ISSN: 2643-9670

Vol. 7 Issue 4, April - 2023, Pages: 67-72

Reports of French Diplomats on the Conflict in Egypt after the Departure of the English Expedition (1807-1811)

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Abstract: This study deals with Reports of French Diplomats on the Conflict in Egypt after the Departure of the English Expedition. The British in Egypt and the escalation of conflicts between the superpowers in the world at that time, and all of them aspired to control the Mediterranean Sea and the key to the East, Egypt. The study deals with five reports, three of which were sent by Saint Marcel, Vice Consul of France in Alexandria, to Minister Jean-Baptiste, French Minister of Foreign Relations, sent from Alexandria, including the political situation in Egypt after the departure of the British, and dealing with the conflict between the Mamluks, which led to the suspension of peace negotiations that were Underway between Ibrahim Bey and Muhammad Ali Pasha, and the continuation of the conflict between the Mamluks and Muhammad Ali, and the start of negotiations to reconcile with the beys of Upper Egypt. It deals with a report from Drovetti to the Minister of Foreign Relations of the French Empire, about the measures taken by Muhammad Ali Pasha after the arrival of a captain in the Ottoman Navy carrying orders entrusting Muhammad Ali Pasha to assume command of the ports and coasts of Egypt, and a report from Minister Jean-Baptiste to Drovetti, regarding the events that took place Between the forces of the Pasha of Cairo and the Mamluks.

Keywords: French Diplomats, Egypt, English Expedition, French Consuls and Ambassadors, French Foreign Ministry, British Army, Saint Marcel, Jean-Baptiste, Muhammad Ali Pasha, Mamluks, Drovetti.

First: Reports [1] of Saint Marcel¹ [2], [3], Vice Consul of France in Alexandria, to Minister Jean-Baptiste² [4],

1. Report [5] from Saint-Marcel, to Minister Jean-Baptiste, sent from Alexandria, dated³ February 1, 1808, and received June 27, 1808⁴.

From Saint-Marcel to the Minister

Mr. Esquire,

I have the honor to inform your Excellency of the political situation in Egypt after the departure of the British. An English galleon, which replaced another, headed for Malta on the 21 st of December, bringing with it the telegrams of the Pasha of Cairo. The English schooner reached Alexandria on the 18th of January, looking as if it had come for peace; The ship was flying a white flag like the flag raised above the lighthouse of the castle, and the Swedish consul, Mr. Petrucci, acting English agent, was raising the flag of his country above his house. The English officer in charge of the ship had handed Mr. Petrucci the ministerial telegrams so that he would immediately hand them over to the Pasha of Cairo, as he did when receiving the telegrams that the captain of the previous English ship carried to him, or to meet with the ruler and inform him of their contents orally, or to send the telegrams to India, as was the case. He personally receives the Pasha's responses to the telegrams.

I do not know whether the consul-general, Monsieur Drovetti⁵ [6], [7], has been able to discover the principal cause of their political correspondence, which, it is said, was chiefly aimed at the redemption of the captives kept by some private ⁶ [8]; However, the large number of these unusual relations and contacts that began to take shape indicate that there is an understanding between the British minister and this government.

To begin with, I can basically guess that one of the terms of the British negotiation with the Pasha was based on a reconciliation between him and the Mamluks. In fact, Shahin Bey Al-Alfi, who was directly sponsored by the English protectorate, made peace with the Pasha, who showed him great affection and respect, and granted him the Fayoum region and some villages from the Buhaira region.

The other beys completed peace negotiations with the Pasha, as they were not hindered by the incidents that took place between them and the rebellious Yassin Bey Al-Albani. The latter (Yassin Bey) had suffered a crushing defeat near Manfalout [9], [10]; As a result, he lost a large part of his forces, and he withdrew with two hundred men of his followers to Minya, where he fortified himself. The Pasha directed him to fight his Khazindar [8].

In about 700 to 800 men with whom the Mamluks united so that they could quite successfully capture this site. This rebel was already threatening to establish a third force in Egypt, perhaps more fearsome than that of the Pasha and the Mamluks; this is due to the inclusion of most Arabs under his banner. The waning of Yasin Bey's power after that defeat would lead to achieving stability and calm and opening trade contacts that had been hampered for a long time between Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt.

