



CHAPTER NINE



Long Live Mohammed Ali!



**Mohammed Ali Pasha
Viceroy of Egypt & Sudan**

Chapter 9

Napoleon's fleet landed in Alexandria July 1, 1798, intent on destroying British control over their routes to India, and their Mameluke supporters, who Bonaparte defeated in *The Battle of the Pyramids* July 21, 1798. But by August 3, 1798, Admiral Horatio Nelson destroyed the French fleet and so their army was left stranded in Egypt. Without Napoleon's disastrous invasion, who knows how *Destiny* would have sent Egypt her *Savior*. Be that as it may, no rational person can compare *Bonaparte* with *Mohammed Ali Pasha*. He may be an imperfect, very human hero, but I know his heart, I know his genius, I've been shown his soul's many incarnations, back to the BCEs — and not only Ali's!...Napoleon took over one of the richest Empires of the day, with an organized government, an army, an economy, educational system, and global recognition. Egypt had none of these! Apart from its 1,000 Mosques, Mameluke Palaces and Saladin's Citadel, Egypt's canals were filled with sand, as were her monuments. The Pasha out-reigned three Ottoman Sultans, (two were assassinated), and he resurrected a land that for millennia was ground to dust. Ali established laws, an army, a naval fleet, cultivated cotton, built hospitals for military and women, and established the first Arabic journals and system of education in the Middle East...***More than any ruler in recorded history!***



After ousting the French, the British then invaded Alexandria in 1807. Ali swiftly, yet diplomatically, sent them packing! At the Sultan's behest, *and for his own survival*, Ali ended the Mamelukes 600 year rapacious reign

in 1811. He expelled the Wahhabis from the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, and delivered the keys to Istanbul in 1818, along with *Abdullah ibn Saud*, ruler of the *1st Saudi State*. Against Ali's pleas, Sultan Mahmud II beheaded Abdullah in front of the *Hagia Sofia Mosque*, *to music*, as Wahhabism bans music, thus restoring Ottoman supremacy.

...Then in 1821, Ali supported his Sultan against the Greek uprisings. *The Greek War of Independence* was backed by the British Empire, the Kingdom of France and the Russian Empire, as protectors of their Christian subjects. — This was too much for the Egyptians! At the *Battle of Navarino* in 1827, Egypt's naval fleet was sunk by the European Allied Fleet that Ali had so painstakingly built.



As compensation for his losses, Mohammed Ali asked The Sultan for the territory of Syria that he desired for its value as a buffer state, its natural resources, and a market for Egyptian products. The Sultan was indifferent, which The Pasha was unwilling to tolerate, setting the wheels in motion for Egypt's 1831 conquest of Syria. Ibrahim took Acre with Egyptian forces, then marched into Anatolia defeating the Ottomans. *Sultan Mahmud II* was so alarmed, ***"I would rather die, or become a Russian slave, than to spare my rebellious Vassal in Egypt"***, so he invited the Russian's support.

After Ibrahim resoundingly defeated the Ottomans and was at Istanbul's doorstep, Sultan Mahmud II died from tuberculosis, on July 1, 1839 and The Pasha told his son to suspend hostilities... Although Mahmud II was succeeded by his 16 year old son *Abdulmejid*, control was held by Ali's

arch enemy *Husrev*, who Ali had ousted from Cairo 35 years earlier. Crisis on top of crisis... then the Ottoman Naval fleet defected to Egypt!

The European Powers were determined to maintain ‘*The Sick-Man of Europe’s*’ Ottoman supremacy, igniting the *Oriental Crisis of 1840*. British Naval forces sailed to Syria and Alexandria. They completely demolished Beirut, (part of Syria at the time) ending Egyptian control of Syria. They took Acre from Ibrahim, and blocked the Nile coastline!...With all this going on, in the heat of June 1840, the 71 year old Pasha developed a boil on his bottom, and couldn’t sleep. So finally, when Ali saw the British fleet outside his *Ras el-tin Palace* window, he knew he was beaten, and acquiesced to accepting ***Hereditary Rule of Egypt and Sudan***.



Ras el-tin Palace Alexandria Egypt

... In 1839 The Pasha met with British economist **Sir John Bowring**:
*“Do not judge me by the standard of your knowledge. Compare me with the ignorance that is around me. — Centuries have been required to bring you to your current state. I have had only a few years....Your country England, has reached its present eminence by the labors of many generations. No country can be made suddenly great. **Now I have done something for Egypt. I have begun to improve her, and she may be compared not only with Eastern, but with European countries.** I have much to learn and so have my people. I am now sending Edham Bey with 15 young men to learn what your country has to teach...He closes with: “I had to begin by scratching Egypt’s soil with a pin, I have now got to cultivate it with a spade, but I mean to have all the benefits of a plow. In your country you have*

a great many hands to move the hands of State. I move it with my own. I do not always see what is best to be done, but when I do, I compel prompt obedience - and what's seemingly best is done."

