

THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE JULBĀN RIOTS DURING THE MAMLŪK PERIOD (1468-1517)

Wan Kamal MUJANI

University Kebangsaan Malaysia, Institute of West Asian Studies (IKRAB)

43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

e-mail: inamal@yahoo.com / inawan@ukm.my

ABSTRACT

This article deals with the economic impact of the public order violations and riots of the Julbān during the half-century before the fall of the Mamlūk sultanate. This group in their own way disrupted the normal flow of domestic trade and commerce. They terrorised, intimidated and caused losses for those involved in trade and commercial affairs. Thus, the main aim of this article is to discuss the factors leading to the havoc caused by the Julbān, and the extent of the economic impact during that time. This article finds that among the reasons for the Julbān revolt are factional ambitions and the regime's failure to meet their demands. There was also the government's increasing reluctance to vigorously prosecute such behaviour. The chaos created by the Julbān, however, did not lead to an absolute decline of the economy. Rather, they distracted the Mamlūk authorities from more productive activities and placed increasingly onerous financial demands on the government treasury.

Key words: Mamlūk, Julbān, riots, economic effects, trade and commerce

EFFETTI ECONOMICI DELLE RIVOLTE DEGLI JULBAN DURANTE IL PERIODO DEI MAMELUCCHI (1468–1517)

SINTESI

L'articolo tratta degli impatti economici provocati dalle violazioni dell'ordine pubblico e dalle rivolte degli julban nei cinquant'anni precedenti alla caduta del sultanato mamelucco. Questo gruppo interruppe a modo suo il corso usuale del commercio interno, terrorizzando, minacciando e determinando perdite nelle attività commerciali. Pertanto, l'obiettivo principale di questo contributo è di analizzare i fattori che portarono alle distruzioni causate dagli julban e di quantificarne l'impatto economico nell'epoca. L'articolo mette in evidenza che tra le ragioni della rivolta degli julban ci furono lotte tra fazioni, l'incapacità del regime di soddisfare le loro richieste, nonché la crescente riluttanza del governo a perseguire vigorosamente la rivolta. In ogni caso, il caos creato dagli julban non provocò in assoluto un declino economico, ma distrasse le autorità mamelucche da attività più produttive e comportò per il bilancio dello stato oneri sempre più pesanti.

Parole chiave: mamelucchi, julban, rivolte, effetti economici, commercio

INTRODUCTION

In Islamic history, the word 'Mamlūk' means a slave, more specifically a white slave, used in the military institution. In the Ayyūbid sultanate, the Mamlūks served as soldiers and later took over the throne and appointed themselves as the sultāns. For more than 250 years they ruled Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Palestine. The period of Mamlūk reign can be divided into two eras. The first is from 1250 until 1381 and is known as the 'Turkish Mamlūk' era. The second period covers 1382 to 1517 and is known as the 'Circassian Mamlūk' era. It is generally accepted among historians that the Mamlūk sultanate reached its glory under the Turkish sultāns and then fell into a prolonged phase of worsening under the Circassians. Between 1468 and 1517, the period under review, seven persons were installed as sultāns. Two of them (Sultān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy and Sultān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī) ruled for a combined total of forty-four years while the remaining five (Sultān al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Sultān al-Zāhir Qānṣūh, Sultān al-Ashraf Jānbalāt, Sultān al-Ādil Ṭūmānbāy and Sultān al-Ashraf Ṭūmānbāy) reigned for a total of only five years. Indeed, there was a good deal of political turmoil during the reign of the latter five sultāns, while even under the rule of the two longest reigning sultāns there were internal and external problems.