Also, it is possible that the political goal of the English was directed, in particular, to their obtaining a share in this trade; for it was here of importance to their goods, and chiefly, to supply the wheat and other grains which they so much needed on their return to

International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research (IJAMR)

ISSN: 2643-9670

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supply to Malta and other places.

This city (Alexandria) is not a rich city except in being a warehouse for the export and import trade in Egypt; Hence, the actual interruption of commercial navigation made it lose the most important basis of its resources, and today it is in a deplorable state. it lacks the means of manufacturing; And also because of the barrenness of its soil, which does not allow it to cultivate the land.

Topuz Oglu Bey Katkhuda Pasha of Cairo has always been the special governor of the city of Alexandria, and this man is completely calm and moderate; In everything that moves him, he follows the instructions he receives from his master, and as I told your highness above, this man seized the property of the Turks and Greeks who fled when the English left this city; These circumstances gave him the opportunity to include the goods belonging to European merchants among his seizures, and to this day we suffer the same difficulties in trying to remove the hand from those goods, and he says that he cannot make any distinction between nations, for the English and the French are equal before him; and that he would give preference - without a doubt - to the nation which, through its trade, provides him with customs profits.

And there is a dam that cuts through the ferry to Lake Mariout, and it is the dam that the British previously destroyed and destroyed, and it is now about to be completely restored, and the dam is already being worked on. Only the external restorations remained, and the expenses of its restoration fell on the shoulders of the city's inhabitants, and the Pasha issued an order requiring the Europeans living in Alexandria to make a contribution of fifty sacks, and my protest against this abnormal extortion led to a significant reduction in the amount required; With the generosity of the Europeans, the agreed sum was paid, and my nation contributed 1,000 Turkish kurus.

On the tenth of February

There are reports that show quite correctly that the British offered the Pasha twelve churches in exchange for handing over the city of Alexandria to them, and Muhammad Ali Pasha [11] listened to these suggestions with great anger, and responded to them that he would defend this city, and he would not surrender it except through a battle waged by the strength of the army and not Through material offers, and there is no doubt that these announced decisions will arouse the wrath of the British and lead to the cessation of their current negotiations, and push the British to carry out acts of piracy in front of the Alexandria marina, which will cause the navigation route itself to be cut off for the boats from Rosetta to Alexandria and vice versa.

The departure of English ships from the archipelago led to the beginning of allowing more freedom for Ottoman navigation; Ships from Thessaloniki⁹ [12], [13], Chania¹⁰, Izmir and the island of Rhodes flocked to the port of Alexandria, loaded with various goods and products, which resulted in some movement in trade.

I have the honor to inform you that Mr. Vasse, the first French translator in Cairo, had to leave on the 21 st of December, 1807, due to ill health, on board an Austrian ship chartered to Malta and Livorne. The English cruiser "Parlementer" intercepted and captured the Austrian ship as it left this anchorage, and on board this warship M. Vasse was forced to surrender himself as a prisoner. I had advised him not to take advantage of the passing of the Austrian ship, as it might expose him to danger; However, he made his wish to leave as soon as possible.

With all respect.

Saint Marcel

2. Report [5] from Saint-Marcel, Vice-Consul of France at Alexandria, to Minister Jean-Baptiste, Minister of External Relations, sent from Alexandria, dated February 21, 1808 (received June 27)

Mr. Esquire,

The Mamluks defeated Yassin Bey when he left the place where he was fortified in Minya, and they were then provided with a regiment of forces that arrived near Minya, a regiment that was led by the Khazindar of Muhammad Ali Pasha, so that these forces would go into Minya, which raised Yassin Bey and encouraged him to make a second attempt to get out of this place, which he actually succeeded in; The confrontation resulted in the killing of four Mamluk scouts, and Shaheen Bey Al-Alfi lost part of his forces that he sent to fight Yassin Bey, and all these circumstances caused the peace negotiations that were underway between Ibrahim Bey and Muhammad Ali Pasha to stop, and the English sailing ship did not appear ten days ago, We believe that it headed for Malta, at the time when its commander received the Cairo telegrams, in which the state of discontent and resentment began, and we believe that we have discovered the real goal of the mission for which that ship came, as it came to inform Muhammad Ali Pasha of the imminent coming of a French campaign to Egypt, accompanied by large forces And that it is necessary for him to deploy his forces in the main sites on the shore of the city in order to resist the French landing, and to accept what they offered him of providing auxiliary forces in order to defend that important city,

The Pasha's answer to this was that he had enough forces to defend the city, and that from that moment he would head to push his forces to the shore of Alexandria and fortify it; Hence, he does not need any foreign assistance.

