ADJACENCY OF THE OTHER:
An Examination of the Impact of Alterity
on the Production of Built Form During the Mamlûk Sultanate

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand the spatial consequences of Mamlūk social identity and rule on urban architectural form in al-Qāhirah, or Cairo, during the Mamlūk Sultanate (1250–1517 CE / 648–923 AH); specifically the early Bahri period from 1250 to 1382 CE (648–784 AH). Particular examination will be made of the quality of Otherness inherent to the Mamlūk identity. The intent being to interpret how this quality is reflected in Mamlūk aspirations, motivations, and influences and how those were translated to and imbued within the architecture they patronized.

It is the premise of this work that the differences between the Mamlūks and the culture at large that ‘produced’ them are linked immanently—either directly or causally—to their production and patronage of architecture during the Bahri dynasty. The supposition being that there are significant and demonstrable manifestations of this identity within the built culture of the Sultanate. The stated interest is not solely in the spatial or decorative consequences—architectural products—of Otherness but also its influence on the process of ‘becoming’ for that built form. That process being the means by which that social identity contributed to or promoted the proliferation of architecture and the thriving urban fabric of al-Qāhirah. This thesis will pay particular attention to the Bahri Sultans al-Zahir Rukn-al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari, al-Mansur Sayf-al-Din Qala’un, and al-Nasir Nasir-al-Din Muhammad and their roles as

1 Where not otherwise stated all years will be provided in common era dating.
2 Alternately 1250–1390 CE (648-792).
3 The selection of the earlier dynasty is, in part, designed to test Humphreys’ assertion that ‘it is at the beginning of a new style that the symbolic expressiveness is at its highest pitch’ (Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 77) and as such will hopefully yield the important information about the expression of the Mamlūk as a sovereign power. Also while the Mamlūks were not the only patrons during this period ‘the finest monuments, those which most fully display the range and possibilities of the Mamluk style, emerged from its dominant group’ (Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 78) meaning the Mamlūks themselves, and specifically those with the disposable wealth to do so—amīrs and Sultans.
4 Commonly (and henceforth) referred to as al-Zāhir Baybars or Baybars I; r. 1260 –1277 CE (658–676) al-Bunduqdari meaning (of the Crossbow?).
5 Commonly (and henceforth) referred to as al-Mansur Qala’un or Qala’un; r. 1279–1290 CE (678–689).
architectural patrons. Understanding of such Otherness will be achieved through examination using the lens of theoretical discourse specific to the spatial and Other. In so doing the intent is to create active discourse specific to such contradictory and multilayered Otherness, which may be applied elsewhere.
Preface

This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Kathryn Moench. It builds on previous original and unpublished research by the author.
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Glossary

**Ablaq**: Pattern of striped masonry, consisting of alternating courses of light and dark stone; occasionally the effect is achieved through applied colour.

**Adhan**: Call to prayer.

**Amīr** (also **Emir**): A term used in much of the Muslim world to denote a high rank of nobility or office. Can be used synonymously with both prince (title of nobility) and commander or general (high military rank).

`Asabiyya: An Arabic term denoting social cohesion. Originally relating to tribal bonds, historian Ibn Khaldūn used the term more broadly as community relating the presence of it among Mamlūks to their success as a regime.

**Atrak**: A term used in reference to Mamlūks, and later without differentiation to the Ottomans.

**Awlād al-nās**: Sons of Mamlūks; specifically the sons of Mamlūk amīrs.

**Ayyubids**: Kurdish Muslim dynasty which preceded the Mamlūk Sultanate in Egypt and Syria.

**Bahr**: Arabic for river. From which the term bahri (‘of the river’) is derived, due to the Bahri Mamlūks having been based on the Isle of Rhoda on the Nile river.

**Bahri Dynasty**: The ‘dynasty’ comprising the first half of the Mamlūk Sultanate, lasting from the inception of the Sultanate in 1250 CE through 1382 CE (/1390 CE) with the rise of the Circassian (or Burji) ‘dynasty.’ It is characterized by a composition of Mamlūks of primarily, Kipchak (Turkic) ethnicity, their residence ‘on the island’ within Cairo and a profusion of architectural patronage.

**Bimaristan**: Persian word meaning hospital or literally ‘place of healing.’ Also sometimes shortened to maristan, ‘place of illness.’

**Burj** (also **Burg**): Arabic term for the tower of a fortress or city walls. From this, the term burji or burgi (‘of the tower’) is derived, indicating the Burji Mamlūks’ seat of power in the citadel of Cairo.

**Circassian dynasty**: Also called the Burji dynasty, refers to the second half of the Mamlūk Sultanate, lasting from 1382 CE through the end of the Sultanate in 1517 CE. The Burji followed the Bahri ‘dynasty,’ and are differentiated by the predominance of Circassian ethnicity.
**Dar al-Harb:** Term meaning ‘abode of war.’

**Dawlat al-Turk:** Roughly ‘Regime of the Turks,’ used in contemporary Arab historiography to refer to the Mamlûk Sultanate (1250–1517 CE).

**Dihliz:** Vestibule (literal), in a house would refer to an anteroom or corridor; in a tent it would be the outer area (sun-blind) or ante-tent.

**Ghulam:** (plural Ghilman) Within the Islamic world, a category of military slave who were soldiers taken prisoner in battle; though the term is sometimes used interchangeably with Mamlûk the ghilman were a distinct class not prevalent during the Ayyubid or Mamlûk Sultanates.

**Halqa:** The broad body of troops made up of freeborn soldiers, i.e., the regular non-Mamlûk division of the Military. The halqa troops were often commanded by Mamlûk amîrs.

**Hammâm:** Bathhouse, or Turkish Bath.

**Ibn 'Abd Allah:** A nondescript Arabic name meaning ‘son of the slave (or servant) of God’ given to many Mamlûks.

**Iwan:** Three sided vaulted (usually) hall facing onto a courtyard or hall.

**Iqta’:** Loans of land revenue as a means of remuneration for military service and loyalty.

**Jâmi’:** (also jama or jama masjid) Congregational, or Friday, mosque.

**Jihâd:** Refers to a tenant of Islamic belief that categorizes struggle as a religious duty, this struggle has multiple expressions but is most often used colloquially to refer to the practice of engaging in Holy War.

**Khanqah:** (or khanaqah) Sufi ‘monastery.’

**Khiwan:** A formal banquet.

**Kuttab:** Literate class consisting of scribes and administrators.

**Madhahib:** (also Madhhab) A school of thought or a rite, also the four rites of Sunni law.

**Madrasa:** (also Madrasah and Madrassa) Arabic term for school, Madrasa often refers specifically to an Islamic college, but can denote any educational institution (both secular and religious).
Maktabs: Charitable primary schools for boys, a major type of pious foundation during the Mamlük Sultanate.

Mamlük: (also mamlouk, mamluq, mamluke, mameluk, mameluke, mamaluke or marmeluke; plural: Mamālik) Arabic term meaning, roughly, ‘owned.’ The term refers to a type of Islamic soldiers of slave origin, a practice ranging from the ninth to the nineteenth century. They rose to power as a nonhereditary oligarchy in Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1517 CE.

Maristan: see Bimaristan.

Mashhad: A mausoleum or shrine for a saint or martyr.

Masjid: A neighborhood mosque (smaller in scale than the jamī/congregational mosque)

Mawali: Term (Arabic) referring to non-Arab Muslim, applicable to converted Mamlūks.

Milk: A type of freehold appanage, privately owned property.

Mujāhideen: (plural mujāhid) An Arabic term referring to a Muslim engaged in jihād, or a struggle for Allah.

Muqarnas: A corbel type of decorative feature often found on the underside of architectural features such as arches and domes; also called stalactites due to their resemblance to the natural feature.

Nasab: Patronymic component(s) of an Arabic personal name that indicates an individual’s heritage. Ibn, meaning ‘son,’ or bint ‘daughter followed by the father’s proper name; or where multiple generations are being traced grandfather or more remote male ancestor.

Qa‘a: In Mamlük architecture, a ceremonial hall consisting of a central space flanked by two iwans with two smaller lateral iwans or recesses. Usually the qa’a formed the focal point of a residence or palace where most meals, hosting and other important activities were held.

Qubba: Arabic word for tomb, refers more specifically to a domed mausoleum.

Qibla: Arabic word for ‘direction,’ is an orientation fixed from any place towards the Kaaba in Mecca; this alignment serves as the direction Muslims orient towards during prayer. Architecturally, mosques generally include a niche—mirab—on the wall facing qibla; this niche is set in what is called the qibla wall.
Rab‘: An apartment building, in Mamlūk al-Qāhirah these were usually attached to other structures such as commercial shops.

Ribat: Small fortified base for soldiers; sometimes also referring to a hospice or caravanserai.

Riwaq: An peristyle like arcade, usually surrounding and open towards the central courtyard in a building.

Sabil: A manned water-house equipped cisterns; often provided for within the scope of the waqf of pious endowments, supplied neighbourhood with water as a form of charity.

Sahn: The central courtyard of a mosque; it can also refer to other types of courtyards—residential etc.

Shadirwan: A vertically inclined fountain set on a wall.

Sīdīs: Term used to refer to sons of sultans and sultan’s Mamlūks.

tablakhāna: Term denoting an area which housed military drums, also the space used for performance of military fanfare at the gates of the houses of amīrs of a certain rank.

Tiraz: A band of stylized arabic script applied—usually horizontally—to a Islamic building façade; the term borrows from the name for the embroidered band on ceremonial and high ranking persons’ clothing. Both embroidery and inscribed bands are often gilded or embellished with gold.

Turba: Term used widely in reference to a range of funerary structures including: graves, tombs, mausolea, and complexes hosting one of the preceding as well as other religious functions.

Ulemā: (singular Ālim) Class of religious scholars, arbiters, and judges within Islam.

Umarā: The upper echelon of amīrs; the term amīr al-umarā describing the ‘amīr of amīrs’—or ‘prince of princes.’ The Mamlūk oligarchic council, the umarā al-mashura, was comprised from among those in this exalted category of amīrs.

Ustādh: Term conferred to a master—as in the slave-master duo; or teacher.

Wala: Expression of the mutual loyalty that is a major tenet of the Mamlūk-owner relationship.
**Waqqf:** (plural: *awqāf*) In Islam, an inalienable endowment. Typically designated for the finance of a building or institution—usually attached to a building—intended for religious or charitable purposes, often for: education, mosques, or the poor.

**Waqqfiyya:** The endowment deed for a *waqqf*.

**Wāqif:** Relating to *waqqf*, a person dedicating or patronizing a *waqqf*.

**Wazir:** (or Vizier) Title given a highly ranked minister or political advisor.

**Wikala:** One type of hostel for merchants; also *Khan* and *Caravansari*.

**Zawiya:** A residence for sufis.
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I lovingly dedicate this thesis to my parents,
without whose help and support this would be a collection of blank pages.
Introduction

The architecture of the Mamlūk Sultanate has been the subject of interest and study dating as far back as the nineteenth century when, during the Napoleonic era, a number of thorough representational works were made detailing surviving Cairene architecture. Major works from that period include the napoleonic *Description de l'Égypte* from 1809 through 1829 and architect Pascal-Xavier Coste’s *Architecture Arabe, ou Monuments du Kaïre, Mesurés et Dessinés, de 1818 à 1826*, from 1837. Since then the political and historic Mamlūk Sultanate has been studied taxonomically, typologically, and dynastically. Despite the abundance of sources exploring the history of the Bahri dynasty, it has only been relatively recently that the study of the Mamlūks has begun adopting more sociocultural perspectives as a means of approaching the subject matter. Rabbat and Behrens-Abouseif have both contributed extensively to the sociocultural aspect of Mamlūk studies examining from new nuanced perspectives the political, religious, linguistic, and architectural aspects of Mamlūk life. It is specifically these authors work that provide the primary springboard for the thesis’ framing of the Mamlūk Other and its influence on their architecture. This particular lens of the Other—influenced by postcolonial discourse on Self/Other—represents the primary contribution and distinction of this thesis as it may illuminate important aspects of Mamlūk architectural production that existing works have not yet done. There are a number of others whose contributions into these new perspectives will be considered along with the fundamentals laid out by the aforementioned.

This exploration will draw heavily from the above sources, as well as older less socially focused sources dealing with Mamlūk architectural, military and dynastic history. The combination of these materials with specific lenses generated from the ongoing discussion of Otherness will be used as a means of approaching and framing the investigation. There is currently little work explicitly examining Mamlūk social identity and Otherness within the existent discourse; within this limited group few—or none—are framed as lenses through which to understand Mamlūk architectural history. I would argue that recent discourse around cultural

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7 French, b. 1787; d. 1879.

expression has incidentally dealt with the Otherness of the Mamlūks. Considering the fundamental attitudes, ambitions, and mentalities at the core of the Mamlūk condition reveals that the sociological Mamlūk and their identity as ‘Other’ are inextricable from one another. This examination is rooted in these core attitudes, as well as the multifaceted and often-contradictory culture exposed by them. Emphasis will be placed on the influence that the nature of Otherness—particular to the Mamlūk ruling class—had on the production of architectural form, ornament and spatial relationships. The definable, quantifiable and qualifiable attributes of this influence is equally emphasized.

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute a new facet to the ongoing aggregate of Mamlūk studies. Towards this end, I aim to approach the topic of Mamlūk produced spaces through a syncretic discussion of the phenomena of Otherness—often associated with colonial and post-colonial discourse—as it can be applied to the unique condition of the Mamlūks. In so doing, I will test the applicability of the conceptual Other to the recognized Mamlūk identity, specifically as it is manifest in architectural patronage. I hope through this to open up a new avenue of insight into both that identity and into the suitability and range of the Other as a novel realm of multi-faceted power dynamics. These insights by extension may add to the discussion of Mamlūk motivations and requirements in their fashioning of urban spaces.
One: Historic Context

[B]rought from the House of War to the House of Islam under the rule of slavery, which hides in itself a divine blessing. By means of slavery they learn glory and blessing and are exposed to divine providence; cured by slavery, they enter the Muslim religion with the firm resolve of true believers and yet with nomadic virtues unsullied by debased nature, unadulterated with the filth of pleasure, undefiled by the ways of civilized living, and with their ardor unbroken by the profusion of luxury. The slave merchants bring them to Egypt in batches, like sand-grouse to the watering places, and government buyers have them displayed for inspection and bid for them, raising the price above their value. They do this not in order to subjugate them, but because it intensifies loyalty, increases power, and is conducive to ardent zeal. ... When the masters know that they have reached the point when they are ready to defend them, even to die for them, they double their pay and increase their grants [iqta'], and impose on them the duty to improve themselves in the use of weapons and in horsemanship, and so also to increase the number of men of their own race in the service for that purpose.9

This is the emergence of the Mamlūk; the ‘owned.’ For 1000 years, bought and trained for the purpose of standing between Islamic rulers and the remainder of the world; as both shield and sword. They are forever caught in this state of interstice—neither of the society they shield, nor of any they shield it from. Inherently Other by everything they are. From the moment they are ‘owned’ their previous self begins to become unmade and remade Mamlūk; outsider to all mankind save for those who are similarly reconstructed.

Meet The Mamlūks

Understanding the unique and somewhat paradoxical qualities of Otherness intrinsic to Mamlūk identity—and by extension its architectural projections—requires a basic look at the history that so positions them. The Mamlūks were a class of slave soldiers unique to, and ubiquitous within, Islamic militaries between the ninth and nineteenth centuries. Bought or captured at a young age, the Mamlūks were enslaved and imported from territories outside of Islam. The Mamlūks hailed from a broad range of homelands; David Ayalon provides an

9 Ibn Khaldūn; b. 1332– d. 1406. (Northrup, From Slave to Sultan, 242-3.)
expansive list of different ethnic groups the slaves belonged to,\textsuperscript{10} illustrating that the Mamlūks were brought from all over Europe, Asia and Africa. At the time of the founding of the Sultanate, however, the majority of Bahri Mamlūks were of Turkic origin having been appropriated primarily from the Kipchak steppes.

Once purchased by the sultan, an amīr, or other high-ranking individual, these young slaves were trained as soldiers and molded into elite warriors; their ranks becoming integrated as increasingly vital elements within military and guard infrastructures throughout the Islamic world. The reason for Mamlūk ubiquity in the Islamic world can be largely credited to expansionist ambitions fundamental to Muslim practice from the outset of Islam. Ambitions that caused a rapidly growing gap between the increasing demand for ‘suitable military manpower (for garrisoning the occupied areas and for further expansion) and the quite limited human resources available in the Arabian peninsula.’\textsuperscript{11} Aside from manpower shortages, further theories regarding the rise of the Mamlūk institution include: technological advances—the invention of the stirrup precipitating the rise of and need for cavalry; the Muslim failure to approximate an Islamic ideal and subsequent withdrawal from Politics; the preservation of nomadic lifestyles—prominent in the regions the Mamlūks hailed from; and the shift amongst the Islamic elite away from military life towards more privileged commercial endeavours.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} These included: Turk, mughul, kifjak, tartar, khía’iyya, rus, rum, arman, as, abaza, laz, and jarkas.

\textsuperscript{11} Ayalon, “Preliminary Remarks on the Mamlūk Military Institution in Islam,” 44.

\textsuperscript{12} Northrup, \textit{From Slave to Sultan}, 245.
The latter two are mutually inclusive facets of a single condition arising from a tension between new urbanization and the nostalgia for former traditions and conventions. Collective Islamic memory tied their origins to the tribal lifestyle of the desert dwelling nomadic Bedouins, and as such nomadic lifestyles continued to be held in some degree of reverence. Consequently—despite an overarching progression towards more sedentary and ‘comfortable’ urban lifestyles—contemporary Islam retained many of the social mores and values associated with nomadic life. Ancestral Mamlūk backgrounds were identified as being nomadic (figure 1) in nature and resonated accordingly with ideals held within an essential cultural core; seemingly incompatible with those values, Mamlūk heritage was simultaneously deemed ‘uncivilized’ by those appropriating them as slaves. It was not the evolution of a single element that promoted Mamlūk integration across militaries within the Islamic world—nor by extension was the thoroughness of their integration attributable to a single aspect of Islamic society. Those impetuses, which principally concern this study, are those essential to the reality of the Mamlūks’ existence that led to their prestige and prevalence by the mid-thirteenth century; prestige and numbers that directly facilitated Mamlūk ascendancy to power in 1250.

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13 Coste, Pascal, “Camps and Tents of the Turks,” illustration, 1837, *Architecture Arabe*. Though drawn significantly later than the Bahri period, it is not dissimilar to what a Mamlūk camp may have been like.

14 Not to be mistaken for a value judgement of progress.
The military power of Mamlūks—as disparate elements of a related trend—waxed and waned throughout the institution’s history in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{15} The concluding years of the Ayyubid Sultanate experienced a defined apogee for Mamlūk power. The year 1250 CE marked a critical juncture, as the royal Mamlūks of the Ayyubid dynasty were powerful enough to usurp political control during a period of dynastic transition, founding the Mamlūk Sultanate in Egypt—and shortly thereafter Syria. The last major Ayyubid ruler, Sultan Al-Sālih Ayyūb, initially bought and built up a formidable force of personal Mamlūks to overthrow his father and—being uncertain of the loyalties of those around him—kept them.\textsuperscript{16} When al-Sālih Ayyūb died during the campaign to halt the advance of the seventh crusade in 1249, his Mamlūks\textsuperscript{17} turned back the invasion. They did so while maintaining the illusion, with the complicity of the Sultan’s widow Shajar al-Durr, of al-Sālih Ayyūb’s continued rule. The upper echelon of the Sultan’s royal Mamlūks kept their master’s demise a closely held secret to maintain control and keep a major weakness from their enemies as well as from their own troops and subjects.

Shortly after the victory against the Norman crusaders al-Muazzam Turanshah, al-Sālih Ayyūb’s son, was assassinated; due, in part, to a combination of al-Muazzam’s late arrival\textsuperscript{18} at the front, as well as his general dismissal of his father’s Mamlūks. Following his death the Mamlūks, as military commanders of the forces assembled to repel the foreign invasion, took the opportunity presented and usurped control of the Sultanate; thus ushering in the \textit{dawlat al-Turk} or ‘Regime of the Turks.’ Enduring until the Ottoman conquest in 1517 CE, the Mamlūk Sultanate is often divided into two periods the Bahri and Burji ‘dynasties.’ The earlier period,

\textsuperscript{15} The Mamlūk Sultanate was neither the sole nor the first instance of slave soldiers usurping power from their owners in the Islamic world. Both the Khwarazmian dynasty (c. 1077 to 1231 CE) and the Ghulam Dynasty (c. 1206–1290 CE) predate it; and the Mamluk dynasty of Iraq following later (c. 1704-1831 CE). Though I have not made any particular study of these regimes, I have the impression that they were more truly dynastic than the Mamlūk Sultanate. Considerably less academic attention has been paid them enabling the general use ‘Mamlūk Sultanate’ to refer unambiguously to the Syro-Egyptian Empire spanning from 1250 to 1517 CE.

\textsuperscript{16} Ayalon, \textit{Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans}, 183.

\textsuperscript{17} With al-Sālih Ayyūb’s wife Shajar al-Durr.

\textsuperscript{18} He had been sent from the away from the Egyptian court due to his father’s distrust of him.
commonly called the Bahri ‘dynasty,’\textsuperscript{19} spanned from 1250 to 1382 CE (figure 2); it is distinguished by the bulk of the Mamlûk ranks being of Kipchak Turkic origins and named in for their garrison’s location on the Isle of Rawda within the river Nile. The Bahri were followed by the Circassian or Burji ‘dynasty’\textsuperscript{20} lasting from 1382 CE until the fall of the Sultanate in 1517 CE; the regimes two names referring to their Mamlûk members’ origins from the Caucus region and the location of their tower garrison within the citadel.

Mamlûk seizure of power evolved first through puppet rule, then marriage, and finally outright usurpation of the sultan’s throne. Commandeering of the throne and control of succession led to a privileged upper class of Mamlûk \textit{amîrs}; distinct from the general elite class designating the body of Mamlûks—which was even greater during the Sultanate. During the Mamlûk regime the Sultanate was maintained as a—primarily—non-dynastic oligarchy which was self-regulating (at least theoretically). The Sultanate’s elite continued the policy of their predecessors in maintaining the continual influx of young able-bodied male slaves to bolster the Mamlûk ranks; thereby preserving the foundation of their regime. This group of Mamlûks experienced a multifaceted identity of Otherness—being slaves, foreigners and non-Muslim born—something which was reinforced politically, culturally, and spatially. It is the production of architecture in the capital of al-Qâhirah—later amalgamated with surrounding areas into modern Cairo—by those comprising the ruling body of Mamlûk Others during the Bahri dynasty, which constitutes the focus of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{19} Bahri (or Bahriyya) a term given al-Sâlîh Ayyûb’s Mamlûks meaning ‘of the river’ in reference to the location of their residence on the isle of Rawda on the Nile; the group is distinguished from the later Circassian Mamlûks, as being composed largely of Turks from the Kipchak steppes of the Black Sea.

\textsuperscript{20} Like the Bahri, the epithet of ‘Burji’ referred to their principal residence within ‘the tower.’ The group and their period of reign is also called ‘Circassian’ in reference to the Mamlûks of the era chiefly originating from the Circassia region of the Caucus.
Figure 2 Map of the Mamlûk Sultanate

21 Map showing the rough extents of the Mamlûk Sultanate following the military victories over the Mongols, Crusader and the Kingdom of Jerusalem.
Two: On Otherness

Otherness

Mamlûks Otherness presents itself as a counter-thesis to ideas of Otherness as proposed by scholars such as Emmanuel Levinas, Edward Said, and Simone de Beauvoir. To narrow in upon the ideation and identity particular to Other as it is meant here and as I propose it existed within the specific parameters of the Mamlûk character, the simplest reduction is in identifying what such Otherness is not. To begin, there is very little correlation between the term as it is meant here and the infinite and Divine Other prescribed by Levinas in his writing. While some of de Beauvoir’s concept of the Other is applicable, in this context the term will be considered absent of the gender dynamics central to her work; this is not to imply that such dynamics are absent within the Mamlûk Sultanate but rather that they are not the ‘Other’ which is the focus of this study. Said’s Orientalism’s focus on the Other-ing implicit in a unidirectional discourse of the ‘occidental’ positioning—a academically and institutionally—upon the ‘oriental’. It is this focus on the discourse and the remoteness of such exercises that problematizes its application to the Otherness of interest to this thesis. Said’s power dynamic is one primarily of framing and viewing, which in the dialectic of the Mamlûk other is held by members of the group which supply the ‘sameness’; though held, in that case, without the autonomous authority implicit in Said’s anglo-franco orientalists, hampering a clean application of his work even in a contrary role to serve as an interesting foil to the consideration of the Mamlûk-Other paradigm. The relationship of Other and Same with regards to the Mamlûk was not one of passive discourse applied remotely but is much more active; while not all aspects—perhaps none—involving equitable consent to their roles, all parties participate in the power structure.