The base of the Egyptian economy, that is, agriculture, industry, commerce and monetary affairs, was in a somewhat weakened state during the half-century before the fall of the Mamlūk kingdom. For instance, the emergence of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean disturbed the flow of spices from Calicut to Egypt and caused a rise in the cost of protecting that trade. The Portuguese also cut commercial relations between India and the

Far Eastern countries and the Mamlūk territories of Egypt, Syria and Arabia (Ibn Iyās, 1963). In this way, the Mamlūk sultāns were deprived of the heavy duties from Alexandria and Jeddah, the transit harbours for oriental merchandise. The commercial balance tilted in favour of Europe, and Lisbon became the centre of the international spice trade instead of the Mamlūk cities. The Mamlūks recognised the immediate effects of these events, and, urged into action by the Venetians who also suffered from this development, tried by diplomacy and then by war to avert the Portuguese threat. However, their efforts were fruitless. After the discovery of the new route to India via the Cape of Good Hope, the price of one *Qinṭar* (equivalent to 44.93 kilograms) of spice in Alexandria was still eighty Ducats, while in Lisbon it was sold at about forty Ducats (Inalcik, 1960). This situation worsened the role of Egypt as the middleman in the spice trade between the East and the West. As a consequence, the treasury did not have sufficient funds to cover military expenses.

During the period under review, the instability of internal politics also influenced and affected the Mamlūk economy. One of the factors that caused political unrest was the havoc and chaos created by the *Julbān*. Indeed, this is an aspect which is often neglected by the modern scholars when they discuss the causes which weakened the Circassian Mamlūk economy. The priority and privileges given by the sultāns made the *Julbān* feel free to do anything and the sultāns sometimes lost control of them. Stories of the pillaging and plundering of markets and shops were associated with them. They also confiscated the belongings of stockmen and merchants. This caused the closure of trading centres such as markets, bazaars and shops (Qāsim, 1994). The Mamlūk chroniclers, namely Ibn Khalīl (AB, 1) and Ibn Iyās (1963, 3:82,272-273,310-311) report extensively on the *Julbān*'s nefarious and impious activities which affected the economy at that time. Therefore, it is important to discuss all of these matters in detail by adding another important issue, namely how far the disruptions by the *Julbān* led to the weakening of the economy. In order to examine these matters, discussion will be divided into three parts i.e. the relationship between the sultanate, changes in the military institution and the commercial economy.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SULTANATE

The Mamlūk armed forces played a very important role in the continuity of the kingdom because they were the actual strength of the empire, expanding Mamlūk authority and defending the state from internal and external enemies. Their number was not fixed and varied from one reign to another, based on the political and economic situation at the time. However, Mamlūk sources reported that the number of soldiers decreased during Circassian times.

THE MAMLŪK ARMIES

Relying on information from the Mamlūk chronicles, the Mamlūk armies, especially in Egypt, can be divided into three main categories, as follows:

1) *Mamālīk al-Sulṭāniyya* (The Royal Mamlūks)

Mamālīk al-Sulṭāniyya were the backbone and main strength of the Mamlūk army and each of them was trained in the barracks. They were responsible for engaging in important military expeditions or in main battles. During the Circassian period, they could number up to 10,000 men, while in the Turkish period they were more in number. According to al-Qalqashandī (1987, 4:15), they were the most significant and the most respected soldiers, and the nearest to the sulṭān. They were also owners of large *Iqtā's* (the land or rarely, the taxes allocated by the great amīr or sulṭān to soldiers in return for military service). The amīrs of various ranks were elected from this group. Most of the *Mamālīk al-Sulṭāniyya* were stationed in the capital and it was very rare for them to stay out of Cairo except for military purposes (Ayalon, 1953). The *Mamālīk al-Sulṭāniyya* was subdivided into two categories: the *Julbān* and the *Mustakhdamūn*, as follows:

i) *The Julbān (The Mamlūks of the Ruling Sulṭān)*

The *Julbān* were those Mamlūks who were purchased and manumitted by the ruling sulṭān (Popper, 1955). They constituted the most important army of the sulṭān and served to strengthen his position as ruler. Besides the term *Julbān*, they were also called *Mushtarawāt* and *Ajlāb*. Historians of the later period, however, such as Ibn Khalīl (AB,1) and Ibn Iyās (1963, 3:82), use the appellation *Julbān* more often.

