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In a meeting between the sultan and the qadis that took place in 873/1468, Qāyṭbāy informed them about his intention to stop paying salaries to old soldiers and women. The sultan complained sorely about the lack of funds, the destruction of the provinces, and his personal distress because of the situation. The possible causes for the deteriorating situation were discussed at length, but no practical conclusions were reached. In any case, the sultan carried out his intentions and arbitrarily stopped paying salaries to old soldiers, orphans, and women. It is quite clear that the sultan aimed his policy at the weaker segments of the Mamluk military society and, therefore, met no opposition from the qadis. They, it appears, regarded themselves as the protectors of the indigenous Muslim population and, of course, their own class interests.<sup>59</sup>

In a meeting that took place in 896/1491 between Qāyṭbāy and the qadis, he bitterly complained about hostile Ottoman intentions, the destruction of the Aleppo region, merchants abstaining from trading with Egypt, and the need to pay the *julbān* to avoid their violence in the capital. He emphasized that the army, which was to be dispatched to Aleppo, needed to be paid while the Treasury stood empty. Qāyṭbāy declared that he would take the yearly income generated by pious endowments and the income from properties such as bathhouses and mills, including ships in the capital. Following a discussion with the qadis, it was decided that income of only five months would be collected, since two months' income had already been taken by the state. In any case, during 896/1491, pious endowments and property owners lost seven months' income.<sup>60</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The description of the ulama as mediators between the Mamluk regime and the local population is too narrow and diminishes their role. The relations between the state and the ulama were symbiotic. This symbiosis enabled the Mamluks to rule and endowed their regime with its Islamic content. To put it differently, the Mamluk rulers acculturated themselves to the religious-cultural world of the ulama, and having done so, they won the acceptance and cooperation of the ulama. The gains of the ulama were enormous. They preserved their position as the class that embodied Islam and defined and protected its values. The qadis

<sup>59</sup> Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-Zuhūr fī Waqāʾiʿ al-Duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo, 1960–75), 3:12–14, 24.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:278–79.





applied Islamic law and maintained their position as judges and administrators of funds and pious endowments. The narrow class gains of the ulama preserved and perpetuated the Islamic identity of the society. On the other hand, the ulama were those who empowered the Mamluks to rule, and the ulama-Mamluk symbiosis made Mamluk rule religiously and culturally meaningful to the subjects.

The ulama-Mamluk symbiosis did not mean the obliteration of the separate identity of the ulama or of the frictions between ulama and rulers. These frictions concerned economic issues: taxation and control of pious endowments. The events of 657/1259 and 872/1468 indicate that, in issues pertaining to taxation, the ulama played the role of advocates/protectors of the subjects. The cases discussed in this article are too few to allow any sweeping conclusions as to what extent the ulama were successful in their endeavors. This issue needs further study, but it is clear that the ulama were unable to influence broad economic policies of the Mamluk rulers such as the monopoly system.

The issue of pious endowments was quite different. Here the narrow class interests of the ulama were involved, and their professional integrity was at stake too. Due to the phenomenal spread and success of the pious endowment system, many ulama and many religious and charitable institutions came to be dependent on the system. The Mamluk ruling establishment, sultans and amirs, created *waqfs* on a massive scale and, in order to procure land for new endowments, old *waqfs* had to be nullified. To do so, the laws of the *waqf* were bent, and the qadis and jurists found themselves in an impossible situation. Many qadis and jurists, but by no means all of them, cooperated with the rulers in the nullification and expropriation of old pious endowments and the creation of new ones. Undoubtedly, the jurists who cooperated were somehow rewarded for their efforts. These were simple cases in which the self-interests of both the Mamluk ruling establishment and the jurists tallied, and what was demanded from the jurists was some legal flexibility.

Far more serious were the cases when the jurists were asked to nullify pious endowments for the distribution of these lands as *iqṭāʿ* among the troops. Here state interests, and not just the narrow interests of the ruling establishment, were at stake. Ostensibly, the jurists had every reason to be sympathetic to these requests, since state interests tallied with those of society as a whole. However, matters were never that simple. The jurists had every reason to be suspicious of the rulers and their motives. Furthermore, the political interests of the Mamluk rulers did not always correspond to those of the subject population. I doubt if we can speak about a typical ulama response in such cases. It seems that it was a matter of circumstances and, to some extent at least, the personalities of the people involved.

The qadis, because of the social network within which they operated, were



able, if they so chose, to resist the rulers. The dismissal of a qadi did not mean the end of his career. Qadis also occupied other posts, and cases of reappointment of qadis took place frequently. Within the overall symbiotic scheme, the balance of power between Mamluks and ulama heavily tilted in favor of the rulers, but the ulama were not entirely powerless.



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