In fact, we know that places such as Damietta, Rosetta, and the castles of Burullus and Abu Qir are fortified by Albanian forces, and there are other forces in the city of Damanhour, near Alexandria, ready to move quickly to it in the event of a warning, and forces of between two hundred and three hundred soldiers arrived here in Alexandria. led by Khalil Dorman; He revealed the forts that were in a state of readiness to defend the city [14], as well as the city was provided with supplies and ammunition, and it can be said in the end that everyone is in a state of complete readiness, as well as the state of the fortifications, as if the enemy had become present to them, however, we see here only a garrison of about one thousand two hundred soldiers.

Despite all these measures taken by Muhammad Ali Pasha, his belief in the validity of the English information is less than his

International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research (IJAMR)

ISSN: 2643-9670

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suspicions of plans on the part of the British to make a military invasion of his country.

On the other hand, the goal of the Pasha, since the last rebellion that took place in Cairo for the military forces, was to distribute those forces to the various locations in Egypt so as to isolate them there, while providing them with supplies and paying the ir salaries. This may lead to a decrease in their number without weakening his forces, as it may reduce his financial burdens.

Also, perhaps the Pasha's views will focus, in light of this situation, on gaining the confidence of the Sublime Porte, whose side he must take into account, despite his control and influence; We affirm that the last telegrams sent by the Sublime Porte showed him an alliance between most of the European powers against that (English) nation that was trying to put an end to his influence.

With all respect

Saint Marcel

3. Report [5] from Saint-Marcel to the Minister, sent from Alexandria on the 27th of February, 1808 (transmitted on the 28th of June)

Mr. Esquire,

I had quoted you in my letter No. 50

That Yassin Bey achieved some limited victories in Minya over the Mamluks and the forces of the Pasha, and today we learned that he decided to accept the Pasha's offer of reconciliation: he handed over Minya to the Khazindar of Muhammad Ali, and in the company of three hundred men of his followers made his way to Cairo, which he arrived on the 13th of this month. However, the Pasha did not receive Yassin Bey with the reception he was waiting for, and worked to deport him to Damietta without guard, and from there he will be deported to Syria¹¹[8], and thus Egypt got rid of this leader who was threatening to form a third military force in power, Muhammad Ali enjoyed a great genius in thwarting the intrigues and parties of the ambitious man called Yassin Bey; And that was through negotiations, and he did not leave any obstacle that prevented him from reconciling with the beys of Upper Egypt, who had already sent three beys to Cairo to discuss the terms of the reconciliation, and Muhammad Bey al-Manfoukh¹² [18] was one of these three envoys.

The Khazindar had tempted the Mamluks to give them Minya, and this annoyed Muhammad Ali a lot. He did not want to see Mamluk officers upon his arrival in Cairo, but after that he found a good way to regain this important place in relation to his position.

Since then, communications between Cairo and Upper Egypt will become completely free, internal trade will witness some activity, and Upper Egypt will be rich in grains and legumes, and these necessary foodstuffs will be very useful to the regions of Lower Egypt. and the latter, in return, would supply the Upper Egypt with rice, tobacco, and Turkish and European commodities, and the scarcity of the latter commodities had caused their prices to reach the highest level of rise; This is because the cessation of Nile navigation led to the disruption of all foreign trade.

Likewise, the internal trade will move and recover slowly. Our government works in general and permanently to prevent the arrival of a foreign force to Alexandria and we believe that the English forces may arrive soon, even without justification for that, and what we see here in Alexandria is nothing but military movements and preparations for defense. The garrison, composed of Albanians and Ottomans, numbered at most 1,200 men; But when supplies are needed, they can quickly receive assistance from neighboring countries in which military forces are stationed.

On March 6th

The ship "Chipak" equipped with equipment, armament and loaded with goods, which bears the name "Le Cerban", had been absent by Captain "Dodro" for fifteen days in the city of "Genoa", and arrived with it at the Alexandria anchor on the second day of this month, although its arrival caused some Panic in the hearts of the Turks and Albanians, who believed - according to the opinions previously published by the British here - that it was one of the warships of the French fleet ready to appear in Alexandria, and despite my efforts to remove those doubts, it was not possible to completely dispel them until after they saw the ship unloading its goods, along with Other signals calmed their spirits, and that was the first French ship which appeared here some five years ago. with all respect.

