Popular Movements and Jaqmaq, the Less Paternalistic Sultan

Some Aspects of Conflict in the Egyptian Cities, 1449-52

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I. Introduction

Boaz Shoshan’s works about “grain riots” in Mamluk Cairo appear to be the most inventive studies on the theme of popular movements and the political culture of Arab cities in the Islamic Middle Period. But it is still controvertible whether his adoption of E. P. Thompson’s well-known theoretical model, extracted from eighteenth-century English society, which basically sets “the moral economy” that took root in the folkways of the local community against “the political economy” of growing capitalism, is really suitable for interpreting such popular movements in Mamluk Cairo, unrivaled commercial center of the medieval Middle East. As for the three main actors of those conflicts, that is, military and political elites of “the Mamluk mercantile state,” Egyptian grain dealers, and the Cairene people who made their living in the developed money economy, they were...
all considerably mercenary in the medieval sense. So we should instead pay more attention to such dimensions of urban commercial culture as bargaining (fiṣāl) and negotiation, to better understand the social struggles over price and distribution of food. It goes without saying, however, that Shoshan's viewpoint is in the forefront of studies on the social history of the medieval Middle East, as he attaches importance to the interactions between people and the Mamluk regime over economic problems and regards the ordinary people as significant actors in the market economy and politics of medieval Cairo. It is noteworthy, moreover, that he considers the people's expectations about the political role of ruler as a significant factor in such protests.

In Mamluk Cairo, the popular actions whose main issue was the rise in grain prices or temporary shortages of bread and food began to occur frequently, not from the 1350s just after the first pandemic of the plague as Shoshan suggests\(^{(3)}\) but from the 1370s onward. According to the extant Arabic chronicles written in Cairo, they happened sporadically until the reign of Sultan al-Ghawrī in the early sixteenth century, though their frequency changed from time to time.\(^{(4)}\) On the basis of pioneering works, we should now move into the next stage: this long period of more than 140 years should be divided, by the reigns of sultans at least, for examining more clearly in the context of changing political culture and social mood the actual conditions and meaning of each popular protest or other behavior of urban inhabitants and the countermeasures of government. And although Shoshan notes that "Paternalism in medieval Cairo generally remained intact,"\(^{(5)}\) those Circassian sultans who faced the popular demands and protests about high prices or food problems practiced a rich diversity of responses and attitudes. Some sultans were truly paternalistic, but others behaved less protectively or were distinctly oppressive.

This paper focuses on popular movements and the respondent measures taken by political authority in the Egyptian cities during the reign of Sultan al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq (1438-53), especially in the closing years, a period of high prices whose duration and substantial increases were exceptional in the whole Mamluk period.\(^{(6)}\) By scrutinizing events in such a restricted period and trying to reconstruct a "micro history" from the contemporary Arabic sources, we can reveal some uncommon types of social protests, the political functions of "popular" religious leaders such as local preachers and holy men during economic conflicts, and features of Sultan Jaqmaq's rule as indicated in the response to economic demands and political actions of urban people. Although the general character of descriptions in the contemporary Arabic chronicles and other primary sources force us to chose Cairo, metropolis of the Mamluk Sultanate, as the main place of our investigation, for this period we can also keep a careful watch over a provincial city of the Nile Delta, al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā, with the unusual aid of Tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk written by al-Sakhāwī.
(1427-97). (7) Because we still know little about popular movements and the political culture in medieval Egyptian provincial towns, in comparison with the higher standard of studies on metropolitan popular movements under the Mamluks, it seems worthwhile to try to bridge the gap. (8)

II. The Joint Struggle of “Two Sheep” in Cairo

In May 1449, the grain price in Cairo started to rise. After about two years, in February 1451, the price of wheat (qamh) climbed to its highest level, 1500 dirham min al-fulūs (d.f., the copper currency of account) per 1 irdabb. The three years from the spring of 1449 to that of 1452 were therefore an unusual period of large price increases, as indicated in Table 1. (9) Also, just before the beginning of this economic difficulty, the plague (tā‘ūn) had spread in Egypt, and more than one thousand lives a day had been lost in Cairo in March and April of 1449. (10) Al-Sakhawī, the chronicler, mentions a contemporary view that correlated the outbreak of plague and subsequent rise in food prices with the death of an Iranian alchemist named Asad al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Kīmāwī al-`Ajamī. Sentenced to death after verification of his zandaqa (irreligion) by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Diyaṣṭī, the Mālikī judge, Asad al-Dīn was finally executed at the al-Ṣālihiyya al-Najmiyya madrasa (located at the heart of al-Qāhira), surrounded by a large number of people (‘awāmm) and rabble (ghawghā) who were staring at him. (11) Although Ibn Taghrī Birdī also gives an account of this view that disasters (āfāt) like an epidemic (wabā‘), a rise in prices (ghalā‘), and drought (sharāqī) arose from this execution, on the other hand, pointing out Asad al-Dīn’s scandal in Iran, he appreciated the execution as “the biggest public interest (min akbar al-maṣāliḥ)” and looked negatively on superstitious explanations of these disasters. (12) The al-Sakhawī account informs us that the initiative of execution was not seized by the above-mentioned judge but by Sultan al-Ẓāhir Jaqmaq, who at first had taken Asad al-Dīn under his wing but then changed his mind and arrested the alchemist in August 1448. (13) It is thus likely that Cairenes who attributed the calamities to the death of Asad al-Dīn had a feeling that the sultan should be blamed for this critical situation, which in their eyes sprang from his mistake as putting to death a person who might have supernatural power.

In June 1449, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Iskandar (instead of Ibn Āqbars) was appointed market inspector of Cairo (muhtasib al-Qāhira) by the mediation of (bi-sifārat) Abū al-Khayr al-Naḥḥās, or by means of Abū al-Khayr’s bribery (’alā māl badhī-ḥu). (14) Abū al-Khayr, who had been the boss of ‘Alī ibn Iskandar, now controlled an office that played a
key part in the economic policy of the Metropolis. Abū al-Khayr was born in Cairo in 1412, the son of a coppersmith. While receiving training for this occupation, he studied in Cairo and Aleppo. In April 1446, taking advantage of submitting a report concerning a case of debt trouble, he became closer to Sultan Jaqmaq. After that, appointed by the sultan to such important offices as supervisor (nāzir) of the al-Ṣalāḥiyya khānqāh, nāzir al-jawāli, and supervisor of the al-Mansūrī hospital, he increased his power dramatically in the pivot of the Jaqmaq Government.(15)

In this summer, as the Nile’s rise frequently stopped and its level changed irregularly, the people of Cairo felt uneasy. The ordinary people (‘āmma) rushed to stores “in accordance with their custom (jaryan ‘alā ‘ādat-hum)”, and some of them snatched loaves of bread from bakeries (afīrān) and shops (dakūkín).(16) On 19 August/27 Misrā of the Coptic calendar, the Nile reached “the full level (wağā)” equivalent to 16 dhīrā’, whereupon the ritual of “perfuming (takhliq)” in the Nilometer at al-Rawḍa island and opening of the Miṣrī canal (fath al-Khali`i) were performed as usual, and then people celebrated the festival with joy. Although the Nile’s rise did not stop after that, the price of wheat went up beyond 400 d.f. per 1 irdabb.(17) According to Tibr, the ordinary people (awāmm) considered the above-mentioned ‘Alī ibn Iskandar the muḥtasib as a ringleader of the rise in prices. Their aversion to him also rose because this market inspector had a policy of controlling the distribution of wheat by, for example, forbidding sales to retailers without his permission. Although he even beat buyers who got wheat from sellers without this permission, he himself was buying wheat speculatively.(18)

