

## **Investigating Aspects of Competitive Sports and Cultural Entertainment in Mamluk Era Egypt**

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### **Abstract**

One Of The Most Important Social And Cultural Issues In Any Society Is The Variety Of Games And Entertainment. Mamluks In Egypt Were Willing And Enthusiastic In Starting Many Of These Games Despite Their Attention And Importance To Their Games And Entertainment. The Mamluk Rulers In Egypt, Despite Paying Attention To Their Social And Private Entertainments, Played A Role In The Prosperity Of These Entertainments For Various Reasons. Cairo Was The Magnificent Capital Of The Mamluks With Its Important History, A Center Of Social Splendor And Various Activities Including Festivals And Games. The Existence Of Some Iranian Games And Their Prosperity In The Abbasid Court, And Then Their Performance And Importance In Egypt During The Mamluk Era, Showed The Desire Of The Egyptian People For These Entertainments. Polo, Horse Racing, Chess And Backgammon, Nowruz Eid, Mehrgan Eid, Islamic Holidays Such As Fitro, Eid Al-Adha And All These Magnificent Ceremonies Show The Variety Of Aspects Of The Game In This Period. The Findings Of The Research Showed That The Diversity And Prosperity Of All Kinds Of Entertainments And Recreations For The Desire And Attention Of The Mamluk Sultans, As Well As The Effects And Characteristics Of The City Of Cairo, Were Very High .

**Keyword:** Game, Entertainment, Egypt, Mamluk

### **Introduction**

The Country Of Egypt Is One Of The Oldest Civilizations In The World, Whose History Reaches Four Thousand Years Before Christ, According To Philip, Even The Arabian Peninsula Is Like An Ice Sheet That Is Spread Between The Two Ancient Bases Of The World Civilization, Egypt And Babylon, And They It Is Separated From Each Other. Egypt Is Like A Desert That Divides The Fertile And Fertile Jezeel And Rodnil And The Country Of Egypt Into Two Deserts, Eastern And Western, Where The Southern Part Of Egypt Is Called "Upper" And The Northern Part Is Called "Lower". Various Governments Ruled In This Region And This Region Has Undergone Many Transformations And Has Been One Of The Important Political Centers Since The Beginning (John Ahmadi, 2019: 122). Until Two Centuries Ago, After The Conquest Of Egypt By The Arabs, This Territory Was One Of The Spheres Of The Islamic Kingdom. Dar Al-Amareh Of That Fustat Was The Center Of The Garrison Established By The Arab Victors. Its Rulers Were Arabs And They Sent Their Caliphs From The East To This Country (Ibid., 122).

In The Middle Of The 7th Century AD, After The Fall Of The Ayyubid Dynasty, A Group Of Slaves Called Mamluks Became Powerful In Egypt. These Who From 648 To 923 A.H. Reigned, They Are Divided Into Two Groups: Bahri Mamluks (648-784 AD) And Burji

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Or Circassian Mamluks (784-923 AD). The Mamluk Government Was Connected To The Mediterranean Sea From The North Side Of Egypt, And Through The Important Ports Of Alexandria And Damietta, It Communicated With The Islands Of The Mediterranean Sea And European Governments.

Mamluk Period Should Be Considered Special Due To The Existence And Variety Of Games And Entertainments. Egypt, With Its Ancient Glory, Faced The Abbasid Government On One Side And The Umayyad Government Of Andalusia On The Other. For This Reason, Many Of These Games And Entertainments Were Adapted In The Social Structure Of The People Of This Land Over Many Years. For This Reason, The Issue Of The Importance Of Entertainment In This Era Should Be Divided According To The Existence Of All Kinds Of Games. In This Research, An Attempt Has Been Made To Point Out The Correct Division Of The State Of Entertainment In This Era, Which Was Also Common In Other Islamic Lands; Because Many Of These Games Were Continued By People From Generation To Generation. In This Research, The Discussion Of Games And Entertainments During The Period Of Imperialism Has Been Discussed. This Research Is Of A Fundamental Type And By Studying Different Aspects Of The Social And Cultural Situation, It Examines The Different Types Of Entertainment Of The People Of Egypt, In Addition To Examining The Types Of Entertainment That Include Sports, Music, Games, Etc., It Also Examines The Influence Of The Islamic World As Well As The Social Situation. That Time Has Focused On People's Entertainment, Games And Entertainment, To What Extent These Issues Have Spread.