Saint Marcel

Second: A report [5] from Drovetti to His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the French Empire.

Sent from Cairo on August 10, 1808, and recorded on October 28 and April 17, 1809 [1]. Mr. Esquire,

I had the honor of submitting to your Excellency, in my letter dated 12 July, a report on the last measures taken by Muhammad Ali Pasha regarding the ship that was carrying the flag of Jerusalem, most of which have been evaded; As Monsieur Saint-Marcel could obtain nothing but the liberty of exercising his jurisdiction over the ship, and my esteemed colleague (Saint-Marcel) advised me that it was unhelpful and even rash to continue to discuss the difference in this matter with the Governor of Alexandria, and I thought I ought to report With this matter to the master in charge of the affairs of the imperial and royal crown in Istanbul, and a captain in the Ottoman navy arrived last month in Alexandria, and then moved directly to the capital (Cairo). The captain was carrying orders to pledge to Muhammad Ali Pasha to assume command of the ports and coasts of Egypt, and Muhammad Ali had received this captain with great hospitality, but he never arranged anything to activate this service, and the arrival of this Ottoman officer had made it necessary for him to make a tour to Damietta, Rosetta and Alexandria, So they were preoccupied with preparing the supplies

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for this travel, which should take place at the end of this month, and an order was issued for two hundred workers of masons and carpenters to be present during the period that the Pasha will pass through in those places (Damietta, Rosetta and Alexandria), and the Pasha invited me to accompany him; But since I had no instructions as to what to do in such circumstances, I asked the Pasha to excuse me from this matter, and the peace agreement with the beys was not yet concluded [15].

I am honored to be...etc.

Drovetti

Third: A report [5] from Minister Jean-Baptiste, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Drovetti, Deputy Consul Acting at the Consulate General in Cairo [1].

Posted from the Château de Fontainebleau [18], [19] in Paris, dated October 16, 1807, the following:

I have received, sir, your letters of the 10th, 15th, 21st January, 2nd March last under the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and I thank you for the particulars which you have sent me and which have furnished me with so much information, both as to the events which took place between the forces of the Pasha of Cairo and the Mamluks, or about the accident that resulted in the death of two of their se nior Mamluk leaders.

Your letter bearing No. 5 was the last letter that I received, and I have reason to believe that many of your letters, especially those that come in the form of a report on what has been happening in Egypt since the British occupation of Alexandria, will be intercepted; Therefore, the system and accuracy of the settings must be taken into account in the correspondence that you send to me. by sending multiple copies by secure means, and I advise you to continue to tell me, with greater accuracy and accuracy, all facts and events which appear to you - a priori - to attract the attention of the government.

I have the honor to greet you [20].

Conclusions

This study dealt with Reports of French Diplomats on the Conflict in Egypt after the Departure of the English Expedition through the mutual reports between the French consuls and ambassadors and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which took on a diplomatic character in the period from 1807 to 1810, which is the period of intense conflict after the resounding fall The British army in Egypt and the escalation of conflicts between the superpowers in the world at that time, and all of them aspired to control the Mediterranean and the key to the east, Egypt.

The study dealt with five reports as follows:

- A report from Saint-Marcel, Vice-Consul of France in Alexandria to Minister Jean-Baptiste, Minister of Foreign Relations, sent from Alexandria, including the political situation in Egypt after the departure of the British.
- A report from Saint-Marcel, Vice-Consul of France in Alexandria to Minister Jean-Baptiste, Minister of Foreign Relations, sent from Alexandria, dealing with the conflict between the Mamluks, which led to the suspension of the peace negotiations that were underway between Ibrahim Bey and Muhammad Ali Pasha. The conflicts ended until Muhammad Ali distributed his forces to various locations in Egypt and sought to gain the confidence of the Sublime Porte, whose side he must take into account, despite his control and influence. The field was suitable for the Sublime Porte after an alliance between most of the European powers against England, which circumvented an end to his influence.
- A report from Saint Marcel to the minister, sent from Alexandria regarding the continuation of the conflict between the Mamluks and Muhammad Ali and the start of negotiations for reconciliation with the beys of Upper Egypt who had already sent three beys to Cairo to discuss the terms of the peace.
- A report from Drovetti to His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the French Empire, sent from Cairo, on the measures taken by Muhammad Ali Pasha after the arrival of a captain in the Ottoman Navy bearing orders entrusting Muhammad Ali Pasha to assume command of the ports and coasts of Egypt.
- Report from Jean-Baptiste, Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, to Drovetti, Vice-Consul Acting at the Consulate General in Cairo, sent from the Château de Fontainebleau in Paris, on the events that took place between the forces of the Pasha of Cairo and the Mamluks, or on the incident that resulted in the death of two of their chief leaders Mamluks.
- Reports confirmed that things were going in favor of Muhammad Ali, who imposed his control over the Egyptian ports of Damietta, Rosetta and Alexandria, and sent his forces to these ports to protect them and later begin to fortify them by establishing castles and forts.

