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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Expenses of Mamluk Army during the Burji Period

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to study the expenses of Mamluk army during the Burji era and how these expenditures affected the economic situation during that time. It also seeks to explore the factors leading to the changes of military costs. This article found that the expenses of Mamluk army increased during fifty years before the fall of Mamluk sultanate because of threats from Mamluk's adversaries. The Mamluk rulers implemented hard policies on the populace in order to cover the expenses of army and to defend their kingdom. All of these affected the economy and its activities during that time.

Key words: Expenses, Mamluk army, Burji, economy.

Introduction

Conflict with neighbouring rivals caused the Mamluk sultanate serious fiscal problems. The expense of military campaign as well as spending to the soldiers raised and the state treasury could not cover all of the costs. This contributed considerably to the exhaustion of the Mamluk economy. This was in turn compounded by the policies of confiscation and extortion resorted to by the Mamluk rulers in order to gain the much-needed cash. Not surprisingly, this severe measure had a negative result on economic situation in Egypt, disrupting agricultural and industrial production, commercial and financial affairs and in general ensuring that economic activities could not run smoothly.

The Expenses of Mamluk Army:

The period under consideration witnessed Mamluk rulers facing many intimidations from neighbouring kingdoms. This caused them extreme fiscal problems since they were forced to spend large totals of money to cover military costs (Ashtor, 1976). Thus, the Nafaqa al-Safar (an expense given to the Mamluk soldiers on the eve of the military expedition) that the Burji rulers had to give their armies before military expeditions was much higher than before. Besides Nafaqa al-Safar, the Mamluk soldiers also received other expenses from the ruler, namely Jamakiyya (the monthly salary), Nafaqa al-Bay'a (the payment on the succession of a new ruler to the throne), Kiswa (a yearly or half-yearly amount to cover the expense of the Mamluks' costumes), Lahm (the daily meat ration), Adhiyya (sheep distributed to the Mamluks on the eve of 'Id al-Adha), 'Aliq (the fodder ration which was distributed twice a week) and al-Khayl wa al-Jimal (horses and camels which were distributed occasionally) (Ayalon, 1958; Ibn Taghri Birdi, 1932).

The expense of Nafaqa al-Safar for a small expedition (Tajrida Khafifa) was approximately one hundred thousand Dinars. For a rather bigger one (Tajrida Thaqila) it was approximately one hundred fifty thousand Dinars. This did not including the accelerated salary of 4 months and the expense of camels. The Nafaqa al-Safar for a big expedition was between 400,000 and 500,000 Dinars (Ibn Iyas, 1960). Usually approximately one thousand Mamluk Sultaniyya (the Royal Mamluks) took part in a small expedition. In a bigger expedition, about 1,500-2,000 Mamluk Sultaniyya participated. An expedition which consisted of 3,000 Mamluk Sultaniyya was considered a very huge one.

Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay had to spend much more cash on troops and military expeditions compared to his Burji predecessors because of the many armed clashes in which he was involved with Shah Suwar, Hasan al-Tawil and the Ottomans ('Ata, n.d.). The manuscript entitled Tarikh al-Malik al-Ashraf Qaytbay contains a record of al-Ashraf Qaytbay's expeditions against Shah Suwar and Hasan al-Tawil during the first five years of his rule. The number of amirs and Mamluks participating in each expedition and the totals expended in connection with it are also supplied.

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In the first expedition against Shah Suwar in February 1468, Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay spent approximately 141,700 Dinars on amirs and Royal Mamluks. This amount did not include the expense of horses, camels, fodder, salary and clothes. In the second campaign in August 1468, Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay used approximately eighty seven thousand Dinars. This sum included the expense of the necessities supplied to the military throughout the campaign. In the third expedition in August 1468, he spent more than three hundred thousand Dinars on his amirs and Royal Mamluks. This total included the Nafaqa al-Safar and the salary of the Royal Mamluks and the fodder for their horses, but excluded the expense of the horses and camels, weapons, etc. In the fourth campaign in September 1470, approximately fifty thousand Dinars were spent on the amirs and the Royal Mamluks, this total not including the expense of horses, camels and weapons. The fifth campaign against Shah Suwar was in April 1471 and cost about 610,000 Dinars. This amount included the Nafaqa al-Safar and salary and the expense of fodder, but excluded the cost of camels, horses and weapons.