On 29 Rajab 853/Thursday 17 September, the discontent of the Cairenes exploded in a disturbance in the old walled district of al-Qāhira and near the Citadel of Cairo. The process of the event can be reconstructed in detail, based on accounts by Ibn Taghrī Birdī and al-Sakhāwī. According to the former, the disturbance began as follows:

In the streets of Cairo from the inside of al-Zuwayla Gate to the foot of the Citadel, the ordinary people (‘āmma) asked for help, uttered the cry for insulting and scolding, and made a protest while they threatened to murder and kill him (‘Alī ibn Iskandar). But nobody understood what the protesters said, due to the intensity of uproar (ghawghā’).(19)

Al-Sakhāwī adds that they were praying to God. Then when ‘Alī ibn Iskandar, “who was subordinate to al-Naḥḥās (Abū al-Khayr),” turned up, the people kept on blaming and stoning, and ran after him from Bāb al-Zuwayla to one of gates of the Citadel, continuing to criticize his youthful follies and his collusion with Abū al-Khayr. Even after ‘Alī ibn Iskandar

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got into the Citadel, people would not stop protesting in the streets.\(^{(20)}\) Also, al-Sakhāwī makes clear that the purpose of hurling the stones was "his (‘Alī b. Iskandar’s) burial" and uses expressions like "the stoning was about to make a hole in his rib."\(^{(21)}\) This means that in this case the people stoned him not with highly theatrical gestures to persuade the sultan to dismiss the muḥtāsib by representing clearly their disapproval, just like many other cases of such popular action in the Circassian Mamluk period, but instead did it in a genuine towering rage. In other words, on this issue they would not try to negotiate with the sultan.\(^{(22)}\)

Then, as the two chroniclers describe, the mamluk soldiers came onstage. According to Ḥawādīth, these new participants were "a large group of mamluks of the sultan (al-mamlāk al-sulṭānīyya)," and al-Sakhāwī uses the Arabic term "ṣa‘ālīk (beggars or the destitute)" to identify the ones that these mamluks supported.\(^{(23)}\) In this second phase, urban people from the economically lower stratum apparently played an important part in cooperation with julbān (the mamluks of the ruling sultan). Then they waited for the passage of Abū al-Khayr, the manipulator of the market inspector. Abū al-Khayr, who got information on the disturbance from his friend, after going on horseback beyond the old walled district of al-Qāhira made a detour to the al-Wazīr gate to enter the Citadel of Cairo. Sensing the device of Abū al-Khayr, the mamluks and people caught up with him and hit him with maces (dabābis).\(^{(24)}\) This attack was presumably done by mamluks because the mace was one of their arms.\(^{(25)}\) Abū al-Khayr now abandoned his attempt to go up to the Citadel and tried to make his escape toward the district of al-Qāhira, crying. But his attackers did not relax their efforts to chase him. Ibn Taghrī Birdī tells us details of his flight in the Metropolis. Running away on horseback, Abū al-Khayr somehow managed to arrive at the al-Āṣlam Mosque near the sheep market of al-Maḥrūq gate. There, however, he suffered an attack on his head, was dragged down from his horse, and had his turban taken off. The direct attacker at this moment was "a black slave ('abd aswad)" whom the chronicler regards as "a person among the people (shakhṣ min al-‘āmma)". Abū al-Khayr stood up and took refuge in the residence of Amīr Aslam. At that time, one of sultan’s mamluks called Yashbak dwelled there. He was forced into a tight corner by Abū al-Khayr. Mamluks and the people entered this residence, hit Abū al-Khayr, stripped off his clothes and shoes, and even looted there. Then, getting over the wall of the residence, Abū al-Khayr ran desperately to get away from his attackers, but they followed him tenaciously until the wālī al-Qāhira Jānībak sheltered him on the instruction of Sultan Jaqmaq. Even then, when brought to the house of Tamurbūghā al-dawādār al-thānī for the sake of his security, an enfeebled Abū al-Khayr was the target of the people’s thundering criticism, mainly concerned with his former penury and low position before currying favor with
Jaqmaq.\(^{(26)}\)

Just as Ibn Taghrī Birdī judges this disturbance to be “a strange event (\textit{waqīa} \textit{gharība}),”\(^{(27)}\) it should be regarded as unique among the many popular movements triggered by high prices in Mamluk Cairo. Its peculiarity was due to the joint struggle of \textit{julbān} and the urban people, whose daily relationship was antagonistic rather than harmonious.\(^{(28)}\) The people, who were dissatisfied with the unjust and self-seeking attitude of a market inspector toward the grain market, understandably chose to take direct action against him, and then against his ambitious supporter Abū al-Khayr, who had been an ordinary artisan of Cairo and so could sympathize easily with the urban people. The nature of the attack on the latter, such as stripping off, should be interpreted as a humiliation of this upstart civilian, but the attack cannot be regarded as merely theatrical because he could have been killed unless \textit{wālī al-Qāhira} (the Superintendent General of the Metropolitan Police) arrived there.

How can we understand the participation of \textit{julbān} in this disturbance? The presupposition of this unusual development was the general trend that began during the reign of Barsbāy, including the deteriorating discipline and disobedience of \textit{julbān}, their demonstration to the sultan who was their \textit{ustādh} (master), and their riotous behaviors in the urban area.\(^{(29)}\) For example, in Safar 846/ June 1442, during the reign of Jaqmaq, \textit{mamālīk li-l-julbān} stood on the roofs of the barracks (\textit{atbāq}) in the Citadel of Cairo, threw stones from there, and on the next day plundered from the sultan’s treasury many goods, worth twenty thousand gold dīnār.\(^{(30)}\) During the years prior to the economic crisis, they took aim mainly at Zayn al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Ashqar, who was an \textit{ustādār kabīr} (majordomo).\(^{(31)}\) In Sha’ban 850/ November 1446, in the al-Rumayla square at the foot of the Citadel, \textit{al-mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya al-a’jlāb} attacked Yaḥyā al-Ashqar with their \textit{dabābis} (as in the case mentioned earlier) and pulled him down from his horse.\(^{(32)}\) Moreover, in Ramadān 852/ November 1448, on the day following the setting up of the new mosque by Yaḥyā al-Ashqar along the Nile at Būlāq, \textit{al-mamālīk al-julbān} looted this majordomo’s residence. After some days, they also assaulted people (\textit{‘awāmm}) who were decorating the streets for the prize-winning of Yaḥyā al-Ashqar, even killing some citizens.\(^{(33)}\) Their attack on Abū al-Khayr, siding with the people of Cairo, should therefore be assessed in the context of those disorders caused by them. We should also note that the main target for the mamluks was not the market inspector ‘Alī ibn Iskandar but Abū al-Khayr, who was not a mamluk soldier but a high civil official like the above-mentioned Yaḥyā al-Ashqar. Ibn Taghrī Birdī sums up as follows:

But he (Jaqmaq) could only fall silent. Because mamluks and the people were all
united into one word in regard to this event. So this day is one of the well-known
days. And I have never seen and heard such event like this. (34)

And al-Sakhawī states:

Two sheep (i.e. mamluks and the people) did not quarrel in this event. And Two
groups, Turks and the people (‘awāmm) did not disputed. So the sultan concealed
his anger. (35)

Eventually, on 2 Sha‘bān 853/ 20 September 1449, ‘Alī ibn Iskandar was dismissed
from the office of muhtasib al-Qāhira and Yaḥyā al-Ashqar al-Ustādār took his place on an
emergency basis. (36) These accounts by chroniclers indicate that the riotous julbān’s par-
ticipation in the social movement contributed to getting the silent approval of this irascible
sultan. In other words, if the Cairenes had attacked the officials as mentioned above with-
out the backup of the mamluks, Jaqmaq might have cracked down on them severely, in
view of the collusive relationship between the sultan and Abū al-Khayr at that time. In this
connection, we should take into consideration another popular movement that occurred
during the reign of this sultan.

