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Baybars — Badass of the Week

12–15 minutes



"Hadst thou but seen thy knights trodden under horses' hooves, thy palaces invaded and ransacked for booty, thy ladies bought and sold at four to the dinar of thine own money! Hadst thou seen thy churches demolished, the crosses sawn in sunder, thy garbled gospels hawked about before the sun, the tombs of thy nobles cast to the ground...then thou wouldst have said, 'Would God that I were dust!'" - Letter to a Crusader King after destroying his army and capturing his castle. This is the precursor to "in ur base killin ur d00dz"

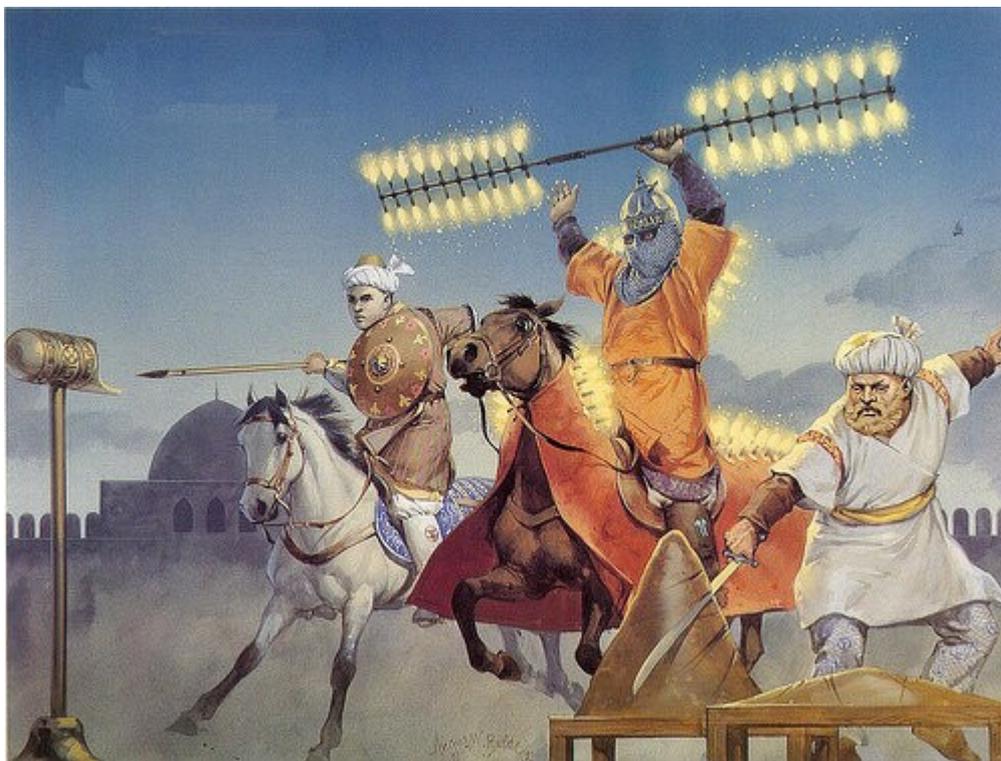
Al-Malik, Al-Zahir Rukn al-Dunia wal-Din Abu l-Fath

Baybars was a gigantic, hulking, blonde-haired, blue-eyed Muslim warrior with a vicious temper, a ridiculously-huge broad-bladed scimitar, and a relentless desire to take on the two most powerful land empires in the world and leave nothing in his path except a field of vulture-ridden corpses and smoking cinders. Born a dirt-poor peasant, sold as a slave, and forced to fight as a front-line warrior against his will in hardcore sword battles against bloodthirsty Mongols and fanatical European Crusaders alike, this badass organic war machine rose from slave to general, overthrew two Sultans of Egypt, seized power for himself, and became the most famous character in post-Pharaoh Egyptian history.

Born into an impoverished dirt-farming Kipchak Turk peasant family somewhere on the Crimean peninsula in present-day Ukraine, Baybars, like many of his Kipchak Turkic relatives, was tall, strong, and powerful, with long blonde hair and blue eyes – although one of his eyes was afflicted with cataracts so it was cloudy white, making him look even more imposing and badass. When he was a young man, Baybars' tribe was attacked by the Mongols – a ferocious Empire of steppe warriors who, under the able command of a dude named Genghis Khan, were in the process of carving out the largest contiguous land empire in human history by wakeboarding a torrent of human blood that stretched from China to Austria. The Mongols killed Baybars's parents, torched his village, took him

prisoner, and sold him into slavery in Damascus, where he was sold to the Sultan of Egypt for a bag of rocks and a pair of Bo Jackson rookie cards.