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Notes

¹ Saint-Marcel, is the vice-consul of France in Alexandria and Rosetta.

² Jean-Baptiste de Nompère de Champagny was an admiral and politician, appointed by Napoleon to the Council of State, from July 1801 to August 1804 he was French ambassador in Vienna, and with great intelligence directed the ongoing negotiations between the two governments. In August, 1804, Napoleon made him Minister of the Interior, and in this position, which he held for three years, he proved himself an administrator of the first class, who was to manage the recruitment of the army. In August 1807 he was chosen to succeed Talleyrand as Minister of Foreign Affairs, until April 1811.

³ Although the five letters were sent from 10 January to 2 March from Drovetti to the Minister, it appears that the reply to them is dated 16 October 1807.

- ⁴ A summary of the topics mentioned in the report is always mentioned at the beginning of the report, which varies according to the circumstances of the circumstances dealt with in the report, and the lesson in these topics is that they all revolve in the orbit of French diplomacy at that time.
- ⁵ Bernardino Michele Maria Drovetti is an Italian traveler, diplomat, explorer, and archaeologist. He was considered in some way Napoleon's consul in Egypt, and he had a great income in the political events that affected the formation of the history of that period. The holdings that he transported outside Egypt constituted the holdings of the Museum (Museo Egizio) in Turin.
- ⁶ It is mentioned that Al-Jabarti indicated that Muhammad Ali sent the prisoners to the castle, and they numbered 466 English prisoners, and he did not indicate at all that Muhammad Ali distributed them to the elite. He laid places for the prisoners, distinguished the older ones and the offspring in a place suitable for them, furnished them with mattresses, arranged arrangements for them, and spent on them expenses and supplies. As is the custom of the Franks with each other, and all of this inside the castle, which the prisoners did not leave until the reconciliation took place between the English and Muhammad Ali. However, he did not mention that some of the captives had fallen into the hands of the people in Rosetta, who used them as slaves. This was contained in Major General Fraser's letter to General Fox, Alexandria, May 14, 1807, Portfolio No. (W.O. 1-348).
- ⁷ Manfalout is a city and center of the Assiut Governorate. It is located on the west bank of the Nile, 350 km (230 miles) south of Cairo, and most likely in Bani Udayyat and its fame is Bani Udayy, whose people before that confronted the French campaign on April 18, 1799.
- ⁸ Al-Jabarti specified in his diaries the name of this Mamluk prince, saying: I appointed soldiers to a region before me and its prince, Bonaparte, his Khazendar, and it seems that the vice-consul Saint Marcel here avoided referring to the name of this prince, who took the name of Bonaparte as his title, at a time when the latter had become the most important emperor in Europe.
- ⁹ Thessaloniki, called Thessaloniki in Greek, is a city located in northeastern Greece, on the Gulf of Thessaloniki. It is one of the largest cities in Greece, and the main port and commercial and industrial center of Greek Macedonia. It was a major industrial center, military and commercial station on the way to Constantinople, and the largest of the Balkan outlets to the Aegean Sea.
- ¹⁰ Chania is one of the cities located in the country of Greece, and it is one of the four districts of Crete, covering the west ern quarter of the island. Chania is the most important city in western Crete, and in 1645 AD, after a two-month siege, Chania surrendered to the Ottoman Turks, and by 1669 AD the entire island of Crete was under Turkish Ottoman occupation. Chania reached a new economic peak during this time as there was great economic activity based on the trade of local products.
- ¹¹ According to al-Jabarti's narration: "He traveled to Damietta to go to Cyprus with governors."
- ¹² Muhammad Bey Al-Manfoukh Al-Muradi.