In the first campaign against Hasan al-Tawil in November 1472, Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay spent approximately sixty-five Dinars on the amirs and Royal Mamluks. In the second expedition in December 1472, he spent more than five hundred thousand Dinars on his amirs and Royal Mamluks. This amount included the Nafaqa al-Safar and the salary. The unknown writer of the Tarikh states that Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay's costs during his rule from February 1468 until January 1473 amounted to 3,770,000 Dinars. This included military expenses before the expeditions, the buying of new Mamluks, arms, horses, arrows, javelins, re-establishing, modifying and reconstructing buildings, grants, welfare and pious endowments.

As the seven expeditions referred to above cost Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay 1,753,700 Dinars this would mean that his military campaigns accounted for almost half of the realm's expenditure during the period covered by the anonymous author. Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay was also forced to spend a lot of money on military expeditions because of the battles with the Ottomans. For instance, in a single expedition against the Ottomans in 1490 he spent as much as five hundred thousand Dinars (Ibn Iyas, 1960).

It can be seen, therefore, that although the battles with Shah Suwar and the Ottomans brought the Mamluks military triumph, they put a heavy strain on the economy (Har-El, 1995). During the short rules of 5 incompetent sultans between 1495 and 1501, large totals of money were spent to end the revolts of the amirs. If the uprisings occurred in Syria the sultans had to spend much more money on sending military forces. Sometimes they bought the loyalty of amirs by giving them a lot of Iqta'. Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri also spent a large amount of money on organizing the military campaign to counter the Ottoman soldiers.

The Economic Results of High Military Expenses:

The Mamluk rulers frequently resorted to confiscation and extortion to cover their military costs. This was in addition to the burden of severe duties on the agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors (Martel-Thoumian, 2005). It was the shortage in profits from these three main sectors which led the Mamluk rulers to seize and extort in order to attain money quickly. It was usual that on the eve of a military campaign, the rulers would seize and extort money from the people. Usually, the sufferers were the businessmen, noblemen, members of the civil management, orphans, widows etc. The traders, who had to contribute larger amounts than any other section of population, usually paid thousands of Dinars at one time. In the meantime, the countryside quarters had to provide horses or their equal in money (Nasir, 2003).

Several rulers exercised confiscation and extortion during the period under consideration. In his work, Ibn Iyas (1960) (d.1524) gives report of these policies which he states happened 19 times between 1468 and 1515. In 1468, for instance, some of rich men were asked to give a sum of money for Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay in order to cover forces expenditures before soldiers started their expedition to Hims to end the rebellion of Shah Suwar. One of these rich men, al-Shihabi Ahmad b. al-'Ayni, was ordered to provide two hundred thousand Dinars, and was beaten and jailed when he failed to pay the amount. He was finally freed after agreeing to pay in monthly instalments. In 1490, Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay extorted money from people and traders in Egypt and Syria in order to pay the Nafaqa al-Safar to the Mamluks and to cover other expenditures in the battle with the Ottomans. The Jewish voyager, Obayda of Bertinoro, explains the problems faced by the Jews and the non-Jews of Egypt as a consequence of Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay's extortions. According to Ibn Iyas (1960), Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay reintroduced Muqarrar Jibayat al-Dinar (a duty on the compilation of Dinars) in 1486 when he faced fiscal troubles in preparing a military campaign against the Ottomans. He commanded the Muhtasib (Market Inspector) to gather all the traders and to ask them to give forty thousand Dinars to cover his costs. There was chaos because the traders declined to pay. After negotiation between the two parties, the traders at last agreed to give only twelve thousand Dinars.

In 1496 and 1497, in order to pay the Nafaqa al-Safar to the Mamluks, Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad b. Qaytbay extorted from the traders, shopkeepers, Jewish and Christian societies and rich men (Ibn Iyas, 1960). Sultan al-Zahir Qansuh, the successor of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad, also followed the same way in order to cover military expenditures. Sultan al-Ashraf Janbalat's policy was also severe. In order to cover his military costs, he sized goods belonging to the entrepreneurs, traders, Jews, Copts and others. In 1501, the shop owners,

the traders and the proprietors of stores faced problems because of the extortions by Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri to cover the Nafaqa al-Safar of the Mamluks. The same circumstance was experienced in 1502 by foreign traders who carried out their trade in Alexandria and Damietta. In 1514, the public of Ghazza, Safad, Tarablus, Aleppo and Hamat were also asked to give 20 Dinars per individual in order to cover the expenditures of Mamluk cavalry. Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri sized goods belonging to the civilians and the rich men to cover military expenditures (‘Ata, n.d.).