Baybars was brought back to Egypt and, due to his size, bad attitude, and ability to wield massive weaponry with ruthless efficiency, was enlisted in the Mamluk Infantry – a regiment of badass slave-warrior killbots forced to convert to Islam and serve the Sultan of Egypt in battle until such time as they died a painfully-bloody and glorious death in battle.



Mamluk training. Please note the DUDE WITH THE FUCKING FIRE LANCE AND FLAMING HORSE WTF

Slave-warrior Baybars was thrown into war almost immediately, as the Sultan hurled his legions head-on into combat against the Crusader Kingdoms that were still clinging to their foothold in the Middle East. Described by

one Crusader as, "as brilliant as Caesar, and as harsh as Nero," Baybars rose through the ranks quickly thanks to his military brilliance, fanatical bravery, and insane personal strength/psychoticness. He was transferred to the Bahriyya Regiment, a unit of 1,000 Mamluk shock troopers who served as the personal bodyguard of the Sultan when they weren't being used as the spearhead of every major Egyptian military offensive ever all the time, eventually becoming the unit's commander after he took over for his wounded commander at a battle in Gaza in 1244 and rallied the Egyptian army to victory against the infidel.

Well the Europeans got a little pissed off about this while Egyptian bullshit, so in 1250 they launched the Seventh Crusade. French King Louis IX dumped 60,000 heavily-armed Crusader knights on the shores of the Nile, marched towards Cairo, crossed a few canals, and ambushed the entire Egyptian army while they were still in their war camp, the Knights Templar and Hospitaller leading a charge of heavy cavalry that smashed the Muslim forces, killed the Sultan of Egypt, and sent the entire Islamic military running for the hills.

Everyone except Baybars, that is.





Baybars was just a regimental commander, but when he saw the entire Egyptian army fleeing towards the safety of the nearby walled city of Al-Mansurah, he devised a plan. Standing atop a wall, he rallied his men to hold their ground, even as thousands of English, French, and German knights stampeded in their direction. Baybars calmed down his previously-leaderless troops, reorganized them in defensive positions, then gave the order to *open the gates of the city*. The Crusaders rushed in, hoping to crush the Muslim forces once and for all and clear the way to Cairo.

Baybars slammed the gates shut behind them as soon as they were in. The Crusaders, unable to use their cavalry in the narrow streets, were boxed in, suddenly ambushed and surrounded not only by thousands of Jihadis, but also by the townspeople themselves, most of whom knew that bloody painful death was all they could look forward to if the Europeans took the town.

The Crusader army was crushed. Baybars didn't take any prisoners.





When the new Sultan took over, that idiot didn't show Baybars and the Mamluks enough appreciation for pulling his Halal bacon out of the European Crusader fire, so Baybars and his men orchestrated a coup d'etat Praetorian Guard style, ambushing the Sultan in his palace, executing him (some say Baybars was the man who dealt the killing blow), and putting a Mamluk Sultan in power. Suddenly the slaves had become the masters.

Infighting among the Mamluks eventually forced Baybars out of town, and the slave-general fled to Syria, where he worked as a badass mercenary for the next couple years. It was a new threat from an old enemy, however, that finally forced the fugitive badass to return to Cairo and offer his warrior-murdering services to his adopted homeland: The Mongols were coming.



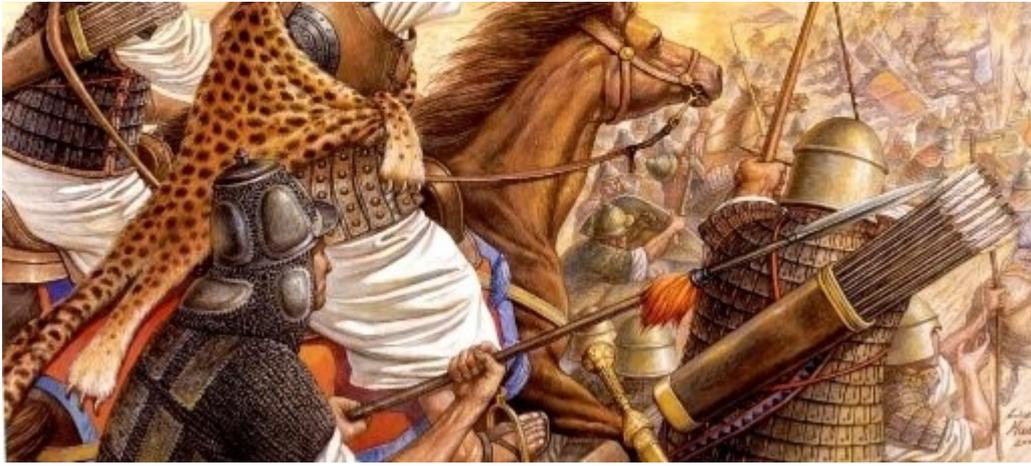


Say what now?