The ‘Other’ implicit in much post-colonial discourse is at once comparable and completely alien to that Otherness which characterizes the Mamlûks, their reign and their

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22 An example being Levinas’ *The Infinite Other*.

23 An in depth look at the role of gender within the Sultanate would certainly prove to be an interesting subject matter for further study, working from the efforts of Ayalon’s.
personal identities. The fetishized, feminized, and vulnerable is the antithesis of the Mamlūks’ Otherness which at its core had an essentialized ideation of robust masculinity and power.

Due to the particularities of the Mamlūk state—both as Other and in reference to the particular regime in question—and the difficulties inherent in applying post-colonial discourses of Otherness to an essentially similar, yet fundamentally disparate, situation a great deal of latitude is to be expected in—and is, arguably, necessary to—the application of that discourse.

The Mamlūk Other

The positioning of Otherness becomes a question of belonging: if not ‘Same,’ then what? The Otherness of the Mamlūks is both more and less simple than the absolutes inherent in much of the prevalent concepts of alterity and the Other. Simpler in that the binary relationship being investigated is neither abstract nor ontological, it manifests as a tangible binary of ‘Other and Same;’ Mamlūk and non-Mamlūk. A clear distinction is created between the class of Mamlūk and extant culture(s) within the Sultanate, most notably the dominant Arab culture. This distinction is manifest in both physical and symbolic ways; distance is created through linguistic, cultural, and architectural means.

In this way the unfettered duality resembles most closely the postcolonial discourse of Said and Bhabha. Said advocates an Other ‘which refers to the act of emphasizing the perceived weaknesses of marginalized groups as a way of stressing the alleged strength of those in positions of power.’24 However, the intimation of a unidirectional power structure—or in fact any uncomplicated power dynamic—would be to completely misconstrue and distort the nature of the interaction between Mamlūk alterity and the rest of the Sultanate or even the contemporaneous Islamic middle east at large. The complexity inherent within the power dynamics of the Sultanate is reflected in the polarity of the Other as both the dominant power as well as a minority and marginalized group—though this is still, in many ways, an oversimplification that disregards the nuances of the power structure. Bhabha’s development of

24 Martin Jones et al (find source)
these concepts through notions of hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry allow a more nuanced approach to interpreting the Mamlük Other. This is particularly helpful in garnering an understanding of that Otherness with its varied and complex interaction with the cultural milieu of its day. Similarly the work of Foucault concerning the nature of power and control particularly in his discourse on similitude and adjacency allow a more fluid and dynamic application to the development of a Mamlük Other.

In scrutinizing the nature of power, the types, attributes, and sources of it, the underlying structures of control within the Sultanate emerge. On the surface three basic classes existed within the Sultanate: the Sultan and Mamlüks, the literary and religious intelligentsia, and the common populace; other non-Mamlük slavery was present broadly throughout, belonging to none of these categories. In terms of actual social-standing the inherent hierarchy deviates slightly, placing a class of merchant princes—a subset of the common class—much higher than their less wealthy counterparts and en par with the highest the literary strata—or higher though always beneath the Mamlük caste at the apex. Additionally, there existed among the Mamlüks themselves a discrete military ranking structure. There were also, it should be noted, many more groups for whom no neatly defined niche existed within this power structure. One such example, is the class of eunuch slaves whose influence is not easily quantified; while they were crucial—as supervisors, protectors, and trainers—to Mamlüks’ upbringing during their training period and after,25 eunuchs no longer held the positions of power they had in earlier eras. This was a significant curtailing as they were allowed only limited and defined boundaries26 restricting their status and only the very highest chief eunuch might rise to mid-rank at most.27

25 Ayalon, Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans, 33.

26 Ayalon, Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans, 176.

27 Ayalon, Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans, 194.
Equating power with strength the Mamlūks had uncontested supremacy during the Bahri period. Their military capabilities and performance, which brought impressive victories against the crusader and Mongol armies, established their dominance in this arena. Much of their initial authority stemmed directly from their successful campaigns during the early ascendancy of the

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28 Rough diagram representing the general power dynamics and hierarchies of the Bahri Mamlūk period. Should not be read as directly representative of populations size or specific interactions.
Sultanate. The power-strength rubric neatly generates a traditional vehicle for understanding Mamlûk Otherness within the framework of postcolonial dialogue—supremacy and submission. However once Rabbat’s examination of the language and tone of the biographic and historic compositions of the period is applied, the clear and unidirectional power structures begin to distort and collapse. His evaluation suggests a complex interplay of tension and reciprocity between the Mamlûk military leadership and the ulemâ and kuttab, who constituted the literary class. It is within that exchange that the multilayered power dynamics inherent to the Bahri period begin to be understood.

The ascension of the Mamlûks from military necessity to supreme political authority severed the literary classes from their traditional avenues of power (figure 3). The combination of the Mamlûks’ carefully cultivated alienation and their internal and impermeable system of recruitment and promotion meant that the political sphere was inaccessible to those outside of the Mamlûk caste. The scholarly cast had, previously, been afforded access to power and wealth through the political realm within the medieval Syro-Egyptian world. This privilege is visible in the case of the Wazir to Ayyubid Sultan Salâh al-Dîn, al-Qadi al-Fadil (1131–1199 CE), who had enjoyed great influence; he had an impact on the reign and practice of jihâd of—arguably—the most well known leader of the medieval Islamic world. Another example is the writer Wazir Nizam al-Mulk al-Tusi (r. 1063–1092 CE) who personally owned a cadre of many thousand Mamlûks. Predictably the diminishment of the scholarly casts’ stature to the direct benefit of the foreign ex-slave class was not easily accepted. The displeasure of the ulemâ manifests itself


30 Within Islam, and more specifically the Mamlûk Sultante, ulemâ were men belonging to a class of religious scholars, arbiters, and judges.

31 Like the ulemâ, the kuttab were ‘men of the pen,’ only their class consisted of more civic roles such as scribes and administrators.


33 At least from a western mainstream cultural perspective.


in the subtle yet perceptibly disrespectful treatment of the Mamlūks in the literature of the period.

Linguistically a significant division existed between the Mamlūks and the whole population of non-Mamlūks within the empire. Though their training included religious education—facilitating conversion—not many Bahri Mamlūks spoke Arabic, fewer still became fluent in its common form, let alone High (Classic or literary) Arabic. What had been an instrument of control for their masters in previous regimes became a significant communication barrier after the Mamlūk assumption of power made them the masters. This led to a need for an intermediate chancery class through whom the Mamlūks disseminated much of their rule. Even after the institution of many awlād al-nās36 into the chancery class, Mamlūks remained disparate from the linguistic and literary traditions of their realm; this despite the ability of the sons’ generation to interact far more freely in Arabic—both linguistically and culturally—than their fathers’.

The cultural-linguistic barrier does not appear to have been a significant obstacle to their rule. Despite this the ‘language barrier must have caused communication problems between the Mamluks and the literati, although the chroniclers never speak of any.’37 There is no suggestion that this was taken advantage of in the day to day running of the empire. However, advantage was taken to some degree by the literary class in whose hands lay the task of recording for prosperity accounts of the Sultanate and its rulers.

At first glance one might mistake the recounting of ruling Mamlūks’ speech, featuring the use of rough low-brow Arabic, as possibly being an accurate transcription of the words of these Mamlūks who had not mastered the nuanced Classical form of the language. Examined more critically—as Rabbat has done—it becomes evident that such instances were often conversations

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36 A subgroup within the literati that was specific to Mamlūk Egypt the awlād al-nās—or ‘sons of the nobles’—were the direct byproduct of the Mamlūk single generation caste structure. The awlād al-nās, as they were identified collectively, comprised the sons of Mamlūks; grandsons and great grandsons would often also be considered as members of this group. (Conermann, “Awlād al-Nās as Founders,” 24) ‘The awlad al-nas were rarely recruited into the Mamlūk army,’ most awlad al-nas ‘belonged to the literati and chose, or were compelled to accept, a career in a religious or administrate field.’ (Rabbat, Mamlūk History Through Architecture, 15)

37 Rabbat, Mamlūk History Through Architecture, 17.
amidst the upper power structure of the Mamlūk oligarchy, which would not have been undertaken in any form of Arabic. Such conversations would have been in Turkic, which was often their native tongue or had been the externally conferred language of choice.

The Mamlūks spoke Turkish and the literati rarely deigned to learn Turkish; ‘possibly as sign of alienation or contempt.’ Therefore, such literature cannot have been recording verbatim intra-Mamlūk conversations; they may not in fact be reflective of any true conversations at all. The conclusion suggested by these circumstances is that the application of coarse language or low-brow vernacular was a conscious choice by the literati caste. Contemporary writers’ decision—and ability—to depict their rulers with a degree of disrespect without evident censure is reflective of the nuanced relationship between the literate caste and their Mamlūk ‘overlords;’ for while the majority of the Mamlūks did not possess a high degree of Arabic literacy they were not without the resources necessary to access contemporary writing.

**Intra-Mamlūk Otherness**

As previously touched upon, the Mamlūk ranks were composed of men from numerous different homelands. Due to their disparate origins it may be moderately misleading to represent a unified history of the Mamlūks; as they do not have a shared history in the sense that might be generally understood for groups with common ethnic and geographic heritage. Though the Mamlūks would bond through training one might consider that there was, in some ways, an Otherness even amidst the Mamlūk ranks. Each Mamlūk’s experience of homeland, youth, and journey into enslavement was distinct from another’s; some would have been sold by family or local leaders while others were captured or taken by force. This distinction is, naturally, a matter of degrees; unique histories may have been less relevant during the Bahri period when the

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Mamlūks were imported\(^39\) as young boys—than it was during the Circassian dynasty when it was more common for the Mamlūks to arrive as adolescents.\(^40\)

It is possible, within the scope of this study, that such internal diversity contributed to the overall quality of Otherness designated by the Mamlūks’ general position outside the prevailing culture and their shared experience as Mamlūks. The absence of a coherent shared history prior to their enslavement may instead be considered as another facet of Mamlūk dissimilarity from their subjects; though it would be erroneous to assume homogeneity in the Sultanate overall. As such this examination endeavours not to quantify their Otherness in relation to these unique histories and pre-Mamlūk identities, but rather to comprehend the influence of their shared experience as Other in which this collection of past lives and dissociated heritages are included.

The foreign origins of the Mamlūks was essential, both as a prerequisite for enslavement within Islamic law,\(^41\) as well as for social dissociation and alienation. The enduring loyalty inherent within tribal cultures of the region created a political condition in which no sultan could be assured that he had the fealty of his regular troops—or even personal guards’—above that which was due their local amīr or tribal chief. This made the Mamlūks, as an extrinsic entity, invaluable to their owners; Mamlūks’ imposed lack of history, kinship or incompatible fealties was one of the most critical facets of their institution. The value of this is well expressed in Seljuk Wazir Nizam al-Mulk’s words:

\[
\text{One obedient slave is better than three hundred sons; for the latter desire their father's death, the former his master's glory.} \tag*{42}
\]

\(^39\) Though contentious and dehumanizing to modern sensibilities, the term ‘imported’ is accurate to the era and attitudes of the time.


\(^41\) Pagan, or more precisely non-Muslim, populations were necessary target of enslavement in the Muslim world, as they could be owned under Islamic Law—where Muslims were not. (Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 246) – “Ayalon, "Aspects: a) Importance," 203, reprinted in idem, Mamluk Military Society, Xa, 203. Also David Ayalon, "The European-Asiatic Steppe: A Major Reservoir of Power for the Islamic World," in Actes du XXVe Congres International des Orientalistes, II (Moscow, 1963), 47-52, reprinted in idem, Mamluk Military Society, VIII, 47-52.”

\(^42\) Attributed to Seljuk Wazir Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092). Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 245.
The training phase of the Mamlūk youth during the Bahri period served to facilitate this dissociation from their past, while their seclusion within the barracks established and maintained their alienation from the surrounding culture. The condition created therein, contributed to the development of unambiguous obedience and devotion towards their owner who became the focus of their new circumstances.

The removal of the boy from his homeland and transporting him into the Islamic Syro-Egyptian world made him an outsider in many respects. The severing of the Mamlūk from his history, family and homeland was not simply a matter of distance but was symbolically reinforced in the obliteration of their unique individual identities. They were bestowed with new names—predominantly Turkic in origin—connected to the anonymous and dissociative Arabic name of *ibn 'Abd Allah*; formalizing the forcible disinheritance from their own pasts. Moreover, this ‘orphaning’ would set them unequivocally outside the Arab culture amidst which they were to live and for whom the imposed lack of lineage would cause a harsh degree of humiliation; this confluences of severances acted to make them ‘dependent on, and theoretically fiercely loyal to, their new master, to whom they would henceforth owe whatever fortune they might find in life.'

The Other Sons

The resulting relationship between master and Mamlūk is often described as patriarchal in nature. In becoming a Mamlūk novitiate, a boy’s world was completely dismantled and reconstructed. His fellow Mamlūks occupied the space voided by whatever relations he lost, becoming his family in all but blood. Within this familial structure the sultan filled the role of father, assuming both the loyalty of and responsibility for his Mamlūks appropriate to the

43 Meaning ‘son of the slave (or servant) of God.’ Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 244-45.
44 Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 244.
45 Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 244.
46 Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 244-45.
47 Or other owner.
paternal-filial relationship. Naturally there existed within that relationship the fundamental dimension of being sovereign and subject, possessor and possessed. It is not, however, the latter quality that uniquely defines the relationship, but rather the idiosyncratic dichotomy of the two; father/master and son/slave. The disproportionately high number of Mamlūks owned did nothing to skew this relationship as historian Baybars al-Mansūrī describes a sultan:

reaching the number of 6,000 [mamluks], whom he bought from his own purse and whom he trained as though they were his children, for the purpose of jihād, of raiding enemies, and of standing by [him] . . . . Tis substantially large group had the same standing as his sons with him, or rather, they had a higher standing than his sons.49

This distinction between a ruler’s sons and his personal Mamlūks is so blurred that a single term, sīdīs, could be used to refer to either or both groups.50 It was neither uncommon for a Mamlūk to refer to his ustādh51 as ‘father’ nor for a master to make Mamlūks an heir.52

This familial imagery is highlighted by the ceremonial: ‘khiwan or formal banquet, at which the great amīrs partook—briefly and formally—at the table of the Sultan, attended by his household officers, symbolizing the peculiar combination of military hierarchy and patriarchal household which formed the essential structure of the Mamlūk state.’53

The training period created a kind of crucible that, through intensity and isolation, solidified a sense of `asabiyya54 among the Mamlūks. During the Mamlūk Sultanate, if not before, the training period terminated in conversion and manumission.55 This would be followed by service in an elite corps within the military or as personal guard to the sultan—al-mamalik al-

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48 D. 1325 CE


51 Master.

52 Irwin, The Middle East in the middle ages, 4.


54 A strong bond akin to kinship or clan cohesion.

55 Northrup, From Slave to Sultan, 245.
—positions that commanded significant remuneration and prestige for a Mamlūk as he was promoted through the ranks. The act of manumitting and rewarding one’s Mamlūks further solidified their already not-inconsiderable allegiance—at least in theory.

While not universal, this paradigm of mutual loyalty, or wala, was a main tenant of the Mamlūk-owner relationship. ‘It was thus the combination of their complete dependence on their master, who was the sole arbiter of their fate’ ... ‘and their unbound gratitude to him for raising them from nothingness and anonymity to the peak of power and wealth, which made the freedmen so faithful and loyal to him.’ The patron’s relationship with and responsibility to his Mamlūks was not bound by the Mamlūks’ time as slave but extended beyond their manumission and was a projected aspect of Mamlūk identity. The broadening of the patron’s allegiance past manumitting his Mamlūks was beneficial to the individual Mamlūks in many ways as they retained, when freed, their station within the elite Mamlūk class. Despite the contradictory connotations evoked by the term Mamlūk, meaning ‘owned,’ describing freedmen, the state and identity of being Mamlūk persisted. Reciprocally the Mamlūks’ loyalty, wala, tied them irrevocably to their patron. Mamlūks’ allegiance did not end with their slave-status. If anything, loyalty was strengthened, as is illustrated by Islamic juridical texts that state: ‘the man who emancipated a slave gave him life and therefore was indeed in a sense his father.’ The historic account of Muhammad b. Yazid b. Hatim al Muhallabi’s fighting a losing battle exemplifies the concept of wala. When the futility of the battle became apparent, Muhallabi told his mawali to save themselves and leave him to fight alone, to which they replied:

By God! If we do so, we would cause you great injustice. You have manumitted us from slavery and elevated us from a humble position and raised us from poverty to riches. And after all that, how can we abandon you and leave you in

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57 Ayalon, “Preliminary remarks on the Mamlūk military institution in Islam War,” 50.
58 Northrup, From Slave to Sultan, 245.
59 ‘Possessed’ or ‘one who is owned.’
60 Irwin, The Middle East in the middle ages, 4.
61 Term (Arabic) referring to non-Arab Muslim, which applied to the converted Mamlūks.
such a state? Oh no! Instead of that we shall advance in front of you and die under your steed. May God curse this world and life altogether after your death.\textsuperscript{62} 

The account ends with his Mamlûks dismounting, hamstringing their horses,\textsuperscript{63} and fighting to the death beside their master.\textsuperscript{64}

The history that is shared by the Mamlûks is something altogether Other. As a nonhereditary designation, the very act of being Mamlûk separates them from the history of their ancestors and from any descendants—for those who had them. The impermeability of the class meant that it maintained itself as a uni-generational institution, thereby excluding a Mamlûk’s children from sharing their father’s status. The universal Otherness implicit in their identity existed through a common identification achieved through shared experience. Undergoing the annihilation of their previous identities and the forced adoption of the new nonspecific one located the Mamlûk firmly as Other. It is this shared quality of Otherness, rather than the individual pre-Mamlûk histories, which is of most interest to a study of the influence of Mamlûk alterity. However the individual circumstances of Otherness may feature in the examination of the specific acts of patronage among the Mamlûk ruling elite.

**The Paradoxical Other**

‘It is not for nothing that unlike ordinary freedmen they continued to be known as Mamlûks, and unlike ordinary converts to be called by their ancestral names, for all that these names were as barbarous on the tongues of the believers as those of the crassest Shubis’.\textsuperscript{65} Similarly the entire regime is subject to this alienation, as Arabic historiography designates the Mamlûk Sultanate as the *dawlat al-Turk* or ‘Regime of the Turks'; essentially and self-referentially designating the regime as foreign to itself and the territory it occupied.

\textsuperscript{62} Ayalon, “Preliminary remarks on the Mamlûk military institution in Islam War,” 49.

\textsuperscript{63} To eliminate ability and temptation to retreat.

\textsuperscript{64} Ayalon, “Preliminary remarks on the Mamlûk military institution in Islam War,” 49-50.

\textsuperscript{65} Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 78.
Somewhat perversely there appears—though this is not without contention\textsuperscript{66}—to have existed an ethnic and cultural fellowship between the Mamlūks and their military enemies, the Mongols, whom they were praised for defending Islam against.\textsuperscript{67} It is suggested\textsuperscript{68} that the Mamlūks experienced a stronger socio-cultural kinship to Mongols than with the local populace. While the Bahri dynasty was impermeable to its Arab subjects even through marriage, many Mamlūks had wives of Mongol origin; including seminal leaders Baybars and Qala’un. Turkic and Mongol histories and lore featured heavily within Mamlūk literary works,\textsuperscript{69} and early on Baybars is reported as having adopted the \textit{Yasa} of Chingis Khan\textsuperscript{70} as an integral document for intra-Mamlūk relations. While the Mamlūk regulations cited as being part of the \textit{Yasa} do not seem to have been part of it;\textsuperscript{71} perhaps more interesting than their purported adoption of the \textit{Yasa} is the evident desire to give the impression of it. There is a notable absence of any spread of these documents within the coexistent Arabic culture of the Sultanate within Egypt and Syria.\textsuperscript{72} Whether this was the result of rejection or suppression—or some amalgam of the two—is ambiguous. Moreover this is not an absence resulting from a scholastic vacuum, but rather occurs in a culture of intense literary and educational engagement spurred by the Mamlūks themselves\textsuperscript{73}—evidenced by the proliferation of libraries and \textit{maktabs}\textsuperscript{74}—making this

\textsuperscript{66} Irwin argues that such influences were relatively trivial—as hairstyle and dress—and that ‘the notion that Baybars imposed a Mongol pattern of organisation on the Egyptian court and army must be regarded as a fifteenth-century myth.’ (Irwin, “The Middle East in the middle ages,” p. 52)

\textsuperscript{67} While culturally identifying with the Mongols the Mamlūks comfortably engaged them in battle. Similarly the main internal turbulence was between the Mamlūks and the populace but rather between Mamlūk factions. Put succinctly, ‘[i]n theory the ruler was a shepherd; and in practice the Mamlūks, for all they might fleece their sheep, directed the predatory instincts mainly against their own kind.’ (Crone, \textit{Slaves on Horses}, p. 88)

\textsuperscript{68} By scholars such as Ayalon, Crone, Fuess, and Poliak—to name a few.

\textsuperscript{69} Ayalon, \textit{Islam and the Abode of War}, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{70} The ‘Great \textit{Yasa}’ of Chingis Khan was a code of laws combining ancestral tradition, custom and laws with his own additions.

\textsuperscript{71} Ayalon, \textit{Outsiders in the Lands of Islam}, p. x.

\textsuperscript{72} Ayalon, \textit{Islam and the Abode of War}, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{73} Ayalon, \textit{Islam and the Abode of War}, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{74} Maktabs were charitable schools for boys, they were a significant building type of pious foundation during the Mamlūk Sultanate; a category of architectural work patronized by the Mamlūk elite. Often in found on corner lots in the upper story over a \textit{sabil}—or public fountain—below them.
nonexistence a conspicuous choice rather than a result of limited literacy at the time. While the lack of culturally ‘Mamlūk’ literary works does not speak directly to the spatial consequences of these distinctions, it certainly creates a framework for understanding the quality of Otherness being enacted spatially.

The Mamlūks were ‘characterized by both personal dependence and cultural dissociation’—fundamentally both slave and foreigner. This status was in no way happenstance, but rather the result of centuries of careful cultivation by the leaders of Islamic states that ‘produced’ Mamlūk warriors. The qualities that made Mamlūks so valuable as military assets, ‘servile status and alien origin,’ were deliberately instilled as a means of controlling their involvement with the Islamic State. Servile status and alien origin were combined in the Mamlūk, though these qualities existed discretely prior to the appearance of the slave soldiers in Islam. The reasoning being that ‘[l]egally and psychologically aliens do not belong, and mercenaries do not usually have strong views on public issues in the polity which recruits them.’ While segregation appears to have originally been imposed as a means of control in early application of the Mamlūk institution, it later becomes self-imposed. The Mamlūks’ elite status and Otherness during the early Sultanate becomes a self-perpetuated condition that is both privileged and exclusive. Perhaps as the Mamlūks absorbed the externally imposed conditions of their marginalization over the long term, their alterity became internalized as an integral facet of their group identity. The ongoing language barrier may be an example of how such previously imposed segregation could later become a somewhat voluntary—or potentially even desirable—attribute of their particular elite status.

