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and Syria – Evolution and Impact**

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## Contents

Editorial note . . . . .	7
Acknowledgement . . . . .	9
Foreword . . . . .	11
Doris Behrens-Abouseif ( <i>SOAS, University of London</i> ) The Arts of the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria: An Introduction . . . . .	13
Nasser Rabbat ( <i>MIT, Cambridge/MA</i> ) In Search of a Triumphant Image: the Experimental Quality of Early Mamluk Art . . . . .	21
Sophie Makariou and Carine Juvin ( <i>both: Département des arts de l'Islam – Musée du Louvre, Paris</i> ) The Louvre <i>Kursi</i> : Function and Meaning of Mamluk Stands . . . . .	37
Rachel Ward Mosque Lamps and Enamelled Glass: Getting the Dates Right . . . . .	55
Roland-Pierre Gayraud ( <i>Laboratoire d'Archéologie Médiévale Méditerranéenne (LAMM) – CNRS Aix-en-Provence</i> ) Ceramics in the Mamluk Empire: An Overview . . . . .	77
Rosalind A. Wade Haddon Mongol Influences on Mamluk Ceramics in the Fourteenth Century . . . . .	95
Jon Thompson ( <i>Oriental Institute, University of Oxford</i> ) Late Mamluk Carpets: Some New Observations . . . . .	115
Ellen Kenney ( <i>American University in Cairo</i> ) A Mamluk Monument Reconstructed: an Architectural History of the Mosque and Mausoleum of Tankiz al-Nasiri in Damascus . . . . .	141

Bernard O’Kane ( <i>American University in Cairo</i> ) James Wild and the Mosque of Bashtak, Cairo . . . . .	163
Julien Loiseau ( <i>Université Montpellier 3</i> ) The City of Two Hundred Mosques: Friday Worship and its Spread in the Monuments of Mamluk Cairo . . . . .	183
Iman R. Abdulfattah and Mamdouh Mohamed Sakr ( <i>The Prince’s School of Traditional Arts, Cairo</i> ) Glass Mosaics in a Royal Mamluk Hall: Context, Content, and Interpretation . . . . .	203
Julia Gonnella ( <i>Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin</i> ) Inside Out: The Mamluk Throne Hall in Aleppo . . . . .	223
J. M. Rogers ( <i>The Nour Foundation</i> ) Court Workshops under the Bahri Mamluks . . . . .	247
Zeren Tanındı ( <i>Sabancı University, Sakıp Sabancı Museum</i> ) Two Bibliophile Mamluk Emirs: Qansuh the Master of the Stables and Yashbak the Secretary . . . . .	267
Mehmed Baha Tanman ( <i>University of Istanbul</i> ) Mamluk Influences on the Architecture of the Anatolian Emirates . . . . .	283
Doris Behrens-Abouseif ( <i>SOAS, University of London</i> ) Mamluk Perceptions of Foreign Arts . . . . .	301
List of the Mamluk Sultans . . . . .	319
Map of the Mamluk Empire . . . . .	323
Select Bibliography of Mamluk Art Studies . . . . .	325
Glossary . . . . .	339
Index . . . . .	343

## The City of Two Hundred Mosques: Friday Worship and Its Spread in the Monuments of Mamluk Cairo

Islamic Cairo is known for its astonishing number of monuments preserved from the Mamluk period (1250–1517): about 250 buildings of various sizes and functions are still standing today, and, according to documents and historical sources, many more were built and have since disappeared, mainly with the modernisation of the city from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards.<sup>1</sup> Religious monuments, which owe their preservation to the uninterrupted gathering of the faithful and to the durability of pious endowments used to sustain them, form the main part of this legacy. Almost all these buildings are used today for daily prayers and Friday worship and they are fully furnished for this purpose, with loudspeakers for the call to prayer and a minbar, a stone or wooden pulpit from which the Friday sermon is delivered, in fulfilment of community worship.

However, this has not always been the case in the past. Most of the religious foundations of the Mamluk period were first established either as madrasas for the teaching of law or as *khanqah*s or *zawiya*s for the gathering and support of Sufis, emphasising the contributions of their patrons to the reinforcement of Sunni Islam.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, most Islamic cities during the Middle Ages had only one mosque for the gathering of the entire male community on Fridays, apart from several oratories visited daily by the people of the neighbourhood. Since at least the eleventh century, both institutions were clearly distinguished in the vocabulary of texts and inscriptions, the oratories as *masjid* (place of prostration), the Friday mosque as *masjid jami*<sup>c</sup> (congregational mosque) or simply *jami*<sup>c</sup>.<sup>3</sup> In the Arabic geography of the imperial age, the presence of a Friday mosque, symbolised by its pulpit (minbar), was one of the main criteria for establishing whether a place was a city or a village.<sup>4</sup> The uniqueness of the Friday mosque within a city was even a requirement of the law (according to the Shafi'i and, to a lesser extent, to the Maliki schools of law<sup>5</sup>) in order to preserve the cohesion of the community and to avoid division and sectarianism.