After his enthronement, the new sulṭān would attempt to increase the number of his Mamlūks as much as he could with the purpose of reducing the influence and power of the *Mustakhdamūn*. This was what Sulṭān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy did when he purchased hundreds of Mamlūks after his accession to the throne. Sulṭān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī also actively taught his *Julbān* the art of war to enable them to break the power of the *Mustakhdamūn* (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 3:18,4:60; Ayalon, 1954). The *Julbān* would be appointed as *Amīr 'ashara* (Amīr of ten) and gradually promoted to higher ranks to replace the *Mustakhdamūn*. The same happened in the administration offices where the *Julbān* slowly replaced the *Mustakhdamūn*. After the death or dismissal of the ruling sulṭān, their position and status changed and they would be classified as *Mustakhdamūn* under a new sulṭān.

ii) *Mustakhdamūn*

The *Mustakhdamūn* were the Mamlūks who passed into the service of the ruling sulṭān from the service of another master. They can be divided into two categories: the *Qarānīṣ* and the *Ṣayfiyya*:

a) *Qarānīṣ*

The *Qarānīṣ* were the Mamlūks who passed into the service of the reigning sulṭān from that of former sulṭāns (Mājid, 1964). This group or faction still used the surname of their former master who had purchased and freed them. For example, the *Zahiriyya* owed their

name to Sulṭān al-Zāhir Barqūq, the *Nāṣiriyya* to Sulṭān al-Nāṣir Faraj, the *Mu'ayyadiyya* to Sulṭān Mu'ayyad Shaykh, and the *Qāyṭbāyiyya* to Sulṭān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy. After the accession of a new sulṭān they would be transferred to serve under that sulṭān as one of the components of the *Mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya*. This was the tradition in the military system in the Mamlūk kingdom. Thus we can see various factions of *Qarānīṣ* during the reign of each sulṭān. For instance, in the reign of Sulṭān al-Ashraf Barsbāy, there were the factions of the *Zāhiriyya*, the *Nāṣiriyya* and the *Mu'ayyadiyya* in his service, whereas, during the reign of Sulṭān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy, there were the factions of the *Ashrafiyya*, the *Khushqaddamiyya* and the *Īnāliyya*.

According to Ibn Iyās (1963, 4:448,5:23) in addition to serving in major wars, one of the duties of the *Qarānīṣ* was to maintain safety in all parts of Egypt including some sectors of the Red Sea coast. They were also sent out to al-Sharqiyya, al-Gharbiyya, al-Buḥayra, al-Ṣa'īd and other places to keep the Bedouin at bay. Sometimes they were ordered to stop the dams from being destroyed by the Bedouin. At the end of the Mamlūk kingdom, the status of the *Qarānīṣ* became progressively worse and they remained second only to the *Julbān*.

b) *Ṣayfiyya*

The *Ṣayfiyya* were those Mamlūks who passed from the service of the amīrs to the sulṭān because of their master's death or dismissal (Ibn Shāhīn, 1894). Generally their position or status was lower than that of other groups in the *Mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya*. When they were transferred into the *Mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya*, they were indifferent or antagonistic toward the *Julbān*, the *Qarānīṣ* and the sulṭān. Their feeling of loyalty towards the sulṭān was also less or totally lacking because he was only their second master. It was very rare for this group to obtain a better status from the sulṭān. Towards the end of the Mamlūk period, the *Ṣayfiyya* were treated with cruelty. Sulṭān al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qāyṭbāy is reported to have sent the *Ṣayfiyya* back to serve under other amīrs after the *Julbān* threatened to kill them. The *Ṣayfiyya* were sometimes allied with the *Qarānīṣ* in their struggle to improve their position (Ayalon, 1953).