Understanding the Mamlūk as servile and alien facilitates the argument of Mamlūks as an entity external to their contemporary culture, but produced by it and reliant on it to complete a reciprocal power dynamic. While they are not ‘of’ the contemporaneous Islamic culture, they are undeniably a product of it—as it is the only culture in which Mamlūks have existed; ‘[a]gainst

75 Crone, Slaves on Horses, 74.
76 Crone, Slaves on Horses, 74.
77 Crone, Slaves on Horses, 79.
the ubiquity of the institution in the Muslim Middle East, we have its total absence in the pre-Islamic and the non-Islamic Middle East—further afield.

The Mamlûks’ persistent attitude towards the sultanate reinforces the argument that although they were a product of it, to some degree accountable to it, and had and maintained control over it they were not ‘of it’ in any organic way. Their treatment of the office of sultan testifies to this, for while they sometimes allowed dynastic inheritance there is little to suggest that Mamlûks—as a cultural entity—ever viewed that role as intrinsically dynastic. For the most part the person of sultan was—to varying degrees—more primus inter pares than autocrat; he served as a figurehead who served as a necessary instrument for protecting their collective, and individual, interests. The fundamental interest served being their continued hold on power. The council of the umarâ al-mashura/majlis al-mashura—comprised roughly of the two dozen highest ranking amîrs—served unofficially as the primary political authority during the sultanate. The balance between the power held by the sultan and those held by the umarâ being determined by an individual sultan’s ability to consolidate their control and the number of high positions held by members of his household or faction. Those sultans, like al-Mansur Qala’un, who managed to control enough high positions through members of the faction of which he was head, gained for themselves a certain degree of autonomous rule—though none could act with complete disregard for the council.

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78 Crone, Slaves on Horses, 80.
81 An exception to this when during the Qala’unid period—following the reign of al-Nâşir Muhammad—when the position of sultan was permitted to pass down hereditarily to a series of puppet rulers. During this time the council appoint—or recognize the supremacy of—one among themselves as the al-amîr al-kabîr. The al-amîr al-kabîr was effectively—though not publicly—the sultan, he took on the mantle of true authority in the empire. Levanoni, “The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate,” 374, 384.
83 Mamlûk oligarchic council of high ranking amîrs.
The Architectural Other

The character of the architecture produced during this time is intrinsically linked to the social matrix in which it was produced—it is from this that its quality of Otherness stems. To assess the nature of the relationship between Otherness and architectural patronage, it is crucial to begin by understanding the role of the Mamlûks in regard to architecture; this necessitates a dissection of the role of the creator—or architect—and his authority during the Mamlûk Sultanate. Towards that understanding, one must bear in mind that no formalized architectural profession existed during the period, something which is neither significant nor unique to the Sultanate. With very few exceptions the general attitude towards craftsmen, artists, and artisans during the Mamlûk sultanate was much like that of their contemporaries within the medieval world. An attitude which was—up until the redefining of such roles and their relation to the societies which gave rise to them during the renaissance and subsequent epochs—pervasive and generally disinterested in the ‘maker’ as an individual. Which is to say that very little in the way of interest or regard was afforded them in Mamlûk historiography and only those who significantly ‘broke the mold’—as it were—and were notable in other disciplines or social categories were given recognition or even—in fact—noted at all in contemporary chronicles. While records may make mention of monumental and great works, their creators and their processes were relegated to obscurity, in their own time as well as in history.

In the absence of a direct analogue for the modern position of architect (or designer), an effort can be made to identify the profession—or professions—that performed approximately corresponding functions. There seems to be a general agreement that within the Mamlûk Sultanate the role of architect—or rather its equivalent—should be viewed as being predominantly technical and supervisory, rather than creative. There are a limited number of occupations that are similar to that of architect; three of the more likely candidates being: the

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85 Rabbat, “Architects and Artists in Mamluk Society,”
86 Rabbat, “Architects and Artists in Mamluk Society,”
87 Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 78.
mi‘mar, the muhandis, and the shadd.88 Discounting the Mi‘mar, roughly ‘mason,’ and muhandis, or measurer, as less likely candidates, being contributing craftsmen but otherwise obscured by the previously mentioned disinterest in such people and positions in the written record, the role of shadd remains. Though muhandis encompassed a diverse skill set and is perhaps the closest corollary existing at the time to ‘engineer’ whose expertise seem to have leant themselves mostly to more civic works, such as bridge building. The shadd, however, worked as superintendent of specific projects, and as the primary arbiter of design under the patrons direction would be the role that is most of interest in this study.89

Shadd positions are a particularly important consideration in relation to building during the Bahri era as they effectively consisted solely of Mamlūk amīrs. The combination of the professional exclusivity and the preeminence of urban projects during the early Sultanate pervaded all levels of Mamlūk politics. This penetration reached its zenith during the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad, during which a special department of building, diwan al-‘ama‘ir; and first-rank amīr post, shadd al-‘ama‘ir; were created. The latter, which became a standard title for first-rank90 amīrs was the equivalent of a ‘director of public works’ for the Sultanate.91

Restricting project management to members of the military elite meant that Bahri Mamlūks—as an entity—exerted tremendous control over urban development in al-Qāhirah. It is reasonable to infer that the autonomy afforded by their innate military command structure would have granted Mamlūk patrons a high degree of direction and control over their own projects. An involvement that was evidently invaluable to many sultans and amīrs, as Bahri Mamlūks were uncommonly—for men of their social and political stature—engaged in the process of building making. It was not unusual for Mamlūk amīrs to engage in anything—or everything—from making aesthetic decisions to physical participation during construction.92

89 Rabbat, Mamluk History Through Architecture, 34-37.
90 Though it would later experience a decrease in prestige and be held by second-rank amirs; this were not minor mamluks.
92 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 16. ??
Direct patron involvement meant that labourers and artisans responsible for constructing buildings during the Bahri era carried out the function, effect, and exact specifications laid out for them by a Mamlūk amīr. Apart from overseeing craftsmen and serving as intermediary to the patron, the shadd amīrs were broadly responsible for the project, program, and budget. As a result of the prestige of such positions, as well as their de facto Mamlūk status, the shadd are the only names among the construction workforce referenced in contemporary Mamlūk documents.

These circumstances allow an acknowledgement that any innovation in a given building as being ultimately attributable to the Mamlūk patron—or more broadly to a collective expressive intent within the Mamlūk ruling body. Consequently, it is neither essential nor particularly advantageous to this thesis to differentiate directly imposed non-Mamlūk filters to understand their influence on Mamlūk patronized works. This is not to suggest that no external influences were enacted in the buildings, simply that the decision to allow such influences was made under the supervision of or directly by the Mamlūk patron—made either deliberately or as a result of ingrained social conditioning. Similarly, while Mamlūks were not the only patrons to undertake architectural projects during their regime, ‘the finest monuments, those which most fully display the range and possibilities of the Mamluk style, emerged from its dominant group.’

Accepting the above statement, Humphrey’s assertion that ‘a particular builder, even if he is trying to innovate, will still probably be working within the bounds of his society's concepts and values concerning architecture, its social functions, and its expressive possibilities’ can be examined within the context of the Mamlūk Sultanate. In addressing the ‘bounds of [the patron’s] society’s concepts’ it becomes less clear which society’s boundaries—and thereby values—are being expressed. Humphreys’ view presupposes a level of belonging within the society in question that is problematized by the inherent Mamlūk exteriority. A more concrete

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94 Nor, for that matter, to imply that no building projects were undertaken by non-mamlūks.
95 Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 78-79.
96 Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 78.
comprehension of a Mamlūk’s particular position, type and level of belonging to that society must be generated. A thorough assessment of this relationship—of Mamlūk and belonging—is integral to interpreting the expressive intent, concepts, ideologies, and values being engaged by the architecture.

Drawing from Foucault’s concepts of similitude and adjacency a new approach to understanding the architectural construct of ‘Mamlūk Other’ may be attempted:

[C]onvenientia. This word really denotes the adjacency of places more strongly than it does similitude. Those things are ‘convenient’ which come sufficiently close to one another to be in juxtaposition; their edges touch, their fringes intermingle, the extremity of the one also denotes the beginning of the other.97

The prospect of this Other as being a creation adjacent to its predecessors has remarkable possibilities. The notion that Mamlūk-created space occupied a position of adjacency to its political precursors—ideologically and literally—allows the physical architecture to be read as being both spatially and temporally convenient to those antecedents. In this way, the architecture may be situated, or read as ‘convenientia’ to the power and legitimacy of the previous regime. Insinuated in this it becomes the existence of Otherness which is fundamental to the juxtaposition and edge condition; in order for two or more objects of discussion to be convenient to one another they cannot be ‘same.’ In examining the Mamlūk conception of urban spatial engagement it may be possible to understand how the adjacency and interstitiality of the Mamlūk Other has corollaries in the spaces produced by them.98

98 Both adjacency and liminality will be unpacked and examined more closely in their respective sections.
Three: Building A Legacy

All kings accomplish things with which to be commemorated, either fortunes or monuments; I have erected sturdy bastions for myself, my children, and all Muslims: these bastions are the Mamluks.99

Patron Sultans

The three sultans whose patronage is being focused upon, al-Zāhir Baybars, al-Mansur Qala’un, and al-Nasir Muhammad, are notable as being among the longest reigning Bahri sultans, but also—and relatedly—as having each made important contributions to the urban development of al-Qāhirah during their reigns. Those contributions represent an evolution in the language and distinctive architectural identity of the Mamlūk period. It is relatively unremarkable that the longer and by extension—arguably—more stable reigns of Baybars I, Qala’un, and al-Nasir Muhammad would similarly produce the economic and political climate necessary to promote exceptional urban growth.100 Further similarities exist amidst the building efforts of these specific rulers.

Particularly notable are their respective construction efforts on the citadel of al-Qāhirah, they represent three of the only four sultans to undertake development of the citadel—the fourth being Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil ibn Qala’un, al-Mansur Qala’un’s son and older brother to al-Nasir Muhammad,101 whose contributions were limited by the brevity of his rule.102 They were the only Mamlūk sultans to build their own throne halls—the most blatantly visible and publicly accessible element in the citadel (figure 4).103 This is significant as examples of contributions to scarce non-pious architecture, as well as in understanding the evolution of the act of Mamlūk

99 Sultan al-Mansur Qala’un (r. 1279-90).
100 Though it is notable that al-Nasir Muhammad’s rule was as much longer than that of his father or al-Zāhir Baybars as theirs was to the shortest of the Sultan’s reigns – and could be said to have been appropriately more architecturally productive.
101 Rabbat, “Mamluk Throne Halls”, 125.
102 A scant three year reign.
103 Rabbat, “Mamluk Throne Halls”, 125-126.
self-creation and representation as rulers. They are, between them, responsible for a majority of the foundational elements which defined the Mamlūk Sultanate; both architecturally and in policy.

Figure 4 Al-Nāṣir Muhammad’s Great Iwan and Mosque at the Citadel.¹⁰⁴

Lion Of Egypt: Al-Zāhir Baybars

Despite starting his reign ten years into the Mamlūk Sultanate, al-Zāhir Baybars is often depicted as the father of the era and holds a place of particular honour in chronicles. His reign was a period of some political stability, military victories, and is the time when much of the institution of the Mamlūk Sultanate was codified and solidified. The architecture of his reign represents the moment between the old regime and the fledgling style of the new Mamlūk era.

¹⁰⁴ My own based on Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamlūks: al-Nāṣir Muhammad’s Great Iwan (left)—demolished—and his Mosque (right) at the citadel.
Hospital Builder: Al-Mansur Qala’un

Al-Mansur Qala’un’s reign is distinctive in a number of ways, not the least of which being that he managed to consolidate within members of his Mamlük ‘household’ high-ranking positions necessary to consolidate control. It was this control that made him one of the most individually powerful Mamlük sultans; allowing his reign a measure of—internal—stability and productivity. No doubt related to the stability of the power base he created during his tenure, he was the most successful Mamlük sultan in terms of founding a dynasty through which multi-generational hereditary succession was enacted; though his son, al-Nāsir Muhammad, may be likewise credited with the ongoing success of the Qala’unid dynasty. From his reign through to the end of the Bahri period, his lineage comprised the major occupants of the sultanate’s throne —though many of his descendants did not hold any significant power.

Other Amid Other: Al-Nasir Muhammad

Though the binary relationship of Mamlük / non-Mamlük is clear, it is not absolute. Exceptions are made to the nonhereditary status of Mamlük by the occasionally hereditary mantle of sultan. There arises a question of the role of an ‘Other’ within the Other; namely the positioning of ‘the son of the Mamlük’ as neither ‘of the Other’ nor ‘of the Same.’ Yet it is important to understand this position as a persistent ‘anomaly.’ The recurrence of this incongruity of non-Mamlük Mamlük sultans is rampant within the Bahri dynasty. As an exception it is particularly interesting given that the Sultanate is generally viewed as having begun with the—albeit brief—rule of Sultan Shajar al-Durr a bondmaid and later wife to al-Malik al-Sālih Ayyūb, considered the last Ayyubid sultan. As a woman, Shajar al-Durr was manifestly ‘not a Mamlük,’ however she was analogous to them being a former slave and of Turkic origin.

105 Al-Mansur Qala’un was himself an exception as a Bahri Mamlük having been recruited at the advanced age of twenty and bought for the impressive sum of 1000 dinars; a circumstance which earned him the nickname of ‘al-Alfi’ or ‘the Thousander.’ Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 129.
Following the model of her reign many—indeed most\textsuperscript{106}—of the Bahri sultans had a hereditary affiliation and were not in the truest sense ‘Mamlūk.’ Having been neither owned, inducted through Mamlūk training, nor belonging to that specific single-generational military hierarchy these men—or boys as was frequently the case—could not be Mamlūk. This lack of Mamlūk-ness creates a dissonance, wherein the personification of the regime—the sultan—is not a true member of the ruling culture; the culture that defined the period. The implicit disconnect is mitigated by the simple actuality that often the hereditary Mamlūk sultan was not, in any substantive manner, ruling. In much the same way as the new Caliph was a construct of the Mamlūk apparatus for generating legitimacy—holding a superficially elevated position without any tangible authority—so too the sons-of-sultans were largely puppets of the powerful oligarchy of Mamlūk amīrs. Most were inaugurated young at the discretion of the upper echelon of Mamlūks, and had generally short reigns before being either deposed or disposed of. Primarily such sultans appear to have functioned as a figural stopgap while the mechanics of power were determined or conducted elsewhere; collectively these boys and young men were figureheads and little else, certainly not the directors of the Sultanate. Such sultans can be categorized as neither wholly belonging to the class of ‘sons-of-Mamlūks’ nor to that of the Mamlūks themselves, but rather a specific and liminal category as brief titular heads-of-state. Because a ruling council of Mamlūk amīrs indisputable held political power during those reigns, their anomalous incumbency has little effect on our understanding of the influence of Otherness and identity upon the production of Cairene urban space and architecture.

The hereditary—or potentially hereditary—nature of the post of sultan creates an exception to the quality of the Mamlūk identity and likewise exceptions exist within these anomalies; dynastic sultans who successfully seized power. Al-Nasir Mohammed epitomizes this as he was amongst the most successful of Mamlūk sultans. As a sultan, al-Nasir Muhammad thrived both in terms of longevity of reign(s) and—essential to our interests—as a prolific patron of architecture having erected 535 buildings during his rule, of which 230 were built in the capital of al-Qāhirah.

\textsuperscript{106} The rapidity with which most dynastic sultans were inaugurated and disposed likely contributes to their high numbers.
Notwithstanding al-Nasir Muhammad’s typifying this exception, he is also an example of the rule, having been inaugurated initially at the age of nine, again at fourteen, and finally under his own power at twenty-four. During his first two reigns he appears to have had little or no tangible authority. That being the case, al-Nasir Mohammed undoubtedly learned from that experience and had begun to consolidate his power by the second time he was deposed, after which he regained his throne within a year and held it for the next thirty-one; distinguishing himself as the longest reigning sultan of the Mamlūk Sultanate.

The establishment of al-Nasir Muhammad’s third reign was achieved through force, having built up his own personal retinue of Mamlûks whose loyalty was unquestionably his. That force and loyalty enabled al-Nasir Muhammad to eliminate senior amīrs from rival households shortly after his accession. Effectively crippling the ability of the umarā council to usurp him again and setting the foundation for his solid reign by vacating crucial political and military positions, he could fill with those whose loyalty he was certain of. In both the manner of obtaining power and of public positioning of his third rule, al-Nasir Muhammad’s action are comparable to a Mamlûks’—instead of the ‘son-of-Mamlûk’ he was. In establishing his power by right of factional overthrow, rather than by inheritance, al-Nasir positioned himself as a true Mamlûk ruler; something which would be recognized and respected by the amīrial elite. That this was an act of deliberate political positioning is evidenced in his defense of his reign where he plainly states: ‘“I did not take the rule by heredity, but I took it by my sword.”’107 Al-Nāṣir Muhammad viewed his rule—and by extension his right to it—and the naming of his successor as non-dynastic exercises; at one point naming an amīr as his successor and at another proclaiming his intent to bequeath neither property nor money to his children.

As will be explored further on, the unique quality of these experiences—making him an outsider amidst outsiders—and the well-founded nature of his authority, had some distinct reverberations in the urban products of his regime. The vast urban projects of Al-Nasir Muhammad’s third reign represent the zenith of urban development and of the architectural style of the Mamlûk epoch. The length and stability of his reign allowed the stimulus of al-Nasir’s

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intense focus on urban construction—and incentivizing others to produce the same—as well as the tremendous scope of those endeavours. He is particularly notable as having undertaken, more than any other Mamlûk sultan, a grand urban initiative including a new canal system to furnish the city’s water needs (figure 5).

**FIGURE 5** “Vue des Casins sur le Canal El-Khalyg, hors la Porte Bab-el-Charyeh”\(^\text{108}\)

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Four: Mamlûk Architectural Style

In order to examine the architecture of the Bahri dynasty in relation to the potential influences of the Mamlûks’ Otherness it is productive to first develop an understanding of the parameters defining the architecture of that period; particularly in contrast with that of other periods or regimes not of Mamlûk rule and not primarily composed of Mamlûk patronage.

The essential inquiry is to identify what is present in Mamlûk architecture that is absent in other periods’ architecture—principally architecture of those directly preceding and following it, i.e., Ayyubid and Ottoman; and conversely, what is absent in Mamlûk architecture that may otherwise be present in different periods and regimes. How are such contrasting elements attributable—if indeed they are—to the influence of Mamlûk rule or patronage? It is also important to remain cognizant during the inquiry that it may prove somewhat inadequate to presume that all aspects of Mamlûk influence—those particular to their circumstances and identity—manifest themselves as contradistinction. That is, such effects may present themselves as deliberate similitude; absence of change being a contraindication and, therefore, more difficult to apply as evidence for influence. Efforts, however, can be made to understand how such apparent cross-regime homogeneity may be the result of a deliberate strategy specific to Mamlûk motivations.

Using these elements of inquiry there are a number aspects of Mamlûk architecture and the processes associated with its production that distinguish themselves as being particular to the Mamlûk regime and period. Major aspects of architectural production during the Mamlûk period to be considered include: changes in the approach to architectural patronage; resulting new variation in typological choices; and the uniquely Mamlûk motivations that shifted both patronage and typologies in culturally subversive directions. Further to this is an examination of the manifestation of style vis-à-vis the consequences of adjacency, spatial mediation, and mimesis; and the influence that the preceding elements, as well as others specific to the Mamlûk condition, had on the stylistic evolution of Mamlûk architecture in their capital.
The culmination of the motivations, architectural products, and processes was a Mamlūks’ metropolitan style. Major changes in the way architecture was sponsored—and its reciprocal benefits to patrons—stimulated a significant building boom during the Bahri period. That boom, in turn, led to uncommonly fast iterating of style and design particular to Mamlūk al-Qāhirah, which epitomized what is referred to as the metropolitan style. This style straddles the particularities of it’s situation and that of it’s patron creators in being at once uniquely insular and specific to the urban environs of the Mamlūk capital, while at the same time benefiting from international influences afforded it due to its cosmopolitan nature and importance in medieval east-west trade.109

**Metropolitan Style: Insular And International**

The nomadic roots and related cultural preferences of the Bahri Mamlūks from their youth and ancestral connection to the area around the Black Sea appears to have little to no influence on the production and aesthetics of their architecture.110 Similarly while the hospitality proffered foreign scholars and for which their regime was known did not extend towards foreign artists and builders111—at least not to the same degree. Due to this, the broad development of a Mamlūk architectural style was fairly internalized. Though the heterogeneous nature of Bahri Mamlūk architecture contained foreign designs and influences,112 the Mamlūks’ style took primarily from the preexisting styles and typologies within Egypt. The resultant architectural products melded the foreign and existing Cairene works and adopted or adapted them to suit the specific needs and tastes of their regime.

If one accepts Lefebvre’s assertion that each society produces its own space, then perhaps Mamlūk al-Qāhirah was a distilled result of the Mamlūk process of large-scale empire building. Zayde Antrim describes the development of the rise and affect of a unified Mamlūk style as:

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110 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 65.
111 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 65.
112 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 72.
images of Syria and Syrian cities began to fade from the discourse at the turn of the 8th/14th century, replaced by larger-scale images of the Mamluk Empire, Syrian Muslim intellectuals were communicating a new vision of place linked both to the bases for political legitimacy claimed by the Mamluk leadership in Egypt and Syria and to the bases for social and religious prestige they themselves might claim under that regime.\(^{113}\)

While architectural and infrastructural development occurred throughout the whole of the Sultanate, nowhere else received the same degree attention and urban explosion as did al-Qāhirah. Other cities saw growth as a result of changes in populations and economics but none were subject to the focus and sponsorship from the Sultanates amīrial elite as was the capital. The resultant crucible of intense Cairene urban growth merged the Mamlūks symbolically and actually with al-Qāhirah as their city. The concentration of so much patronage—including the somewhat collateral establishment of supporting infrastructure related to it—compacted by the rapidity of innovation and iteration allowed the formation of the Cairene metropolitan style. There are plenty of elements in Mamlūk architecture that evoke this worldly influenced Mamlūk style; those expressed in the complex of al-Mansur Qala’un should not be viewed as representing the Imperial style Antrim mentions, but rather as the early progression towards it. It should be noted that while elements of the Metropolitan style disseminated outwards to the rest of the empire the only place in which it was fully realized, and to which an examination of it is applicable, is within the context of al-Qāhirah.\(^{114}\)

Humphreys distinguishes—at least—four distinct Mamlūk styles during the course of the Sultanate.\(^{115}\) It is indicative of the rapid growth of the early Sultanate that three of these divisions occur during the course of the Bahri period. The first is characterized by little stylistic innovation and heavy reliance on the stylistic vocabulary established by the Fatimids and utilized by the Ayyubids; it extends from the beginning of the Mamlūk era, through the reign of al-Zāhir Baybars. The second period is distinguished as being comprised mainly of al-Mansur Qala’un’s reign and that of his eldest son, al-Ashraf Khalil. The third period encompasses the accession of

\(^{113}\) Antrim, *Place and Belonging in Medieval Syria*, 2.

\(^{114}\) This is due in part to the lack of

\(^{115}\) Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 96.
al-Mansur Qala’un’s second son, al-Nasir Muhammad, until the end of the Bahri period. The fourth stylistic period falls beyond the scope of our interest here; it is characterized by some innovation in the early years of the Circassian dynasty, followed by little alteration until the fall of the Mamlük Sultanate.\footnote{Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 96.}

Partitioning the Bahri period into three distinct stylistic eras is useful for understanding the overall evolution that architectural design underwent between the end of the Ayyubid period to the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad and the third stylistic periods.\footnote{Though I am delineating roughly the same time periods Humphreys and will in part use the criterion he employs my use of the periods may differ from the perimeters of his definitions.} It is this third period, which Antrim is referencing as the Mamlük imperial style, which was the fully unfolded and mature Mamlük metropolitan style. Though this style had wider impact it was realized nowhere else as fully as it was in the capital city.

It is during the early tenuous days of the new empire that one sees this first considered move towards the eventual realization of Mamlük style. The Ayyubid dynasty had adopted more or less unchanged the style of its predecessors the Fatimids. Despite significant typological innovations during the period, a general widening of the repertoire of Islamic monumental architecture, the Ayyubids chose to adopt the old stylistic vocabulary for the new building types. It is out of this unvaried stylistic heritage that early Mamlük patrons emerge.