In Damascus, the second largest city of the Mamluk Sultanate, on 9 Ramaḍān 843/
13 February 1440, when governor of Damascus Amīr Julbān was marching in a ceremonial
parade (mawkiḥ) in the city on Saturday according to custom, the people (‘āmma) made a
protest and demanded of him a relief measure for the doubled price of meat. (37) Ibn Ḥajar
relates in his chronicle that the governor’s bardār ‘Abd al-Razzāq cornered the market
(iḥṭakara) in meat. (38) But the governor not only refused to give ear to the people’s claims
but also ordered his own mamluks to beat them. Taking the initiative, however, crowds of
people aimed stones at the governor and his group. The governor ran back to his palace,
Dār al-Sa‘āda, shut the gates, had his military band play, lighted a fire, and began to draft
with amirs and judges a written report (maḥdar) on the people’s protest to send to Sultan
Jaqmaq in Cairo. On 22 Ramaḍān/ 26 February, receiving this report, Jaqmaq “was infuri-
ated at the people of Damascus”, called together amirs and Chief Judges, and ordered the
report read in their presence. At that time, Chief Shāﬁ‘ī Judge Ibne Ḥajar and Chief Ḥanbali
Judge Aḥmad al-Baghdādī aroused the sultan’s anger by arriving late, perhaps intentional-
ly. Then Jaqmaq counted off “the sins of the Damascene people” and made up his mind to
punish them severely. (39) Asked by amirs again and again to forgive them, eventually
Jaqmaq only gave the governor, Julbān, some goods in his honor and sent to Damascus
the edict in which the sultan censured and threatened the people. (40)
In this case, the response was characteristic of this sultan when facing the protests of urban people that did not deviate from their habitual manner. Jaqmaq's attitude toward the people's protests, that is, to promptly resort to violent oppression, differed from that of early Circassian sultans like his master al-Ẓāhir Barqūq (1382-89,90-99) and his senior al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (1412-21), both of whom attached (or behaved as if he attached) importance to dialogue between the ruler and the ruled, giving his ear to the popular demands.\(^{(41)}\)

### III. A Popular Uprising in al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā

The above-mentioned Zayn al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Ashqar was born in Cairo at the beginning of the fifteenth century.\(^{(42)}\) Starting his career as a scribe who worked in the Mamluk government, Yaḥyā al-Ashqar skillfully advanced to the high position of ustādār. This important post was his ten times, in the years between 1440 and 1467. Like a number of civil government officials in this period, by turns he accumulated wealth and had it confiscated during the reigns of sultans from Jaqmaq to Qāytbāy; he was finally put to death under the torture in the Citadel. One of his nisbas (names denoting origin) was "al-Qibṭi", indicating that either he or his ancestors were converted from the Coptic Church to Islam. Judging from his known full name, it appears likely that his father, 'Abd al-Razzāq, was a convert. The biographer portrayed Yaḥyā al-Ashqar as a fair man who had blue eyes. He was known as generous, holding grand banquets and striving for poor relief during the time of high prices. He had his residence in the Bayna al-Ṣūrayn area of Cairo and erected many public buildings such as mosque, madrasa, sabil-kuttāb, and ḥammām. He also built a convent (ribāṭ) for a Sufi sheikh in Cairo. To understand the implication of his so lively and out of the ordinary building and charitable activities, perhaps it is necessary to take into account his insecure social position as a high ranking civil official who was born into a recently converted family.

In September 1449, at the critical moment when protesting movements of people and mamluks flared up as mentioned above, Yaḥyā al-Ashqar al-Ustādār held a concurrent post of muḥtasib al-Qāhira as an extraordinary measure and was ordered to end this crisis. A scholar named Tāj al-Dīn al-Ikhmīmī acted as his assistant.\(^{(43)}\) According to al-Sakhawī's account, the people ('āmma) were pleased with the appointment of Yaḥyā al-Ashqar to the office of market inspector, on the grounds that he didn't buy this profitable post.\(^{(44)}\) According to Ibn Taghri Birdī, however, there was another reason for this favorable expectation about him. People were delighted because Yaḥyā al-Ashqar gave them notice
on the day before his installation that the wheat would be sold at the good price of 1 ḏīnār
per 1 irdabī. After taking up his post, he began to sell wheat without quantitative limit from
his own granary at Būlaq, but his measure fell short of people’s expectation, as the selling
price was about 500 d.f., almost the same as the current market price in Cairo.\(^\text{(45)}\) Then,
probably because he perceived the disappointment of people, three days later it was pro-
claimed that an illegal tax (maẓālim) previously established would be abolished.\(^\text{(46)}\)

In Dhū al-Qa‘da 853/ January 1450, in the economic situation of a continuous rise in
prices, Amīr Jānībāk al-Yashbakī wālī al-Qāhirah was appointed as muḥtasib al-Qāhirah in
place of Yaḥyā al-Ashqar.\(^\text{(47)}\) Now the Superintendent General of the Metropolitan Police
held an additional post as market inspector of Cairo. This change should be interpreted as
Jaqmaq’s measure for suppressing by force the increasing economic dissatisfaction of his
subjects. In March, however, as if people had resisted such a maneuver of political authori-
ty, there occurred a visit (ziyāra) to a living mu’taqad (holy man) who was opposed to the
regime of Jaqmaq in Cairo. A large number of the Cairenes, especially women, the handi-
capped, and sick persons, gathered round this popular venerated person who was an
emancipated slave from Sudan. His name was Sa’dān and he lived in the Bāb al-Khalq area
of Cairo. Although Jaqmaq ordered him put to death at first, he had to commute this to
banishment from Cairo instead, mainly owing to the ardent support of crowds. It draws our
special attention that at the first stage of this conflict Yaḥyā al-Ashqar had been trying to
forfeit the property left by Amīr Zayn al-Dīn Qāsim, who had been the kāshif (superinten-
dent) of Upper Egypt and who died on January 1450. Sa’dān opposed this forfeit, resisting
the confiscation of his former master Amīr Qāsim’s estates by the sultan’s household.\(^\text{(48)}\)
So it was plausible to suppose that this event, which resulted in the banishment of the re-
putable mu’taqad, changed the social image of Yaḥyā al-Ashqar for the worse. The major-
domo then became the central figure standing against a local popular revolt that broke out
in the autumn of this year.

After an inadequate rising of the Nile river that summer, with a lack of irrigation
throughout the Egyptian countryside and a jump in the prices of staple foods such as
wheat and fava beans (fūl), on 25 Ramadan 854/ 1 November 1450 a serious popular upris-
ing occurred in al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā, provincial capital of al-Gharbiyya.