In the Mamluk period, however, this changed in Cairo earlier than anywhere else in the Islamic world, with the institution of Friday worship in an increasing number of religious buildings. Some of the largest Islamic cities had more than

one Friday mosque: in Baghdad there were six in the tenth century and eleven at the end of the twelfth century, when the city broke up into quite autonomous neighbourhoods.<sup>6</sup> But in Cairo the phenomenon was on an unprecedented scale with more than 220 mosques opening their doors for Friday worship in 1517 on the eve of the Ottoman conquest.<sup>7</sup> This has already been noted, in numerous publications, by historians studying the form and function of Cairene religious foundations.<sup>8</sup> A comprehensive study of this process, regarding religious practice, pious institutions, and architectural patronage, is still to be done.

### “Until the increase in the number of mosques did occur”

The legal requirement of the uniqueness of the Friday mosque in the city was still a current topic in the reflections of fifteenth-century scholars, especially within the Shafi‘i circle, even if (or perhaps because) it was contradicted by the urban reality. Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Sakhawi (d. 1497), a disciple of the great Shafi‘i scholar and chief *qadi* of Egypt, Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani (d. 1449), gave an interesting example of this in his chronicle:

“Despite the choice of oratories, the Friday worship [*al-jum‘a*] is not attended in Mekka, Medina and Jerusalem except in one place [...]. It is also established that the Friday worship in Misr [al-Fustat] was not attended except in one place in the age of the emirs, of the Fatimid caliphs, and then of the sultans, until the New Mosque (al-Jami‘ al-Jadid) was built at the limit of Misr on the Nile shore, under the reign of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad [1310–1341]. During almost 700 years the Friday worship had not been attended except in one place, the Old Mosque (al-Jami‘ al-‘Atiq), despite the crowds of people, especially before the foundation of al-Qahira [969], until the increase in the number of mosques did occur.”<sup>9</sup>

Writing in the second half of the fifteenth century, Sakhawi identifies the third reign of al-Nasir Muhammad (1310–1341) as the turning point in the history of Friday worship’s practice in Cairo. His assumption seems to be confirmed by the urban growth of the city in the first half of the fourteenth century and the development of its outskirts.<sup>10</sup> But one should be cautious before making too strong a connection between the foundation of new Friday mosques and the spatial expansion of the city. Taking a look at the history of Cairo is instructive.

In 1171, acting as the last vizir of the last Fatimid caliph, Saladin abolished the Shi‘i caliphate in Cairo and officially restored Sunni Islam in Egypt. As an implementation of the strict Shafi‘i doctrine, he ordered the closing on Friday of almost all the Friday mosques and the gathering of the faithful in only two places: the Old Mosque (or mosque of ‘Amr ibn al-‘As) in Madinat Misr and the mosque of

al-Hakim in the Fatimid city of al-Qahira itself. This choice was mainly due to the space available in the courtyard of the mosque of al-Hakim (990–1013); but, as a consequence, the mosque of al-Azhar (970), which had been the main centre of the Isma‘ili mission during two centuries, was from then on closed for Friday worship.<sup>11</sup> Besides the practical constraints that Saladin’s measure imposed on the inhabitants of Cairo, it had a great significance for the religious landscape of the city. In 1171, there were nineteen Friday mosques in Cairo, of which six were located in the walled area of al-Qahira. Most of them had been built in the Fatimid era, in either an urban or funerary context. Loyal to their ancestor, the Ayyubid sultans of Egypt respected Saladin’s prohibition, with the sole exception of an old oratory in the Qarafa necropolis, where Sultan al-Kamil Muhammad instituted Friday worship in 1210. Ironically, this new Friday mosque was supposed to serve a shrine where crowds of people used to gather on Friday: that of Imam al-Shafi‘i, the eponymous ancestor of the Shafi‘i school of law.<sup>12</sup>

The advent of the Mamluks in the middle of the thirteenth century brought about not only the formal reopening of the Friday mosques in Cairo (Friday worship was held again at the mosque of al-Azhar for the first time on December 17<sup>th</sup> 1266), but also an astonishing increase in the number of places of worship. From 20 Friday mosques in 1250, the number had grown to 30 by the end of the thirteenth century, and then to 144 by the beginning of the fifteenth century. Forty places of worship were deserted and left in ruins during the dark years of Sultan al-Nasir Faraj’s rule (1399–1412); but there were about 171 Friday mosques in Cairo in the middle of the fifteenth century and no fewer than 221 in 1517, when Selim the First conquered the city. This figure would remain largely unchanged during the Ottoman period, since the French topographers of the *Description de l’Égypte* estimated as 233 the number of Friday mosques in Cairo at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup> According to our survey, at least 242 Friday mosques were built in Cairo during the Mamluk period.<sup>14</sup> Indeed a major change did occur, and deserves investigation (figs. 1, 2).