2) *Mamālūk al-Umarā'* (The Mamlūks of the Amirs)

The *Mamālīk al-umarā'* was the Mamlūk army who served the amīrs. The number of these that could be kept by amīrs was fixed. Nevertheless, some of the amīrs added to the number of their Mamlūks without concern for such regulations (Ḍūmiṭ, 1980). The *Mamālīk al-umarā'* received their payments from the fief belonging to their masters. Usually, the income from the *Iqtā's* would be divided as follows: one third to the amīrs and two thirds to the Mamlūks. However, sometimes the amīrs did not follow this division and took one half for himself.

The *Mamālīk al-umarā'* did not constitute a serious political factor in the Mamlūk army and were rarely involved in rebellion. Normally, they followed their masters and *participated* in battle if they were ordered to do so. They were also not as well-trained as the *Ṣayfiyya* (Ibn Taghrī Birdī, n.d.).

3) *Ḥalqa* (A Free Corps)

The *Ḥalqa* or the *Ajnād al-ḥalqa*, as they were sometimes called, was the non-Mamlūk army and al-Qalqashandī (1987, 4:16) mentions that they were non-military people. They comprised of the *Awlād al-nās* (Sons of the amīrs and of the Mamlūks). Sometimes *Mamālīk al-umarā'* was transferred to *Ḥalqa* after the death or dismissal of their masters. The Bedouins, Kurds and Turcomans were also regarded as groups within the *Ḥalqa* when they were sent out to participate in battle (al-Ṭurkhān, 1960). Besides participating in battle, other duties of the *Ḥalqa* in the Circassian period included guarding the Cairo Citadel, the gates of Cairo, the old city and the suburbs in the absence of the main forces (Ibn Shāhīn, 1894).

In the early Turkish period, the *Ḥalqa* held exalted positions and received sufficient *Iqtā's*. Their income was, however, greatly affected after the land redistribution in the Mamlūk kingdom at the end of the seventh century and the cadastral survey conducted in Egypt in the early eighth century. Their *Iqtā's* became fewer after a large number of them were allotted to the sultān.

Among the reasons that led to the fall of the *Ḥalqa* was the fact that they were not Mamlūks and did not have any military ability. In addition, it cost a great deal to maintain them and this resulted in their numbers being reduced and their position becoming less important. At the end of Circassian period, they also were not involved in many wars. During the reign of Sultān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy, he gave them a choice either to participate in battle or to pay 100 *Dīnārs* (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 3:8; al-Ṣayrafi, 1970).

CHANGES IN THE MILITARY INSTITUTION

According to the Mamlūk chroniclers, the Mamlūk armies during the period under review did not maintain high discipline and demonstrated less respect for their lords and masters. They were infamous for their chaotic and political conspiracies. One of the important factors which weakened the military institution and caused the political instability was the frequent strife and *coup d'états* to usurp the throne by the amīrs from different factions. This necessarily affected the stability and the effectiveness of the armies. The works of contemporary historians also contain abundant information about the conflict and strife among the groups in the *Mamālīk al-sultāniyya*. These were factors behind the disorder in internal politics, especially at the end of the Circassian period.

To maintain the influence and power, the sultān relied more on the *Julbān* than on other sources of military support. This was because the *Julbān* and the sultān had a tightly-knit association, being united by strong bonds of solidarity. The *Julbān* were loyal to the sultān, regarding him as a master and liberator. They needed each other because the *Julbān* would only continue to receive their privileges as long as the sultān was on the throne. On the other hand, the sultān would only possess sovereignty as long as the *Julbān* had power and supported his rule.

The sultān gave priority and privilege to the *Julbān* because he saw the *Qarānīṣ* as factions who would not give him total loyalty as he was only their second master, and thus

they always remained potential rivals to the throne. Indeed, it was said that the stability of the reign of any sultān depended on how far he could control the dominance and the power of the *Qarānīs*.