According to Ibn Duqmāq (d. 1407), this town of the Nile Delta was a large city
(madīna kabīra) that had some mosques, madrasas, and equipment for inter-regional
trades and handicrafts (aswāq, qayāṣir, bazzāzin, fanādiq).\(^\text{(49)}\) Ibn Baṭṭīṭa, who traveled
through this city in 1326, states that its buildings are excellent, and it has a large popula-
tion and many admirable characteristics.\(^\text{(50)}\) We have no medieval statistical data on
medieval al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā. ‘Alī Mubārak, the famous compiler of al-Khiṭaṭ al-jadīda,
describes this city in the latter half of the 19th century as having about 50,000 inhabitants, 43 mosques, 7 zāwiyan (Sufi convents), many ḍarīhs (mausoleums), an old Coptic church, and a synagogue. Of the above-mentioned 43 mosques, at least 28 had existed in the 15th century. If the number of mosques was in proportion to the population (although this is purely speculation), roughly 30,000 inhabitants would have lived in al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā under the Circassian Mamluks.

No other contemporary sources give us the Cairene scholar al-Sakhāwī’s remarkably minute information on the uprising of November 1450 in al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā. This unusual attention to a local event seems to have been caused by the fact that his grandfather Muḥammad came from al-Sakhā’, a town of the same al-Gharbiyya province and near al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā. Therefore al-Sakhāwī could get vivid information about this disturbance by means of the networks of his relatives or acquaintances linking between Cairo and al-Gharbiyya. He states in Tibr:

In those days of drought, when the żulm (injustice) of the above-mentioned man, his interference in the foods and other things, and his appearance in the ugly affairs had increased, the ordinary people (ānma) got unable to forgive such his acts.

The name of “the above-mentioned man” is given as Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad. He was a half-brother of Yaḥyā al-Ašqar with the same mother, Zaynab (?), a sister of Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Faraj, who was a inspector of the army (nāzir al-jaysh) and belonged to the distinguished Armenian civilian family Banū Abī al-Faraj. The official position of this Aḥmad in the society of al-Maḥalla is not mentioned at all by al-Sakhāwī. Given, however, that the ordinary people of al-Maḥalla had felt his żulm, and this Arabic term was usually used for expressing the injustice of rulers and administrators, it seems certain that Aḥmad was one of the government civil officials of this city. We cannot know from the Arabic sources the name of the governor (wālī) of al-Gharbiyya at this critical moment. It is likely that Aḥmad himself may have been the wālī, because the normal measure taken by the provincial governor against disorder in the town was, strangely, not enforced at all in this case. We can say, however, that this uprising was caused by the people’s indignation about the injustice of Aḥmad, and we take notice of his unfair interference with the food supply of al-Maḥalla town in the time of high prices. It was not only an anti-żulm popular revolt but also the disturbance, one of whose issues was the distribution of food. The first stage of the uprising is described as follows:

Al-Shaykh al-Wāʾīz Waliy al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-
Raḥmān al-Maḥallī, who was a father of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, son-in-law of al-Ghamrī, turned toward Allāh the Sublime after reciting [al-Šāhīḥ of] al-Bukhārī in the Friday mosque (jāmī'), asked Him for help, and prayed for the victory over the tyrants (ṣulama) and afore-mentioned one of them (i.e. Aḥmad) for the sake of the God. And those participating in it got excited, raised their voices for curse against him (duʿā' 'alay-hi) and ascended on pulpits. Then they exclaimed Allāh Akbar (kabbarū) and manifested [their intention].

Al-Sakhāwī portrays Aḥmad al-Maḥallī, who was a preacher (wāʾiz) and related by marriage to Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Ghamrī (the charismatic popular holy man) as a leader of this turmoil. (57) The chronicler gives this account of the people's following actions:

Then they went down and bent their steps toward him (Aḥmad) at Ṣadafā, the place of his residence. And rabble (ghaughā') and people whom no one but the God could count had already followed after them. After their robbing him indescribably, they pulled out him from his house, struck him excessively, made his head bleed, and took him along to the Friday mosque of al-Maḥalla. He was walking naked only covering his waist. (58)

Ahmad's residence was located at Ṣadafā (Ṣandafā), the southern district of al-Maḥalla. Humiliated and accompanied by the crowd, he arrived at one of the Friday mosques in al-Maḥalla city. Regarded as a ẓālim (tyrant), he was then struck on the head and killed. (59) In comparison with the many food disturbances in Cairo under the Circassian Mamluks, in which administrators like muhtasibs were often jeered or stoned by the crowd but never killed, this case in a provincial capital appears peculiar. It reminds us, however, about the case of Damascus in 1397, in which Ibn al-Nashū was killed and burned by furious Damascene people at al-Mizza in the suburbs of Damascus, where a rain-making ritual (istisqā') was taking place on a large scale at the time of famine (qaḥṭ). He was a simsār (broker) of this metropolitan city, and after being installed as the supervisor of the urban market, he had been controlling the grain supply of this capital of Bilād al-Shām unjustly, like Aḥmad. (60)

Immediately upon learning about the murder of his brother, Yaḥyā al-Ashqar al-Ustādār dispatched his subordinates from Cairo to al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā. Then a group of inhabitants of al-Maḥalla (jamā'a min ahl al-Maḥalla) were arrested. Some were beaten and others escaped from the suppression. (61) As for Yaḥyā al-Ashqar's troops, these must
have included many mamluks, because the chronicler al-Jawharī states that he had two hundred and fifty mamluks at one time in spite of his scribal (kāṭīb) origin.\(^{(62)}\) The arrested rebels arrived at Cairo on Saturday 8 Shawwāl/ 14 November. Yaḥyā al-Ashqar went out to Shubrā village in the northern suburbs of Cairo to meet them, and some were flogged there by his order. He forced approximately ten arrested men, including the above-mentioned preacher al-Mahallī, a certain al-Badr ibn Mujāhid, and 'Abd al-Ghanī ibn Qutwā (?) to ride on the camels, horses and donkeys. To watch their passing through the Metropolis, Cairenes rushed to Qanṭara al-Ḥājib and the southern district of Bāb al-Zuwayla. Al-Sakhāwī says,

They (i.e., the Cairene people) felt pain from their (i.e., the rebels') cause and publicized [their feelings] by insulting and cursing of al-Ustdār [Yaḥyā al-Ashqar]. Therefore, he (Yaḥyā al-Ashqar) felt anxious about himself and on Sunday [al-Shawwāl] 9, did not go up to the Citadel [of Cairo].\(^{(63)}\)

Fearing both imminent stoning by the people who felt sympathy for the rebels of al-Maḥalla and attacks by urban military groups such as urban watchmen (harasiyya), gangs (zuʿr), and mamluks, as well as being confronted with the people's calling down divine vengeance upon the brother of a local tyrant on the occasion of his going out, Yaḥyā al-Ashqar had no choice but to seek help from the power of the sultan. But Sultan Jaqmaq's first measure corresponding to the people's anti-żilm actions was impulsive, to all appearances. Jaqmaq became furious and desired to ride on a horse with the object of putting down the ordinary people (awāmm). Before doing so, he requested the fatwā (legal opinion) from the judges in order to justify his suppression. This request was turned down, however, so the sultan unwillingly restricted himself to only issuing the proclamation that prohibited citizens from carrying weapons and stoning.\(^{(64)}\)

As for the arrested people of al-Maḥalla, after the trial by Chief Shāfiʿi Judge, some of them were sent to the wāli al-Qāhira. After punished with taʾzīr penalty, they were jailed. But about one month later, on 8 Dhū al-Qaʿda / 13 December, all of them were liberated through a ṣafāʿa (intercession) to the sultan from al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Shaykh ʿUmar al-Ṭuraynī.\(^{(65)}\) Our chronicler al-Sakhāwī, who was treated by this religious leader as a guest, states in the short biographical sketch of this sheikh that he was a muṭaqad (holy venerated man) living in al-Mahalla al-Kubrā. Muḥammad al-Ṭuraynī died in 1457 and was buried beside the tombs of his father and younger brother.\(^{(66)}\) The father, Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad (d. 1400), was a Mālikī scholar and ascetic of this city,\(^{(67)}\) and the brother, Zayn al-Dīn Abū Bakr (d. 1424), was portrayed as a famous local
mu'taqad like him. This Abū Bakr al-Ṭuraynī, who was known as an ascetic and vegetarian farmer, frequented on foot the sacred tombs in the Nile Delta, such as those of the famous Ahmad al-Badawi and 'Umar ibn 'Isa al-Samannūdī. Al-Maqrizī relates in his short biography that his intercessions (shafā'āt) were not rejected.\(^{68}\) Therefore both of the al-Ṭuraynī brothers were living holy men of al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā and had respected powers to intercede with ruling Mamluk elites.