## Friday Mosques and Trivialization of Patronage

A profound change occurred during the Mamluk period regarding the social identity of the patrons who established new Friday mosques. Once the monopoly of caliphs and sultans and an attribute of their sovereignty sometimes delegated to vizirs and servants who acted in their name, it eventually became in the fourteenth century a privilege accessible to many others.<sup>15</sup> Officers (either military or civilian), merchants, scholars, Sufi shaykhs, even women of non-royal descent became patrons of Friday mosques in Cairo, including, for instance, two female servants of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad in 1337 and 1340.<sup>16</sup> A Friday mosque was also estab-

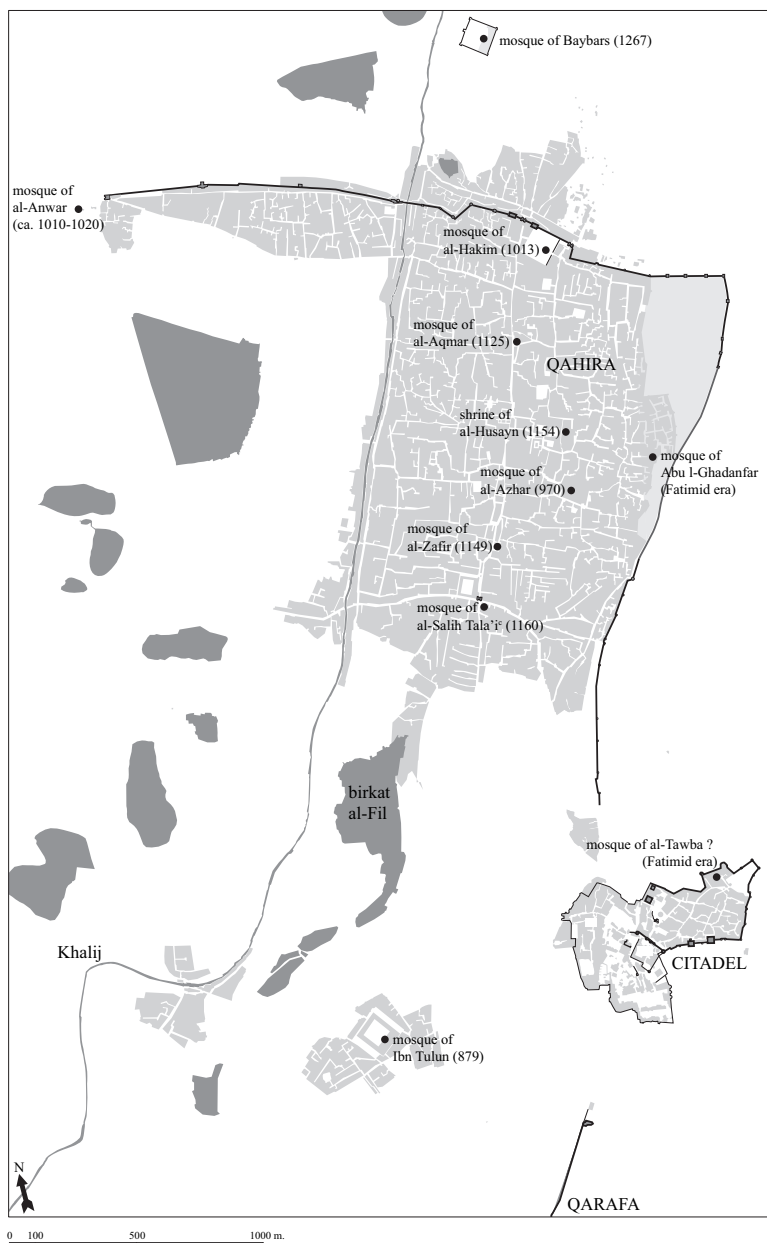


Figure 1: Friday mosques in the city centre of Cairo in 1277 (death of Sultan al-Zahir Baybars).