In the year 1260, emissaries from the Great Khan arrived in Cairo with a message – the invincible Mongol Hordes were en route to Egypt, and only the unconditional surrender of the Sultan would prevent the utter destruction of their entire civilization. Baybars, naturally, had the emissaries executed and sent their balls back to the Khan in a box. Then he prepared for war.

The Mongol Horde, now under command of Genghis Khan's grandson HULAGUALAUGLAUG Khan, had not lost a battle in the 40 year history of the Empire. They'd destroyed Imperial China. They'd crushed the Empires of Central Asia. They spent 8 days plundering Baghdad, then killed the Caliph (basically the Muslim Pope) by rolling him up in a Persian rug and trampling him with horses. They'd crushed the Prince of Russia to death by laying boards over him and eating dinner on his corpse. They leveled Damascus. And now the only thing that stood between the Mongol Empire and Jerusalem, Mecca, and Cairo were the armies of the Egyptian Sultan and Baybars' enormous nutsack.





Baybars, now in command of the entire Egyptian Army, met the Mongols at a place called Ain Jalut – the "Pools of Goliath" – just north of Jerusalem. He lined 60,000 Egyptian troops in battle formation against 30,000 Mongols, but even the two-to-one advantage was no guarantee of victory. The Invincible Mongols rushed ahead, firing their fearsome composite bows into the Egyptians, then following it with a ridiculous charge of heavy cavalry that smashed the Egyptian lines and sent the entire army into a full retreat.

As he had done before, Baybars rushed to the front to rally his troops, even as the Mongols pursued them relentlessly, cutting fleeing Mamluk warriors down as they ran for their lives. Somehow, Baybars turned his troops back even in the face of an overwhelming rout, ordering them to turn, stand and fight.

The Mongols bore down on Baybars and his shattered regiments. It looked like this would be their last stand.

It was at this point that another 60,000 Egyptian horsemen came out of the forests on either side of the battlefield, slamming into the Mongol flanks and cutting off their only

escape route.



Uh oh, looks like someone got caught with their nuts in a zipper.

Baybars took no survivors. The Mongols were slaughtered to the last man. It would be the first defeat the Horde would ever suffer, and their defeat at Ain Jalut would mark the furthest their Empire would ever stretch in the Middle East. On the way home to Egypt, Baybars asked the Sultan for a promotion for, you know, kicking so much ass, and when the Sultan said no Baybars decapitated him, seized the Citadel of Cairo, and took the name Al-Malik al-Zahir, meaning "The Conquering King". Since everyone hated the sultan and loved Baybars anyways, nobody really cared.

Ruling an empire stretching from Cairo to Baghdad for over 17 years, Baybars, the ex-slave, lived in a massive

palace, cleaned up the city of prostitutes and hashish, built mosques, shipyards, roads, and bridges, and was so beloved that he became known as "The Lion of Egypt". He elected a new Caliph, kept the Mongols at bay, and went to work forcing those annoying Crusaders out of the Middle East, capturing Antioch in 1268, crushing the Knights Templar stronghold of Arsuf, obliterating the Hospitallers at Krak des Chevaliers in 1271, and destroying the armies of Lesser Armenia a few years later, being sure to either massacre or enslave the entire populations of cities that defied him and hanging the heads of enemy kings on the gates of Cairo.

Baybars eventually died in 1277 when he accidentally assassinated himself. Apparently, he'd poisoned the drink of one of his rival princes, but that guy switched cups Dread Pirate Roberts style when Baybars wasn't looking and the 54-year-old Sultan died after 13 days of poison, ironically becoming the third Sultan of Egypt he'd assassinated with his own hand. His descendents, however, would forever keep the Mongols out of Egypt and the Crusaders out of the Middle East, and would remain in power so long that when Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt in 1798 it was still ruled by Mamluk Sultans.