We have now followed the details and settlement of local popular revolt in a provincial town of the Nile Delta and the responses of the Jaqmaq Government in November 1450. Although valuable accounts can be found in al-Sakāhī’s chronicle, they unfortunately fall short of revealing to us what is in the hearts of people who made up their minds to take part in such decisive revolt. But we can think more about the character of this event by analyzing Sakhawi’s biographical account of Ahmad al-Maḥallī (d.1477), the prominent religious leader of this uprising. Al-Maḥallī was a preacher (wā‘iṣ or khaṭīb) who adhered Shāfī‘i law school. He pursued learning in his hometown al-Maḥalla and then in Cairo, studying on al-Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī under eminent scholars such as Ibn Hajar and al-‘Ālam al-Bulqīnī. Having accomplished the ḥajj pilgrimage a few times, he longed for a connection with a famous Sufi leader, Muḥammad al-Ghamrī (intimā’ li-al- Shaykh al-Ghamrī), and had his son marry al-Ghamrī’s daughter.\(^{69}\) According to al-Sakāhī, al-Maḥallī was sound but so inclined to consider “commanding right and forbidding wrong (al-amr bi-al-ma‘rūf wa-al-naḥy ‘an al-munkar)” as his principle that he came into conflict with inhabitants of al-Sibā‘, one of southern districts of Cairo. He insisted not only on destroying apartments (rubū‘) of al-Sibā‘ where many “girls of sin (banāt al-khaṭa‘)” lived, but also on prohibiting the use of slaves in this area because the inhabitants worked them too hard. His position did not gain general acceptance, and furthermore Sultan Jaqmaq had this puritan preacher forcibly admitted, as a mental patient, to al-Manṣūrī hospital in the center of al-Qāhirah district.\(^{70}\) It deserves special attention that al-Maḥallī, who was enthusiastic about social reform, had the bitter experience of clashing with Sultan Jaqmaq in the capital of the Mamluk Sultanate before he played an important part in the uprising of his home town. Taking this into consideration, it is easily understandable that al-Maḥallī agitated for and participated in the revolt against the unjust brother of Yaḥyā al-Ashqar who was the confidential majordomo of his opponent, the ruler Jaqmaq.

Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Ghamrī, related by marriage to al-Maḥallī, was one of the most eminent popular religious leaders of Egypt in the first half of the fifteenth century.\(^{71}\) Al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā and Cairo were the main stages for his activity as a Sufi sheikh and mu’taqad. According to Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, this sheikh attracted criticism from the scholars (ahl al-‘ilm) of Cairo when he set up his mosque at the heart of the market place
of Amīr al-Juyūsh Sūq. Ibn Ḥajar himself gave al-Ghamrī notice that the he should give up using the mosque for public prayer, but the sheikh did not give his ear to the legal advice of this preeminent Shāfi‘ī jurist of the age.\(^{72}\) After al-Ghamrī's death in November 1445, his Sufi order al-Ghamriyya did not stagnate but instead increased its influence, especially in the local society of the Nile Delta. In Rabī‘II 851/ June 1447, the opposition between a group of al-Ghamriyya (jamā‘a min al-Ghamriyya) and a group of Aḥmadiyya Sufis (jamā‘a min al-fuqarā‘ al-Aḥmadiyya) occurred due to a dispute over hosting the mawlid festival of the famous Aḥmad al-Badawī. Sultan Jaqmaq intervened in this dispute, supporting the al-Aḥmadiyya, and in the end punished some leaders of al-Ghamriyya.\(^{73}\) Keeping this phase of confrontation between Jaqmaq and al-Ghamriyya in perspective, we should consider the possibility that the leadership of al-Maḥallī in the al-Maḥalla uprising might have been owing in part to his close connection with the family of the founder of al-Ghamriyya, which had a strained relationship with this sultan.

While al-Ghamrī, al-Ghamriyya, and al-Maḥallī obviously tended to be opposed to Jaqmaq, another living holy man of al-Maḥalla, Muḥammad al-Ṭuraynī, appears to have maintained an amicable relationship with the sultan, and he succeeded in freeing the rebels from the jail. But the fact that al-Ṭuraynī made this intercession showed that his relationship with al-Maḥallī had been good, too. Thus, this case illustrates the political function of the private relationship between ruler and Muslim living holy man. Jaqmaq's decision to liberate the rebels suggests not only that his government admitted the fact of Aḥmad's tyranny to some degree, but also that local living saints had begun to increase their importance in the structure of cultural hegemony in the Mamluk Sultanate. In other words, in order to maintain political stability in the provincial towns of fifteenth-century Egypt, it became effective for the Mamluk sultan to form friendly terms and collaborate with local mu'taqads and Sufis.

From the viewpoint of comparative study on various food disturbances in the cities under the Mamluks, this furious and decisive uprising in al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā contrasted sharply with the usual Cairene popular movements triggered by high prices and characterized by dialogue or negotiation between the ruler and the ruled. This tendency toward becoming more violent and serious, as found in the popular protests of provincial towns, appears to have been conspicuous not only during the reign of Jaqmaq but in the Circassian Mamluk period generally. For example, an anti-zulm revolt occurred in Damietta in January 1418. In this case, fishermen called al-Samnāwiyya who lived in the villages (‘uzab) on the islands of Tinnīṣ (al-Manzala) Lake rose up against and killed Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Salākhūrī, tyrannous governor of this Mediterranean city.\(^{74}\) Were people living in provincial circumstances more obliged to resist by use of their own force
because of a remoteness from the sultan, who was expected by subjects to fill the role of realizing the ideal of 'adl (justice) and so held the *maṣālim* court for the sake of the ruled in the Citadel of Cairo. Did this phenomenon in the provincial cities result mainly from deterioration of the Mamluk Sultanate’s local administration in this period? We will be better able to answer these questions after more scrupulous and comprehensive studies on popular movements and local politics in the provincial towns under the Circassian Mamluks.