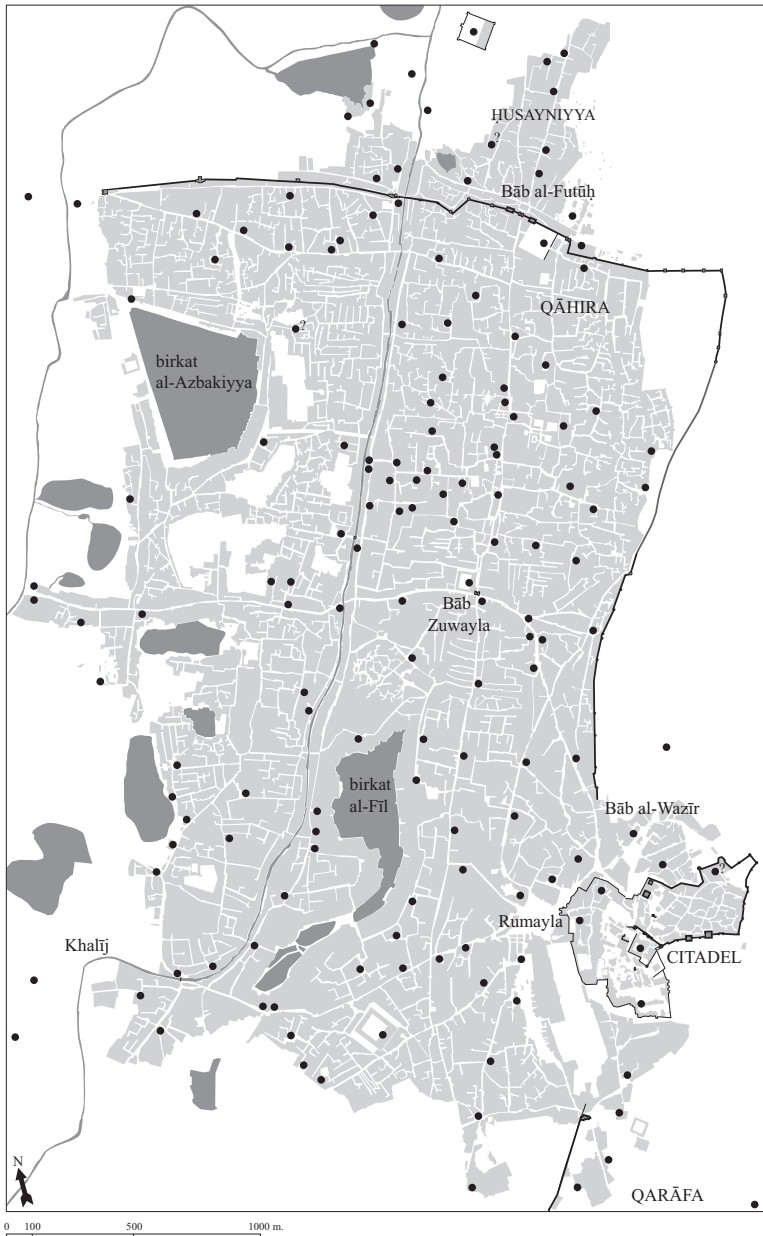


Figure 2: Friday mosques in the city centre of Cairo in 1517 (Ottoman conquest).

lished without any patron, as a result of the people's devotion toward a descendant of the Prophet, Sitt Nusayra, whose putative tomb had been established at the end of the fourteenth century and adorned with a *masjid* where Friday worship also took place.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, an assessment of such a change in the social patterns of patronage is qualified by the difficulty in associating every founder with a specific social profile. Aside from anonymous foundations, a single name is not always enough to ascribe a social identity, especially at a time (the fourteenth century) when military offices were still open to non-Mamluks. Of the 242 Friday mosques that, according to our survey, were built in Cairo during the Mamluk period, the founders of 39 are unidentifiable, because these mosques were named after a place (13 cases), a collective name (two), an architectural layout (two), a propitiatory term (one), or because the name of the patron does not deliver any clue to his social identity (21). Consequently, the less visible categories, the civilians who belonged neither to the religious establishment nor to the sultanic bureaucracy, are obviously underestimated in the following graphs, especially for the years 1300–1379 to which most of the uncertain cases date (figs. 3, 4, 5).

Al-Zahir Baybars (1260–1277) was the last sultan to strictly exercise the monopoly of Friday mosques' foundation in Cairo. In addition to the reopening of al-Azhar for Friday worship in 1266, he built three new mosques on the city outskirts during his rule.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, a social diversification of mosques' patronage took place for the first time in the last two decades of the thirteenth century<sup>19</sup> and gained ground during the first half of the fourteenth century in the favourable

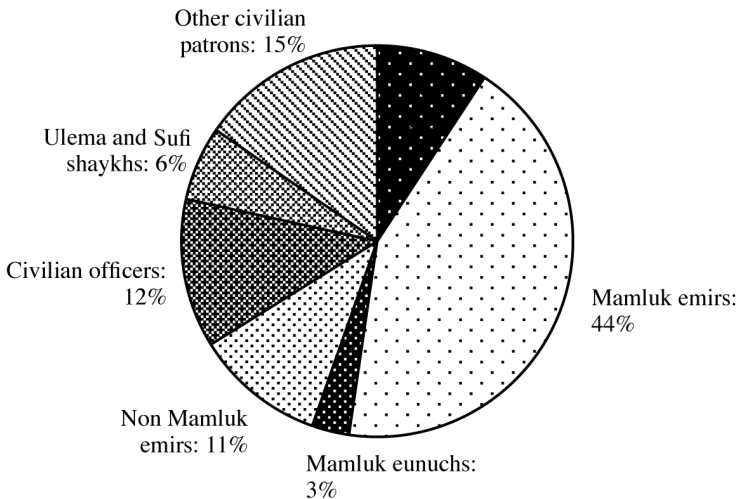


Figure 3: Patrons of Friday mosques in Cairo between 1300 and 1379.