Humphreys describes this period as following the traditions of their predecessors essentially unaltered—which in itself would be an inheritance of the attitudes of these predecessors. I would suggest, however, that while the changes made during these early decades were minimal compared to those of subsequent decades they were not an outright adoption of that preceding style. The patronage of Shajar al-Durr, and more particularly of al-Zāhir Baybars diverted enough from earlier models and provided precedents for later developments, to merit their inclusion as early iterations in the progress towards a fully realized Mamlük style. Even in these initial examples of architectural patronage the inclination towards change and redefining

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\footnote{Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 96.}

\footnote{Though I am delineating roughly the same time periods Humphreys and will in part use the criterion he employs my use of the periods may differ from the perimeters of his definitions.}
the vocabulary of construction is evident. For instance al-Zāhir Baybars’ madrasa\textsuperscript{118} on Bayn al-Qasrayn introduced a number of elements that would be picked up by later Mamlūk designs, such as the use of stalactite, recessed panels\textsuperscript{119} and the cruciform madrasa in Cairo.\textsuperscript{120}

The second period is mainly comprised of the reign of al-Mansur Qala‘un. It is largely a transitive period between the first and third periods during which greater movement towards new stylistic adaptations are made—and older ones abandoned. It is, however, also slightly problematic as while elements are transitive, it is also somewhat anomalous with some elements tending towards being particularly \textit{sui generis}\textsuperscript{121} in comparison to the stylistic periods bracketing it. Examples of new stylistic elements include: tiered windows evocative of the Gothic style; a small grilled window above the main portal thought to be French crusader craftsmanship;\textsuperscript{122} Andalusian styled horseshoe arches; basilica design referenced in the plan of the \textit{madrasa}; and columns appropriated from a variety of pervious styles from ancient Egyptian architecture onward.\textsuperscript{123} There are others but what is equally important is the absence of certain features such as keel arches and lozenges that were previously ubiquitous.\textsuperscript{124}

It is in its new adoptions and balance of consolidation and dismissal of the traditional that the \textit{al-Bimaristan}\textsuperscript{125} \textit{al-Mansouri} of Qala‘un may be understood as being a seminal building in the progression of Mamlūk architecture.\textsuperscript{126} Most importantly the complex ‘established a precedent for the buildings that followed, so it embodies many of the urban spatial notions that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{118}Arabic term for school, madrasa here refers specifically to an Islamic college.
\item \textsuperscript{119}Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 80.
\item \textsuperscript{120}Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 119.
\item \textsuperscript{121}Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 96.
\item \textsuperscript{122}Possibly a prisoner of war.
\item \textsuperscript{123}Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 74.
\item \textsuperscript{124}Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 95-98.
\item \textsuperscript{125}\textit{Bimaristan} designates a hospital or literally ‘place of healing,’ sometimes shortened to \textit{maristan} or ‘place of illness.’
\item \textsuperscript{126}Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 76.
\end{itemize}
were later to become typical of Mamluk Cairene architecture.'\textsuperscript{127} The specific typology of multifunctional urban complex, a major building type of the era, began with al-Mansur Qala’un’s complex.\textsuperscript{128}

In its resolution of the novel and the conventional that the \textit{al-Mansouri} acts as a vehicle for both the mimesis of camouflaged legitimacy and the expression of the quality of Other. The act of giving weight to the quality of Otherness has spatial repercussions beyond the decorative treatments, as it begins to create a space for itself in the Mamlûk world and becomes a means of ‘re-presentation’ itself rather than repetition. It is the careful balance of the \textit{convenientia} which articulates not only the sharing of adjacencies but also the edges which separate them—both the Other and the same; or almost the same but not quite.

The third period spans—roughly—from the reign al-Nâsir Muhammad through to the end of the Bahri dynasty. It is during this period that a distinctively Mamlûk style coalesces. The style of the period draws from the first two and develops a more coherent and consistent—though still quite heterogeneous—set of common forms and techniques.\textsuperscript{129} Though many of the characteristic elements have prototypical roots within the previous iterations. Elements of fully realised Mamlûk architecture include: a broadening of patronage; changes in the categories of building focused on; a subversive element to both process and type in architecture; a resultant uptake in the amount and rate of development; a specific attitude towards place and adjacency; intensifying of dome and minaret use and pairing; new approaches to spatial mediation and engagement; distinctions in use of fenestration, circulation, and entryways; and Mamlûk-specific uses of mimicry and mimesis in building.

\textsuperscript{127} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 76.

\textsuperscript{128} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 83.

\textsuperscript{129} Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 96.
Deconstructing The Mamlûk Architectural Process

An important factor in considering Mamlûk building practices is the shift in public architectural patronage—begun shortly before the founding of the Sultanate—that widened the scope of architectural commissions to include new classes of citizens. Essentially, opening patronage beyond the narrow category of public architecture driven by state or monarch sponsorship to include other upper classes who had the means to fund architecture; mainly amîrs but could include well-to-do members of the literati and merchant-prince castes. This widening caused a dilution—or perhaps even elimination—of the previously monolithic intersection of religion, public space and sovereignty. The resultant broadening of patrons led to significant changes in the types of buildings sponsored as well as the forms of these buildings. The emergent architectural atmosphere generated an emphasis on pious complexes as the premier architectural category, and an outward subordination—or even neglect—of typologies such as palatial architecture and city founding. Furthermore, conditions inherent to Mamlûk patrons precipitated an evolution of the practice of exercising and financing urban construction.

One of the ways that Mamlûk architectural efforts are distinguishable from much of those produced during earlier periods and regimes is the conspicuous discrepancy between the major building types promoted. Certain building types which the Mamlûks paid little tangible attention to comprised a major part of the ruler or ruling classes’ attention in the realm of built works in earlier and contemporary regimes. The Mamlûk period is hallmarked by the combination of little attention paid to secular endeavours and a great deal of effort and patronage focused on a number of more recent—and potentially subsidiary—institutions affiliated with Islam. Absent from Mamlûk focus¹³⁰ are large-scale urban foundations, royal palaces, khans, caravansaries, and congregational mosques.¹³¹ An exception existed in the notable presence of hammâms¹³² and

¹³⁰ This is not to say that such typologies are absent altogether, only that during a time of comparative abundance in architectural patronage these building types are notably less prominent.


¹³² Bathhouses.
sabil-maktabs\textsuperscript{133} combinations which, while not a focus \textit{per se}, were frequently built in connection to those pious complexes which represented the primary focus of Mamlūk architecture. The lack of those secular foci—and congregational mosques—is highlighted by the enormous volume of major building efforts directed towards other Islamic institutions, often in conjunction with one another in complexes: those dedicated to mystical devotion such as \textit{khanaqahs}, \textit{ribats},\textsuperscript{134} and \textit{zwaiyas}; those providing education in teaching of law and theology like madrasas; and those established for veneration of departed saints and defenders—or upholders—of the faith in the form of \textit{turbas}\textsuperscript{135} and \textit{mashhads}.\textsuperscript{136,137}

Many of these changes are the result of massive conceptual reforms around the idea of kingship. These changes massively impacted all areas of Mamlūk self-presentation, among which architectural sponsorship is a single—albeit substantial—facet. These ideological changes were partly the result of an inheritance from the Mamlūks Ayyubid predecessors—who themselves had not defined their rule according to that of divinely mandated authority—but also as a result of the limitations their own identities presented for generating legitimacy. As the Mamlūks could not change the basic facts of their identity and Otherness, they operated within the boundaries of it to establish their own ideation of kingship and right through military might.

Examining the lack of city building, very little in the way of new urban development outside of al-Qāhirah during the course of the Sultanate is attributable to specific planning or attention from the Mamlūks. For the most part, urban change, both growth and decay, outside of the capital was the organic result of shifts in population and economics, rather than as acts of policy laid forth by the military elite.\textsuperscript{138} Their indifference to the development of cities further off in their domain, is balanced against the attention and growth occurring within the city of al-

\textsuperscript{133} Combination of manned water-house equipped cisterns and primary school.

\textsuperscript{134} Small fortified base for soldiers; sometimes also referring to a hospice or caravanserai.

\textsuperscript{135} Refers to a range of funerary structures including: graves, tombs, mausolea, and complexes hosting one of the preceding as well as other religious functions.

\textsuperscript{136} A mausoleum or shrine for a saint or martyr.

\textsuperscript{137} Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 79-80.

\textsuperscript{138} Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 83.
Qāhirah; though in this too they might be said to have lacked—overall—a grand vision of city building even where their capital was concerned. While infrastructural development—not necessarily urban in nature—as well as the patronage of individual buildings and complexes were not limited to al-Qāhirah, there is certainly no where else in the empire which even remotely rivals the focus of Mamlūk patronage and endowment within their capital.

One particularity of Mamlūk architectural endeavours is their transgressive or even subversive nature. Whilst legitimacy and self-representation seem to have been powerful underlying objectives, more often than not there is an aspect of their approach to civic patronage that seeks to circumvent traditional religious, cultural, or legal proscriptions to attain those goals. This transgressive approach is manifest in a number of aspects of Mamlūk architectural production. The two most pronounced ways are evidenced in the pervasiveness of *waqfs*\(^{139}\) in building financing and in the ubiquity of the urban mausoleum—and by extension of the latter, the pairing of the dome and minaret.

One way in which architectural patronage during the Mamlūk Sultanate can be understood is through the influence of location and adjacency. For the Bahri sultans a recurrent approach to publicly creating and maintaining legitimacy was achieved through making physical and visual connections between their patronage and architecture, and their predecessors’—who’s legitimacy was presumed to be established. Physical location was not the sole method by which these associations were created; frequently this was coupled with a somewhat mimetic approach to building early on during the Mamlūk epoch. The desired adjacency could be achieved through location, but also through mimetic recall and camouflage. Complex relationships present in the interaction between the urban fabric of previous regimes and that of the Mamlūks allow interesting social dissection. Just as fascinating though, are the moments when that adjacency is conspicuously and deliberately undercut by stylistic or functional decisions deriving specifically from the Mamlūks’ condition; decisions which may therefore, be read as being specific to the particular ideations representative of their legitimacy and rule.

\(^{139}\) An inalienable endowment, typically used to finance a building or institution intended for religious or charitable purposes.
Meaning

Humphreys makes a number of observations concerning the architectural trends that categorized the Mamlûk period, which on the face of it are both interesting and useful; however it seems possible that some of the final conclusions drawn from these observations are perhaps open to further exploration. For instance, the palace metaphor is arrived at from observing that grand portals are a feature of Mamlûk monumental public works—particularly madrasas—and are also used in a few amîrial homes or palaces, and thereby concluding that use of grand portals in public architectural works is meant to call to mind these private structures.\(^{140}\) This metaphor may be overstated given that the monumental portal was used in comparably few amîrial palaces. Furthermore, madrasas and private domestic spaces have, it is generally agreed upon, common origins between them—something which Humphreys commented upon himself; the latter often having been converted into the former during the life of the amîrs who built them.\(^{141}\)

Assuredly this practice was often undertaken, not for pious purposes as much as for dynastic and practical ones, but none-the-less the fluidity of interchange between the one type and the other is enough to cast doubt on the absolute pronouncement of placing ‘palatial metaphor’ upon the madrasa by way of the few amîrial households who have similar portals. In fact, given the drastic inequity in the prevalence of the use of the grand portal in favor of the madrasa over the palatial, one might as easily—or indeed far more so—suggest the overlaying of a ‘religious metaphor’ upon the households in question. What then could one discern from this application, that even in the sphere of personal architecture there was an awareness of the public service Mamlûk architecture in general provided? I have no particular argument to make in this regard and endeavour only to present it as a plausible alternative reading of the meaning imbued through stylistic similarities between the two types.

Though, that said, one could imagine that, given the importance of self re-presentation among the military elite, and their reliance on various demonstrations of Islamic piety to

\(^{140}\) Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 111.

\(^{141}\) It should be noted that I am not sure as to whether this might have been the case in the few instances of amîrial portals which Humphreys referred—non-specifically—to.
accomplish this re-presenting, there might have been tangible benefits to creating visual and conceptual connections between instances of worldly indulgence—or at the very least secular focused construction\(^{142}\)—and those of pious patronage and religious contributions. Connections that would in turn bring to mind the military efforts made by the military amīrs towards the protection of Islam—particularly during the early period of the Sultanate.

\(^{142}\) There is no reason to suggest that Mamlūks were stingy where personal luxuries were concerned, in fact the opposite is far more probable. Grand palatial complexes were conspicuously absent during the Sultanate and palatial architecture, in general, was not the focus of their patronage at all. Certainly none of the ceremonial attention was paid to that typology. Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 86.
The symbolism inherent to the mausoleum, combined with its ubiquity in Mamlūk Cairene architecture, resulted in a powerful impact on the aggregate character of urban al-Qāhirah. That mausolea were nearly always combined with religious buildings in a complex meant that two elements were routinely found in proximity to one another; the dome over the mausoleum’s principle chamber and the minaret—ostensibly for the adhan or call to prayer. Separately potent symbols together a binary of commemoration and worship was explicitly charged with lofty and paradisiacal evocations. This duo represent a major component of the

Mamlūk impact on Cairo’s urban landscape and skyline; the composition had no precedent in Fatimid or Ayyubid architecture due primarily to the limited role of funerary monuments.144 Whilst both dome and minaret are found throughout the Muslim world, the coupling of the two was a hallmark of Mamlūk architectural language. Piri Reis145 1525 map of al-Qāhirah (figures 6 and 7), and Venetian Matteo Pagano and cartographer Giovanni Domenico Zorzi’s 1549 woodblock print (figures 8 and 9), both demonstrate the impact and extent of that coupling and its repetition. They create a series of conversations in the way they contrast and relate to one another within and between complexes.

The pairing of minaret and dome is particularly important in the Mamlūk architectural self-presentation. Though seemingly antithetical to the Mamlūks’ architectural tendency to negotiate the existent urban fabric, there existed a desire to achieve a certain status and visibility within the urban landscape. In the absence of the grandeur inherent to spatially isolated monuments, the dome and minaret create a measure of visibility and sense of place for Mamlūk complexes despite the high density of the urban setting. This desire precipitated an increase in the verticality of Mamlūk architecture. In particular the height of domes and minarets were increased that they might have greater visibility from street level; affording the elements a level of conspicuity that made them integral components of the built language of the period.

144 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 71.

145 Piri Reis (c. 1465-c.1555).
**Figure 8** Venitian Map of Mamlûk al-Qâhirah\(^{146}\)

**Figure 9** Detail: 16\(^{th}\) C. Venitian map of Mamlûk al-Qâhirah\(^{147}\)

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147 Detail of *View of Cairo* by Matteo Pagano and Giovanni Domenico Zorzi. 16\(^{th}\) century woodcut in 21 sheets, 895 x 1980 mm (impression from the Acadian Library, London). Detail showing a grouping of dome and minaret pairings. *A View of Cairo*, McDonald, 84-85. Red (domes) and blue (minarets) highlights are mine.
That desire for visibility accounts—at least partially—for the elongated profile of the Mamlūk dome, the shape of which facilitates its visibility from the street below the building. This need to build higher funerary domes in the limited space provided by the Mamlūk tendency to build into the fabric rather than apart from it prompted builders to both raise the transitional zone above the rectangular chamber and extend the drum. As a result, in most Mamlūk domes, the transitional zone and dome proper combined are taller than the façade beneath them.148 This pairing is a feature of al-Zāhir Baybars’s madrasa, Qala’un’s al-Bimaristan al-Mansouri and the complex of al-Nasir Muhammad. The evolution of the extended drum and dome is perceptible on the Bayn al-Qasrayn where the dome of al-Sālih Ayyūb’s mausoleum had no external drum (figure 10), while across from it that of Qala’un’s (figure 11) demonstrates the introduction during his reign of the high octagonal drum.149 Though a similar high octagonal drum is seen earlier in Syrian funerary domes ‘the profile of the Qalawunid domes is quite distinct from that of the Syrian predecessors and should be seen as an innovation in its own right.’150 Where the dome of al-Salih’s mausoleum marked allegiance of the first Mamlūks to their Ayyubid master, the dome of Qala’un signaled a new era of Mamlūk power and dynastic continuity—it remained exceptional during the history of the Sultanate.151

As highly visible architectural elements, domes and minarets allowed an additional level of public self-expression in the array of patterning and styling applied to their surfaces; the urban density necessitated articulation of individual features.152 The proliferation of this duo resonates in the otherwise greatly changed Cairo, which is still in modern times called the ‘City of a Thousand Minarets.’153

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148 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 83.
149 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 81-82.
150 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 129.
152 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 71.
153 The domes seem to have been left to earlier eras. Nicknamed ‘the city of a thousand minarets.’
Architectonics Of Public Spaces

The minaret-dome pairing was a means of demarcating and declaring buildings. They represent a further means through which their creators interlaced visual and programmatic elements of the building with Cairene urban street life. Both minaret and dome are taller than those of preceding styles, which in the medieval city constitute the best—and sometimes only—way for buildings to announce themselves.

The Mamlūk minaret’s chief purpose of obtaining vertical visibility is made apparent by their excess of height; for example the minaret of al-Mansur Qala’un’s complex is 56.2 meters

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tall. They are so tall that they undermine their supposed religious function; the platforms on which the muezzins would stand are too high for the *adhan* to be heard well—or possibly at all—amidst the noise and bustle of the city below. Furthermore some minaret are attached to remote structures—in the desert or cemetery—where even if they had been a more appropriate height the *adhan* still wouldn’t have reached many people.

![Figure 12: Bayn al-Qasrayn: With the Complexes of al-Nāṣir, Qala`un and Baybars](image)

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156 Measured from the ground, according to Creswell. It should be noted that the upper portion of the minaret was rebuilt by al-Nāṣir Muhammad after an earthquake in 1303 damaged it and the current cap is likely added during the Ottoman period; though these may have had some effect on the height it is unlikely to be to a sufficient degree to negate the statement. (Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 135.)


158 Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 112.
The Bayn al-Qasrayn (figure 12) again provides an excellent example of the spatial dynamics of dome and minaret placement. In the complex of al-Mansur Qala’un the minaret is placed on the northern corner of the building thereby attaching it to the mausoleum and not on the side of the entrance portal—as was common practice at the time; a distinct choice was made to situate the minaret away from both the madrasa and the entrance. The result is the first example of dome and minaret placement for artful juxtaposition—something which as we have seen characterized subsequent Mamlûk funerary architecture.

The minaret of al-Mansur Qala’un’s complex originally faced that of al-Zâhir Baybars’ madrasa across Bayn al-Qasrayn. A traveler entering the city and following the processional road into the city would have had clear view of the two towers facing one another at the center of the city. Of the two minarets only Qala’un’s remains one can still understand the node that was created by the pair (figure 12). They were an unequal pair, however, as unsurprisingly both the façade and minaret of al-Mansur Qala’un’s complex were executed on a more monumental scale than their counterparts in Baybars’ madrasa.

The vertical elements help to declare both the presence and nature of the buildings to which they are attached; also within Mamlûk urban context they served to draw attention to social-spatial nodes. These nodes represent moments of spatial pause along main thoroughfares that use expansion to ‘re-orient the observer, to acknowledge an entry into a building, or to generate a place of social interaction’; these moments are what al-Harithy calls ‘urban pockets’ (figure 13). These pockets are useful in understanding how a Mamlûk urban concept required the engagement between their build spaces and the public spaces—with no definitive

159 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 135.
160 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 135.
161 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 135.
162 Al-Zâhir Baybars’ minaret collapsed in 1874 and the madrasa was soon after demolished save for a small wall fragment. (Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 121)
163 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 135.
boundaries of their own.\textsuperscript{165} The multi-functionality of the Mamlūk complex becomes an extension of public life; the architecture and the site interact and are interdependent (figures 14 and 15). The centrality of the urban complexes and their various programmatic functions meant that both the complexes and these nodes were locales of intensive social encounter and assembly; they facilitated interaction and involvement from various disparate social groups, strata, and classes.\textsuperscript{166} Not inconsequential was the increased exposure for the commemorative aspects of the Mamlūk complex afforded by the heightened engagement of the space.

\textbf{Figures 13 & 14 Bayn al-Qasrayn ‘Urban Pocket:’ Diagram\textsuperscript{167} & Atmosphere\textsuperscript{168}}

This engagement was audibly present but also the tomb chambers are often given extra emphasis through physically projecting into the street space and furnishing the façade with a degree of transparency. This practice of visually dominating the surrounding public space was

\textsuperscript{165} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 84.

\textsuperscript{166} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 84.

\textsuperscript{167} Figure 13. Moench, Diagram illustrating flow created between the entrances to al-Mansur Qala’un’s complex (west) and the mausoleum of al-Salih Ayyub (east). Influenced by Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 82.

\textsuperscript{168} Figure 14. Detail: Ebers, Georg, “Door of the Moristan in Kala'oou,” 1878, Travelers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA), 21283. URI:hdl.handle.net/1911/21283
built into the first urban mausoleum, that of al-Salih Ayyub169 (figure 12). Across from it, the complex of al-Mansur Qala’un utilized the opposite volumetric arrangement170 in framing the mausoleum façade between the expanded madrasa and portal on one side, and the minaret on the other. It is through the type of controlled spatial contraction and expansion exhibited on Bayn al-Qasrayn that the sense of enclosure171 and transitive pause is given. Further the similarities in the treatment of the various façades and adjustment to the street axis and nearby buildings lends definition to the inter-lying space.172 The node created between Qala’un’s complex on the west and Baybars’ and al-Salih’s on the east is an example of the Mamlûk tendency to formally define and activate the open spaces immediately adjacent to their buildings which is consistent throughout Mamlûk al-Qâhirah.173

Mamlûk In The Milieu

As previously stated, the architectonics of Mamlûk space were inherently fluid and dynamic as ‘the final product was no longer a self-contained structure that achieved monumentality by setting itself apart in a grand manner, but rather a social space in which each building was an active participant.’174 The integration into the matrix of the city is one aspect of this participation, not only do the buildings not superimpose themselves over the fabric of the city, they mold themselves into it and—this is particularly innovative—into one another. This blending is particularly evident in the buildings along the Bayn al-Qasrayn where the façades of the buildings of al-Mansur Qala’un, al-Nasir Muhammad, al-Kamil and Barquq form a


170 Though there is a suggestion that this was against the wishes of al-Mansur Qala’un who had desired his mausoleum to occupy the space where the madrasa was built. There is, however, no sign that the current arrangement was changed from a previous one so it is likely that the spatial organization was the plan from the beginning. (Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 134-135)


173 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 83.

continuous uninterrupted elevation (figure 15). The contiguous façade treatment in Bayn al-Qasrayn and elsewhere in Cairo—and its cemeteries—is an architectural phenomenon unique to the Mamlûk capital city. The architectonics of Mamlûk space is inherently fluid and dynamic as ‘the final product was no longer a self-contained structure that achieved monumentality by setting itself apart in a grand manner, but rather a social space in which each building was an active participant.’

**Figure 15 View North on Bayn al-Qasrayn from Qala’un’s Portal**

175 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 84.

176 Exemplified by the ‘contiguous facades of amīrs Qurqumas’ and Inal’s funerary complexes in the northern cemetery,’ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 84.

177 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 84.


This blending is particularly evident in the buildings along the Bayn al-Qasrayn where the façades of the buildings of al-Mansur Qala’un, al-Nasir Muhammad, al-Kamil and Barquq form a continuous uninterrupted elevation.\textsuperscript{180} The contiguous façade treatment in Bayn al-Qasrayn and elsewhere in Cairo—and its cemeteries\textsuperscript{181}—is an architectural phenomenon unique to the Mamlûk capital city.\textsuperscript{182}

Just as the Mamlûk metropolitan style attempted to harmonize the urban surroundings and the architecture of their complexes so to they showed an interest in harmonizing the dome and minaret proportions as a single composition. This may have influenced the accentuation of the transitional zone that, eventually, became a staple characteristic of the Cairene mausoleum profile.\textsuperscript{183}

There is a discernible patterning of spatial hierarchies which is visible across the significant elements of three major façade elements; dome, minaret, and fenestration—and sometimes the portals.\textsuperscript{184} The features of each larger element are arranged in a three tiered ascending progression in which each subsequent level is more faceted or complex than the previous. The base level is basic rectangular, the second slightly more complex shapes—pointed arches or octagonal zones—leading finally to more rounded or complex shapes and decorations—the tripartite window topped with occuli or dome (figures 10, 14, 15, and 16). This is a rough description of the progression in which not all Mamlûk buildings fit precisely; however they more often than not follow a similar ascending layering (figure 16). In an architectural style that was not overly pre-occupied with the symmetry of the façade this parallel layering created a type of visual patterning that homogenized the various disparate elements of the buildings.