(*Many Egyptian families resisted Ali's educational expeditions, sending a servant in the place of their own offspring.)

In 1840 Sir Bowring submitted a 200 page '**Report on Egypt and Candia**' (Crete) to Lord Palmerston on all aspects of Egypt's commercial development under the government of Mohammed Ali:

"My Lord, It is indeed, scarcely to be wondered at, that in speaking of Egypt and the Pasha's government, the most opposing statements have gone forth to the world. Anyone who turns their eye towards the good that exists in Egypt, the increased revenue, progress of toleration, the spread of education, the introduction of military and naval tactic, the safety for travelers, respect for authority, the personal character of the Pasha, may long expatiate on the bright hues of the picture; while he who is willing only to dwell on the dark and discouraging, may find in the despotic acts of the governors, in the oppression of the few and sufferings of the many. Judged by the standard of our own civilization, by the rules of Christian philanthropy, the condition of the people will seem deplorable; but contrasting what has been done in Egypt by the struggle for improvement, by any other Mohammadan country, the results will appear in the highest degree interesting and important."

Lord Palmerston, British Foreign Secretary, then Prime Minister until 1858, who for profit, had no problem addicting China to opium, or raping India of wealth and health, even cutting off the fingers of India's weavers, said: **"For my part I hate Mehmet Ali, whom I consider as nothing but an ignorant barbarian, who by cunning and boldness and mother wit, has been successful in rebellion...I look upon his boasted civilization of Egypt as the arrantest humbug, and he is as great a tyrant and oppressor as has ever made people wretched...There is no question of fairness towards Mehmet.... a robber is always liable to be made to disgorge."** (Bowring's report held no sway over Palmerston!)

Adolphe Thiers, French President of the Council of Ministers said:
“Mehmet Ali has founded a vassal state with genius and consistency. He has known how to govern Egypt and even Syria, which the Sultans have never been able to govern. The Muslims, so long humiliated in their justified pride, see in him a glorious Prince who returns to them the feeling of their power; why weaken this useful vassal who, once separated by a well chosen frontier from the state of his Master, will become for him the most precious of supporters.”

“Long live Mohammed Ali”... In 1846 to much fanfare, huge crowds welcomed The Pasha at Istanbul. Dressed in a gold embroidered coat, Ali came by steamer to salute his new Sultan. When he attempted to kiss the young Abdulmejid’s feet, courtiers rushed to lift him and seat him at the Sultan’s side..... <https://archive.org/details/pashahowmehemeta0000uffo>

History is written by the victors — and not only on the Western side. In the 2011 Eastern TV drama: ***‘Mohammed Ali Pasha’ is portrayed as a portly, dark haired, wiley Arab***, when there are copious depictions of Ali and his son Ibrahim, as fair haired men, who were physically fit in form. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPLztPuTpTg>

Egyptian author of ***‘The Last Days of The Pasha’*** Rasha Adly writes:
“They have filled our minds since school age that the Pasha was a cruel and murderous man.”



Prince von Pückler-Muskau



Machbuba

In 1837 the eccentric **Prince Hermann von Puckler-Muskau** traveled for two years in Ali's domain. In Cairo's slave market he bought a naked, orphaned Ethiopian girl **Machbuba**, as his valet, etcetera, and went on excursions into the desert with Ali. The Prussian Prince delivers a faithful narrative of what passed between them, *from The Pasha's own mouth*.

'Egypt under Mehemet Ali' Vol 1-2 1845 Chapter XI: *'Mehmet Ali was at the time, a subject of daily conversation in Europe..for what has been published respecting him in so many different shapes, contains too many contradictions, to enable anyone to arrive at a positive conclusion...I had pictured to myself an austere harsh-looking man in Oriental dress. Instead of this, there stood before me a friendly little old man, whose vigorous well proportioned frame was set off by nothing but a freshnes of complexion, and a cleanliness that might almost be called coquettish, but whose features were equally expressive of a calm dignity, and a benevolent good-nature, and who, though his sparkling eagle eye seemed to penetrate my innermost thoughts, yet, the grace of his smile and the affability of his manner, inspired me with involuntary partiality, without the slightest tincture of timidity.....*
Nothing is more easy than to obtain an audience with the Viceroy — would he venture to do this if he were indeed the tyrant, which the malicious views of Europe designate him !?....