## **1- The Entertainment of Competitive Sports in The Mamluk Period**

### ***1-1 Polo***

One Of The Most Important Competitive Sports In This Period Is Polo. Polo Is The Oldest Sport That Is Played With Horses, In Which Two Groups Of Riders Bend Down From The Horse And Hit The Ball With The Polo And Steal It From The Opponent. The Sole Was Made So That The Ball Could Be Placed Inside It, Because In The Past, The Ball Was Caught In The Air With A Polo And Thrown Back Into The Air. This Type Of Polo Was Also Called "Panh". Later, The Polo Was Changed In Such A Way That Its Head Was Bent Or Another Short Stick Was Installed On Its Head. Orbs Are Light Balls Made Of Wood. (Anoushe 1997: 504). The Interest Of The Mamluk Kings In The Polo Game Is A Manifestation Of Their Greatness. Ball Game Tools And Their Performance. Eyasin, In Which The Princes Were The Best In The Ball Game Among Poets, Writers And Jurists, All This Showed The Greatness Of This Game In The Mamluk Era (Latfi Ahmad, 1999: 219).

### ***1-2 swimming and horse racing***

Swimming And Horse Racing Were Among The Sports That Were Considered In This Period, Although It Should Be Noted That These Two Days Were Very Important In Ancient Times. In The Book Hakayat Abi Al-Qasim Al-Baghdadi, The Names Of Thirteen Types Of Swimming That Were Customary At That Time, Such As Diving (Underwater), Astilqa (Laying With Your Back On The Water), Tawsi, And Aqrabi, Are Mentioned In That Book. Ibn Al-Tawa And Zanabiri Are Two Swimming Masters And Coaches Mentioned (Faqihi, 1987: 765). Horse Riding Was One Of Those Important Sports That The Mamluks Could Not Ignore Or Fail To Practice. This Helped With The Military Growth Of The Mamluks In That Military Environment. As If Some Kings Neglected Some Sports Or Violated Their Disciplines. Riding Remained A Privileged Sport Throughout The Mamluk Period Until It Was Impossible For Any Of The Mamluks Not To Know This Sport And The

Kings Declared That No Slave Would Join His Master's Heresy Unless He Learned To Ride (Riding Was A Form Of Military Service). And Its General Education Was Acquired In Private Schools That Were Prepared For This Purpose). He Would Then Join His Master's Army And Train For Archery, Spear-Throwing, And Horse-Riding, Especially Since The Mamluk Regime Was Won On The Basis Of The Strongest And The Greatest And Most Influential Princes Tended To Reign. (Lotfi Ahmad, 1999: 217).

### ***1-3 Coercion***

Exertion and strength sports were one of the things that were very common during the monarchy; One of the most important sports is wrestling. The Mamluk kings did not know the art of wrestling. The ruler Haji "brought the bastards' cedar in his hands and played fighting with others and it was said that he practiced it alone with the commoners where he was. He had a leather tian, pants He wears short clothes and they take off all his clothes and wrestle with them. Among the princes, there were those who were proficient in this kind of sport. One of the ten princes of Karkamas al-Ali was a wrestler and his name was Amir Akhor. He was a symbol in the fight and this prince Iyas's son-in-law was a historian and it seems that he was doing well until he was assigned to her and divorced; In the same way, Ibsen mentioned that among the prominent people who practiced jogging, I was disappointed with one of them, Moulaym Ismail ibn Amer Lajin, who was skilled in the art of fighting and that in the He was afraid that Hajj would be challenged in 881 AH. (1476 AD) He also pointed out that this sport was practiced by the ruling Mamluks and that they are the ones who occupied Ras Nuba and among them, for example, during the era of the ruling Qitabay, the prince of Maqlabai al-Fahlwan al-Mohammadi. Al-Ashrafi, Anal. Who knew how to end the conflict, one sign of which was the horsemanship and spear-throwing manuscripts of the Mamluk kings, which show a variety of Turkish, Arabic, and Persian pastures; So I figured out what he was wearing during the match he was telling the wrestlers how to defend and how to strike he was also teaching how to deny the opponent's moves and paralyze the opponent. This manuscript contained several images that depicted the conditions of wrestling and training of that era, which were identified through contemporary sources. (Lotfi Ahmad, 1999: 305).