### IV. Famine, Other Protests, and Responses of Jaqmaq

In Şafar 855/ March 1451, a famine (*qaḥṭ*) began in Egypt and disease followed on its heels. In such a catastrophic situation, on Friday 19 Ṣādiq ‘I 855/ 21 May 1451, a venerable Sufi called Muḥammad al-Huwârî al-Safârî who lived in the ‘Amr Mosque of Fustat dispatched his two Sufis (*faqîrs*) to Yâr ‘Alî al-‘Ajamî al-Kharâsânî, who had been *muḥtasîb* *al-Qâhîra* instead of Jânîbâk al-Yashbakî since July 1450. Al-Safârî let them behave symbolically by bringing two sets of chains and collars (*bâsha*) to the market inspector. Then the leader of the two told al-Kharâsânî that their sheikh al-Safârî had also ordered him and his assistant (*nâ‘îb*) al-Qâdî ‘Izz al-Dîn to put those chains and collars on their necks. Hearing these words, al-Kharâsânî brought these two Sufis to the Citadel of Cairo and informed Sultan Jaqmaq what they said. The two Sufis, as well as a *dawâdâr* belonging to the *wâlî* of al-Fustât area who had shown them the way to al-Kharâsânî, were beaten. The two Sufis were then dragged around in Cairo and jailed in the al-Maqshara prison. Jaqmaq dispatched a *dawâdâr* belonging to afore-mentioned Amîr Jânîbâk in order to summon Shaykh al-Safârî. But the living holy man not only ignored the messenger and blamed Jaqmaq but even foretold the Sultan’s death on 21 Jumâdâ I. Nevertheless the saint himself died on 11 Jumâdâ I. According to Ibn Taghrî Birdî, in conversation with a Sufi, al-Safârî predicted his own death and the date that he really said was not 21 Jumâdâ I but 11.

In the obituary of al-Safârî, al-Sâkhâwî says that he was “the aim of the visit (*maqsûd al-ziyâra*)” and al-Sâkhâwî himself visited him. Through the afore-mentioned original action that implied punishing the sin of the market inspector, the holy man living in the marginal area of the Metropolis expressed his severe criticism of current misadministration by the market inspector as well as the Jaqmaq Government in the current extreme situation. Although the symbolic action that he invented appears to have had little substantial effect on the policy of the government, this strange type of protest in the time of a food cri-
sis reflected clearly the social role of the living saint as a spokesman of the people. How can we understand the fact that Jaqmaq could not (or would not) punish the mu'taqad for such an insulting attitude toward him? The reason seems to be that the sultan was concerned about “public opinion” in the capital of the Mamluk Sultanate or stood in awe of the supernatural power of living holy men, which was broadly believed in by the society.

In June 1451, Cairo fell into ruin and the number of the poor in this city became larger. The famine claimed many lives and many emigrants went from Egypt to Syria. Then, in the summer, due to the extension of famine (qahṭ) and high prices (ghalā’), Egypt was wholly devastated and many villages had no inhabitants. Therefore inhabitants of Cairo so rejoiced at the wafā’ (the level of 16 dhirda) of the Nile that they “perfumed with saffron each other.” But the shortage of food in this country was not easily solved. In the autumn the grain and meat continued to be so expensive that even dog meat was sold. The famine lasted and the number of needy increased extremely, though the rise of the Nile had been enough for irrigation.

Then in Dhū al-Qa‘da 855/ December 1451, the Cairenes tried to build another protest movement in the Metropolis. Al-Sakhāwī says:

In this month, when he (Jaqmaq) went down [from the Citadel] for the purpose of the [funeral] prayer for Ibn İnāl, people made a protest to the sultan and complained him about the extension of the high price. But he said to them, “Turn your faces toward Allāh for the sake of removing it (i.e., the high price).”

Ibn İnāl was one of the Amirs of a Hundred in Egypt, and his full name was Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Atābak İnāl al-Yūsufī. As he died on 27 Dhū al-Qa‘da /21 December 1451, this event occurred in Cairo toward the end of December. Jaqmaq’s discourse in front of the protesting people appears to have had the implication that he could do nothing because the Almighty caused the extending high price. Such an attitude may be interpreted that he selected the deliberate market policy of averting price control (tas’ir), which often led to an insufficient supply of goods. But in this phase, Jaqmaq not only avoided price control but also did not make efforts to take any emergency measures like urgent importation of food from abroad or restriction of putting food in dead storage (which we touch upon soon). Thus at that time the attitude of Jaqmaq was clearly taken by the people to mean that the sultan lacked a sense of responsibility. This was in marked contrast to the political attitude of Sultan al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh, who confronted skyrocketing prices in 1415 by proclaiming that the price was in the hand of Allāh yet simultaneously took positive countermeasures to improve the current distribution of grain in the coun-
try.\(^{(84)}\)

We will now take a general view of measures by the Jaqmaq Government against the high price and shortage of grain in the time of economic crisis from 1449 to 1452, and try to evaluate it. In this connection, we have no information concerning the price policy of Jaqmaq during another period of high prices in his reign, November 1439 to February 1440.\(^{(85)}\) But in August 1449, as mentioned above, the market inspector of al-Qāhira, ʿAlī ibn Iskandar, introduced the new system of licenses for selling wheat, which appeared to have a bad influence on the price, and in the next month, after large social protests, the majordomo Yahyā al-Ashqar who was installed as a market inspector took the measure of opening his own granary and selling from it probably a large quantity of wheat at the current market price. But this might have had a good effect solely on the current state of undersupply.

Then Yahyā al-Ashqar's granary at the port of Būlāq was opened again in Rajab 854/ August 1450. The course of events was as follows: In the situation of shortage of bread in Cairo, the market inspector al-Khurāsānī stationed guards at bakeries to prevent plundering. At this time, the mamluks of the sultan assaulted and looted the Nile river ships for the transportation of grain from Upper Egypt. As the possessors of grain (aššāb al-ghilāl) began to refrain from selling their grain for fear of such disorder, it became difficult to buy wheat. To deal with this situation, Jaqmaq sent the vice-commander of the sultan's mamluks (nāʿib muqaddam al-mamālīk al-sulṭāniyya), Amīr Marjān al-ʿĀdilī al-Maḥmūdī, to the point of al-Āthār al-Nabawīyya in the southern outskirts of al-Fuṣṭāt, and had him secure many river ships for the purpose of preventing the mamluks' attacks in the Nile. On the other hand, the sultan dispatched Amīr Azbak min Ṭuṭūkh al-Sāqī al-Ẓahirī, his mamluk and son-in-law, and Jānībak, who was wālī al-Qāhira, to the port of Būlāq for keeping guard over Yahyā al-Ashqar's granary. Then Jaqmaq let Yahyā al-Ashqar sell wheat from the granary at a low price of 600 d.f. per 1 irdāb. Fearing the plunder of the mamluks from his granary, Yahyā al-Ashqar consented to this measure that meant his outlay on the part of the sultan.\(^{(86)}\) Although to a certain degree it appears to have become easy to buy wheat by this measure, it is interpreted not as a countermeasure taken by the Jaqmaq Government after mature consideration of current social distress but rather as an incidental one for responding to the disorder brought about by unlawful julbān.

Then, facing the situation that the Nile did not rise well and the price of wheat had reached the extraordinary level of 1000 d.f. per 1 irdāb, mainly caused by the withholding of wheat from sale plus the social unrest, Jaqmaq dispatched Fāris al-Turkmānī to Cyprus that was a part of Bilād al-Fīrānj for importing the grain from there.\(^{(87)}\) The Kingdom of Cyprus had been a dependency of the Mamluk Sultanate after the ambitious expeditions...
carried out by al-Ashraf Barsbāy, and it paid the jīzā (poll tax) to Cairo.\(^{688}\) Although in this case Jaqmaq got a portion of the grain as the jīzā and bought the additional portion in cash, the buying price is not mentioned in contemporary sources and quite possibly the sultan beat the price down, taking advantage of his position as a king of the suzerain. Although we can only say that it is difficult to grasp the real situation of this emergency importation by Jaqmaq, it is supposed this importing from abroad could be managed for the purpose of storing provisions in the sultan’s granary.\(^{89}\)

After the above-mentioned famine started in Egypt, on 26 Safar 855/ 30 March 1451, Jaqmaq opened his granary (šūna) and sold wheat from it at the relatively low price of 1000 d.f. per 1 irdabb. The current market price was not clear but appears to have been close to 1500. People accepted this policy with cheers and the current market price of wheat fell to 800 d.f. or below.\(^{90}\) So this measure was rewarded with good results. We can suspect, however, that Jaqmaq could earn a profit from this measure if he bought the large quantity of wheat at an exceptionally low price from the Kingdom of Cyprus, which was in a dependent position to the Mamluks.

