

I heard it told as a truth that the old Sultan Cathubie [Kait-Bey], who died within the last two years, was born in Circassia and was with his father, a shepherd, his age being then fifteen years. One day he was . . . with another lad watching the sheep . . . when four Mamluks came riding up and caught them both, and carried them to Cairo, where they were both sold for ten ducats. Kait-Bey did so well in combat, fighting, and defense, and showed such wisdom, that he rose daily to higher status and came at last to be chosen Sultan. . . .

These Mamluks, when they walk or ride in the streets, always have a large stick in their hands and a sword at their sides. When . . . anyone in the street comes too near or touches them, they strike him to the earth, so that everyone is forced to give way to them. . .

-Arnold Von Harff, "The Pilgrimage of von Harff, Knight" (circa 1499) excerpt.