As the Mamlūks of former sultāns, the *Qarānīs* were veterans and had more experience in war and politics than the *Julbān*. Nevertheless, the sultān ignored them and was careful not to promote them into positions which could give them too much influence and power. There are some accounts indicating that the sultān discriminated against the *Qarānīs*. For example, the sultān preferred to send them into battle instead of his *Julbān*. Thus, Sultān al-Ashraf Qāyrbāy sent the *Khushqaddamiyya*, and Sultān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī sent the Mamlūks of al-Zāhir Qānṣūh, al-Ashraf Jānbalāṭ and al-‘Ādil Ṭūmānbāy into most battles. In fact, the participation of *Qarānīs* in military campaigns was considered a substitute for banishment and exile (Ayalon, 1949). Another purpose for sending them into battle was to reduce their numbers. The sultān also dismissed them from the posts that they held, imprisoned, exiled or even killed them (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 3:5,7-8).

Payments to the *Qarānīs* also showed discrimination. Although they were senior, veterans and more experienced, the emoluments they received were always less than those for the *Julbān*. For example, in 1486, the bonus given to each *Qarānīs* was five *Dīnārs*, while the *Julbān* received ten *Dīnārs* per person. The distribution of *Iqtā’*s to *Qarānīs* was also unfair: they received a small fief compared with what the *Julbān* received. Ibn Iyās (1963, 3:231,4:107) reports that in March 1507 one of the *Julbān* killed one of the *Qarānīs* to obtain his *Iqtā’*. The sultān was reported to have done nothing to the *Julbān* and did not even charge him.

The Mamlūk sources report that the *Julbān* were helpless in combat and were unenthusiastic or unwilling to fight, showing no chivalry and no bravery in war. They were lacking in military spirit and their training was most ineffective. In 1503, during Sultān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī’s reign, they were scorned by the *Mustakhdamūn* for the poor quality of their lance play (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 4:60). One of the reasons why they did not make good soldiers was that they were already matured when the sultān purchased them. The sultān preferred to acquire this kind of Mamlūk because their price was lower than that of younger Mamlūks. This was particularly the case in the later Circassian period due to financial difficulties. It was harder to discipline and train older Mamlūks in the art of war than it was to train young Mamlūks, nor was it easy to instill in them an esprit de corps and a duty to obey the law. This led to their lacking good discipline and training (‘Āshūr, 1977).

The Mamlūk sources continuously report the strife and rivalry that existed between the *Qarānīs* and *Julbān*, especially during the Circassian period. For example, during Sultān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī’s reign, there were riots and threats from the *Qarānīs* who were dissatisfied when their privileges were reduced following the appointment of the *Julbān* to replace them. At the same time, these *Julbān* took the opportunity to demand a high payment and constantly caused disturbances (Holt, 1978). However, the sultān rarely took serious action against the *Julbān* because, as already mentioned, he needed them to support his reign against the rivalry of other factions. For example, one of the *Julbān*

and his groom were found guilty of murdering a prominent jurist, a Ḥanbalī deputy judge, in broad daylight. al-Ṣayrafī (1970, 149), however, reports that they received no punishment.

It seems that the *Qarānīš* were antagonistic towards the *Julbān* because they were junior but usurped their positions or privileges. Meanwhile, the *Julbān* took every opportunity to oppress the *Qarānīš* using the power they had as the group with the highest status in the *Mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya*. Occasionally, hostility from the *Julbān* and the ruling sulṭān made the various factions in the *Qarānīš* unite against them.

THE COMMERCIAL ECONOMY

Ibn Khalīl (AB, 1) and Ibn Iyās (1963, 3:75,197,4:13-16,5:81) report extensively on the *Julbān*'s nefarious and impious activities which disrupted the economic activities at that time. As a result, the people continued to live under the threat of terror and oppression by the *Julbān*. Most of these unfortunate events were related to their dissatisfaction with their payments and the failure of the sulṭāns to meet their demands. Often, when the government could not give bonuses or sacrifice animals for religious festivals to the *Julbān*, the shopkeepers and merchants lost their goods or herds with no compensation.

The chroniclers' narratives about the *Julbān* can be classified into three categories, i.e. i) the increasing demands of the *Julbān*, ii) the confiscation of merchant goods and the closure of shops and markets and, iii) the *Julbān* attacks on the civilians.