### ***1-4 shooting***

Among The Sports That Were Popular In The Middle Ages, Shooting Can Be Mentioned First. (Jarid) Refers To A Type Of Hand-To-Hand Combat Where Armed Riders Faced Each Other And Started Shooting. Only Kings, Nobles And Officers And Heads Of The Army Were Entertained By This Game. In Each City, One Or More Fields Were Considered For This Game, And On The Designated Day, The Opponents And Players Appeared In The Field And The Competition Started In Front Of The Eyes Of The Spectators, Urban People And Foreigners. There Is No Doubt That The Mamluks And Sultans Loved Sports Very Much, The Same Sports That They Practiced In Dishes And Dishes, In Fact, Sports Had Become An Art In Their Hands And Had Taken Different Forms. Therefore, Due To The Appreciation Of The Sultans And Rulers For Sports, Official Categories Were Started For Various Sports And Some Sultans Participated In These Sports, Which Was A Proof Of The Vitality Of The Mamluks And Sultans Of That Time. Riding Is One Of These Sports. It Was Important That No King, Whoever He Was, Could Ignore Or Fail To Do. Horse Riding Helped The Military Training Of The Mamluks In That War Environment, Even If Some Sports Were Neglected, But Riding Always Remained A Special Sport During The Era Of The Monarchy, To The Point That If A Sultan Or A Mamluk Did Not Master This Sport, It Was Subject To Princes. At That Time, The Sultans And Mamaliks Did Not Reach The Rank Of Professor Until They Received Their Military Education In

Private Schools That Were Prepared For This Purpose, So After That They Had To Join The Army And Train In The Fields Of Throwing A Slingshot, Throwing A Spear, And Riding. They Saw That Since The Monarchy System Was Based On The Fact That Victory Is For The Strongest, The Princes Who Had The Most Influence And Power Came To The Throne (Latfi Ahmad, 1999: 181).

## **2- Cultural entertainments in the Mamluk period**

### **2-1 Music**

Singing In Egypt Has A Long History, Especially Among The Courtiers; Many Of The Government's Men And Elders Came To Listen To The Singers In Their Private Gatherings And Banquets, And Most Of The Singers Were From The Wealthy; For Example, For Prince Tamim Bin Al-Mo'ez, They Bought A Fat Man Who Could Play Music And Sing; Therefore, That Fat Man Sang For Him And His Companions, Went To His Residence In Egypt And To His Parks, And Participated In The Entertainment Of The Egyptians There. However, Singing And Singing Gatherings Appeared Soon After The Ruler's Death, And Fatimid Palaces Were Known For All Kinds Of Entertainment And Games. (Lotfi Ahmad, 1999, 154). Wine And Singing Parties Became Common In The Middle Ages. Many Rulers Of Egypt Accepted It Until The Time Of The Mamluks, Who Showed A Great Deal Of Grandeur In These Gatherings. They Were Used To Every Sultan Or Ruler Having A Group Of Hymns And Songs In His House; This Caused Some Of The Mamluk Kings To Approach Music And Sing In Their Assemblies, As If One Of Them Hears A Song, Sends For Him And Assigns Him To Teach His Concubines To Sing, As Nasir Ben Qalavon Did This With The Singer Kutileh Bin Qargan. Many Of Them Were Trained Under Him And Graduated. (Lotfi Ahmad, 1999, 138).

The Gatherings Of Music And Joy And Singing Included The Art Of Singing In All Cases, Which In Many Cases Was Necessarily Accompanied By The Colors Of Composition, As Some Dancers Were Also Present. The Music Was A Single Party. Music Was An Important Means Of Entertainment In That Era, And Many People Excelled In It. But Ibn Khaldun Says: "When The Soul Hears Songs And Sounds, Without A Doubt, It Perceives Its Joy And Vitality, And The State Of The Soul Comes To Taste." That Makes The Difficulty Easier." (Ibn Khaldoun, 1989: 45) And In The Mamluk Era, There Is A God, Who Is Known For His Relationships, He Was Considered A Teacher Who Teaches Music, So Ibn Khalqan Says: "When I Became Proficient In Mathematical Sciences, I Longed To Meet Sheikh Kamal Al-Ain Bin Yunus I Was. So I Traveled To Mosul And Met Him And Got To Know Him."