Ibn Iyas (1960) clearly mentions that confiscation and extortion had negative consequences on the economic activities in Egypt, with hubs of trade, such as the harbour of Alexandria and the harbour of Damietta, being harshly affected due to the government’s fiscal burdens on the traders and businessmen. Both domestic and overseas traders were not capable to run their commerce calmly under the rules of confiscation and extortion, and they suffered losses because huge sums of money had to be paid to the government without returning any revenue (Al-Shirbini, 1997). Extortion by the rulers also influenced the agricultural sector where several Iqta‘ holders lost interest in improving their Iqta‘ and preserving the irrigation system. Their only concern was to obtain as much revenues as they could from their land before it was confiscated by the ruler. The uncertainty of their fiscal position also led the Iqta‘ holders to force many obligations on the farmers.

The industrial sector was also disturbed by the rulers’ policies. Indeed, in 1491, the owners of the textile factories in Damascus protested to the governor about the sum of money they had to provide to the government (Ibn Tulun, 1962). The long-term impact of government burden was a slowing down in industrial production and the rising importation of industrial goods from European countries. Warfare between the Mamluks and their opponents also caused disturbance to trading activities and commercial dealings. A table listing the Arab traders in Bursa (an early capital of the Ottoman state), as reconstructed by Halil Inalcik (1960) from the records of the Qadi of Bursa in the years 1479-1500, obviously shows to the short of business activity that took place during the conflicts between the Mamluks and the Ottomans (1485-1490). On this subject, Inalcik says that in 1487 the revenue Bursa from duties on imported saffron, gum lac and pepper amounted to 100,000 Akca (over 2,000 Venetian gold ducats). This had been even higher (135,000 Akca) before, and the reduction can be ascribed to the conflicts between the Ottomans and the Mamluks. Elsewhere, Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay is said to have complained about the Ottoman restriction on the passage of goods into Syria and Egypt.

The demise of Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay in 1495 was followed by almost five years of intense power struggles over the sultan’s throne and this also had impacts on trading activities and commercial relations. The enthronement of Qansuh al-Ghawri as sultan in 1501 seemed to calm the political condition inside the sultanate, but other undermining forces continued to disrupt trade activities in the region. When Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri heard about Isma‘il Safawi’s overtures to European powers to form an alliance against him, he seized the resident consuls of these governments in Cairo and threatened to kill them if they complied with their patron’s schemes (Ibn Iyas, 1960). Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri was said on several occasions to have attempted to end trading relations with Venice because of its connections with Isma‘il Safawi. Consequently, no ships were sent from Venice to Alexandria in 1505, 1508, 1513 and 1515. These temporary halts obviously caused the disruptions in the trading activities between the two kingdoms.

The severe actions taken by Sultan Salim to crush Isma‘il Safawi also affected the business activities of the Mamluk traders. Thus, in 1514 he prohibited all silk imports from Iran and disallowed dealing in raw silk in the Ottoman territories. With the aim of ending all Iranian silk exports to European countries, the sultan also extended the restriction to include Arab lands under Mamluk power. He announced that any Turk, Iranian or Arab found with Iranian silk in his possession would have their freight seized. These measures caused losses for the silk traders and disturbed a long-established pattern of international trade (Inalcik and Quataert, 1994). Other strain on the economy during the period under consideration was the monetary system which was also in an unsteady condition because of military expense. The Mamluk rulers controlled the currency in order to obtain fiscal benefit in the short term, dropping the weight of individual coins as well as debasing them. This essentially had an unpleasant effect on economic activities which were unable to run smoothly.

Financial Problems in Covering Military Expenses:

During the period under review, the expense of military campaigns as well as payments to the soldiers raised and the state treasury could not cover all of the expenditures. Ibn Iyas (1960) states on the troubles of the Iqta‘ from the year 1495 and the deficient resources of the treasury. Simultaneously, the bureaus in charge for the soldier’s wage, i.e. the Diwan al-Wizara’ (The Office of the Wazir), the Diwan al-Ustadariyya (The Office of Majordomo) and the Nizarat al-Khass (The Office of the Keeper of the Privy Purse) were financially unsteady (Ibn Shahin, 1894). Indeed, the Diwan al-Wizara’ started to face a difficulty in the early part of the Burji period, seeing exhausted profits from areas such as Giza, Manfalut and Qatya not as before. In the meantime, the fiscal situation of the Diwan Ustadariyya and Nizarat al-Khass also became insufficient.