1. The increasing demands of the *Julbān*

The constant demand for increases in pay always caused problems for the sulṭāns. For instance, in February-March 1489, the *Julbān* demanded a bonus of one hundred *Dīnārs* from Sulṭān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy. The sulṭān could not meet their request because of financial difficulties and he threatened abdication. However, after a discussion between both parties, the sulṭān agreed to grant a bonus of only fifty *Dīnārs* paid in two monthly instalments. Meanwhile, the veterans (*Mustakhdamūn*) received only twenty-five *Dīnārs* each (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 3:261).

In November-December 1490, the *Julbān* once again demanded a bonus and Sulṭān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy, who was in Mecca at the time, threatened abdication. However, the sulṭān had no choice but to grant them the bonus after the *Julbān* revolted and caused general mayhem. The *Julbān* did not stop their wild demands and in April-May 1493, they blocked the Citadel gates in order to force the sulṭān to grant them another bonus (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 3:276,280,295).

In 1500, they revolted because Sulṭān Qānshūh al-Ghawrī failed to pay their *Nafaqa* (payment) on time. In 1501, the sulṭān had once again delayed paying their *Nafaqa* for three months at which the *Julbān* confiscated property belonging to civilians. Meanwhile the sulṭān had to order the shopkeepers to pay the rent on their shops ten months in advance, something which led to the closure of shops and the interruption of economic activities (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 4:8,16-17).

Disturbances by the *Julbān* over salary payments increased during Sulṭān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's middle years, and continued until the sulṭān began planning for his confrontation with Sulṭān Salīm. It can be seen from the Mamlūk sources that the resultant riots intensified after 1508. The first event occurred in February when the *Julbān* demanded a bonus of one hundred *Dīnārs*. The sulṭān's reluctance to grant the bonus caused them to revolt and the rebellion continued for three days with the Citadel being closed and no amīr able to visit the palace (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 4:127).

In April-May 1510, several units of *Julbān* attacked civilians with stones. They crowded the streets of Cairo, many shops were plundered and they stole the goods sold in several markets such as Sūq Jāmi' Ibn Ṭūlūn, Sūq al-Ṣalība and Sūq taḥt al-Rub'. This happened because their rations were delayed and Sulṭān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī could not pay their *Nafaqa* on time. It is reported that in March 1511, the *Julbān* again created havoc by pillaging animals (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 4:177-178,207).

2. The *Julbān* confiscation of merchant goods and the closure of shops and markets

The reign of Sulṭān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy witnessed considerable disruption by his *Julbān* for almost every year of his reign. In 1474, the *Julbān* created such chaos that the merchants were forced to stop their businesses and the shopkeepers had to close their shops and stalls. The disturbances caused by the *Julbān* became widespread because nobody was able to stop them. In 1482, they freely took what they wanted from markets and stores. Similar events happened in 1486, 1489 and 1492. Ibn Iyās (1963, 3:96,197,233,322) reports that the markets and bazaars were closed in expectation of looting. At the end of Sulṭān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy's reign, the situation worsened and the merchants were frequently afraid to conduct their businesses. This necessarily caused an interruption in normal economic activities.

During the reign of Sulṭān al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qāyṭbāy, the *Julbān* are also reported to have disrupted the economy by stealing clothes from shops and goods from the markets. Examples of these events can be seen in the years 1496 and 1498. Ibn Iyās (1963, 3:349,400,463) states that Sulṭān al-Nāṣir Muḥammad could do nothing to get the situation under control. Sometimes, however, he is said to have extorted money by whipping and torturing to meet the demands of his *Julbān*. Sulṭān al-Ashraf Jānbalāṭ is also reported to have confiscated property belonging to magnates, merchants, Jews, Copts and others in order to cover his *Julbān* expenses.