Remarkably, after this enforcement of selling the wheat from his own granary in March 1451, the sultan abandoned taking measures against the extending famine and the high prices, as is clearly demonstrated by his above-mentioned neglect of popular demand in December 1451.\(^{91}\) Why did he adopt such an irresponsible attitude toward the distressed people and a critical market situation? Didn’t he have enough economic power for lending a helping hand to the needy at that time? Was he too old to tackle such difficult problems? The Arabic sources don’t give us information for answering these questions completely. But we can state that Jaqmaq’s attitude caused al-Asadī, an unidentified intellectual, to write a warning treatise full of suggestions on the relief of people and reform of Mamluk economic policy. That al-Asadī emphasizes tenaciously the importance of ‘adl (justice) for the ruler in the fourth chapter of his work is due to his view that Jaqmaq was short of this virtue, indispensable for Muslim rulers.\(^{92}\)

As for the royal response to urban popular protests and demands, the rule of Jaqmaq was hardly one of paternalism. Unlike al-Zāhir Barqūq and al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh, he did not care much for dialogue with his subjects. His often irritable and intolerant ruling style was rather more analogous to that of his predecessor al-Ashraf Barsbāy (1422-38). In October 1425, this Circassian sultan, though estimated to have realized the “Indian Summer” of the Mamluk Sultanate, cracked down ruthlessly on popular protest movements and had the noses cut off of more than twenty men who were a part of the Cairene people dissatisfied with the existing high price of bread. The people had been complaining loudly in the streets of Cairo and hurled stones at the market inspector Badr al-Dīn
Maḥmūd al-ʿAynī, a judge and famous historian. Although their behavior appears not to have strayed out of habitual protests, the suppression was made, partly because the market inspector stood high in the sultan’s favor.\(^{(93)}\)

**Notes**


(3) Shoshan, “Grain Riots,” 462; Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 65-66. He did not, however, show concrete examples for “grain riots” that occurred in the 1350s and 1360s.


(8) For other contributions to the study of popular movements under the Mamluks see especially A. N. Poliak, “Les révoltes populaires en Égypte à l’époque des Mamelouks,” *Revue des Études*
Islamiques, 8(1934), 251-71; Ira M. Lapidus, Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages, Cambridge, 1967, 143-84.

For the inflation of 1449-52 see B. Shoshan, “Money Supply and Grain Prices in Fifteenth-Century Egypt,” The Economic History Review 36(1983), 58-9; Adam Sabra, Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250-1517, Cambridge, 2000, 158-61. Sabra rectifies the monetarist interpretation of Shoshan and underscores the importance of “real” factors like a low Nile and disease. As for “real” factors, I suppose the dead storage (khazn) for speculation from summer to winter is also important in this case, although the contemporary sources make little mention of it. On the speculative actions such as holding off selling grain in the summer of 1450 see Tibr (1896), 310-2; Ibn Taghrî Birdî, Hawâdîth al-duhûr fî madâ al-ayyâm wa-al-shuhûr, Cairo, 1990, 1:235. Al-Maqrîzî points out in his account of a rise in price in the summer of 1434 that a bad custom, found from “those events and trials (the catastrophe of 1403-4),” was that prices rose because the holders of grain, especially “persons of the dynasty (ahl al-dawla),” made a corner, held off selling, and circulated a false rumor (irjâf). This tendency in the grain market appears not to have improved during the reign of Jaqmaq. See Sulûk, 4:920.


Hawâdîth, 1:151.


Tibr (2002), 2:166-7; Hawâdîth, 1:162. Rushing to bakeries (zâhma, izdihâm) should be regarded as one of the significant forms of popular action since then the government often recognized the seriousness of the situation and sometimes came up with countermeasures.


Hawâdîth, 1:165-6.


It is noteworthy that muhtasibs stoned by people neither died nor were seriously injured. Rajm should be considered as a time-honored and symbolic action that means “the sanction against the evil.” For cases of rajm at market inspectors see, for example, Ibn al-Furât, Ta‘rîkh Ibn al-Furât, Beirut, 1936-42, 9:387, 459-60. Cairene people could use other devices for attack, but it seems that they dared to choose the customary and “just” way of hurling a stone. In May 1389,
on the occasion of the rebellion of Yalbughā al-Nāṣirī and Mintāš, the weapons used by the ordinary people to defend their hāras (urban quarters) were full of variety. See Ta'rīkh Ibn al-Furāt, 9:84.

24 Hawādīth, 1:166.
27 Hawādīth, 1:165.
34 Hawādīth, 1:168.
37 Sulūk, 4:1181.
38 Inbā’ al-ghumr, 4:143.
39 Sulūk, 4:1181-2.
40 Sulūk, 4:1182-3. A somewhat different account of this event can be found in Inbā’ al-ghumr, 4:143-4.
41 For such a ruling attitude of Sultan Barqūq see Ta'rīkh Ibn al-Furāt, 9:434, 439-40,459-60; Sulūk, 3:856, 859-60, 872,875; Inbā’ al-ghumr, 1:507-8; Badā‘i’, 1-part 2, 298. For al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh see below.
Hawādīth, 1:168.


Tibr (1896), 302; Hawādīth, 1:200-1; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, al-Nujūm al-zāhirā fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira, Cairo, 1929-72, 15:406-7. It is necessary to make a comprehensive and comparative study on two types of ziyāra, that is to say, a visit to the dead holy person and a visit to the living one. Mu'taqad is the term that means a venerated holy man, and that term has been overlooked despite its importance in the research on popular religion of the medieval and early modern Near East. For mu'taqad and the veneration of mu'taqad (i'tiqād) see Ibn Ḥajar al-ghumr, 1:296, 385, 405, 425, 426, 429, 442, 447, 477, 480, 481, 497, 501, 506, 534, 2: 29-30, 3: 448, 523, 528, 4: 28, 57, 77-8, 82, 222, 243; Ibn Ḥajar, Dhayl al-durar al-kāmina, Cairo, 1992, 64, 71, 72-3, 82, 90, 96, 106, 117, 118, 121, 131, 136, 137, 142, 147, 165, 166-7, 187, 196, 255, 261, 262, 267, 276-7, 316-7.

Ibn Duqmāq, al-Intīṣār li-wāsitat 'iqād al-amsār, Cairo, 1309-10/1891-3, 5:82.


Tibr (1896), 322.

Ibid.

Martel-Thoumian, Les civils et l'administration, 227-37. According to al-Sakhāwī, Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad was short, fat, and spendthrift. See Daw', 2:260; Tibr (1896), 328.

Wilāyat al-Gharbiyya was a post for amīr tabkhāna (Amir of Forty), and its importance was equal to that of the governorship of Qūṣ. See al-Qalqashandī, Ṣubḥ al-aṣhā bi-ṣīnā'at al-inshā', 1913-8, 4:66.


Tibr (1896), 322.

Ibid. For medieval Sandafā (Sandafā) see Yāqūt al-Rūmī, Mu'jam al-buldān, Beirut, 1979, 3:268.


Tibr (1896), 322.

Inbā' al-haṣr, 144.

Tibr (1896), 322. I have not been able to find the careers of any "leaders" except al-Maḥallī in
other sources.