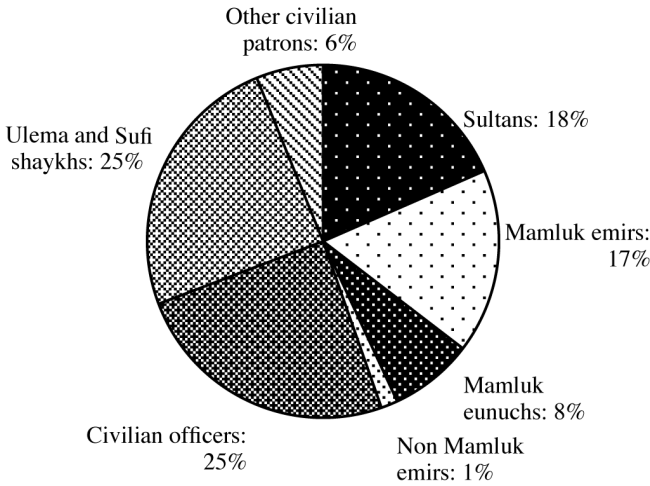


Figure 4: Patrons of Friday mosques in Cairo between 1380 and 1453.

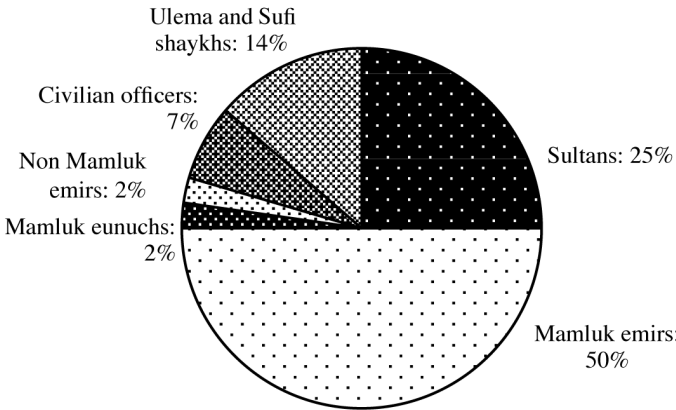


Figure 5: Patrons of Friday mosques in Cairo between 1454 and 1517.

decades of al-Nasir Muhammad’s rule. However, the Mamluk sultans remained major patrons and even regained part of their former position at the end of the Mamluk period: nine percent of the new Friday mosques established between 1300 and 1379 (whose founder is known) were of royal foundation; this increased to 18 percent between 1380 and 1453 and to 25 percent in the last six decades before the Ottoman conquest. Beside the sultans, the major fact of the whole period is the near hegemony of Mamluk emirs over the patronage of Friday mosques: they are responsible for more than half of all new foundations between the 1280s and the Ottoman conquest, except for the first half of the fifteenth century, dur-

ing which the ruin and rebuilding of Cairo gave unprecedented opportunities to the civilian officers of the sultan's household. During these decades of political and social upheaval, only 26 percent of new Friday mosques were built by military officers (including eunuchs). As for the civilian officers, their contribution grew from twelve percent between 1300 and 1379 to 25 percent between 1380 and 1453, but fell to seven percent between 1454 and 1517.

The same context of upheaval, ruin and rebuilding was also favourable to the members of the religious establishment, either the ulema (expounders of religious law) or Sufi shaykhs. Patrons of only six percent of the new Friday mosques (whose founder is known) between 1300 and 1379, their share increased to 25 percent between 1380 and 1453, before falling to 14 percent during the last six decades of Mamluk rule. Noticeable, however, is the ulema's lesser contribution by comparison with Sufi shaykhs (respectively, four and eleven new foundations between 1380 and 1453), as if legal scruples (the resiliency of the strict Shafi'i doctrine) restrained the former from endowing other than madrasas without minbars.