### **2-2 Ceremony of poetry and literature**

Egypt Has Always Been The Best Among Islamic Countries In Terms Of Poetry And Literature, And It Has Always Had Something To Say In This Regard, That The Mamluk Period Is One Of These Important Periods. During The Mamluk Kingdom, Egypt Flourished With A Group Of Scholars, Including Exegetes, Hadiths, Jurists, Usulists, Theologians, Scholars And Others (Lotfi Ahmad, 1999, 57); The Fall Of Baghdad By The Tatar People Or The Mongol People In 656 Ah/1258 Ad Caused The Destruction Of Important Heritage And Works And The Killing Of Many Valuable Scientists And People Of That Time. These Works Were Important And Outstanding Works For The Muslims Of The World At That Time. The Tatar People Destroyed All The Cultural And Scientific Heritage And Libraries. And They Shed A Lot Of Blood And... Meanwhile, Scholars, Scientists And Writers Migrated To Syria And Egypt, And When The Mongols Attacked Syria, The Scholars Of

That Time Migrated To Cairo, Which Had Many Scientific Schools, Institutes, Assemblies, And Libraries, As Well As The Kindness And Kindness Of The Rulers. And The Sultans Of That Period Allowed The Scholars To Stay In This City, So They Started To Compose Books And Write Prose. In The Same Period, A Large Number Of Andalusian Scholars And Writers Who Fled Because Of The Fear Of The Ansaris Migrated To Cairo, Which In Turn Led To The Uprising. And The Religious, Scientific And Literary Movement Helped, And This Movement Was Greatly Encouraged By The Sultans And Princes. Sultans Gave Wealth And Status To Scholars And Writers And Asked Them To Write Books In Different Fields (Lotfi Ahmad, 1999: 21). According To Some Parts Of The Political World, It Has Been Common To Reward Poets Since The Beginning Of Islam. Some Caliphs Set A Monthly Or Yearly Allowance For Poets, Sometimes They Accepted Poets Once A Year On A Certain Day And Gave Them An Annual Allowance As A Reward. (Ibrahim Hassan, 2009: 920).

One Of The Themes Of Poetry And Literature In The Mamluk Period Was Storytelling About Heroes And Celebrities. Monsieur (Sedi Po) Writes: The Thoughts And Imaginations Of Poets Always Showed Themselves In Stories And Anecdotes, And The Followers Of The Prophet Of Islam In Every Period Stole The Lead From Others In This Regard, And When Night Fell, These People Gathered Together Under The Tents. They Came To Hear Amazing Stories." (Lubon, 2010: 559). In Those Days, Both The Special Class And The General Public Had Fun And Entertainment. It Is Obvious That The Means Of Special Entertainment Were More And More Diverse Than Public Entertainment, In Some Entertainments, Both Classes Shared, Including Spending Time At Night, When The Public Gathered In The Long Nights And Talked To Each Other. They Spent Their Time Reading Books About War Events And Various Stories. During The Long Summer Days, These People Wasted Their Time By Sleeping Before Noon And Walking Around The Tigris And In The Markets. Many Of The Mamluk Kings Were Not Only Interested In The Gatherings Of Science And Literature, But Some Of Them, Like The Apparent Ruler, Were Delusional, For Example, They Were Knowledgeable In Language, History, And Mysticism. The Mamluk Kings Encouraged The Gatherings Of Science And Literature Until Their Era Flourished With Scholars And Writers, And Many Distinguished Writers Who Were Successful In Literature Got Rich, And Many Of Them Contacted The Institute's Office With A High Hand In Liberating The Delegations And Covenants. . (Lotfi Ahmad, 1999: 47).