In a more serious case, in August-September 1506, one of the *Julbān* robbed a Greek merchant who was under the sultanate's protection and Sulṭān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī was forced to take action by banishing him (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 4:98).

Property belonging to the sulṭān also did not escape the misdeeds of the *Julbān*. In September-November 1511, a group of *Julbān* misappropriated barley stored in the royal granary. On another occasion in February-March 1513, livestock became difficult to obtain because the *Julbān* were seizing animals from the peasants. Other riots by the *Julbān* caused by a delay in provision of rations and *Nafaqa* are reported to have occurred in March-April 1514 and January-February 1515. On the latter occasion, the Ṣalība

markets were pillaged and the sultān threatened to abdicate if the demands for payment were not dropped. Although the stockmen and merchants experienced considerable losses the sultān rejected their claims for compensation (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 4:241,368,430-431,466).

The activities of the *Julbān* not only affected Egypt but other places as well. In January-February 1515, a group of *Mamālīk al-sultāniyya* garrisoned in Aleppo to monitor Sultān Salīm's acts, assaulted the local populace and their houses, pillaged their clothing, violated their harems, plundered their markets, and seized their goods. As a result, Sultān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī ordered them to return so as to avoid a worsening situation. After 1515, while relations with the Ottomans were worsening, both *Julbān* and *Qarānīs*, seeing an opportunity for an increase in stipends, increased their disorderly behaviour. They caused riots several times in 1516 when they were ordered to take part in the military expedition against the Ottomans and they confiscated goods belonging to the merchants. Both the garment markets and wheat mills were closed and this disrupted the buying and selling of textiles and led to a scarcity of flour and bread. The shopkeepers, craftsmen and cloth makers are said to have gone into hiding out of fear of the *Julbān* (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 4:432,465,474).

3. The *Julbān*'s attacks on the civilians

Civilian vulnerability to crimes inflicted by troops may have been a ubiquitous aspect of Mamlūk oppression unaffected by the regime's incapacity to restrain them. For example, at the end of 1468, the *Wālī al-shurṭa* (the sultān's prefect of police) detained many of the *Julbān* and grooms who had been attacking civilians and tearing their turbans off (AV, 1). Three years later, when Sultān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy commanded the departure of an expedition against Shāh Suwār (the eighth ruler of the Dhū al-Ghādir dynasty), he warned the *Julbān* against 'striking any civilian', warning that whoever did so 'would be drawn and quartered without a hearing of his case' (al-Ṣayrafī, 1970, 193).

In July 1472, in order to maintain public safety, Sultān al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy ordered three *Julbān* to be beaten for public disruptions. The disturbances by the *Julbān* continued in January 1473 when some of them rebelled against Sharaf al-Dīn ibn Kaṭīb al-Gharīb, a Muslim of Coptic ancestry, who carried out duties of the vizierate and the major-domoship on behalf of the Amīr Yashbak. The *Julbān*, who were dissatisfied with him, marched to his house and damaged the front gate. Sharaf al-Dīn was afraid to face the angry mob and went into hiding (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 3:75,82)

A problem during Sultān Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's reign was similarly the threat from the *Julbān*. They demanded high wages and this pressure caused him to impose heavy taxes on merchants (AR, 1). The *Julbān* are also said to have freely pillaged the people's property and to have accumulated a lot of money from this activity (AR, 2). There are indeed many examples of the havoc created by them.

For example, in June 1516, one of the *Julbān* seized a donkey and a bag belonged to a peasant from Upper Egypt and killed him. However, there was no charge against him. Meanwhile in August-September 1516, the *Julbān* attacked the Anatolian merchants in

the Khān al-Khalīlī area. After the departure of the Mamlūk troops from Cairo to Syria on 18 May 1516 to encounter the Ottoman armies, the remaining *Julbān* in that city continued to cause trouble (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 5:50,82).