The fiscal problem faced by Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay can be seen in his cancelling the Nafaqa Bay’a as a condition for being appointed as a sultan. He knew that the treasury did not contain enough funds to cover the

Nafaqa. Similarly, in 1501, Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri could not pay the Nafaqa al-Bay'a to his Mamluks because the kingdom's financial problems. al-Ashraf Tumanbay, the last sultan, also found the treasury depleted. He too accepted the sultanate only on condition that he need not pay the Nafaqa al-Bay'a (Ibn Iyas, 1960). In order to cover military expenditures during the period under consideration the rulers had option to many measures. For instance, Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay attempted to use the money of pious endowments in the first expedition against Shah Suwar but was opposed in this by the 'Ulama'. He then lessened the allowances of retired Mamluk officers and soldiers and cut the expenses to widows, orphans and others. Nevertheless, during the Mamluk-Ottoman war, money was squeezed from the pious endowments and public estates in order to cover military expenditures.

Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri also attained fiscal resources from the pious endowments, decreased the wages and payments, and ordered some rich persons to cover military expenditure (Al-Ghazzi, 1945). In 1516, the year of the war of Marj Dabiq, Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri found quite a simple solution for the maintenance of his Royal Mamluks. He made every one of his amirs responsible for providing a certain number of Royal Mamluks in accordance with his rank and with the size of his Iqta'. He also did not pay the Nafaqa al-Safar to the Awlad al-Nas (Sons of Mamluks) who took part in the expedition. The caliph al-Mutawakkil III was also asked to provide Nafaqa al-Safar himself; this had previously been provided by the earlier sultans.

Factors leading to the increase of military costs:

The period under consideration witnessed the emergence of several neighbouring leaders who contested Mamluk sovereignty. They attempted to expand their power and provincial prominence or tried to occupy strategic routes and places. For instance, in southeastern Anatolia, Shah Suwar from the Dhu al-Ghadir family endeavoured to set up an autonomous principality free from Mamluk control. Elsewhere, during the 15th century a principality ruled by Hasan al-Tawil in central Iran also threatened Mamluk suzerainty in southwest Asia. Later, Isma'il Safawi, who established the Safavid kingdom and by the early 16th century had attained control over Iran attacked the Mamluk borders in the northeast. Further west, the Ottomans who had established their supremacy in the Balkan, were looking to expand their power to the East (Petry, 1994). In order to sustain their power and to protect their territories, the Mamluks were involved in several wars with these leaders, something which contributed to the debilitation of the Mamluk economy.

Shah Suwar:

Shah Suwar was the 8th ruler of the Dhu al-Ghadir dynasty and he threatened Mamluk sovereignty shortly after the enthronement of Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay in 1468. Shah Suwar deposed his brother, Shah Budaq (the 7th ruler of Dhu al-Ghadir), who received a decree from the Mamluk ruler in 4 December 1465 and attempted to found an autonomous principality during the transition of power from al-Zahir Timurbugha to al-Ashraf Qaytbay. Although he started his rebellion as a vassal of the Ottomans, he intended to break free from the Ottomans and the Mamluks and establish an autonomous principality (Ibn Iyas, 1960).

Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay's early reign was very much troubled by Shah Suwar's revolt. He caused much worry to the sultan and posed a danger to the Mamluk boundaries areas. Ibn Taghri Birdi (1932) (d.1469) and Al-Sayrafi (1970) (d.1495) state Shah Suwar's rising power and mention that he seized the major garrison city of 'Ayntab and also conquered Darnada which guarded the trade routes. Without delay, al-Ashraf Qaytbay sent some military expeditions to end the rebellion but with strategic skill Shah Suwar defeated the early military campaigns from Cairo and al-Ashraf Qaytbay's armed forces were harshly crushed in 1468 and 1469. Atabak Janibak, who commanded the military campaign, was detained by Shah Suwar but al-Ashraf Qaytbay was reluctant to pay the ransom to free him because it meant that he recognized Shah Suwar's power. At last, a formidable amir called Yashbak crushed Shah Suwar after a war that had continued until 1472. Yashbak was one of the grand amirs during al-Ashraf Qaytbay's rule and worked as the sultan's hatchet man. He was chosen as executive secretary and well-known for his bravery in the wars. Shah Suwar was sent back to Cairo as a prisoner in 1473 and was hanged at the Bab Zuwayla.