Finally, one should stress the importance of the contribution of the civilian patrons, who belonged neither to the religious establishment nor to the sultanic bureaucracy, during the first eight decades of the fourteenth century. They were in command of at least 15 percent of the new Friday mosques (whose founder is known) founded between 1300 and 1379. But the lack of data about 29 mosques, built at that time mainly in the new urban areas of western Cairo, reduces the share one could impute to them with certainty. On the other hand, the civilian patrons' share fell to six percent between 1380 and 1453 and was reduced to nothing at the end of the Mamluk period. Between 1454 and 1517, the military elite (sultans, emirs, and eunuchs) were in charge of 79 percent of the new Friday mosques. During the last decades of Mamluk rule, aside from five mosques whose founders remain unidentified, as far as I know there was not a single foundation whose patron was neither a member of the ruling elite nor a figure of the religious notability or judiciary.<sup>20</sup> The time of social opportunities in urban patronage, during which a merchant or a craftsman was able to establish a new Friday mosque in Cairo, was over by the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Oddly enough, the privatisation of land tenure and the popularisation of pious endowments (waqf) that marked the end of the fifteenth century seem to have been paralleled by a social restriction on the patronage of Friday mosques.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the mosques of the first and last decades of Mamluk rule – i.e., the three mosques of al-Zahir Baybars (1260–1277) and the six of al-Ashraf Qaytbay (1468–1496)<sup>23</sup> – should not overshadow the trivialization of Friday mosques' patronage during the entire Mamluk period. Indeed, on the eve of the Ottoman conquest, Cairo owed a significant number of its places of worship to unassuming and forgotten endowers.

## Friday Mosques and the Blurred Intent of Mamluk Architecture

The Mamluk period also witnessed a deep change in the definition of the various religious institutions. Such a process, in which the madrasa emerged as the main institutional and architectural model, has been well studied for Cairo on the basis of waqf documentation and building evidence.<sup>24</sup> But the specific function of Friday worship in this new configuration deserves some more thought. Indeed, Mamluk patrons continued to found new *jami*'s and the preservation of this designation in epigraphy and popular toponymy is not meaningless. But it should be stressed that, for the first time in the history of Cairo, some madrasas, *khanqahs*, *zawiyas* and funerary foundations were endowed with a minbar for Friday worship. The first case is, to my knowledge, the *khanqah* of Emir Baktimur al-Saqi in the Qarafa necropolis in 1326,<sup>25</sup> followed eight years later by the mausoleum of Emir Tashtimur Hummus Akhdar in the northern cemetery.<sup>26</sup> In 1333 Friday worship was also established in a *zawiya* known as Turbat Jawshan, built in the same area at the beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Friday mosques had existed before in the Cairene necropolis, where pious visits to the saints' tombs (*ziyara*) had a long tradition.<sup>28</sup> However, by bringing together two religious practices clearly distinguished before in the institutional pattern of the Sunni revival – i.e., the fulfilment of a personal obligation (Friday worship) and the performing of Sufi rituals – these institutions were unprecedented. Moreover, this new form was set up in a funerary context, as if the gathering of the faithful on Friday would add to the spiritual reward (*thawab*) of the founder buried inside the complex. In the case of *zawiyas* (and at least twelve of the 67 new Friday mosques built in Cairo in the first half of the fifteenth century were *zawiyas*), the fulfilment of Friday worship near the grave of the shaykh by his followers would also firmly root his pilgrimage (*ziyara*).

Another development occurred around 1360, when two funerary madrasas were established within the city for the teaching of law, the adorning of their founder's grave, and also (for the first time in Cairo) Friday worship. The huge religious complex built behind the Citadel by Sultan Hasan between 1356 and 1362, and endowed with various functions, was so unusual in many respects that it cannot be considered as evidence of a wider trend.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the funerary madrasa of princess Tatar al-Hijaziyya, a daughter of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad, was built on a more common scale in 1360, in the heart of al-Qahira.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the minbar of the madrasa of Tatar al-Hijaziyya, still preserved in Cairo's Museum of Islamic Art, is one of the first milestones in the process of alteration of the madrasa's legal, spiritual, and architectural significance. From then on, up to the end of the Mamluk rule, most of the new Cairene madrasas built by members of the ruling elite (and to a much lesser extent by members of the religious establishment<sup>31</sup>) would serve also as Friday mosques (fig. 6).



Figure 6: The minbar of the madrasa of princess Tatar al-Hijaziyya (1360) in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo.

Such a change had major consequences on the architectural layout of these new Friday mosques. Whether madrasas fulfilling the function of a mosque or mosques fulfilling that of a madrasa, in which the students were also resident Sufis as in a *khanqah*,<sup>32</sup> most of the pious foundations of fifteenth-century Cairo were built according to the plan of a four-iwan madrasa, based on the residential form of the *qa'a* (the reception hall in Cairene architecture). Courtyard mosques (for instance, the so-called madrasa of Sudun min Zadah, which was also a Friday mosque<sup>33</sup> are conspicuous exceptions. The standardisation of the layout added to the confusion of the institutional pattern inherited from the twelfth-century Sunni revival, the distinction between the various institutions being practically blurred in the fifteenth century.