\textsuperscript{180} Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 84.

\textsuperscript{181} Exemplified by the ‘contiguous façades of amîrs Qurqumas’ and Inal’s funerary complexes in the northern cemetery,’ Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 84.

\textsuperscript{182} Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 84.

\textsuperscript{183} Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 83.

\textsuperscript{184} While I haven’t read anyone addressing this directly—perhaps it’s simplistic to the point that its simply a given—I shall briefly include it all the same.
Example of a breakdown of Formal Hierarchies. Often the transitional zones would be higher to complement the minaret.
Entry, Flow, And Fenestration

Another defining facet of Mamlûk architecture is the novel means with which it dealt with spatial liminality, Mamlûk treatment of the moments that connect—or lie between—spaces is unique. Perhaps this is itself a function of their own liminality within the space of their capital or even their empire. Treatment of liminality in Mamlûk architectonics is a manifestation of the growing interdependence between inside and out. As a result, the use of transitional features—entrances, fenestration and interstices—represents the moments of interface between interior architectural space and external urban space, or between disparate programmatic elements. In Mamlûk complexes such moments negotiate the tensions of private and social and of urban engagement and internal program, and as such they require particular intentionality and treatment.\(^{186}\)

The nature of the multi-function complexes—with domestic, civic and religious programs—favoured by Mamlûk patrons encouraged an increasing transparency between the street and the interior.\(^{187}\) As the buildings’ programs were public or semi-public there was a desire to have a level of engagement with the public spaces adjacent to them. That engagement was an inverse of the introverted nature of architecture\(^{188}\) from pre-Mamlûk periods. Previously façades would reveal scant information about the interior space, the experience of which would unfold once you were at its center.\(^{189}\)

Mamlûk architecture desired both the visual connection and—following earlier traditions—the progressive experience that was inherent to the prevalent collective understanding of

\[^{186}\text{Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 84-85.}\]

\[^{187}\text{Though, it may be worth noting that architecture in Cairo overall is far more extraverted than in many other Islamic countries. Even residential buildings during the medieval period would choose, whenever possible, to provide views on to the street—rather than into the central courtyard. (‘Ali Ibrahim, “Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo,” 47) Such extraversion was important enough that it was always mentioned in the buildings’ waqfiyya whenever a street view existed. (‘Ali Ibrahim, “Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo,” 49.)}\]

\[^{188}\text{Particularly domestic and military.}\]

\[^{189}\text{Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.}\]
buildings.\textsuperscript{190} The conflicting nature of these aims lead to a certain level of ambiguous contradiction in the new openness of Mamlūk façades. As interior spaces of buildings became more visually accessible to the public realm, the experience of entering and engaging with that space became more obscured and convoluted. The resolution of the underlying conflict in those ideologies led to an evolution in the conception and significance of transitional spaces.

\textbf{Figure 17} Window from the Mausoleum of Al-Mansur Qala’un\textsuperscript{191}

The increased visual access was mediated through the façade’s fenestration, which as previously seen tended to be arranged in multiple horizontal rows set into vertical recessed panels. These panels are an adaptation of a similar feature from the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods; while these periods were not without any fenestration—though sometimes this was the case—the degree of visual porosity increased greatly in the new Mamlūk complex designs. One of the

\textsuperscript{190} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.

\textsuperscript{191} Detail: “Window in the Mausoleum of Kala’oon,” 1878, Travelers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA), 21285. URI:http://hdl.handle.net/1911/21285

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notable features of Mamlük fenestration is the adoption of the tripartite window system comprised of two arched windows surmounted by an oculus (figure 17). This arrangement was certainly the result of foreign influence—the exact source of which is a matter of debate.

Greater visibility from exterior to interior warranted the crafting of an approach that elaborated and controlled the actual physical movement from the one to the other allowing a deliberate unfolding of the experience. Execution of such experiences led to an increase in the importance of those transitional spaces and as a result gave rise to a ‘new spatial sequence composed of entries, vestibules and corridors’.\footnote{Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.} As Al-Harithy describes:

Long, bent, and dark corridors were transitional devices that controlled the experience one had inside the building. At times they could be quite theatrical as they moved the visitor from one spatial realm to another.\footnote{This style of direct ingress was customary in the Fatimid period. Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.}

The evolution of this spatial theatricality is evident in architectural patronage during the reigns of al-Zâhir Baybars, al-Mansur Qala’un, and al-Nâsir Muhammad. Baybars’s mosque at Husayniyya—1318–1335\footnote{The dome was rebuilt in 1935.} and that of al-Nâsir at the citadel—1266–1269— both follow the earlier classical hypostyle tradition (figures 4 and 25) of mosque building and as a result their entrances are straight and uncomplicated (figures 18 and 19).\footnote{Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.} The complex of Sultan al-Mansur Qala’un, \textit{al-Bimaristan al-Mansouri},\footnote{Complex comprising: hospital, madrasa /religious school, and mausoleum.} represents an intermediary moment between the directness of the Fatimid predecessors and the complexity that would become characteristic of Mamlük style. It begins the demarcation via the development of indirect entrances that are either bent—adapting for socio-religious programs an existent residential device in Fustat—or through transition spaces like vestibules and corridors—the latter could also be bent.\footnote{Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.} Though the
transitional elements are not fully resolved in the complex of Qala’un, they would be realized by its architectural successors during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muhammad.\footnote{Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.}

Similarly, the fluid interaction of interior spaces is not yet realized in \textit{al-Bimaristan al-Mansouri}; there the integration of the elements is dependent upon the great corridor around which the various component spaces are arranged. At its apogee, the Cairene metropolitan style

\textbf{FIGURES 18 & 19 MOSQUE PORTALS: AL-ZĀHIR BAYBARS\textsuperscript{199} & AL-NĀṢIR MUHAMMAD\textsuperscript{200}}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{mosque_portals}
\end{figure}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{199} Figure 18. Blair, Sheila and Jonathan Bloom, “Mosque of Sultan Baybars I, exterior, southwest portal” photograph, 1978, ARTstor Digital Library, BB-0974.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{200} Figure 19. Blair, Sheila and Jonathan Bloom, “Mosque of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qala’un, exterior, northwest portal” photograph, 1978, ARTstor Digital Library, BB-1225.}
combined diverse programmatic elements, thereby merging them into a single architectural edifice—as is the case in Sultan Hasan’s mosque-madrasa. 201

Al-Mansur Qala’un’s complex—and al-Nāsir Muhammad’s adjacent one—made use of a corridor as a transitional element. The corridor allowed the various programmatic elements to remain disparate yet to be accessed indirectly through a single monumental portal. As the relationship of the elements evolved to be more interwoven, the corridor was no longer needed as a buffer between them and is resolved as being a transitive element between the exterior and interior—reducing noise and providing privacy. 202 However even as a proto-transitional element the dihliz203 of al-Bimaristan al-Mansouri offers a certain level of complexity in its navigation. The monumental corridor runs the length of the madrasa (to the south) and the mausoleum (on the north) and conducts the visitor along between the two towards the maristan. High windows along the party walls allow some sensory interaction between the spaces—the dihliz was probably have been open to the sky initially allowing greater amounts of light to filter into the mausoleum204—but the two areas only open to the viewer after they reach the terminus and then enter into the madrasa, mausoleum, and maristan through their respective individual vestibules (figure 20).

203 Corridor and vestibule. The vestibule and portal area can also also be referred to as a durqa’ā—essentially denoting a covered qa’ā (ceremonial hall consisting of a central space flanked by two iwans with two smaller lateral iwans or recesses).
204 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 138.
The monumental portal (figures 14 and 20), which leads directly to the grand corridor is aligned with the southern end of the mausoleum creating a juncture where the façade of the madrasa projects into the street. As a result of the placement the entrance is not the center of a symmetrical composition; instead the focus is on its position as a means of emphasizing interplay between the halves of the building and with the neighboring structures. In this position the portal sits directly across from that of al-Salih’s madrasa-mausoleum.205

The portal, rising nearly to the full height of the façade, is comprised of elements that diminish in scale downward and inward. The visual movement created by this gesture lends a fluid continuity to the transition from Bayn al-Qasrayn into the corridor.206 The monumentality of the entrance is consistent with Fatimid portals. However, where Fatimid architecture centered the portal on a symmetrical façade emphasizing the axis formed between it and the mihrab on the opposite end, the Mamlūk equivalent conveyed much less about the internal axiability and symmetry.207 Al-Mansur Qala’un’s portal is unique in Mamlūk architecture demonstrating again a step between the earlier period and the resolved stage of the period’s style. In the case of portal design, the widely adapted style tended towards the deeply recessed portals surmounted by a

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207 Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.
half-dome composed of muqarnas\textsuperscript{208}—as is evident in al-Nāṣir Muhammad’s citadel mosque (figure 19).\textsuperscript{209}

As with many aspects of Mamlūk culture the bent entrance and vestibule had a secondary martial purpose; as such buildings were often used for refuge, the grand portal and vestibule area functioned as a defensive gate, which could be manned.\textsuperscript{210} This may also have been the case in domestic architecture which similarly highlighted the use of the vestibule and bent entrance to facilitate privacy and control ingress. Domestically, vestibules were a point of special attention and were luxuriously decorated; they were where visitors were received and awaited admittance to the house and where the amīr’s Mamlūks sat all day.\textsuperscript{211} It is unlikely that the dual-function of the vestibule—as both the primary access point and the area designated for the household’s elite soldiers—was unintentional. Doubtlessly, as well as providing privacy the vestibule space similarly offered a measure of defense to both domestic and public spaces.

\textsuperscript{208} A corbel type of decorative feature often found on the underside of architectural features such as arches and domes; also called stalactites due to their resemblance to the natural feature.

\textsuperscript{209} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.

\textsuperscript{210} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 86.

Six: Endowed Subversion

[T]he state consists in the codification of a whole number of power relations that render its functioning possible, and that revolution is a different type of codification of the same relations. This implies that there are many different kinds of revolution, roughly speaking, as many kinds as there are possible subversive recodifications of power relations—and, further, that one can perfectly well conceive of revolutions that leave essentially untouched the power relations that form the basis for the functioning of the state.212

There is a clarity and reasonable amount of discourse around types of architectural production, which are linked to the qualities of Otherness previously discussed. Waqf patronage, as religious and charitable works, provides an effective entry into the question of this paradox of Otherness within Mamlūk architecture. As defenders of the faith within the Sultanate, the prolific patronage of awqāf during this period may be examined as a method of re-presenting and legitimizing themselves to the local populace—to which they were Other—within an identified form of pious generosity. Paradoxically the pious endowment simultaneously allowed circumvention of conventions excluding them from normal acts of inheritance; endowments set up by Mamlūks were often used to support themselves and—following their deaths—their widows, children, and the Mamlūks of their household.

On Waqf

Understanding the influence of Otherness on Cairene architecture during the Bahri dynasty requires an examination of the act and process of patronizing architecture during this time. The utilization of waqf—and by extension iqta’213—was fundamental to architectural financing during the Mamlūk Sultanate. Waqf is a legal practice by which certain properties are alienated allowing the profits they generate to be allocated in perpetuity. These assets might manifest in any number of ways from an urban commercial property or rental apartment in al-Qāhirah, to a rural farm in Syria; in essence anything capable of generating profit—or value—

212 Foucault, Power, 123. Interview, “Truth and Power.”

213 Loans of land revenue as a means of remuneration for military service and loyalty.
perpetually. *Awqāf* generally belonged to two categories: pious and familial—though they did periodically exist outside these for grand civic works, e.g. Fortifications, bridges or roads.

The legal-fiscal system of *waqf* as an institution was neither invented during nor exclusive to the Mamlūk Sultanate, nor to the Mamlūks themselves. It was a well established practice by the time of the Sultanate’s emergence and continued long after its overthrow into modern times. During the Bahri period the practice of *waqf* took on a unique and influential role when it became fundamental to the shaping of the urban fabric of al-Qāhirah. During the reign of the Mamlūks the *waqf* system reached the height of its development and was used as a means of preserving the historic city, furnishing necessary social services, and funding cultural institutions—everything from mosques to schools to hospitals and more. The *waqf* system was so indispensable to, and indivisible from, the urban development of the day that several ministerial positions were created to accommodate the practice and maintenance of it; making *waqf* part of the fundamental regulatory machine of the Mamlūk Sultanate.

As previously stated, the utilization of *waqf* was a fundamental feature during what was a notably prolific period of architectural and charitable patronage. While both pious and family *awqāf* were important to Mamlūks and helped shape al-Qāhirah into a preeminent city during their regime, it is predominantly the former that is of interest to this study. Chiefly because pious and charitable foundations were the major building category of the Mamlūk Sultanate, and thus had a large influence on shaping urban medieval al-Qāhirah. Dominance of the building type was due in some measure to the utility of the practice to the upper tiers of Mamlūks. The

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214 *Waqf* endowments date as far back as the time of the Prophet Mohamed; as a practice *waqf* likely pre-dates Islam entirely having been absorbed from older practices in the region. [Rabbat, *Mamluk History Through Architecture*, 102.] Correspondingly, the practice extends into modern times and politics such as that seen in Palestine; the legitimacy or lack thereof being less material here than it’s evident and continued reverberations into modern power discourse.


216 A{lSayyad}, *Cairo*, 112.

217 Mamlūk documents show the creation of positions such as: the ‘mo’alem, who supervised the construction of buildings; the shahdi al-imara, who enforced building codes and specifications; and the al-mur’khem, who maintained and beautified the buildings.’ A{lSayyad}, *Cairo*, 112.

218 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 72.
ubiquity of the system overall was likely the product of a number of factors, not the least of which was as a means of facilitating that patronage.

_Awqāf_ tied the alienated properties to the creation and perpetuation of endowments to religious and charitable foundations; the income produced providing funding necessary for the long-term support of such foundations. However, use of _waqf_ was crucial not only as a means of funding building projects but also as a means for Mamlūks to negotiate their unique status as outsiders within the population. The disproportionate abundance of such religious patronage should not be mistaken for an equally excessive abundance of piety among the princely tier of Mamlūks. Rather, it is more likely the product of an intelligent exercise in pragmatism and in service of self-interest. Patronage of charitable endowments accomplished three objectives particular to Mamlūks: it supplied a mechanism for creating financial stability for the Mamlūks, as well as their descendants and dependents; offered a medium through which to ensure their legacies; and concurrently offered a means of manufacturing legitimacy for their rule. So essentially connected was patronage of this type and such goals that it is fitting that many _waqfiyya_ utilized the following haddith in their preambles:

> When a human being dies, his doings come to an end except in three cases, [if he leave behind] an ongoing charity, or beneficial knowledge, or a virtuous offspring to pray for him

Of the three exceptions listed within the above haddith, the non-hereditary Mamlūks clearly focus on the first two. The third element of creating a dynasty to follow was not-immaterial to the Mamlūk but rather a separate and vastly uncertain prospect, which even when achieved successfully meant having progeny who did not—and generally could not—belong to the same sphere and social cast as themselves. In regards to having prayers spoken on their behalf, it was not necessarily a hereditary practice, most Mamlūk pious foundations included provisions for prayer and Qur’an recitation. Often this was conducted in a publicly visible—or audible in this case—fashion. This practice required adjustments, which resulted in a feature

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219 The legal document pertaining to a _waqf_.

220 Behrens-Abouseif, _Islamic Architecture in Cairo_, 15.
particularly endemic to the Mamlūk era, the adoption of a more permeable façade, which accommodated the transmission of these recitations from the enclosed religious structure to the surrounding public sphere. The addition of fenestration was a significant departure from the existent architectural language of the city, one that may be said to have signified the changing relationship between the city and its ruling cast. Prayers wafting through the windows overlooking the street kept the memory of the deceased ever-present in the city.²²¹

_Iqta’_

The need for financial stability was a direct result of their status as Mamlūks. As a slave-mercenary class Mamlūks were granted remuneration primarily in the form of usufruct, *iqta’.*²²² As recompense for services and loyalty rendered to him—and by extension the state—the sultan (or amīr) could bestow upon his subjects loans of land revenue and wealth as *iqta’.*²²³ These loans would last for the duration of either the recipient’s lifetime or their term-of-office—namely amīr. In the case of the Mamlūks soldiers, during the sultanate their *iqta’* encompassed other riches acquired during their tenure. As such, both the loan and similarly bestowed property could be—and frequently was—confiscated by the state at the time of death, to be kept or redistributed by the sultan at his discretion.

Functionally this system of remuneration and re-appropriation imposed upon the Mamlūks—relating to their status as ex-slave outsiders—barred them from normal patterns of patrimony during the Mamlūk Sultanate.²²⁴ Such restrictions on inheritance compelled the

²²¹ Behrens-Abouseif, _Islamic Architecture in Cairo_, 76.

²²² Much less frequently, the privileged favorites might receive property as Milk (Irwin, _The Middle East in the middle ages_, 55)—a type of freehold appanage—constituting a private possession for which conventional inheritance is permitted. It is unclear (to me) whether any relationship existed between Milk and the appanage system more widely practiced by the Mongol Empire; though I would hazard to estimate it unlikely or at most tenuous. Regardless such a connection would be interesting but not particularly material to this investigation given what seems to be very limited use by the Mamlūks.

²²³ Execution of *iqta’* the practice in Islam varies widely according to period and place; there is no all encompassing explanation. Also while somewhat comparable to western European fief systems it should not be mistaken for such.

²²⁴ May additionally have served as a means of maintaining the wealth of the Sultanate during a period where dynastic succession was quite low.
Mamlūks to find alternate avenues for providing for their legacies, their descendants, and others under their care such as their wives and their own Mamlūks. The *waqf* system provided a suitable alternate avenue for Mamlūks to provide for posterity and, as such, may be inferred to have played a role in the Mamlūks’ perfuse patronage of architecture. At the very least one might reasonably question whether Mamlūks would have been quite so prolific in their patronage of religious endowments—and thereby of the architecture such institutions occupy—had not such philanthropy also provided them a way to circumvent restrictions placed upon material patrimony.

Created during the lifetime of the Mamlūk patron, these endowments—by way of the perpetuity of the attached *waqf* properties—produced incomes extending far past the death of the patron. This allowed the patron the opportunity to install his heirs—or other beneficiaries—in positions for managing the endowments and the profits that maintained them. The majority of endowments produced more capital than was necessary to the running of the foundations to which they were attached, sometimes many times as much. With occasionally as much as two-thirds of the proceeds accessible for other uses, a beneficiary of the endowment could draw a ‘salary’ from these funds, thereby providing future stability for the household. In this fashion the *waqf* was used as a way of bequeathing their fortune, as they could not pass on any portion of their *iqta’* posthumously. Put another way, had Mamlūks not found a legally valid technicality that allowed them a means of dispersing their wealth so that it would outlive them, that wealth would revert to the sultanate upon their demise leaving those for whom they were responsible without resources.

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225 ‘Contemporaries like al-Suyuti saw the ultimate contradiction in the system: if Mamlūks were slaves, how could they own land with which to endow institutions?’ (Sheehan, *Babylon of Egypt*, 102.) An interesting question: first during the Mamlūk Sultanate the Mamlūks would have (with few to no exceptions) been manumitted by the time they were actively earning for their efforts; second the prohibition appears not to have curbed the procurement of wealth during their lifetime, only limiting their ability to designate its dissemination after death.


227 Patrons often awarded their manumitted slaves and eunuchs positions within their pious foundations as a means of providing them with a pension for that would last for the remainder of their life. Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 18.

Given the precarious nature of hereditary succession this imperative was as influential on the sultan as it was on his amīrs and lower ranking Mamlūks. Sultans had little or no guarantee that their sons would follow them on the throne, let alone wield any significant authority or even remain there for any length of time. There was, therefore, small chance of maintaining familial—or even factional—control over the empire’s wealth, including their various iqtaṣ as they reverted to the Sultanate. So too, lower ranked Mamlūks faced the necessity once they left the household of their master to set up their own, with their own dependents. This is why such ‘generosity’ extended to the amīrs as they competed, according to ibn Battuta, ‘with one another in charitable works and the founding of mosques and religious houses.’

It naturally being far more problematic to undermine the funding of institutions, which benefited the people and brought glory to Allah, than it was if the property in question were private or explicitly self-serving. For most Mamlūks, the imperative to build resulted in much smaller scale works; the waqf system allowed many, during the Mamlūk period, to convert their houses into madrasas ‘as a means of keeping them under the control of the founder’s family (waqf ahli) as a matter of expediency’ during difficult times.

It is, however, probable the waqf’s utility as a means to move wealth cross-generationally was not the sole reason for the ubiquity of it during the Mamlūk Sultanate. If this were the case, it would seem likely that far less provision would be made for the disposition of the charitable and religious works. Though certainly embedding inheritance within pious works greatly facilitated their success and potential for longevity.

Legacy & Legitimacy

In many ways the Mamlūk goals of generating legitimacy and producing a legacy were not entirely disparate. Often the same mechanics utilized to achieve legitimacy, worked simultaneously to create something on a scale and of a type to function as a legacy. Architecture fulfilled this double purpose for the Mamlūks. This is the case where waqf was employed as a

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229 Recounted by Ibn Battuta. (AlSayyad, Cairo, 101.)
230 Sheehan, Babylon of Egypt, 102.
means of funding production for religious and charitable works as part of a public campaign for generating legitimacy. The built products of such campaigns furnished a physical political legacy whilst the system itself provided for the humane legacy of the individual.

Undoubtedly the ability of *awqāf* and architecture to serve multiple Mamlūk ambitions at once led to the momentum that produced multiple building booms in medieval al-Qāhirah:

The waqf system and the Mamluk desire to emphasize their legitimacy to rule through architectural display, amply funded by the revenue from taxes on agricultural land, combined to create a series of building booms in the Egyptian capital in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.\(^{231}\)

The prevalence of *waqf* is directly linked to the burst of intense urban development in Mamlūk al-Qāhirah. Not only because it facilitated the building of the architectural pieces used by the Mamlūk elite to position themselves publicly, but also because all of these public works were funded by numerous other urban ventures—often created or built for this express purpose. A single pious complex might require many income-producing amenities to sustain it—and the other interests of the founder. Therefore numerous shops, apothecaries, apartments, and so on grew up quickly allowing an astonishing urban population growth. Add to this the amount of work generated for the craftsmen and artisans affiliated with the process, and all of the infrastructural economic upsurges associated with a large employed workforce.\(^{232}\) Often, particularly in the early Sultanate, these subsidiary support endeavours would be built up in the neighbourhood surrounding the complex to which they were endowed; this allowed not only the provision of the specific religious amenities of the complexes but also many others integral to a thriving urban community. During the Bahri period Mamlūk al-Qāhirah became the second

\(^{231}\) Sheehan, *Babylon of Egypt*, 102.

\(^{232}\) Which is not to say that slaves were not used for the construction process, as they undoubtably were.
largest metropolitan center in the world, superseded only by Constantinople,\(^{233}\) and not even that according to some sources.\(^{234}\)

Furthermore, each complex was also likely to furnish smaller but necessary functions for the neighbourhood in which it was built, such as *sabils* (figure 21) and *hammâms*. The furnishing of water in the medieval Islamic world being neither an inconsequential nor an arbitrary act; as a religion founded in the desert, water had—and to an extent still retains—symbolism of mythic proportions with strong paradisiac connotations within Islam. Everything from portable goods such as ceramics and rugs, to large garden design was impacted by the potent concept of the power of water as a basic necessity to life as well as of the Islamic faith—often directly linked to the imagery of the four rivers of paradise described in the Qur’an. In providing such for their subjects, Mamlûks were making distinctly pious and lordly gestures, demonstrating willingness and ability to take on stewardship of the people. In this way, while not as impressive as others, the adoption of the *sabil-maktab* as the sole completely novel contribution of the Mamlûk rulers to the typological repertoire of pious Cairene building, is not as insignificant as some might imagine.\(^{235}\)

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\(^{233}\) During al-Nâṣir Muhammad reign—arguably the apogee of the epoch—the population had grown to 200,000; two and a half and three times the size of contemporary Paris and London respectively. Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, 13.

