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Manjak Basha Waqfia (784H./1382A.M.) Study and Investigation

*Mahmmoud Muhammad Al-Jbarat**

ABSTRACT

This historical study aims to clarify a Mamluk Waqf (a bequest of land ownership) titled 'Manjak Basha Waqfia' and found in the village of Beit Safafa near Jerusalem. It is dated to 784H/1382AD. The Waqf consists of four separate documents, the last being the Istadar of Amir Manjak al-Yousufi and Mrs. Tanshaq al-Muthafaria. It describes the efforts of a Mamluk woman to establish economic independence in a system in which control by her father, brother and husband was the norm. Mrs. al-Muthafaria sold, bought and thus obtained land, and deeded it as a Waqf (a mortmain). In doing this, she was represented by two men who were not related to her family, but whom she considered equal (in terms of legal authority) to her husband. The bequest (al-Waqf) defined benefits to her offspring (Thuri), to emancipated persons, to employees of her estates, and to the poor and destitute in Jerusalem, Mecca and Medina. The keeper of the Waqf (Nazer) was obligated to safeguard the Waqf statement, not to rent properties in two consecutive years at the same rate, not to sell that property to dishonest or authoritarian men, and not to write a new contract until the current one had expired. These events took place during the political collapse of the Mamluk state, when corruption of amirs was widespread.

Keywords: Mamluk waqf, Jerusalem, Mamluk women.

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