Daw', 6:136. It seems that local inhabitants did not venerate 'Umar al-ţuraynī as a holy man during his lifetime.

Daw', 11:64-5; al-Maqrīzī, Durar al-ʼuqūd al-fārīda fi tarājim al-ʼa'yān al-mufīda, Beirut, 2002, 1:143; Dhayl al-durar, 592. 'Umar al-Samannūdī, the Shāfī'i jurist and ascetic of one of the al-Gharbiyya towns, al-Samannūdī, located to the east of al-Mahalla, was known as a worker of miracles (̲b̲a̲r̲ā̲m̲à̲t̲). He died in 1424, more than one hundred years of age. See Daw', 6:112-3.

Daw', 2:74-5.

Daw', 2:75. For al-amr bi-al-ма́rūf wa-al-nahy ʼan al-munkar in medieval Shāfī‘i law school see M. Cook, Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought, Cambridge, 2000, 348-56. We have to give heed to the fact that the al-Manṣūrī hospital, which was under the sultan’s control by way of appointing the comptroller of waqf and so forth, functioned as a “correctional institution” for a type of social reformer. See also M. Dols, Majnūn: the Madman in Medieval Islamic Society, Oxford, 1992, 121-6. As al-Sakhāwī mentions, Yahyā al-Ashqar saw that al-Mahallī had committed the murder of his brother.


Inbā’ al-ghumr, 4:243.

Tibr (1896), 176-7.

Sulūk, 4:429-30.


Hawādith, 1: 258-9; Tibr (1896), 346-7.

Hawādith, 1: 265-7; Tibr (1896), 348-375. bāsha means a collar for a draft animal or criminal. See R. Dozy, Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes, Leiden, 1881, 1:49. Al-Sakhāwī states that al-Safārī dispatched his Sufis on Thursday 29 Rabī’ II 855. For the installation of al-Khurāsānī, see Hawādith, 1: 217.

Hawādith, 1: 267.

Tibr (1896), 375.
Hāwādīth, 1: 268,270-1; Sabra, Poverty and Charity, 159-60.


Tibr (1896), 353.

Hāwādīth, 1: 290-1. According to Ibn Taghrī Birdī this amir, who belonged to the awlād al-nās, was known for being warm to the poor (fuqārā) and pious (ahl al-ṣalāḥ). He was also a supporter of the illiterate Ibādī al-Matbūlī, one of the most notable muʿtaqads in this century.


For the rise in prices and people’s rush to flour millers in Cairo during 1439-40 see Sulāk, 4:1176, 1178-81; Inbāʾ, 4:136.

Hāwādīth, 1: 235; Tibr (1896), 311-2.

Tibr (1896), 312.


Tibr (1896), 346.

A week before this popular movement, Jaqmaq banned staging of shadow play (khayāl al-zill) in Cairo and burned all the dolls. Did this oppression of popular theater have any influence on the Cairene action toward the sultan? See Hāwādīth, 1: 279; Tibr (1896), 353; Shmuel Moreh, Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World, Edinburgh, 1992, 73.


Sulāk, 4:698; Inbāʾ al-ghumar, 3:350; Nūjm, 14:281-2. On this event, al-Maqrīzī criticizes his rival Al-ʿAynī, but the disciple of the latter, Ibn Taghrī Birdī, takes a dim view of the former, even though he cites the account of al-Maqrīzī for the most part. In his chronicle, Al-ʿAynī says nothing about the incident.

Associate Professor, Keio University
Table 1. Grain Prices in Cairo during the Reign of Jaqmaq

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Wheat (lirdab)</th>
<th>Fava Beans (lirdab)</th>
<th>Barley (lirdab)</th>
<th>Flour (ibatta)</th>
<th>Bread (1ratl)</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July-Aug.1439</td>
<td>140–190d.f.</td>
<td>200d.f.</td>
<td>80–150d.f.</td>
<td>100d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sūlūk 4:1160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January1440</td>
<td>300d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sūlūk 4:1180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February1440</td>
<td>330d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sūlūk 4:1181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March1440</td>
<td>200–250d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sūlūk 4:1184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March1440</td>
<td>300–150d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Inba' al-ghumr 4:145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October1443</td>
<td>300–200d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Iqd(1889),603;Tibr(2002),1:179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr.-May1444</td>
<td>200d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hawādīth 1:71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr.1445-Jan.1446</td>
<td>110–20d.f.</td>
<td>90–95d.f.</td>
<td>90–95d.f.</td>
<td>100d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>'Iqd(1889),648;Tibr(2002),1:266-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-June1449</td>
<td>300d.f.</td>
<td>300d.f.</td>
<td>1dīnār</td>
<td>150d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibr(2002),2:166;Hawādīth 1:161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug.1449</td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>307d.f.</td>
<td>30/7d.f.</td>
<td>Tibr(2002),2:169;Hawādīth 1:170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug.1449</td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td>200d.f.</td>
<td>6d.f.</td>
<td>Tibr(2002),2:184;Wajiz 2:633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep.1449</td>
<td>500d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>500d.f.</td>
<td>220d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hawādīth 1:175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October1449</td>
<td>600d.f.</td>
<td>500d.f.</td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td>270d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hawādīth 1:197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.1450</td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td>270d.f.</td>
<td>6d.f.</td>
<td>Tibr(1896),301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.-Feb.1450</td>
<td>800–1000d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td>270d.f.</td>
<td>6d.f.</td>
<td>Tibr(1896),1220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February1450</td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td>500d.f.</td>
<td>280d.f.</td>
<td>250d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibr(1896),301;Hawādīth 1:231.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February1450</td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td>360d.f.</td>
<td>250-80d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibr(1896),312;Hawādīth 1:239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June-July1450</td>
<td>500d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>360d.f.</td>
<td>170d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibr(1896),312;Hawādīth 1:242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June-July1450</td>
<td>850–500d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>360d.f.</td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wajiz 2:647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August1450</td>
<td>600–700d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibr(1896),312;Hawādīth 1:258-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September1450</td>
<td>1000d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>600d.f.</td>
<td>300d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibr(1896),346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.-Nov.1450</td>
<td>1200d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>600d.f.</td>
<td>8d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hawādīth 1:264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February1451</td>
<td>1500d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1000d.f.</td>
<td>500d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hawādīth 1:270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February1451</td>
<td>1500d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1000d.f.</td>
<td>500–250d.f.</td>
<td>8–4d.f.</td>
<td>Hawādīth 1:272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May1451</td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>600d.f.</td>
<td>500–250d.f.</td>
<td>8–4d.f.</td>
<td>Tibr(1896),381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May1451</td>
<td>800–1000d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>700d.f.</td>
<td>700d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibr(1896),381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August1450</td>
<td>900d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>900d.f.</td>
<td>500d.f.</td>
<td>3d.f.</td>
<td>Tibr(1896),381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September1451</td>
<td>900d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td>550d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibr(1896),381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January1452</td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>800d.f.</td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tibr(1896),381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May1452</td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>500d.f.</td>
<td>400d.f.</td>
<td>2d.f.</td>
<td>Tibr(1896),381-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.1452-Jan.1453</td>
<td>300d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>300d.f.</td>
<td>8d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hawādīth 1:378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July1453</td>
<td>140d.f.</td>
<td></td>
<td>90d.f.</td>
<td>120d.f.</td>
<td>1.5d.f.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table represents the grain prices in Cairo during the reign of Jaqmaq, with dates and corresponding prices for wheat, fava beans, barley, flour, and bread.*