Even contemporary witnesses were hesitant in identifying the new buildings. The monument built in 1418 by the sultan's majordomo Fakhr al-Din ibn Abi 'l-Faraj was left unfinished when he died and was partly altered during its renovation in the eighteenth century. It still looks like a madrasa, with its central courtyard, four iwans, and the largest proportion of the qibla iwan used as a prayer hall. The foundation was commonly known in the fifteenth century as the madrasa of Ibn Abi 'l-Faraj, but was referred to as the Jami' al-Banat by the end of the eighteenth century, after its renovation. The fifteenth-century founding inscription describes the place as a mausoleum (*turba*). It is referred to as a madrasa in the waqf

deed, but the document preserved today is a copy which summarises the stipulations and does not specify either the recruitment of a preacher or the holding of the Friday worship in the qibla iwan. However, Maqrizi, who witnessed the foundation, described it as a Friday mosque (*jami'*) where lessons of *fiqh* (Islamic law) were also delivered (as in a madrasa). Finally, Sakhawi, who was not lenient toward the infringement of the Shafi'i doctrine with respect to the uniqueness of the Friday mosque, depicted it as a funerary madrasa but mentioned the name of its preacher, thus adding to the evidence that Friday worship took place within it.<sup>34</sup>

### Raising a Minbar, Instituting the *Khutba*

It is not known whether Ibn Abi 'l-Faraj planned for Friday worship to be held in his madrasa. If it was not the case, then a minbar must have been raised and a preacher recruited by another patron. This practice became very common in Cairo from the first half of the fourteenth century onwards. As far as I know, the first instance dates back to 1313, when the emir Badr al-Din Muhammad al-Mihmandar instituted the *khutba* (literally the Friday sermon, which means in this context the Friday worship itself) in an old *masjid* of the western district of Cairo, from then on known as the *Jami' al-Jaki*.<sup>35</sup> The year after, Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad instituted Friday worship in the old shrine of Sayyida Nafisa, at the entrance to the Qarafa necropolis.<sup>36</sup>

The number of new places of Friday worship set up in older institutions increased to nine percent of the new Friday mosques established during the first half of the fifteenth century and to ten percent during the last six decades of the Mamluk rule. One of the latest instances was the raising of a minbar by the emir Azbak min Tutukh in 1494 in one of the most prestigious institutions of the city, the old Madrasa al-Mansuriyya, built two centuries earlier by Sultan al-Mansur Qalawun.<sup>37</sup> The restoration of the building, as in the case of the Madrasa al-Mansuriyya, was often the best opportunity to institute Friday worship. Emir Yalbugha al-Salimi did the same thing after the sultan put him in charge of the renovation of the old Fatimid al-Aqmar mosque in 1399<sup>38</sup> (fig. 7).

Yet such an alteration of the function and legal meaning of ancient institutions sometimes raised legal issues. In 1330, Emir Aqqush al-Ashrafi asked for a *fatwa* (legal opinion) before raising a minbar in the Madrasa al-Salihiyya – perhaps a specific case, since the building also housed the court of the four chief judges.<sup>39</sup> A century later, the madrasa established by the *qadi* Muhammad ibn Suwayd, left uncompleted when he died in 1425, was altered to a *jami'* by his son, administrator (*nazir*) of its endowment, who raised a minbar and decided to replace the teacher by a preacher and the students by muezzins. In order to do so, he had to ask for the consent of Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbay himself, with the support of some emirs,



Figure 7: The minbar of the mosque of Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (1415–20).

before getting a legal validation by the Hanafi judge. In the Hanafi doctrine, the increase in the number of Friday mosques was not illicit, but the alteration of a pious endowment still required a legal decision. In 1441, the decision was temporarily broken by the Shafi'i judge to whom the case was referred to by the grandsons of the founder, who were in litigation over the administration of the waqf. The minbar was removed on the judge's instructions and put under seal in a boxroom. But three weeks later, Sultan al-Zahir Jaqmaq (r. 1438–53) ordered the resumption of Friday worship in the former madrasa. He had been convinced by one of his courtiers, who reminded him of the decision of Sultan Barsbay, and stressed how accommodating the doctrine of the Hanafi judges was, and how stubborn the Shafi'i counterparts were. He finally emphasised the spiritual reward (*thawab*) that one might expect from instituting Friday worship.<sup>40</sup>

However strong the resilience of the single-mosque doctrine among Shafi'i ulema, the Mamluk period witnessed a trivialisation of Friday worship that led to the raising of minbars in all kinds of building. When Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh acceded to the throne in 1412, he decided to fit out his former house in Cairo, in the vicinity of the Citadel, as a madrasa which would also be a *khanqah* and a place for Friday worship.<sup>41</sup> Among the few remains of Mamluk residential architecture in Cairo, there is also a former *qa'a*, the reception hall of Emir Khushqadam al-Lala, which he converted into a Friday mosque in around 1480.<sup>42</sup> As for the former hospital of Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, completed in 1420, it was also supposed,





Figure 8: Foundation inscription of the minbar endowed by Sultan al-Zahir Jaqmaq (1438–53) to the complex of Sultan al-Zahir Barquq (1386).

according to the waqf deed, to house Friday worship for the patients. But in all likelihood, no patients were accommodated there before the sultan's death, a few months later. However, after having been converted into a guest-house for foreign emissaries, the building was endowed in 1422 with a minbar and became the third Friday mosque of the city, known as a foundation of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh<sup>43</sup> (fig. 8).