It is worth noting that the strife and struggle for power among the amīrs also affected the common people. For instance, the clash between Sulṭān al-Ashraf Sha‘bān and Amīr Yalbughā in 1368 and the battle between Amīr Barqūq and Birkat in 1379-1381 disrupted daily activities of the Cairo populace. The fights always took place in the city or its vicinity where many of the markets were situated. This led to the closing of stalls, shops and markets for a certain time until the situation became calm (al-Maqrīzī, 1972, 280,352). During the period under review, the same situation occurred frequently especially during the short reigns of incompetent sulṭāns such as al-Zāhir Qānṣūh, al-Ashraf Jānbalāṭ and al-‘Ādil Ṭūmānbāy (Ibn Iyās, 1963, 3:388,395,443,463).

From the above discussion, it is clear that the rulers were too weak to exercise control and supervision over their own Mamlūks and the resulting frequent disorders by the *Julbān* had an effect on the economy. In particular, the commercial activities of the merchants and shopkeepers were often severely disrupted and their plight was aggravated by the fact that the sulṭān also put pressure on them in order to fulfil the *Julbān*'s demands. Men of commerce were no more immune from the breakdown in public order plaguing the sultanate in its final decades than any other property holders. But the historians were well aware of the stymieing effect such seizures had on economic growth. None touted the empire's prosperity during these troubled times. If rebellion is examined as process, its frequency may be understood as the result of frustrated factional ambitions and the regime's failure at maintaining the standard of living the elite expected as a right of caste (Petry, 1994, 78,88).

CONCLUSION

The last fifty years of the Mamlūk sultanate witnessed developments in the regime's internal situation which affected the Egyptian economy. One of these developments was the increasing chaos and havoc caused by the *Julbān*, and they are frequently connected to reports of disruption of the economic activities. They showed little discipline and respect for their masters and caused various problems in society. Among the reasons that caused them to revolt were factional ambitions and the regime's failure to meet their demands. Meanwhile, in addition to there being no compensation for those who suffered losses because of the *Julbān*'s misdeeds, the sulṭān had to put pressure on the populace to cover the expenses of the *Julbān*. In this situation, economic activities could hardly run smoothly.

GOSPODARSKE POSLEDICE JULBANSKIH IZGREDOV V OBDOBJU
MAMELUKOV (1468–1517)*Wan Kamal MUJANI*

University Kebangsaan Malaysia, Institute of West Asian Studies (IKRAB)

43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

e-mail: inamal@yahoo.com / inawan@ukm.my

POVZETEK

Nobena tema ni bila deležna obširnejše obravnave v kronikah poznejšega čerkeškega obdobja kot likvidnostni primanjkljaj režima vpričo nenehnih zahtev njegove vojske po zvišanju plač. Izgredi, do katerih je prihajalo skozi celotno obravnavano obdobje, so razkrili, kateri deli vojske so bili najbolj nagnjeni k nasilnemu vedenju, in kako ranljivo je bilo neoboroženo ljudstvo. Bolj kot je upadala sposobnost režima, da kaznuje samovoljo Julbanov in zadovolji njihovim težnjam, bolj je njihova predrznost in frustracija naraščala. Sultani so le neradi grajali njihovo nesramnost..

Izgredi in zmešnjave so bili zato pogosti. Zdi se, da so Julbani poskušali ustvariti politično nestabilnost s prekinitvijo toka gospodarskih aktivnosti in z napadi na civiliste. Upali so, da bodo s taktiko rušenja ekonomske stabilnosti prisilili sultane k izpolnitvi njihovih zahtev. Povsem jasno je, da julbanski nemiri niso pripeljali do popolnega propada mameluškega gospodarstva, temveč so samo zmotili dnevne gospodarske tokove in povzročili škodo tistim, ki so se ukvarjali s trgovskimi dejavnostmi. Nezadostni prihodki v državno blagajno pa so nezmožnost sultanov, da izplačajo Julbane, še povečali. Šlo je za dinamičen proces, ne zgolj za vzročno-posledičen odnos med sultani in Julbani.

Ključne besede: Mameluki, Julbani, izgredi, gospodarske posledice, trgovina

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