### ***2-3 calligraphy and calligraphy***

Calligraphy and calligraphy were taught to people from childhood; It was one of the programs of the elementary education period, which was considered in addition to writing and memorizing the Quran. Later, among the distinguished students of calligraphy and literature, some were recruited into government agencies, and some of them turned to work such as paperwork to earn a living. Or they would become calligraphy teachers themselves (Ghofrani, 2017: 175). There is no doubt that the schools of Cairo continued to train dutiful teachers, and probably what Ibn Khaldun means when he says: The good traditions related to education have remained, nothing but this; Of course, there were those who had local fame and there were literati who were the subject of discussions and comments, and of course there were many teachers who taught religious books, recitation of the Quran, and even history in schools and monasteries. These teachers taught students who wished to replace their teachers one day. The development of religious schools and monasteries during the Mamluk period should not mislead us. Because this had nothing to do with the competence of the teachers, and not even a single big name has survived from this period. These educational institutions did not train talented people or writers with good taste. And in fact, they were nothing but teacher training institutes, with the exception of Ibn Khaldun's introduction by an

extraordinary scientist who was not educated in Egypt, no original work was created in Cairo. This century was the era of encyclopedia writers, biographers and teachers whose works were often It had no value and appearance, and no original and innovative work ever emerged from them. In their era, these writers were people who, when they died, phrases full of praise and praise were placed on their tombstones, and in the description of their condition, certain attributes and words were used, but it wasn't long before their names were completely forgotten, this is what Balzac said. remembers (Witt, 1986: 103).

### ***2-4 performing arts***

Dramatic arts have been the attention of artists in all civilizations for a long time, and in each period, certain dramatic arts have attracted the attention of artists, which differed according to the type of culture and civilization of that era. Research has been done to investigate them.

#### ***2-4-1 marquee play***

Puppet play is an old entertainment that some consider as the origin of European commedia delarte shows, and some do not count it as originating from shows in eastern countries, which later became popular in Europe, especially in the 16th to 18th centuries. The history of these shows in Islam is also not very clear, based on the fact that from the fifth century of Hijri onwards, in some poems, the term play, which in the past, along with the term slave play, in the meaning of marquee play with shadow play, is another type. It was used in puppet shows (Anousheh, 1997: 565). The art of moving dolls developed a lot between the 11th and 15th centuries, and in the Islamic era, we see that there are examples of popular and popular games, and in some references, we see classifications for various games that were popular at that time, which Ibn Khaldun Karag game, which was published during the time of Bani Abbas, I mention that I have found many and varied such popular animated games published in Arab countries, they were also published in Egypt and other Arab countries. It is lit by a lamp, which was considered one of the best means of entertainment at that time. At one time, they were known as imaginary characters, imaginary shadow, imaginary ghost, puppet theater, curtain shadow or imaginary owner (Latfi Ahmad, 1999: 323).

#### ***2-4-2 clowning***

Some people were very skilled in telling the story of other people's voice and appearance, and they used to make others laugh and laugh with their words and gestures. Among them was a man named Abul Ward, who was one of the wonders of the age in all kinds of charms and anecdotes of people's voices. He imitated the faces and voices of others in the Majlis of Anas Mehlabi (Minister of Moazal Doleh) in a way that was no different from those people themselves. He didn't have it, and anyone who saw his face or heard his voice in that state would be surprised, and if the woman and child were dead, they would laugh (Faqihi, 1987: 625); There were other people who (for the amusement of others) spoke the language of the people of Yemen, Maghreb, Khorasan, Ahvaz, Sind and Zanzibar, better than those people themselves. (Faqihi, 1987: 626).

### ***2-5 Playwriting and its performance***

#### ***The first narrative***

It is one of the most creative of the three plays, and some consider it the most creative play in Egyptian history. , which has come of age with all its traditions and customs and in this style, although the format of this gate is like other satirical formats, but it depicts the political criticism of a famous event of that period, which is the recruitment of Prince Abi al-Abbas Ahmed bin Al The caliph is al-Zahir al-Abbasi. And from Baghdad to Egypt and the

celebration of King Al-Zaher Baybars and the hero of this gate is Prince Vasal, whose humorous image is Prince Abbasi. This is Daniel's first chapter of a comedy called Shawaliyah, which means mockery (Latfi-Ahmed, 1999: 257).

### ***The Second Narrative***

Some People Consider This Part As One Of The Authentic Historical Documents And One Of The Real Vital Evidences That Depict The Social Aspect Of Our Most Important Past Era In Egypt, People's Lives Are Less Noticed By History Researchers. Ibn Daniyal Arranged The Popular Language And Common Meanings Among The People In Arabic Style And Addressed All These Common Meanings And Expressed Them With Words That Praised The Abundance Of Linguistic Materials And His Literary Wealth. Returning To This Chapter, We Find That It Is Not A Complete Show With A Specific Theme, But Rather A Series Of Satirical Positions Or Critiques Presented By A Strange Group Of People With Strange Crafts, Who At Markets, Birthdays And Public Parties Were Displaced For About Twenty-Seven Years. He Presents Some Of These Characters According To Their Appearance In The Play (Latfi Ahmad, 1999: 257).