Shah Suwar's victory in devastating some Mamluk military expeditions indicated that the sultan was not capable to maintain his power abroad. It also caused him considerable fiscal problems. After the demise of Shah Suwar, Shah Budaq was reinstalled as the Dhu al-Ghadir ruler until he was confronted by another brother, 'Ali Dawlat, in 1479 (Mordtmann and Menage, 1965).

Hasan al-Tawil:

During the 1470s and 1480s, Hasan al-Tawil sought to expand his control and influence in central Iran by attacking his neighbours. Ibn Taghri Birdi (1932) mentions that this ruler of Aqquyunlu crushed Jahan Shah, the leader of Qaraqayunlu and ruler of Iraq and Adharbayjan at the end of 1468. According to the Mamluk sources,

a few months after his success Hasan al-Tawil approached Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay and offered himself as a friend. Hasan al-Tawil's first representative came to cheer the sultan on his installation. This was followed by others who promised their patron's obedience.

At the same time that Hasan al-Tawil was sending his messengers to Egypt, he sustained to abolish his opponents in Iran and Central Asia. Hasan's control became greater after he defeated Jahan Shah's son, Hasan 'Ali, and Sultan Abu Sa'id, the Timurid ruler of Bukhara and Samarqand in Central Asia. He also seized some commercial centres held by the Venetians on the Black Sea shore. The Ottomans who had business relations with the Venetians, perceived Hasan's action as a risk to their share of the Black Sea business.

Hasan al-Tawil did not make any troubles to the Mamluk kingdom until September-October 1472, when the Na'ib of Aleppo notified Cairo that Aqquyunlu's troop had encroached on Mamluk territory. This troop, however, had retreated. In November-December 1472, the Viceroy of Aleppo once again told Cairo about the movement of Hasan's armies. This time they had surrounded al-Ruha under the instruction of Hasan's son, Ughurlu Muhammad. In order to defend Mamluk suzerainty and to prevent the Aqquyunlu expansion, Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay took urgent action by sending a military expedition led by Amir Yashbak. Yashbak arrived at Aleppo in March 1473 and without further delay marched to the Euphrates. The war between the Mamluks and Aqquyunlu occurred in April 1473. Hasan's troops were harshly defeated and he fled from the battle. After the war, Amir Yashbak was shocked when he found some letters belonged to Hasan al-Tawil addressed to the European rulers and which suggested that they join him against the Mamluks. Hasan made no further military expeditions against the Mamluk sultanate after his defeat (Ibn Iyas, 1960).

According to Ibn Iyas (1960), the news of Hasan's death reached Cairo in October-November 1478. He was succeeded by his son Khalil who was toppled after one year on the throne. Ya'qub, who succeeded Khalil, ruled for more than 10 years. During his tenure, Amir Yashbak was harshly defeated by Ya'qub's vassal when he attacked the border fortress of al-Ruha in November 1480. After the demise of Amir Yashbak, Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay launched no further expedition against the Aqquyunlu regime.

Isma'il Safawi:

Isma'il Safawi who founded Twelver Shi'ism as the formal interpretation of Islam within his kingdom, also posed a threat to the Mamluk kingdom. In 1501, he declared Tabriz his capital and himself Shah of Adharbayjan. He sustained to expand his base in northwestern Iran and was declared Shah of Iran in 1502. Throughout the rest of the decade Isma'il continued to expand his territory, taking Hamadan in 1503, Shiraz and Kirman in 1504, Najaf and Karbala in 1507, Van in 1508, Baghdad in 1509, Khurasan and Herat in 1510. The Safawi propaganda also won over many Turcomans in Anatolia (Winter, 1998).

In August-September 1502, it was told in Cairo that Isma'il Safawi had trespassed into Mamluk province in Aleppo. Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri responded by sending a military campaign to monitor the Isma'il's activities and to defend Syria. In 1507, Isma'il once again occupied Mamluk terrains by destroying Elbistan and Mar'ash during their battle with 'Ali Dawlat of Dhu al-Ghadir. Isma'il later made an apology for this to the Mamluks and no war broke out between the two troops. However, Isma'il's unfriendliness towards the Mamluks indicated that he had no respect of the power of that sultanate and his assaults were crucial enough to compel Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri to mobilize armies in order to protect his suzerainty (Ibn Iyas, 1960).