\(^{234}\) According to Grabar, Cairo was the ‘largest metropolitan center in the world throughout’ the two-and-a-half centuries of Mamlûk rule. (Grabar, *Islamic Visual Culture*, 306)

\(^{235}\) Namely Humphreys who dismisses it as insignificant. Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 95.
Words Of Waqf

Irrespective of the aesthetic or physical language of the architecture of Mamlûk al-Qāhirah—as it is discussed elsewhere—there clearly existed a ubiquitous language which permeated built production at this time, that of the legal system of waqf and their related documents.

Due to a general lack of contemporaneous architectural illustrations—from either a technical or aesthetic perspective—historians must turn to written records pertaining to building

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237 Rabbat, Mamluk History Through Architecture, 24.
to more fully comprehend architectural practices of the period. In this regard waqfiyya represent an integral lens through which the practices, products and motivation encompassing the architectural milieu of Bahri al-Qāhirah may be scrutinized. Other references to architecture exist but as they were written predominantly by a literary cast who—at their heart ‘men of the pen’—were acutely unfamiliar with construction as a practitioners of a craft rather than one accessible through literature and accordingly provide little information about it.238 Mamlūk authors—unlike those of the Ottoman period and later—seem to have entirely lacked knowledge of architectural technicalities, something that often resulted in their either disregarding it all together or addressing it only to provide misleading narratives; the latter is chiefly due to ignorance on the subject.239 As such precise details are rarely provided and the ‘who’ of the building craft was largely unknown—and likely unimportant—to them. Peculiarly the ruling class, ‘[t]he Mamluk elite, who were often directly involved in the construction business and management, were probably more knowledgeable in the art of building than most historians’ during the Sultanate.240

The building descriptions of the waqfiyya offer a means of understanding the buildings as their patrons intended them to be, regardless of what time and subsequent regimes has left of them. As useful as these documents are in outlining the nature of the buildings they describe, so too is the manner in which it is described and what they fail to mention. Language and omissions both being useful indicators of the attitudes and importance granted architecture and its constituent elements in the Mamlūk period.

Often the waqf for a given building may afford a more precise and accurate picture of the building as it was initially constructed than any other source including, sometimes, even later illustrations and descriptions. One example of such is the mention within the waqfiyya for Qala‘un’s complex, of an octagonal central fountain in the madrasa which had been lost some

238 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 16.
239 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 16.
240 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 16.
years following its construction, and rediscovered when an excavation in 1971 uncovered its remains.241

However, despite their revealing nature the language of awqāf were neither florid regarding the aesthetics and feel, nor overly descriptive of the nature and composition of structural or architectural elements within the buildings they describe. Waqf language is, in fact, quite proscriptive in nature describing the building from an experiential view. A waqfiyya would outline the structure as it would be physically navigated, moving through the space in a generally contiguous manner without supplying over much in the way of detail; exceptions to this rote approach are, therefore, all the more remarkable. As in many things, the al-Bimaristan al-Mansourī proves to be one such exception; its waqfiyya uses language unusual in such legal documents by praising the beauty of the hospital as being ‘a magnificent building, unparalleled in the universe, famous in the whole world for its fine qualities’.242

**Waqf Enacted**

Attaching a waqf to a pious foundation created an inalienable trust, thereby producing ongoing financial resources for the maintenance of the foundation in question, which could not be withdrawn—at least theoretically.243 In establishing such foundations a Mamlūk could attach to them, via the waqfiyya (figure 22) 244 any properties that might be helpful in maintaining or promoting their upkeep.

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241 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 140.

242 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 141.

243 The later years of the Mamlūk epoch—during the Circassian period—would witness a progressive breakdown of the waqf system of endowments and perpetuity due in part to its ongoing ubiquity and the appropriation of previously endowed properties for new projects.

244 The term for the physical written document of the endowment deed for a waqf.
For example, *waqfiyya* for Sultan Qala’un’s *al-Bimaristan al-Mansouri* reveal it to have been endowed primarily with urban estates—including markets, shops, apartments and *hammāms*—with a few rural estates located in Syria.\(^{246}\) Rent and revenues from these would, in turn, be used for the upkeep and running of the complex; in the case of the *bimaristan* this also included the provision of medical care. Qala’un’s complex is a massive example of such funding as the upkeep was not insignificant. Ibn Battuta\(^{247}\) marveled at the beauty of the *bimaristan* stating that ‘no description is adequate to its beauties,’ and estimated the endowment to have been approximately one thousand dinars per day to have provided for the patients—as many as four thousand daily—being treated by the hospital.\(^{248}\)

Besides securing the means of support, a *waqfiyya* could—and often did—including instructions or parameters for the dispensation and functioning of the endowment; these

\(^{245}\) An illuminated title-piece with *waqf* statement in the name of Mamlūk amīr Aytimish (d. 802 AH/AD 1400) for the library of the Madrasa—later known as al-Madrasa al-Aytimishiyah—which he established at Cairo's Bab al-Wazir.’ (Artsor: http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/library/iv2.html?parent=true#)

\(^{246}\) AISayyad, *Cairo*, 99.

\(^{247}\) A Moroccan traveler and scholar who passed through Cairo in 1326.

\(^{248}\) AISayyad, *Cairo*, 101.
instructions were representative of the patron’s ideal vision for the perpetuation of the foundation and its works. Relating to the example above, the *waqfiyya* for the *al-Bimaristan al-Mansouri* also dictates guidelines for the operation of the hospital in great detail.

Like his father al-Nāṣir Muḥammad utilized his *awqāf* strategically and politically, as did many Mamlūk patrons. In the *waqfiyya* for his madrasa al-Nāṣir stipulated as to which *madhhab* would occupy each *īwan* but positioned them—for reasons now unknown—giving priority to the Maliki and Hanbali, contrary to their relative importance and common practice in Egypt. Further it stipulated various minutia about the staffing and functioning of the madrasa, it having: four *muʿadhdhins*, four teachers, two imams (one each for the madrasa and mausoleum), a librarian, one Hadith teacher for the mausoleum, twenty-five Quran readers for the mausoleum, and an unspecified number of readers and students for the madrasa. Further to this it details commercial structures, dwellings, and *hammāms* in various districts of al-Qāhirah and a share in a khan in Damascus all belonging to—and providing revenue towards—al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s madrasa-mausoleum endowment.

Al-Zāhir Baybars’ madrasa included in its endowed properties a large apartment complex or *Rab*. The *Rab* Zahiri was a stone, brick and timber construction consisting of two stories containing seventy-five apartments above street level shops. One third of the income produced there for the endowment was reserved for his son Baraka. Baraka himself became Sultan for


251 More discussion of these details will be made in the ‘Mimicry and Mediation’ section dealing specifically with the complex of al-Mansur Qala’un.

252 A school of thought or a rite, also the four rites of Sunni law.

253 Three sided vaulted (usually) hall facing onto a courtyard or hall, Mamlūk *madrasas* commonly had four.

254 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 152.

255 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 152.

256 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 152.

257 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 49.

258 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 12.
two years between 1277 and 1279—doubtless supported in part by the financial provisions made for him by al-Zāhir Baybars—though clearly with limited success due to his brief tenure.

Within the capital of al-Qāhirah endowments attached via awqāf represented a mixture of commercial resources and public—or semi-public—infrastructure and amenities, which combined to create the metropolitan atmosphere of the Mamlūk era. Other cities within the empire were not necessarily as fortunate or balanced—particularly where imperial Mamlūk patronage is concerned. For instance, the waqfiyya for Al-Nāsir Muhammad’s khanqah in Siryaqus is the only currently known royal waqf to reference Alexandria at all and it dedicates revenue from several commercial businesses to the maintenance of an endowment nowhere near the city, but rather in a village aimed to provide a pleasance area as a satellite to al-Qāhirah.

Sanctified Subversion

The inclusion of mausolea—and specifically the concept of the princely tomb—with piously endowed complexes in urban al-Qāhirah was a product of the Mamlūk regime. The inclusion of the mausoleum typology, in addition to the ubiquity of religious foundations overall, resulted in significant changes to the urban fabric of the city. That change would shape the character and skyline of al-Qāhirah for centuries to come.

A number of proscriptions against the mausoleum and its inherent egocentricity existed in Islamic practice. Fundamentally, while practice was not strictly outlawed it was strongly disapproved of by Islamic authorities and therefore saw limited practice. Those that existed were

259 Suffi ‘monastery.’
260 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 69.
261 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 155.
262 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 65.
263 Though not otherwise unknown as a typology elsewhere in the Islamic world. (Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 114.)
confined to cemeteries until the Mamlūk era. The upper echelons of the Mamlūk elite managed to circumvent the prohibition by combining the mausoleum with other charitable and socio-religious functions. The repositioning of the mausoleum space as religious was reinforced linguistically. It was not uncommon that waqfiyya referred to mausolea as oratories and they nearly always provided regular recitation of the Qur’an from their windows; both practices were positioned as benefiting the Cairene community and its spiritual wellbeing as a whole. Complexes were endowed inclusively, attaching the finances of the religious elements—madrasa, maristan, khutabah, et cetera—and their functions directly to that of the mausoleum; thereby making the one inextricable from the other ensured the perpetuity of not just the charitable aspects of the complexes but equally that of the patron’s commemorative architecture. In precisely the same way the waqf was used to tie the finances of the endowment to that of the patron and his beneficiaries.

Understanding the practice of building urban mausolea insinuated within the architectural repertoire of the Mamlūks necessitates a discussion of its first implementation. Interestingly, as a practice, mausoleum building was one of the first deviations of the Mamlūk period. Its nascence lies with the very first ruler of the Mamlūk sultanate, Sultan Shajar al-Durr, widow of al-Sālih Ayyūb. While her individual reign lasted only a matter of months, her influence—politically and architecturally—continued through her abdication, marriage to Aybak, his rule, her assassination of him and subsequent death at the hands of his retinue. The first two monuments of the Mamlūk era were mausolea built by Shajar al-Durr for herself and for her late husband, al-Sālih Ayyūb; while the mausolea are consistent with the existent Ayyubid tradition, the appending of them to a religious building was a novelty in Cairo. Built simultaneously during 1250, the first year of the Mamlūk Sultanate, the two structures provide a precedence that would shape patronage during the entirety of the era. These inaugural monuments managed to dovetail both the

Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 114.


266 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 114.
commemoration of the Ayyubid Sultanate and prefigure the emergent Mamlūk Sultanate;\textsuperscript{267} simultaneously serving to connect the two—and thereby legitimate the latter.

As the widow of the of the late Ayyubid Sultan and the first ruler of the Mamlūk period—and later wife of the first Mamlūk sultan—Sultan Shajar al-Durr epitomizes the transition between the two regimes and transference of power implicit in it, neatly straddling the boundary between past and future. Shajar al-Durr set numerous precedents during her rule, not the least of which being the subversion she represented on a fundamental level in and of herself as a woman; further to this, not just a woman but as a one-time bondswoman of relatively obscure background and no previously existing connection to any aristocracy. Through her direct connection to the previous sultan and hailing from the Caucus region herself, she presented a sufficient intermediary for the Mamlūk elite’s transition to power.

\textbf{Figure 23 The Minaret of Shajar al-Durr}\textsuperscript{268}

\textsuperscript{267} Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 113.

\textsuperscript{268} The remains of the minaret from Shajar al-Durr’s mausoleum. Pascale Coste, public domain via Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 116.
In honour of her late husband, Shajar al-Durr appended a mausoleum directly onto the madrasa previously erected by al-Sālih Ayyūb during his reign, in the heart of al-Qāhirah on the Bayn al-Qasrayn. A site which was already politically charged due to the history of the area—a gesture which will be discussed further in the subsequent chapter on adjacency and location. She simultaneously built a funerary complex for herself consisting of both madrasa and mausoleum in a comparatively prestigious—yet undoubtedly less contentious—area within the extant cemetery.

In erecting a mausoleum to al-Sālih Ayyūb (figure 11) posthumously on his behalf, Shajar al-Durr removed the conceit from the act. In constructing her own mausoleum (figure 23) concurrently she positioned her rule in direct relationship with him, presenting herself as his successor. The boldness of that statement is mitigated by her decision to make her own mausoleum aesthetically echo al-Sālih Ayyūb’s but on a slightly more humble scale and situating it within the cemetery—decidedly out of the urban center—she sidesteps the perception of self-aggrandizement. Through this conscious mediation of bold innovation/contravention and humility Shajar al-Durr appears to have circumvented the proscription against mausoleum building.

While Shajar al-Durr clearly set the precedent for the building typology of mausoleum-complex, it would not become a major element of Cairene architecture until the reign of Sultan Qala’un—and the building of his al-Bimaristan al-Mansouri—after which it became a primary convention within the Mamlūk building repertoire.269 During the intervening quarter century the inclusion of mausolea within the Cairene urban context is non-existant. Even al-Zāhir Baybars, who is often credited as being the founder of the Mamlūk regime due to his role in solidifying and codifying the role of the Mamlūk elite as rulers, may not have undertake his own

269 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 65.
mausoleum.\textsuperscript{270} Like that of al-Sâlih Ayyûb, al-Zâhir Baybars’ mausoleum was erected posthumously, but in Damascus—where he died—rather than in the capital.\textsuperscript{271}

Qala’un approached the building of mausolea thoughtfully and obliquely. Aware of the strictures against it, he first built a mausoleum for his wife and it was not until five years into his reign, after the successful completion of the mausoleum for his wife—perhaps a point at which he felt politically secure—that he began construction on his own mausoleum complex (figure

\textbf{FIGURE 24 SECTION: EAST INTO THE MAUSOLEUM OF AL-MANSUR QALA’UN}\textsuperscript{272}

\textsuperscript{270}Bloom suggests that perhaps the ‘Tomb of the Abbasid Caliphs’ might have been built by al-Zâhir Baybars with the original purpose of being used as his mausoleum after death. (Bloom, “The Mosuqe of Baybars al-Budunqdârî in Cairo,” 48)


\textsuperscript{272}Detail: Coste, Pascal. "Coup sur la Linge ‘?’ Plan de la Salle du Tombeau de Qalaoun," lithograph, 1818-1826. (L’Architectue Arabe, 119)
Qala’un was the first Sultan to build his own mausoleum and to build it in the center of the capital city of al-Qāhirah. His precedent was a powerful one, spurring the widespread adoption of the mausoleum complex as a fundamental building type during the remainder of the Mamlūk regime. The utility of the mausoleum in the political self-fashioning of the Mamlūk elite was considerable. Mausolea allowed the Mamlūk patron an enduring presence within the city.

The mausoleum in the context of al-Qāhirah during the Mamlūk Sultanate can be said to have been directly connected to the idea of power and the patrons’ display of power and magnanimity. It became so ubiquitous that—following Qala’un’s reign—most Mamlūk sultans’ first metropolitan undertaking was to commission their own mausoleum complex within the capital. The construction of such complexes was often achieved rapidly. Though rapidity is a characteristic for which Mamlūk building was generally known, expeditious construction in the case of mausoleum undertakings was likely closely related to the tenuousness of power within the Mamlūk ranks. The average tenure of Mamlūk Sultans was less than seven years with many lasting only months. The probability of a short reign left little time for incumbent sultans to solidify their personal legacy and leave their mark on al-Qāhirah. It is, therefore, indicative of the importance of the mausoleum’s role in the Mamlūks’ legacy that it was generally the first architectural project patronized by a sultan upon his accession to power; nearly universal from Qala’un reign through to the end of the Mamlūk era. Unlike the first few decades of the Sultanate, there was no confidence that future rulers would undertake the completion of the mausoleum should their predecessor die prior to its realization; even less likely was the prospect of a successor commissioning such work, as had been the case at the outset of the Sultanate for sultans al-Sālih Ayyūb and al-Zāhir Baybars. It is probable that the same urgency that prioritized mausoleum building impacted the scale of most Mamlūk architectural endeavors. Sultans with

273 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 132.

274 Limitations in urban and labour resources also promoted the modesty of scale in Mamlūk architecture—compared to other regimes with similar wealth. The amount of construction required to meet the funerary and commemorative demands of the Mamlūk oligarchy was incompatible with individual monumental architecture. The reduction in scale benefited the growing metropolis as the amirial foundations propitiated on a neighbourhood level resulted in increased urban development and renewal. (Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 71)
particularly long and prolific reigns such as al-Mansur Qala’un and al-Nasir Muhammad managed works of greater scale, the few others who attempted it often died or were deposed with their legacies incomplete; as is the case with the monumental complex of Sultan Hasan.²⁷⁵

The very act of such subversion is demonstrative of the precarious nature of the Mamlūks’ relationship with their empire—specifically with the upper tiers of the non-Mamlūk populace in al-Qāhirah. While clearly defiant, an illustration of Mamlūk ability to skirt the laws and conventions, it was apparently aware enough to be enacted carefully and within certain boundaries. Application of such parameters, reigned in the power wielded—often brutally—by the Mamlūks and was a demonstration of respect—or at least mutual dependence—towards other classes; a balance made all the more precarious as many of the latter were somewhat displaced by the Mamlūk ascent to power. The result is finely targeted transgression that achieves specific needs, but is presented in such a way as to allow for ambiguity and the impression of piety—at least superficially. Such transgression allowed the Mamlūks, as a group, to meet needs particular to their situation and identity; the same situation and identity that necessitated the maintenance of the complex power balances in place between the foreign Mamlūk and their subject empire.

²⁷⁵ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 71.
Seven: Agency of Adjacency

Location, Location, Location

As with the Mamlūk sultan and the umarā al-mashura, often the buildings erected by the sultan were primus inter pares to those patronized by powerful amīrs. No major stylistic differences existed between royal and amīrial works,276 the distinction between the two was manifested in scale, execution—such as density of inscription277—and more significantly in location. As is so often the case with architecture, location was intricately linked to presentation in Mamlūk patronage; the Mamlūk sultan’s buildings were granted privilege of placement.278 An uncoded but distinct hierarchy existed within Mamlūk al-Qāhirah whereby proximity to major arteries and nodes within the city was reserved for the highest echelons of Mamlūk patrons, namely Sultans, followed by high ranking amīrs and so on moving generally further from those nodes as the patrons’ standings decrease. Acquiring the right urban plot was a matter of power and prestige.279 It is for this reason that at the heart of old al-Qāhirah there is a concentration of funerary complexes along Bayn al-Qasrayn—a major axis and at the center the remains of the parade grounds between the Western and Fatimid palaces.280 This locale was rarified enough that ‘[n]o emir built along the main avenue of Qahira, which remained a royal preserve.’281

Mamlūk locality exploits a type of adjacency which is multilateral; conferring various layers of legitimacy via locational proximity. The mausoleum-madrasa of al-Sālih Ayyūb placed within the area of Bayn al-Qasrayn created a kind of nexus, both conferring and receiving stature through locale. For the Mamlūk rulers following al-Sālih Ayyūb—whose buildings cropped up in

276 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 65-66.
277 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 66.
278 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 66.
279 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 77.
280 As a street Bayn al-Qasrayn retains the memory of that legacy, its name literally meaning ‘between the two palaces.’ Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 74.
281 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 66.
the direct vicinity of that of the last Ayyubid sultan—there is an understanding of legitimacy conferred via their relationship with their former master; legitimacy beyond that which was specific to their Mamlûk-ness as military heroes conferred through allusions to their military prowess.

**Convenientia**

The relationships implicit in Foucault’s *convenientia* will be examined in relation to the architecture of al-Zâhir Baybars, Qala’un, and al-Nasir Muhammad; specifically the spatial implications of symbolic situating and the implicit Otherness that employs it.

Qala’un’s complex demonstrates a spatial and symbolic enactment of Foucault’s principle of *convenientia*. This principle of convenience can be related to Al-Harithy’s assertion that ‘Mamluk monuments cannot simply be read as containers of spaces or objects in space, but rather as complex mediators between interior architectural spaces and exterior urban spaces.’

Beyond the tangible relations of Other along the external walls is the symbolic adjacencies that are carefully constructed throughout the Complex and its mediation with the sociopolitical and urban fabric around it. In the case of Qala’un’s *al-Bimaristan al-Mans oui*, location is the result of deliberate positioning to maximize the potential of the building’s adjacencies. Despite suggestions that the site was the only available one in the center of al-Qâhirah, evidence suggests that it occupies the former site of the home of female descendants of the Ayyubid dynasty and previous to that the site of the grand Fatimid palace. The site had been acquired from them in a manner some consider suspect; whatever the means of acquisition the site was conspicuously not chosen as an unoccupied and uncomplicated location.

Beyond the Fatimid remnants, an alternative rationale for selection criteria presents itself in the site’s physical and the building’s symbolic adjacency to the tomb of al-Malik al-Sâlih

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283 Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 119.

284 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 95.
Ayyūb—and by default the tomb of al-Zāhir Baybars. They are situated across the street from the Madrasa of Qala’un (figure 12). This adjacency creates a convenience between the buildings emphasizing the relationship between the two—or three—and by extension the relationship of the patrons, as well as Qala’un’s devotion to his former master. The purpose of such emphasis was to strengthen and legitimize his claim to the throne; and perhaps by extension the legitimacy of his son, al-Sālih, named after the last Ayyubid sultan. These were reminders that were deliberately evocative of their paternal-filial relationship to al-Sālih Ayyūb, the nod of a dutiful son, which reinforces the idea of the Mamlūk—or specifically al-Zāhir Baybars and al-Mansur Qala’un—as successors to Ayyubid rule. The skewed orientation and dome position obtains convenience to the Ayyubid building.

As powerful an expression as that is, it is also an understated one in its occupation of a spatially constrained plot rather than invasively carving out a place within the preexistent matrix of al-Qāhirah. Further to this, its placement away from the main street—behind the madrasa and mausoleum of the complex—adds a level of unveiling to the experience of approaching the hospital via the internal corridor. The grandeur and substance of the hospital—and the complex overall—lies inside rather than expressing itself boldly on it’s façade.

**Ideological Adjacency: Asserting Military Dominance**

Aside from the ‘inherited’ legitimacy-via-proximity, the Mamlūks’ architecture emphasized their authority in terms specific to their Mamlūk-ness through allusions to their militant nature. Emphasizing righteousness through military prowess and triumph. Triumphs—especially on behalf of Islam—represented a validity to their urban presence; reminders of specific contributions to dar-al-Islam being directly related to their Mamlūk-ness, specifically the ability to act as military guardians of the religion.

In the specific case of Bayn al-Qasrayn, there is an additional facet to the reminder of the Mamlūks’ military status. In occupying spaces formally belonging to Fatimid royalty, Mamlūk

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patrons are confiscating that which was predominantly secular and exclusive, and in its place creating public spaces for the betterment of the Islamic populace. It is an act of democratizing the city for common welfare but also of lending their support both actively and symbolically to the revival of the Sunni school of Islam, which had—beginning during the Ayyubid dynasty—displaced the Shi’ism favored by the Fatimid regime. It lends a more nuanced level to the Mamlūks’ pre-existing image and role as the protectors of the faith; embodying the intimation that Mamlūks not only safeguard the faithful from external military threats but also from more subtle internal menaces.

Spoils Of War

Within the perimeters of the Mamlūks’ inherent need to generate and maintain legitimacy and the use of architecture as a means to that end, there is one facet of this constructed legitimacy that is both inherently endemic to Mamlūk identity, whilst also not exclusive to their patronage. That is the careful and consistent use of architectural projects as a method for propagating validity through visual and symbolic reference to their role as military protectors and upholders of the Islamic faith—and, by natural extension, the faithful and their wellbeing.