Chapter XXII 'Journey with the Viceroy': *'His suite of tents consisted of 300 men and 300 animals, and 2 complete culinary establishments. He received me in his splendid tent where a divan of crimson velvet embroidered with gold stood in the background. "Do you know what I have just decreed? — a Bank in Cairo! It will be henceforth, no longer be difficult for enterprising individuals to raise capital."....The Viceroy humorously related a string of the most ridiculous anecdotes of travelers.*

'...We passed numerous villages and everywhere the Viceroy was received with demonstrations of joy."This is always the way" said Mehmet Ali, "I must compel for their own support. All works on the canals are done for wages."
Ali proceeded to give an account of his wars with the Mamelukes:

“And now I want one thing — to be left in peace to establish the health and welfare of Egypt. — Why at this advanced time in my life do I labor day and night? The glory and consciousness of the countries I govern — this is my whole interest, to this my whole life is dedicated.”

*‘...During supper he related many details of the period when he attained unlimited power over Egypt. Expressing my regret that he did not dictate these memoirs, retained for history he replied: — “**Why should I do so? I do not love this period of my life. And what could the world profit by this interminable tissue of combat and misery, cunning and bloodshed, which circumstances compelled me? Who could derive pleasure from such disgusting detail? It is enough if posterity knows that all Mehmet Ali attained he owes to neither birth nor interest. — My history shall not commence til the period when free from all restraint, I could arouse this land that I love as my own, from the sleep of the ages, and mold it to a new existence.**”*

Ali went on to recount stories of his youth...*“How strange” he exclaimed, “that of 17 children I should be the only one to survive”* He went on to describe how he toughened himself for life, in spite of the fears of his overprotective parents...Artim Bey said, *“You may esteem yourself highly favored, to learn particulars like this from the lips of the great man himself, I can assure you that even we have not heard them before.”*

<https://archive.org/details/egyptundermehem00vongoog/page/n349/mode/1up?view=theater>



Ibrahim Pasha - Sherif of Mecca - Viceroy 1848

Ibrahim Pasha, first born son of Ali, at 16 was sent as a hostage to *Sultan Selim III* when Ali was made Pasha in 1805...and not released until after Ali thwarted the 1807 British invasion, aka '*Fraser's debacle*'. So in Ibrahim's heart of hearts, he was more Egyptian than Turk. Yet it's hard to imagine a closer relation between a father and son — although disagreements arose over finances and strategy, sometimes leading to murderous threats. Ibrahim's troops loved and respected him, as he led and cared for them through numerous challenging conflicts. In 1848, after so many wars, Ibrahim ailing with tuberculosis, coughing up blood, took a European tour to recover his health. Ali, who had never been to a country more civilized than his own, followed his son on his own steamship, a gift from Great Britain after the 1840 crisis ended. When hearing that his friend *King Louis Philippe*, was being deposed in the *1848 French Revolution*, Ali wanted to sail to France to rescue him!...When Ibrahim heard this, he sent his father's ship back to Egypt.

Ali was suffering seizures of senility, attributed to the abundance of silver nitrate treatments given for dysentery, that ate his brain. So Ibrahim went to Sultan Abdulmejid to recognize him as Egypt's ruler, but he died 6 months later....To spare the ailing father at *Shubra*, the shock of Ibrahim's death, the news was withheld. But as Ibrahim was being lowered into his grave, in a flash of 2nd sight, The Pasha said, "***They are burying Ibrahim — now Abbas will reign, and all our work will be undone!***"



Shubra Palace

“One by one,” wrote Consul Murray, “he is abandoning all the works of the old Pasha. Schools are abandoned, factories done away with. Against these reductions, Abbas is building and furnishing palaces, making enormous presents to the Sultan, and talking of buying steamers as if they were as cheap as figs.”

On Aug. 2, 1849, when he was 80 years old, Mohammed Ali died.

His body was carried from Alexandria Palace up the Nile to Bulaq’s porte, and met by all family members, except Abbas. With scant ceremony, his body was laid to rest in the Mosque he built in the Citadel, overlooking the Nile and the Pyramids beyond. Sir Murray goes on to say: *“The old Inhabitants remember and talk of the chaos and anarchy from which he rescued the country — and whether Turk or Arab do not hesitate to say openly that, the prosperity of Egypt has died with Mohammed Ali.”*



Alabaster Mosque of Mohammed Ali Cairo Citadel

Mohammed Ali’s last spoken words were: ***“He comes...He comes...”***