Ibn Daniyal Masterfully Was Able To Provide A Detailed Description Of These Characters In Terms Of Movement Or Manner Of Speech And Communication And Choose Any Character That Suits Them From Among The Dialogue And Their Characteristics From Among The Speech, Actions And Idioms For They Choose. He Chose A Strange And Funny Name For Each Character. Perhaps This Is What Gives Ibn Daniyal's Gates An Important Social Value In The Mamluk Era, Especially Since His First Profession That Of A Bagger In A Shop "Inside Bab Al-Futuh", Helped Him To Watch Closely And Mix With Many Examples. Humans Who Are Full Of Living Evidence (Latfi Ahmad, 1999: 257).

### ***The Third Narration***

Then Comes The Role Of Talking About The Three Extraordinary Works Of Ibn Daniyal, Which He Called "Al-Mutamim And Al-Dha'i Al-Ilitim" And Differ In Content From The Previous Two Chapters, Although It Agrees With Them In Style And Humor. There Is Much Doubt As To The Authenticity Of This Gate's Attribution To Ibn Daniyal, Or At Least It May Have Undergone Many Changes Until It Appeared At A Reduced Level And Presents An Ugly Picture Of All Kinds Of Deviations. Dangerous, Human Abyss, And Those Who Have This Opinion That There Is A Difference In The Texts, This Story Is In The Versions That I Mentioned, And They Support The Existence Of Doubt In Attributing The Entire Representation To Ibn Daniel. Some Believe The Validity Of This Doubt Is Because The Descent Methods Mentioned In This Chapter Are Not Sheikh Ibn Daniyal's Because Of The Descent Tendencies That Exist Around Them. But It Can Be Answered That The Pessimistic Nature Of Ibn Daniyal, As Well As The Conditions Of The Egyptian Society In The Era Of The Mamluk Kings, Corruption, Prostitution, And The Tendency To Carnal Pleasures, All Of These Make The Works Of Ibn Daniyal And Many That Satire And Devotion To Corruption That His Poems Were Based On The Fact That With Humor And Sarcasm, He Encouraged Joy, Laughter And Fun To Overcome (Latfi-Ahmed, 1999: 257).

## **Conclusion**

Entertainment And Games Have Always Been Important Throughout The History Of Civilizations, Which Has Made People Happy And Also Brought Vitality Among Different Classes Of People. In This Research, The Mamluk Period Has Been Discussed And Competitive Entertainments As Well As Cultural Entertainments Have Been Studied.

Competitive Sports Have Been An Issue That Has Always Been Of Interest For A Long Time, And People Have Considered Some Games And Sports As Competition, Which In Some Cases Have Been More Frequent In Islamic Countries; Polo, Swimming, Horse Racing, Jockey And Shooting Were Among The Competitive Sports That Have Always Been Of Interest In The Old Regimes, And The Mamluks Were No Exception To This Rule In Egypt, And They Considered These Sports As Their Main Competitions; In Addition To Increasing Their Strength, These Sports Gave People A Sense Of Beauty And Happiness, And In Fact, They Prepared Themselves For Battle And Moved The Society Towards Happiness. These Sports Were Popular Among All Strata Of Society, And Especially Among The Rich And The Court Strata, They Were More Abundant. In Addition To The Competitive Entertainments, The Mamluk Period Was A Time When Poetry, Literature, And Art Also Grew, And Because Of That, Many Entertainments Were Created, Such As Music, Singing, Plays; Clowning, Etc., Which Has Been Of Interest In This Era; These Entertainments Were Less Popular Among The Common People And Were More Popular Among The Elite Class Of The Society, And Some Of Them Were Special For The Court, Such As Clowning, Singing, And Court Music, Which Of Course Was Popular In The Society As Well. But What Is Certain Is That In This Era, In Addition To Entertainment, There Were Also Cultural Entertainments, And These Issues Showed The Great Importance Of Egyptian Mamluks For Entertainment And Entertainment.

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