The Ottomans:

During the period under review, the Ottomans had changed into a great power and appeared as the major competitor of the Mamluk kingdom. While Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih (1451-1481) still lived, relations between the Mamluks and the Ottomans remained positive. According to Ibn Iyas, the Ottoman ruler offered aid to Amir Yashbak against Hasan al-Tawil during the clash between the Mamluks and Hasan. Sultan Muhammad also notified Cairo about Hasan's proposals to the European rulers. Only once did the Ottoman sultan cause the Mamluk sultan nervousness, this being when he sent out a military campaign against the still independent Qaraman principality of southeastern Anatolia in 1468. According to Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert (1994), the Ottomans were victorious in their efforts to dominate Qaraman in that year.

Bayazid II (1481-1512), who succeeded his father in 1481, sustained to keep good relations with Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay until 1483 when the Ottomans attempted once again to expand their power over the principality of Dhu al-Ghadir. The Ottomans encouraged 'Ali Dawlat (who substituted his brother Shah Budaq) into announcing his bid for independence. Ibn Iyas (1960) states that in July-August 1483 'Ali Dawlat seized Malatya from its Mamluk governor under Ottoman encouragement. After discovering how the Ottomans had helped 'Ali Dawlat, Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay sent considerable military campaigns against both of them during the period of 1484-1491. The battles only ended in 1491 after a peace agreement was signed. This was the result of the Ottoman's defeat at Qaysariyya in 1490. In the agreement, Bayazid acknowledged all Qaytbay's claims as absolute suzerain in Syrian southeastern Anatolia. After Bayazid's defeat, the Mamluk sources do not state any

further effort by him to seize Mamluk holdings in Dhu al-Ghadir provinces. Indeed, wars with the Ottomans had exhausted the Mamluk economy. The military expenditures of several immense expeditions had proved enormously costly and had caused Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay economic problems.

Salim I (1512-1520), an ambitious prince, succeeded Bayazid and defeated his brothers who were his contestants for the throne. During his era, relations between the Mamluks and the Ottomans became tense and deteriorated. Salim's aggressive rule can be seen from his early days in power when he began occupying Muslim principalities on his eastern boundaries (Ibn Iyas, 1960). Because of the risk and menace created by Isma'il Safawi to Ottoman authority, Salim jailed some 40,000 of his supporters in Anatolia. Later Isma'il himself was crushed at Caldiran in 1514. This victory allowed Salim to expand his control over the vicinities from Erzurum to Diyarbekir, and in 1516-1517, the local dynasties and tribal leaders in these areas recognized Ottoman suzerainty.

Salim caused a real danger to the Mamluks when he sent Khadim Sinan Pasha to crush 'Ali Dawlat because of his unwillingness to help the Ottomans during the conflict with Isma'il Safawi. 'Ali Dawlat was executed and his head was carried to Cairo by an Ottoman envoy. These events challenged Mamluk supremacy and al-Ghawri felt that a war with the Ottomans was unavoidable. The old sultan with his immense military marched out of Cairo for Aleppo in May 1516 and arrived there in July 1516. The Mamluk and Ottoman troops met at the plain of Marj Dabiq, north Aleppo, on 24 August 1516. Several causes, such as the betrayal of some amirs and the advantage of the Ottomans' arms, led to the defeat of the Mamluks (Ibn Iyas, 1960).

Salim then marched towards Aleppo where he received the title 'al-Khadim al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn'. al-Ashraf Tumanbay, the newly-appointed sultan in Egypt, declined to surrender to the Ottomans, thus causing Salim to traverse the Sinai Desert with his troops and to march towards Egypt. Sultan al-Ashraf Tumanbay and his armies were defeated at Raydaniyya in January 1517. The sultan was arrested and executed. Following this, in July 1517, the Sharif of Mecca sent Salim the keys of the Holy Cities and announced his submission.

Conclusion:

The second part of the 15th century saw the emergence of several ambitious leaders, namely, Shah Suwar, Hasan al-Tawil, Isma'il Safawi and the Ottomans who confronted and caused menace to Mamluk hegemony. The ensuing conflicts showed that the Mamluk ruler was at times incapable to sustain his control abroad. Wars with external adversaries also caused the sultanate serious fiscal problems. The cost of military campaigns as well as payments to the armies increased and the state treasury could not cover all of the expenditures. This contributed significantly to the exhaustion of the Mamluk economy. This was in turn compounded by the policies of confiscation and extortion resorted to by the Mamluk rulers in order to get the much-needed money. Not shockingly, this severe measure had a negative effect on economic life in Egypt, disturbing agricultural and industrial production, trade and monetary affairs and in general ensuring that economic activities could not run smoothly.

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