This is, in many ways, a celebration of their Otherness, in that to be reminded of the need for the military elite is to also be reminded of their particular place within—or adjacent to as it might more appropriately be termed—the society served by their military prowess. It would be a signal highlighting the inherent differentness of the Mamlūk, as the suggestion of legitimacy through military means must include within it a suggestion of uniqueness, that this rule—including the specific benefits and protections therein—was the unique provenance of the rulers’ military capabilities. Simply such feats are not something of which any, or many, other persons or groups would be capable. It is within this emphasis on their martial achievements that the kernel of Mamlūk attitudes towards ruling and validity exists. That attitude is simply that authority and right to rule is neither divinely mandated nor hereditarily occurring—never mind

the number of Mamlūk sultans who attempted to produce dynasties—it is authority by competency. For the Mamlūks such fitness for rule was defined and justified in terms of their military might.

This deliberate redefining of rule, disassociated from the concept of divine mandate was something that was, to an extent, an inheritance from their Ayyubid predecessors. Sultan Salāh al-Dīn, as the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, and his descendants, defined their legitimacy through the precepts of restoring Abbasid sovereignty and suppressing the religious heresies of the Fatimid Caliphate.287 While the Mamlūk elite had their own specific approach to legitimacy, it was clearly founded on that of the Ayyubids and the idea that they were the inheritors of that legacy. The formation of the new Caliphate in Egypt by the Mamlūks, through the person of an Abbasid prince, shows clearly their adoption of Ayyubid ideology. Rulership for the Fatimids, and many previous Islamic dynasties, had been framed as a hereditary divine birthright, through which their right to rule and act as intercessors for the Islamic faithful was derived. The Mamlūk parameters for rulership belonged to a fundamental shift in the character of the monarch, wherein the right to rule was derived from function, being conceived of as a type of meritocracy;288 the same extended, in all likelihood, to the ruling capacity of the Mamlūk umarā as an exclusive oligarchic class.

The new concept of rule was paralleled in the changing nature of the relationship between state, religion and community. In many regimes little distinction existed between state and religious rule and therefore the former controlled the community’s access to the latter, a relationship solidified by their role as the primary patron of monumental architecture. During the half-century preceding the Mamlūks’ accession, the simple precept of state-religion as provider of religious space had begun to dissolve and a new movement towards a broader range of architectural patrons—and building types—was emerging.289 No longer was the divine ruler the sole provider of sacred spaces but now anyone with sufficient means might produce it; though

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288 Williams, “Urbanization and Monument Construction in Mamluk Cairo,” 34.
naturally one finds that ascending the tiers of power those with most means and the finest results are inevitably collected towards the apogee of the hierarchy.

It is arguable that it was in pursuit of this particular ideology of legitimate military rule that al-Zâhir Baybars undertook the building of his congregational mosque at Husayniyya. The mosque itself shows deliberate innovation and movement away from the forms and typologies which had shaped the patronage of the Ayyubids. The grand statement made by a congregational mosque could potentially have been immanently suitable to the nature of the Mamlûk elite’s self-representation as sunni warrior-prince-mujâhid, however it features very little in the architectural repertoire of the Bahri era. For this reason, among others, the mosque of al-Zâhir Baybars’ at Husayniyya is unique in Mamlûk patronage. In some ways the choice of typologies is archaizing, despite being novel amidst Mamlûk buildings, as the days of the large scale state sponsored congregational or Friday mosque were past. Al-Zâhir Baybars’ mosque was the first such built in Cairo in one hundred years and, though the Mamlûks likely built more mosques than had all the previous rulers in Egypt put together, mosques during the Mamlûk period were not built on a scale appropriate to furnish the prayer needs of an entire community. Al-Zâhir Baybars’ mosque was to this scale, however it is the particularities of the location, decoration and scale of it that make the building remarkable and unlikely to have been meant to serve the needs of a local community.

The location—al-Zâhir Baybars’ own polo ground—was significant in three fundamental regards: its construction was more impactful as a result of sacrificing his own pleasure and pastime for a pious cause; it was a location whose legality was above reproach baring it from criticism or future confiscation; and lastly it was a large empty space apart from the city’s urban fabric which would allow the mosque, once built, to be viewed from all sides and to

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290 A Muslim engaged in jihađ, or a struggle for Allah.
293 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamlûks, 121.
remain disparate from the city to maintain this effect.295 A number of less clear secondary concerns may also have been influential, such as: the proximity to the zawiya296 of al-Zahir Baybars’ problematic patron saint, Shaykh Khidr;297 and the possibility that a ceremonial nature had been conferred either directly or via adjacency to the garden in the northern suburb where al-Zahir Baybars was said to have ceremonially installed the Abbasid caliph in a tent.298

![Figure 25 Plan of al-Zahir Baybars’ Mosque](image)

**Figure 25 Plan of al-Zahir Baybars’ Mosque**


296 A residence for sufis.

297 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 121.

298 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 122.

The great mosque of al-Zāhir Baybars adheres closely to the traditional hypostyle plan, roughly 100 meters by 100 meters enclosing an interior with riwaq\textsuperscript{300} surrounding an open sahn\textsuperscript{301}—approximately sixty by seventy-five meters in size.\textsuperscript{302} From there, however, the resemblance to a traditional hypostyle Friday mosque ends, as the decorative motifs applied consist of a number of elements previously unknown or rare in Egyptian religious architecture.\textsuperscript{303}

The exterior stone walls, corner towers and massive projecting gateways (figures 25 and 26)—essentially cubical entrance towers on three sides of the mosque—lend the structure the striking impression of a fortress.\textsuperscript{304} These entrance towers, while having two precursors in Fatimid architecture, ultimately derive from the Roman triumphal arch,\textsuperscript{305} a heritage which if anything lends itself to this military reading of the structure.\textsuperscript{306} Not only is the application of this type of fortified analogue to a mosque anomalous, but also it is relatively rare for the hypostyle type mosque to have any significant exterior façade as this type was built and ornamented for viewing from the interior, within the sahn.\textsuperscript{307, 308}

If the great mosque’s fortress-like features were insufficiently discernible to create the right impression on its audience, the materials with which it was built might be. The building materials were partially supplemented by the spoils from al-Zāhir Baybars’s victorious campaign in Jaffa in 1268. Al-Zāhir Baybars along with his sons apparently conducted the demolition work on Jaffa’s citadel personally; taking from it the wood to be used to build his dome and the marble

\begin{enumerate}
\item As can be seen in figure 25, an arcade surrounding and open towards the central sahn in a the mosque.
\item Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 88.
\item Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 89.
\item Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 89.
\item While Bloom disputes Humphreys assertions about the military character of the building. Bloom, “The Mosque of Baybars al-Bunduqdari in Cairo,” 50-55.
\item Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 89.
\item This focus is clearly visible in the Fatimid congregational mosque, the al-Hakim mosque, built in Cairo in 990 C.E. whose sahn’s glossy white marble floor.
\end{enumerate}
for the *mihrab* of his future mosque. There is little chance that such an incorporation would be overlooked, especially not in this instance as the dome of al-Zāhir Baybars’ mosque was unambiguously monumental in scale. Though emphasis on the *mihrab* area through a cupola or transept or a combination thereof dated back to early mosque architecture, the size of al-Zāhir Baybars’ double shell dome—covering the space of nine bays and nearly fifteen and a half meters in diameter—was the most pronounced and dramatic feature of the edifice.310

![Figure 26](image)

**Figure 26 Exterior: Mosque of al-Zāhir Baybars**

Add to these impressions the curious fact that Husayniyya, the area in which it was built, was sparsely populated. Additionally there were no plans for new urban development centered on

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309 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 121.
310 Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 124.
it, and it was too far removed from al-Qāhirah to be a place of prayer for the city’s inhabitants.\textsuperscript{312} Not only was the area not in development when al-Zāhir Baybars chose it but he conspicuously did not contribute any urban development in the vicinity via the \textit{waqf}, which mentions no commercial structures as many \textit{bahri} endowments did. Viewed collectively it becomes clear that al-Zāhir Baybars very deliberately created and positioned the mosque to present this specific effect, while simultaneously showing little intention of it serving as a place of communal prayer at all.

The effect of the mosque, therefore, is principally symbolic and arranged for exhibition. That the purpose lay in its display, at least in part, is supported by the efforts made to ensure a site where the building could be viewed unfettered by surrounding urban elements. The lack of surroundings was important enough that al-Zāhir Baybars forbade any development or building up in the immediate vicinity of the mosque including the usual ad-hoc stalls that were ubiquitous,\textsuperscript{313} and sometimes even accommodated architecturally, in the urban center of Cairo.\textsuperscript{314} While not entirely unfamiliar in al-Qāhirah, few Mamlūk mosques were built to be free-standing,\textsuperscript{315} fewer still\textsuperscript{316} included such deliberate specifications towards retaining their visual independence. To this end, as well as for general support, the lands surrounding the mosque were affixed to it in the form of a long-term lease via the building’s \textit{waqf}.\textsuperscript{317} In this al-Zāhir Baybars appears to have been successful in maintaining the marginality of the area as twenty years later al-Monsieur Qala’un’s \textit{waqfiyya} describes the area vaguely as having gardens and in 1295 when Mongol refugees were settled there it was described by historian Maqrizi as being \textit{fada} or empty.\textsuperscript{318}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{312} Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 90.
\item \textsuperscript{313} Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 90.
\item \textsuperscript{314} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 89-90.
\item \textsuperscript{315} Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamlūks}, 84.
\item \textsuperscript{316} Potentially none outside al-Zāhir Baybars’ mosques and the citadel.
\item \textsuperscript{317} Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamlūks}, 122.
\item \textsuperscript{318} Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamlūks}, 121.
\end{itemize}
The palpable and overshadowing effect of this fortress-like mosque is that of ‘Sunni Islam militant and triumphant,’\(^{319}\) or perhaps more specifically that of the militant Mamlûks, on behalf of Sunni Islam, triumphant, the difference being minute yet significant. It seems probable, in light of al-Zâhir Baybars’ impressive victories over the Mongols and the Franks and his neutralization of Isma’ilis in Syria that that the message would have been implicitly understood by his subjects.\(^{320}\) What must also be considere is that it would also—and perhaps more importantly—be unmistakable to those approaching and entering the city. A particularly important consideration, given that as it was situated to the northwest of the city, the building’s rearward wall is towards the city and anyone approaching from that direction;\(^{321}\) conversely, with its principle entrance faced away from the city the mosque is ideally situated to greet those approaching from the other direction. While it was too remote a locale (figure 27) to expect it be used as a proper Friday mosque, it was well situated for housing the ceremonial reception of foreign officials and ambassadors arriving at the Capital.\(^{322}\)

Mamlûk political self-fashioning was multi-faceted as it strove to achieve the similar yet disparate goals of addressing both internal and external audiences. Promotion of legitimacy for the Mamlûks required not only addressing their immediate territory—over which they held and aimed to maintain authority— it also required them to address neighbouring powers. More particularly, the rulers of those states, from whom they—particularly during the early Sultanate—struggled to achieve respect and recognition as equals. Architecture had an integral role for the Mamlûks in pursuing acceptance as authorities over a land to which they were brought as slaves, and as the protectors of a faith they were not born to. In the case of the Husayniyya mosque, visual indicators of military might made a conspicuous statement of Mamlûk authority by virtue of ability. The message directed outwards from the Mamlûk empire towards foreign powers and visitors therefore becomes even more potent and appropriate to the type of reign the Mamlûk sultans represented.

\(^{319}\) Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 90.

\(^{320}\) Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo,” 90.

\(^{321}\) Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamlûks, 123.

\(^{322}\) Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamlûks, 122.
What appeared to be an outlier to the Mamlūk disinclination towards building grand congregational mosques is upon inspection the exception which proves the rule. For though al-Zāhir Baybars’ building has the necessary trappings of a congregational mosque—and is so designated—a number of its major elements suggest that it was never intended to function as one, but rather was meant as a device for delivering an entirely different set of ceremonial and symbolic needs, and messages.

Other examples of Mamlūk architecture featuring building materials, elements and other features that accentuate the military might of their patron builders are plentiful, the effect existing to varying degrees of conspicuity. Al-Nasir Muhammad’s contributions to the citadel, for instance, include the citadel Mosque—still extant—which was decorated with stone brought in

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323 Map of medieval al-Qāhirah showing the Mosque of al-Zāhir Baybars in purple in the upper left (north-east) corner.
triumph from the ruined Cathedral of Acre.324 So too a Gothic marble portal from Acre was repurposed for the entrance to al-Nāsir Muhammad’s madrasa-mausoleum325 on Bayn al-Qasrayn (figure 28). The portal manifested extraordinary military symbolic importance; having been a trophy from the Mamlūk campaign against the crusaders in 1291 in which they saw their second major achievement—after the victory against the Mongols.326 The addition of the word ‘Allah’ in a loop at the apex of the arch no doubt drove that home.327 As it was these victories that lent the Mamlūks a level of legitimacy, which was incontestable the portal, as a visual reminder of them, was a tangible reminder of their power and the deeds that made them worthy of it.

The Mamlūk interest in accentuating their military prowess and success by inserting reminders of it into the architecture they patronized went beyond the use of looted materials and was at times much more direct. For instance, Al-Mansur Qala’un during the construction he patronized within the citadel included on the walls of his state hall painted decorations of views of all of the citadels and fortresses he had conquered.328 Sources329 such as those which furnish details of al-Mansur Qala’un’s state hall indicate that while painted decorations belong to a pre-existing tradition of wall paintings, earlier examples of that tradition tend towards court activity and frivolity330 rather than making such decisive and intimidating political statements as did al-Mansur Qala’un.

324 Williams, “Urbanization and Monument Construction in Mamluk Cairo,” 38.

325 The complex was originally begun by Kitbughā and appropriated and completed by al-Nāsir Muhammad upon his return to the throne during his second reign. Williams, “Urbanization and Monument Construction in Mamluk Cairo,” 38.

326 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 153.

327 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 154.


329 No royal palace architecture from the Mamlūk era—or indeed from the whole of the medieval period—survives and there are few descriptions due to the limited access such spaces allowed. Information about such decoration is derived from those descriptions which exist. ‘Ali Ibrahim, “Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo,” 52.

330 Examples of such subject matter include: Khumarawayh (884-95)—son of ibn Tulun—had a mural depicting a life size version of himself surrounded by concubines, dancers, and musicians; during the Fatimid period the mastaba of the Caliph was painted with scenes of the hunt and tournaments; in the same vein Fatimid wazier al-Yazuri had a trompe-l’œil of a dancer painted in a recess. ‘Ali Ibrahim, “Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo,” 52.
The Mamlūk predilection for incorporating reminders of their status and their military successes had other effects on the Cairene cityscape. Residences of the upper level Mamlūk were distinguishable mostly for their portals that were afforded certain elements and proportions restricted to their class. The stateliness of the portals would immediately indicate the status of the owner, as grand portals were a design element restricted to the most elite amīrial houses or

palaces.\textsuperscript{332} The portals of \textit{amīrs'} dwellings were correspondingly marked as the \textit{amīr}'s rank was declared via a painted blazon (figure 29).\textsuperscript{333} Additionally, during the Bahri period\textsuperscript{334} Mamlūk \textit{amīrs}—only Mamlūk \textit{amīrs}—were permitted to display their painted weaponry from war on this area; weapons were also traditionally displayed on the gates leading into the city and into the citadel.\textsuperscript{335} The military overtones of such architectural and decorative features could be further emphasized as the \textit{amīrs} of a certain rank and above were also allowed to have a designated space, called a \textit{tablakhāna}, to house military drum units;\textsuperscript{336} it is probable that the playing of military percussive music would have been an effective means of drawing attention and distinguishing the residences of Mamlūk \textit{amīrs}. All this was in addition to the liberal use of blazons on virtually everything belonging to a Mamlūk \textit{amīr}. The blazons, or ranks, were similar to the western coat of arms and included a symbol representative of the \textit{amīr}'s rank—or a sultan’s personal emblem—set on a round shield; the blazon ‘which bore a colour of the \textit{amīr}'s choice, was painted on the gates of his house and his other possessions, such as the grain storehouses, the sugar refineries, the ships, as well as on his sword, his bow, and the caparisons (barkustawanāt) of his horses\textsuperscript{337} and camels.’\textsuperscript{338}

\begin{flushright}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{334} Until it the practice was forbade by Sultan Barqūq during his reign. ‘Ali Ibrahim, “Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo,” 55.  
\textsuperscript{337} Riding of horses was likewise limited to the Mamlūks, other high ranked individuals had to make do with mules. (Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamlūks}, 26-27)  
\textsuperscript{338} Ayalon, “Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,” 461-2. 
\end{flushright}
Non-Military Appropriation

The expropriation of elements from pre-existing structures was not limited to elements that explicitly evinced the military prowess of the Mamluks; though it may have been similarly symbolic of power. The use of military spoils existed within a larger trend of appropriation from the beginnings of the epoch. Sultan Aybak\(^{340}\) plundered his former master’s citadel at Rawda for building materials; later al-Zāhir Baybars would restore the citadel only for it to then be striped anew to furnish supplies for al-Mansur Qala’un grand complex being built within the remnants of a Fatimid palace.\(^{341}\) The practice of dismantling and seizure was relatively unremarkable during the Mamluk era.

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\(^{341}\) Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 54-55.
The most common Mamlūk architectural convention—in regards to appropriation—was to repurpose pre-Islamic columns, piers, and capitals for wholesale use in contemporary construction. This practice is particularly evident in hypostyle mosques where such spoils currently constitute important collections of piers from ancient architectural periods.343 Such plunder, however, provided an insufficient quantity of columns for the magnitude of Mamlūk building ambition and their preference for reusing ancient columns whenever possible.344 The resulting aesthetic includes columns of various sizes, styles, and time periods—including contemporary to supplement the insufficient numbers of pre-Islamic ones. The only concession to the resulting visual hodgepodge was in placing the columns on plinths of varying heights as a pragmatic solution to the inherent discrepancies in height. The lack of visual consistency and symmetry resulting from this practice was considered neither problematic nor aesthetically disruptive.345 Al-Nasir Muhammad’s extant hypostyle mosque at the citadel is a prime example


343 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 74.

344 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 74.

345 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 74.
of this practice; the status of the building and the resources available to the Sultan’s building projects\textsuperscript{346} affirm this as a design decision rather than necessity (figure 30).

\textsuperscript{346} Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 55.
Eight: Mimicry and Mediation

The relationship of mimicry and Otherness is slightly problematic in that a brief exploration of how architecture can exhibit both the Otherness of its patron and a mimicry of the culture that the patron is precluded from belonging to. This necessitates an understanding of how the quality of Otherness in architecture can be achieved, while that same quality of Otherness is both a function of and at cross-purposes to the expressive intent of its production. Such architecture—the intent of which encompasses the paradoxical nature of the socio-historic matrix of its creation—was undertaken during the Mamlūk Sultanate.

If a principle ambition of the Mamlūks’ architectural patronage was the pursuit—and obtainment—of a public exposition of legitimacy, its products were often imbued with the ostensible trappings of antecedent power. The unlikely maneuver executed through early Mamlūk architecture is the outward recollection of previous, legitimating structures while still inherently exposing the Otherness of their patrons. It similarly reveals the underlying tensions between those belonging to that Mamlūk Other and those not.

As previously mentioned, high ranking members of the Mamlūks patronized vast amounts of architecture during the Sultanate, much of it in their capital city of al-Qāhirah. Al-Zāhir Baybars was no exception; he is recorded as having established a large number of waqf endowments in Egypt and abroad. Similarly, Sultan Qala’un patronized an impressive sixty-eight buildings during his eleven-year reign, twenty of them in Cairo.

A jewel among Qala’un’s building projects was his al-Bimaristan al-Mansouri\textsuperscript{347} (figure 15) complex built from 1284 to 1294 CE.\textsuperscript{348} As an extension of its adjacency, the complex of Qala’un may be interpreted as a mediator between the architectural fabric of the building and its urban framework—physical and otherwise. One concludes that the layered reading and mediation are facets of the convenient; following this then, mediation is produced through the adjacent relationships generated by the building in situ. The complexes’ affinities are explicit in

\textsuperscript{347} Complex comprising: hospital, madrasa /religious school, and mausoleum.

\textsuperscript{348} Stierlin, Splendours of an Islamic World, 212.
part because ‘[i]ndividually, Mamluk monuments were more responsive to their context than they were initiators or dictators of new ones’\textsuperscript{349} and the concept of space expressed in it is not manifested in isolated buildings, but in urban infills or complexes set in the midst of existing structures.\textsuperscript{350} There are of course, exceptions. Instances where individual buildings deviate from the norm, often done so as a means of conveying specific intent, as in the mosque of al-Zāhir Baybars at Husayniyya.

The responsiveness of Mamlūk buildings is evident in their effort to integrate themselves into awkward sites within al-Qāhirah urban fabric; overall they do not assert themselves as separate entities but rather insinuate themselves into the street-scape. The buildings’ exteriors are oriented to the urban environs while the interiors derive orientation from religious spatial doctrine and are aligned—approximately rectilinearly—toward Mecca. The oddly shaped space between the street lines and the internal qibla\textsuperscript{351} walls become points of mediation between the external urbanity and the architecture.

Viewing the deviation of wall thickness (figure 12) as a moment of mediation illustrates Bhabha’s concept of mimicry which is ‘almost the same, but not quite.’ The buildings are neither fully oriented to the street nor Mecca, but instead act out a mediated adjacency to both; adhering again to Bhabha it is possible to view his notion of an ambivalence or indeterminacy enacted. This ambivalence is seen in the representation of the Other’s existence and difference along the edge condition between the start of one and the end of the next, all of which is the result of the need to adhere to the street. Few examples of similar ambivalences exist in Cairo prior to the Mamlūk era, but the first seems to have been a small mosque built during the Fatimid period. While such ambivalence may not have been wholly original to Mamlūk building, it was a recognizable feature of it in a way that it was not in preceding periods.

\textsuperscript{349} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 73.

\textsuperscript{350} Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 73.

\textsuperscript{351} The wall whose orientation is fixed towards the Kaaba in Mecca.
This connection to and repetition of spatial orientations is evocative of a façade of mimicry that is contingent on the concept of camouflaging, which is not about creating exact conformity with the surroundings but rather amidst an urban heterogeneity inserting itself as an accordingly mottled element. It seeks to create for itself a sense of legitimacy through its relation to and mimicry or mirroring of the architecture of the previous regime.\textsuperscript{352}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Figure31.png}
\caption{Plan of the Maristan-Mosque-Mausoleum of Qala’un\textsuperscript{353} \textsuperscript{354}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{352} Bhabha, \textit{The Location of Culture}, 85.

\textsuperscript{353} Lithograph. “Plan Du Moristan l’Hopitale de la Mosquee et du Tombeau de Qalaoun,” or “Plan of the Hospital of Qala’un’s Mosque and Tomb;” plate from Pascal Coste’s \textit{Architecture Arabe; ou, Monuments du Kaire, Mesurés et Dessinés, de 1818 à 1826}, 1818-1826. (Colours and text are mine)

\textsuperscript{354} Note that the façade of the mausoleum and madrasa have been simplified and the divergency between the street and quibla sides of the wall are not represented.

102
Conceptual Mimesis

There are other aspects of the complex that display similar aspirations towards creating a mimetic space as a means of strengthening legitimacy. Qala’un’s bimaristan was considered the focus of the complex’s patronage. The building type, scope, decoration and generous provision for all announce the complex as being an undertaking of royal proportions and was unquestionably meant to be viewed as such.355 Regardless of the truth—or lack-thereof—in the story that Qala’un’s hospital was the fulfillment of a ‘sickbed vow,’356 it served to place him in the tradition of royal hospital builders. It aligned him reflectively with prominent rulers Nur al-Din and Salâh al-Dîn who were known for their demonstrated commitment to jihâd—a connection implicit in his Mamlûk-ness as a warrior-prince-mujâhideen—and also built grand hospitals.357 This mimetic was a calculated move on Qala’un’s part to strengthen his reign and win public support; as both Nur al-Din and Salâh al-DînSalâh al-Dîn achieved through their works.

Yet the al-Bimaristan al-Mansouri was no pretense at hospital making, no thin emulation. The fame of Qala’un’s bimaristan derived from its function as a charitable foundation for medical care, teaching and study. It was a remarkable philanthropic undertaking in Qala’un’s time or any other; it lasted in some form through to the nineteenth century.358 His endeavour may have been emulation, but it also eclipses the original. The bimaristan is a decidedly ‘royal’359 statement.

