In order to build and maintain his army, Muhammad Ali took control of much of the agricultural lands of Egypt to grow products such as sugar , indigo, and cotton that could either be used to make uniforms or exported to Europe in exchange for weapons . He also sought to impose monopolies in many areas of production in order to establish an Egyptian industrial base to supply his army with the weapons . For making all these radical changes, some historians have called Muhammad Ali the (Founder of Modern Egypt) . But it would seem that ruling Egypt was not his only ambition. In 1827 Muhammad Ali asked the sultan to grant him the governorship of Syria . When the sultan refused , Muhammad Ali ordered the Egyptian army to occupy Syria in October 1831, saying that the Ottomans had given asylum to Egyptian peasants who had escaped into the Ottoman territories to avoid conscription .

Ibrahim Pasha, the commander of the Egyptian forces, made quick successes . By December 1832 he had reached the central Anatolian city of Konya, where he defeated an army led by the Grand Vizier. At that point, nothing stood in his way for occupying the capital . Muhammad Ali claimed that he, as sultan, would restore the true glory of the empire. The Western powers were stunned by this position, and they applied pressure in both Istanbul and Cairo;