355 Northrup, From Slave to Sultan, 120.
356 Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 96.
357 Northrup, From Slave to Sultan, 120.
358 When it had dwindled to being an eye clinic.
359 Al-Maqrizi: “When al-Malik al-Mansur was on his way to fight the Rum as an amir during the reign of al-Zahir Baybars in the year 675 [1276] he fell ill in Damascus. Doctors treated him with medicines that were brought for him from the maristan of Nur al-Din al-Shahid. He was cured and rode to visit the maristan. He admired it and vowed to build a maristan if God were to award him kingship.” [Al-Maqrizi, Khita’ 2: 406.] Al-Harithy, “The Concept of Space in Mamluk Architecture,” 76. Clearly an association existed between the type of patronage and the status of the patron, that he should undertake it only in the event of attaining that rank. The narrative likewise creates a link between the kingship of al-Mansur Qala’un and that of Nur al-Din as well as connecting to the endeavor the notion of divine favour.
The substance of al-Mansur Qala’un’s grand vision for the hospital survives in the complex’s *waqfiyya*; allowing, so many years after its construction, an understanding of the intentions Qala’un had for his legacy. The *waqfiyya* of the complex dedicated the hospital to all Muslims regardless of their gender, race, nationality, status or illness; they were to be treated free of charge, the only proviso being that those in greatest need should be given priority. As previously mentioned, the services covered by the foundation were far ranging, including providing superlative medical care and hygiene through: a laboratory for medicines (figure 32); a minimum of one doctor—or more, working together or in shifts—on premises at all times; dedicated laundry facilities; individual chamber pots; and a kitchen which supplied food and drink with hygienic forethought—in individual covered vessels.

![Figure 32 Medical Prescription Issued by Qala’un’s Bimaristan](image32)

Specific attention was paid to the comfort and humane care of their patients through the provision of: sleeping accommodation with a separate section for women; beds of wood or palm slats with pillows and covers; beautifully ornamented spaces creating an uplifting atmosphere for healing (figures 33, 34, and 35); soothing music for the patients’ benefit; and funerary expenses according to social standing—in event of patient’s death where the family were unable to afford

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360 Medical prescription issued by Bimaristan Qalawun, Wikicommons.
it themselves. Little is left of the *bimaristan*, but what remains of the complex support accounts of its once being beautifully decorated.\textsuperscript{361}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Shadirwan\textsuperscript{362} in Western Iwan of Qala’un’s Maristan\textsuperscript{363}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{361} Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo*, 96-97.

\textsuperscript{362} One among many elements included for the comfort of patients and the splendour of al-Mansur Qala’un’s Maristan were two Shadirwans—wall fountains—placed on the back wall of the western and eastern iwans of the hospital from which water flowed into into two connected basins. Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo*, 142. The remains of the western iwan and its basin are shown above.

\textsuperscript{363} Blair Sheila and Jonathan Bloom, “Complex of Qala’un; Maristan (Hospital) west arch,” photograph, 1978, ARTstor Digital Library, BB-1264.
The *bimaristan* then, rather than being a shadow of those it was emulating, became the most renowned medical institution of its day anywhere in the world.\(^{366}\) It is in some ways analogous to Foucault’s “Of Other Spaces” wherein the creation of the illusory spaces exposes real ones. It may also be viewed as the enactment of another aspect of Foucault’s concept of similitude, in which:

\[
\text{The relation of emulation enables things to imitate one another from one end of the universe to the other without connection or proximity: by duplicating itself in a mirror the world abolishes the distance proper to it; in this way it overcomes the}
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\(^{364}\) Interior of Madrasa-Mausoleum from the complex of al-Mansur Qala’un; 1284-85. Photograph, ARTstor Collection Islamic Art and Architecture Collection (Sheila Blair, Jonathan Bloom, Walter Denny); 1983.

\(^{365}\) Detail of stone inlay work from the complex of al-Mansur Qala’un; 1284-85. Photograph, ARTstor Collection Islamic Art and Architecture Collection (Sheila Blair, Jonathan Bloom, Walter Denny); 1983.

\(^{366}\) Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 120.
place allotted to each thing. But which of these reflections coursing through space are the original image? Which is the reality and which the projection? 367

This is the question we have to ask, for the act of emulating is not a static repetition but creates a dynamic relationship between the reflection and that which it mirrors. There is a tension implicit in the act of emulation, which requires some movement to break free from the unproductive cycle of pure mimicry. In both Foucault and Bhabha this relationship has aggressive overtones. Compare Bhabha’s somewhat cynical vision of the duplicity and control implied in the mask of mimesis:

The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both ‘normalized’ knowledges and disciplinary powers.368

Foucault’s idea of the combat of reflection and reflected:

Similitude then becomes the combat of one form against another – or rather of one and the same form separated from itself by the weight of matter or distance in space. Man as Paracelsus describes him is, like the firmament, ‘constellated with stars’, but he is not bound to it […] It pertains to the firmament of man to be ‘free and powerful’, to bow to no order’, and ‘not to be ruled by any other created beings’. His inner sky may remain autonomous and depend only upon itself, but on condition that by means of his wisdom, which is also knowledge, he comes to resemble the order of the world, takes it back into himself and thus recreates in his inner firmament the sway of that other firmament in which he sees the glitter of the visible stars. If he does this, then the wisdom of the mirror will in turn be reflected back to envelop the world in which it has been placed; its great ring will spin out into the depth of the heavens.369

367 Foucault, The Order of Things, 22.
368 Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 86.
369 Foucault, The Order of Things, 23.
The question becomes whether the emulating entity asserts itself to move outside the limits of this static combat; and if so, how? The solution within the Complex of Qala’un is that of the ‘mirror reflected back’ as it develops a visual language completely its own and in ‘the distance it crosses is not annulled by the subtle metaphor of emulation; it remains open to the eye.’\textsuperscript{370} The reflection opens itself up to the influences of the world. The \textit{bimaristan} and \textit{qubba}\textsuperscript{371} were impressive in design, both demonstrating techniques of style and decoration never before employed in Egypt.

\textbf{Mamlûks As Mimic Men}

Bhabha’s discussion of the power play encompassed within mimicry as being elusive because it ‘hides no essence, no ‘itself’’ is applicable for the Mamlûks, except that the ‘identity effects’ are not in this instance a product of a specific strategy—at least not one constructed by the Mamlûks.\textsuperscript{372} Rather the emptiness and elusiveness of Mamlûk identity, is a result of the individual self having been broken by the boys’ entry into slavery. While a new self is created through participation within the Mamlûk experience and community, it is produced with a specific awareness of the Otherness inherent to it. That is to say that, the Mamlûk ‘self’ was created within cultural paradigms and parameters to which it would never belong but was nonetheless aware of; identity constructed as inherently and mindfully Other.

Bhabha’s use of the concept of \textit{mimic men}\textsuperscript{373}—those who are Anglicized but not English or put another way ‘\textit{almost the same but not white}’\textsuperscript{374}—is applicable in so far as the Mamlûks are created also as a means of intersecting. Mamlûks however, unlike the mimic men, do not function as a bridge between a colonial power and its native subjects, but rather they serve as the intersection—and bulwark—between the Islamic state and the forces besieging it. In some ways

\textsuperscript{370} Foucault, \textit{The Order of Things}, 23.

\textsuperscript{371} Tomb.

\textsuperscript{372} Bhabha, \textit{The Location of Culture}, 90.

\textsuperscript{373} Bhabha, \textit{The Location of Culture}, 87-89.

\textsuperscript{374} Bhabha, \textit{The Location of Culture}, 89.
they serve also as a connection between contemporary Islamic culture and nostalgic notions of its nomadic past and the ideal of *mujāhid*.

Ironically the creation of the Mamlūk Other is so complete that when they, as a class, ascended to power the Mamlūks themselves required an intermediary group through whom that power was exercised. This chancery class while serving goals similar to those of Bhabha’s mimic men, do not appear to have been in any other way similar to them, as while they were members of the ‘native’ culture they were not even superficially disguised in the trappings of Mamlūks, the equivalently dominant political group. Here again, if anything the Mamlūks are the mimic men in assuming the outward manifestation of their predecessors.
Conclusion

[I]t was God’s benevolence that He rescued the faith by reviving its dying breath and restoring the unity of the Muslims in the Egyptian realms, preserving the order and defending the walls of Islam. He did this by sending to the Muslims, from this Turkish nation and from among its great and numerous tribes, rulers to defend them and utterly loyal helpers, who were brought from the House of War to the House of Islam under the rule of slavery, which hides in itself a divine blessing.375

As ibn Khaldūn’s376 words suggest, even in their halcyon days Mamlūks were considered to be Other than the broader culture around them. Rather than mitigating their political, military or architectural potential, that Otherness offered an avenue to success and a lens through which we may understand those successes; as well as those means and motivations for achieving them.

Through the lens of their unique status, Mamlūk architectural patronage can be recognized as satisfying specific needs: for bequeathing wealth, constructing legitimacy, and in facilitating their voice in realizing their concept of urban al-Qāhirah. The legacy of the Bahri period in al-Qāhirah is its high degree of engagement and mediation with the metropolitan landscape. The resultant urban fabric was more than a by-product of Mamlūk rule, in many senses it was their rule. The Mamlūks evinced a remarkable intimacy and reciprocal relationship with their capital city that in effect bonded them with it.377 Mamlūk al-Qāhirah embodied the delicate and often imperfect negotiation of Mamlūk rule with their empire. There are few aristocracies—especially military ones—who tied themselves so closely to their urban milieu; as Ayalon put it ‘few military aristocracies in Islamic history were as bound to the capital and as closely identified with it as the Mamlūks in relation to Cairo.’378

375 Ibn Khaldūn. (Northrup, From Slave to Sultan, 242)

376 A significant historiographer and historian ibn Khaldūn was originally from Tunis and thus external to the innate tensions between the Mamlūks and the Cairene literati; also less cynical than some of this local counterparts, like Al-Maqrizi. (Behrens-Abouseif, Islamic Architecture in Cairo, 16)

377 Behrens-Abouseif, Islamic Architecture in Cairo, 70.

378 Behrens-Abouseif, Islamic Architecture in Cairo, 70. Ayalon: (‘the muslim city’, pg 319; idem ‘studies pg 205)
It would not be overstating it to suggest that—as with any symbiosis—the inverse was equally true, as the growth and metropolitan character of the city was directly related to its Mamlūk patrons. Very simply, Al-Qāhirah development and urbanization would have progressed quite differently were it not for the Mamlūks. In reflecting upon this symbiosis it becomes apparent that Striking parallels existed between the Mamlūks and their architecture both being exclusive and defined by their militaristic qualities, useful for raising up and safe keeping Islam, filling the empty spaces of their context but nonetheless being perfectly discernible from the milieu surrounding them. The segregation and isolation that defined the Mamlūks was also a primary motivator in establishing the art and architecture to meet their needs; that same architecture would resonate with the particularities of their identity—though perhaps unintentional and potentially a consequence of the remoteness from which this lens of inquiry is applied.

One might reasonably argue that the Mamlūk Other at its core was a diaspora of displaced people whose primary element of cohesion was this displacement, and the ongoing reverberations thereof. It is for this reason that the art of creating space for the Mamlūks was a particularly nuanced activity; the displaced’s generating of space. This may have been as significant an act of self-defining as were the battles they fought, the positions they earned. By literally making room for themselves in their surroundings urban environment, the Mamlūks engaged all at once in a submissive non-invasive act of a once-slave-outsider and a dominant one of the warrior-prince-mujāhideen.

Al-Qāhirah was symbiotic to the Mamlūks, providing them—through their architectural mediation of it—with much that their Otherness denied them. It gave them a ‘voice’ through which to be heard where they would otherwise have been inaudible, even through their ‘own’ chronicles and histories. It gave them a tangible civic presence despite the segregation imposed upon them and later self-imposed isolation. It gave them a legacy when they had been extirpated from their ancestry and denied patrimony. It bore their names and ranks when they had been unnamed and unmade. These were the monuments of men, former slaves, who judged themselves and one another by their deeds—the courageous but equally the ruthless or cunning.
The great impact of their commemoration in mausolea was in the ultimate act of self-naming—therefore reclamation of power over oneself—and insuring that despite the hindrances placed upon their legacies, their names and presence would reverberate for many years after their demise, individually and collectively.

Even the conceptual act of self-naming is consistent with the Mamlūk emphasis on meritocratic advancement; for in ‘a society that purchased its aristocracy, including the monarch, on the slave market’ the importance of merit based rank and social status can’t be underemphasized. Everything following from the act of establishing worth is a demonstration of their worth and the power it commanded. Mamlūk architecture was a physical symbol of that power. What ibn Khaldūn knew, and wrote, was that ‘[g]reat monumental works are the collective achievements of successive generations and the product of accumulated knowledge’. Such works are only possible through a confluence of organization, availability of proficient labour and a surfeit of resources; in essence a co-ordination of elements the product of which are indicative of the power of the authority which commands them. Through this reasoning architecture becomes a manifestation of power.

Beyond the temporal power that was embedded in the act of creating space, and monumental architecture, there were goals specific to the Mamlūk Other which the Mamlūk sought to achieve through architectural means. If we are to judge the accomplishment of the Bahri Mamlūk’s architecture by one of their own criterion, that of commemoration and legacy, it is easy to say that they as a whole they were triumphant. To walk down the street in Bahri al-Qāhirah would have been to be viscerally aware of the Mamlūk presence within the city—extraordinarily so had the street been a major processional avenue. Above the clamor of the street peddlers were the sounds of the prayers offered up for the warrior patrons wafting through the lattice windows of mausolea and the rhythmic tattoo of the military drums of the tablakhāna outside the palatial houses of the mightiest Mamlūk amīrs. The city was awash in the sounds of

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381 Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo*, 16.
the Mamlūk as a savior in the defense of Islam and the counterbalance of the salvation of those same through their struggle for Allah. Visually reminders of the military lords would have been omnipresent: from the brightly coloured blazons of the Mamlūk rank and the painted weapons they wielded to earn them, to the ablaq382 patterning on soaring minarets that would draw the eye up from the raucous street. Their continuing legacy was successful not only in the imminent viscera of the Cairene streets but enduring indefinitely. Arguably this study, and all others like it, are testament to this. If to observe is to change the object of scrutiny, then it is possible that to study the artifacts of the Mamlūk state is actively engage their continuing legacy.

By another of their criteria, legitimacy, they achieved a relative measure in their time. In subsequent years one might argue their achievements in this were even greater. So successful were the Mamlūks’ efforts towards producing legitimacy for themselves that hundreds of years later when a post-Ottoman Egypt was searching for a style to honour its nascent nationhood and to clarify its identity as Egyptian, they adopted the ‘Neo-Mamlūk style.’ It was in the Mamlūk epoch that the modern heirs to the country found the aesthetic by which they would self-identify and present themselves to the world. The Neo-Mamlūk style was at once a negation of Ottoman influence383 and the basis for optimistic outlook for the new nation by embedding it in an architectural language evocative of previous glory. The limited monumental patronage undertaken by the Ottomans meant that much of what remained and recalled the glory of past Islamic regimes were in fact remnants of Mamlūk monuments.

Almost one third of some 3,300 identifiable Mamlūk architectural undertakings have, to varying extents, been preserved.384 In all these monumental remnants and the study of them, are the reverberations that allow a glimpse through their echoes of the splendor that ibn Khaldūn perceived upon arriving in Mamlūk Cairo:

He who has not seen Cairo, does not know the grandeur of Islam. It is the metropolis of the universe, the garden of the world, the ant-hill of the human

382 Pattern of striped masonry, consisting of alternating courses of light and dark stone.

383 Sanders, Creating Medieval Cairo, 38.

384 According to the estimate of Michael Meinecke. (Grabar, Islamic Visual Culture, 306)
species, the portico of Islam, the throne of royalty, a city embellished with castles and palaces, decorated with dervish monasteries and with schools, and lighted by the moons and stars of erudition.  

These associations provide the legacies, and more, sought by the Bahri sultans for whom building in—and up—their city was more than just a grand architectural endeavour but rather the physical and ideological reflection of themselves. Their Otherness, which so impeded their attempts to achieve legitimacy and legacy, has been eroded by those efforts and the passage of time resulting in their acceptance as Same through the vehicle of cultural nostalgia. More than any other Mamlūk act, their patronage of architecture created the reverberations into history necessary to immortalizing them. So it is that in the present, when their unique class of Otherness has long since ceased to exist, their works and names still persist. The dome and the minaret still define the urban landscape of the old quarter of a city that is still, by modern standards, a major metropolis.

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385 AlSayyad, Cairo, 94.

386 Front detail: “CAIRE - Vue Generale de Caire,” Postcard, 1905, Travelers in the Middle East Archive (TIMEA), 5623. URI: http://hdl.handle.net/1911/5623
Afterword

In many ways the focus and approach of the thesis—the examination of Mamlûk architecture vis-à-vis the quality of Otherness—positions itself toward the margins of the current breadth of Mamlûk studies. That said, there are a number of connective filaments born of those studies, which provide the framework for this study. There are numerous Mamlûk scholars—including Rabbat, Behrens-Abouseif, and to an extent Ayalon (Outsiders in the Lands of Islam)—whose treatment of the subject is positioned adjacently to the subject of Otherness, but does not focus on this quality. Their work leaves unexamined the relationship between the quality of Otherness and the cultural, political, and architectural fabric of the Mamlûk-controlled world. However, though the topic of Otherness is not one that is explicitly or deeply explored in their work, I would argue that the properties of the condition of being Mamlûk—in this thesis, Otherness—are integral to a significant portion of the current scholarship on the Mamlûks and their sultanate. Not expressly stated, the Mamlûk Other is nonetheless implicitly evident in the sociological approaches taken by much of the newer work on the Mamlûk Sultanate.

One feasible explanation for the dearth of explicit discourse linking Mamlûks and Otherness might result, in part, from the particularities of the Mamlûk Sultanate. As explored in the thesis, the Mamlûk State during this period was unique in many regards and the power dynamics wielded within it were neither unidirectional nor static throughout; peculiarities which make more conventional discussions of Self/Other binarism problematic in application. As with many forms of power—but in ways wholly unique to the Mamlûk condition—the Other-power binary relationship engaging the Mamlûks was both nuanced and transitory. The intimacy of power and Otherness during the Sultanate impedes the articulation of an uncomplicated Mamlûk Other. In many ways we find that their architecture—with all its attendant processes and trappings—became a vehicle for bridging that Otherness while simultaneously being a direct product of it. As articulated within the thesis the overall architectural patronage of the Mamlûks, as an entity, held within it an element of cultural transgression. The uncodified but systemic nature of their transgressive attitudes followed from the Mamlûks’ unique needs and desires;
both of which are intrinsically tied to the condition of being ‘Mamlūk’—their collective situation and identity as Other. The same circumstances and identity that required the maintenance of the complex power balances in place between the foreign Mamlūk and their subject empire.

The resulting broadening of the Self/Other binary relationship required for the application to the Mamlūk condition represents, to me, an exciting avenue for prospective work in this area, though falling outside the scope of this particular thesis. Use of the lens of Otherness was constructed as a sort of scaffold to provide a means of investigating the peculiarities of the Mamlūk identity and its relationship to architectural patronage for this thesis. Further study building upon the Mamlūk condition, situating it within this broader discourse but without any peripheral foci, could create a strong foundation for understanding and categorizing the nuances of the previously described deviations inherent to Mamlūk-centric Otherness. The necessary building blocks already exist within the existing oeuvres in both Mamlūk studies and in the opposing perceptions and image of Bhabha’s ambivalence. Such a foundation would permit a more fluid application of the principle to further study of the Mamlūk Sultanate—study which might include, but in no way be limited to, a revisitation of and expounding upon its influence upon Mamlūk architectural process, practices, and products. I would be interested in seeing other studies touching upon the interaction of one or more groups endowed with ambivalent and liminal positions, such as women (specifically Shajar al-Durr), eunuchs, other slave casts, and the ‘sons of Mamlūks.’ I believe that such work in combination with this thesis would have the potential to provide a theoretical framework extending the discourse of Otherness - a framework that could be applied in other fields of study.
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Appendix A

Chronological List Of Bahri Sultans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titular Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Son Of (ibn)</th>
<th>CE</th>
<th>AH</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Malikah Ismat al-Din</td>
<td>Shajar al-Durr</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>May–July 1250</td>
<td>648–648</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Mu’izz ‘Izz al-Din</td>
<td>Aybak</td>
<td></td>
<td>July 1250–April 1257</td>
<td>648–655</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Ashraf Muzaffar al-Din</td>
<td>Musa*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1250–1252</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Zahir Rukn-al-Din</td>
<td>Baybars I</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oct. 1260–July 1277</td>
<td>658–676</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Sa’id Nasir-al-Din</td>
<td>Baraka</td>
<td>Baybars I</td>
<td>July 1277–Aug. 1279</td>
<td>676–678</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Adil Badr-al-Din</td>
<td>Salamish</td>
<td>Baybars I</td>
<td>Aug.–Nov. 1279</td>
<td>678</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Mansur Sayf-al-Din</td>
<td>Qala’un</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov. 1279–Nov. 1290</td>
<td>678–689</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Ashraf Salah-al-Din</td>
<td>Khalil</td>
<td>Qala’un</td>
<td>Nov. 1290–Dec. 1293</td>
<td>689–693</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Nasir Nasir-al-Din</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
<td>Qala’un</td>
<td>Dec. 1293–Dec. 1294</td>
<td>693–694</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>al-Nasir Nasir-al-Din</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
<td>Qala’un</td>
<td>Jan. 1299–April 1309</td>
<td>698–708</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>al-Muzaffar Rukn-al-Din</td>
<td>Baybars II</td>
<td></td>
<td>April 1309–Feb. 1310</td>
<td>708–709</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Nasir Nasir-al-Din</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
<td>Qala’un</td>
<td>Feb. 1310–June 1341</td>
<td>709–741</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Mansur Sayf-al-Din</td>
<td>Abu-Bakr</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
<td>June–Aug 1341</td>
<td>741–742</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

387 Largely derived from Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 317.

123
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titular Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Son Of (ibn)</th>
<th>CE</th>
<th>AH</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>al-Nasir Shihab-al-Din</em></td>
<td>Ahmad</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
<td>Jan.–June. 1342</td>
<td>742–743</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>As-Saleh Imal-al-Din</em></td>
<td>Isma’il</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
<td>June 1342–Aug. 1345</td>
<td>743–746</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>al-Kamil Sayf-al-Din</em></td>
<td>Sha’ban I</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
<td>Aug. 1345–Sep. 1346</td>
<td>746–747</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>al-Nasir Nasir-al-Din</em></td>
<td>Hasan</td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
<td>Dec. 1347–Aug. 1351</td>
<td>748–752</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>al-Mansur Nasir-al-Din</em></td>
<td>Muhammad</td>
<td>Hajji I</td>
<td>March 1361–May 1363</td>
<td>762–764</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>al-Ashraf</em> Zayn-al-Din</td>
<td>Sha’ban II</td>
<td>Husayn</td>
<td>May 1363–March 1377</td>
<td>764–778</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>al-Mansur Ala-al-Din</em></td>
<td>‘Ali</td>
<td>Sha’ban</td>
<td>March 1377–May 1381</td>
<td>778–783</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>al-Saleh Salah-al-Din</em></td>
<td>Hajji II*</td>
<td>Sha’ban</td>
<td>May 1381–Nov. 1382</td>
<td>783–784</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>al-Zahir Sayf-al-Din</em></td>
<td>Barquq</td>
<td>Anas</td>
<td>Nov. 1382–May 1389</td>
<td>784–791</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>al-Mansur Salah-al-Din</em></td>
<td>Hajji II*</td>
<td>Sha’ban</td>
<td>May 1389–Feb 1390</td>
<td>791–792</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-Bahri Sultan**

**Baybars I and sons.**

**Aybak and son.**

**Qala’un and descendants.**

Colours represent dynastic affiliation, decreasing in saturation generationally.