### Breaking up of the Community or Islamisation of the City?

The increase in the number of Friday mosques could be partly explained by the history of the city: first, in the context of the urbanisation of new areas on the outskirts of Cairo during the first half of the fourteenth century; and secondly, in the context of the growing density of the old districts of the city during the fifteenth century.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, the introduction of Friday worship in several *zawiyas* established in the outlying districts of Cairo might have made the social integration of a newly settled population fleeing from the countryside easier.<sup>45</sup>

But the process goes beyond the history of Cairo. It is also evidence of a deep change in the meaning of Friday worship at the end of the Middle Ages. Cairene believers seem to have been increasingly keen to be physically, socially, and spiritually closer to their own place of worship, as if the Friday mosque had become a

matter of choice.<sup>46</sup> In 1421, the sultan's chief secretary Ibn al-Kuwayz decided to raise a minbar in the old madrasa of Ibn al-Baqri, in the vicinity of the mosque of al-Hakim, for two reasons: the long walk from his house to the mosque of al-Hakim; and his scruple against going to Friday worship on horseback.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, most of the new Friday mosques built during the fifteenth century were close to their patrons' houses, for the convenience of their relatives and followers.<sup>48</sup> But the closeness could be sought for more spiritual reasons. Badr al-Din al-ʿAyni (d. 1451), the famous scholar and courtier of Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbay (r. 1422–38), built his funerary madrasa in the vicinity of the mosque of al-Azhar in 1411. Thirty-two years later, annoyed that he had to pray in al-Azhar, in his opinion a mosque founded by a heretic, the Fatimid caliph al-Muʿizz, he decided to refrain from this sin, and established the *khutba* in his own foundation.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, some Friday mosques were devoted to specific communities. This was obvious for Sufi affiliations, as in the case of the mosque of the Banu Wafa, established before 1430 in the house where Abu ʿl-Qasim Muhammad ibn Wafa used to preach to his followers.<sup>50</sup> There could be no doubt for the latter that they were attending Friday worship near their master. Spiritual affiliation could be reinforced by ethnic affiliation, as in the case of a Friday mosque built in 1323 by Persian Sufis in the Qarafa necropolis, and later pulled down and included in a new mosque by Emir Qawsun.<sup>51</sup> Friday worship in Mamluk Cairo was even adapted to the specific demands of the working and non-working faithful. The *khutba* was thus instituted in a *masjid* within the Khan Masrur, a famous marketplace in the city centre frequented by Syrian merchants.<sup>52</sup> As for the mosque of Saruja, built in the 1330s on the bank of the Nasiri Canal, a neighbourhood almost deserted a century later, it was closed all year except on Fridays during the summer, when Cairene strollers used to enjoy the pleasures of the Nile flood.<sup>53</sup>

The dramatic increase in the number of Friday mosques from 1250 to 1517, from 20 buildings up to at least 221, brings evidence of a growing Islamisation of the urban society and the city landscape of Cairo during the Mamluk period. Indeed, the end of the thirteenth century and the early decades of the fourteenth century witnessed the conversion of many Coptic Christians to Islam.<sup>54</sup> It should be pointed out that the spread of Friday worship in the pious institutions of Cairo began at this time.

The process also reveals new relationships between the inhabitants of a district and the Friday mosque they would gather in. Sufism and the veneration of holy men may have played a major part in this new feature of religious practice, feared by some as a breaking up of the city's Muslim community. This explains the vigorous protestations of the highest legal authority, the Shafiʿi chief *qadi* of Egypt, in 1440, against the institution of Friday worship in the newly built *zawiya* of Shaykh al-Ghamri in the walled area of al-Qahira.<sup>55</sup> Its patron was neither an emir nor a civilian officer and thus was more likely to accede to the *qadi*. But Friday prayers

were still attended in the *zawiya* after the shaykh's death. Henceforth, even if the foundation of a Friday mosque in the fifteenth century still required the formal permission of the sultan, its legal validation had become a matter of routine.<sup>56</sup>

The spread of Friday worship in the pious institutions of Cairo is an important aspect of the legacy of the Mamluks regarding the religious landscape of the city. But it is not the only one. In addition to the minbar, a growing number of Friday mosques in Cairo were also housing, from then on, the grave of a Sufi saint.

## Illustrations (with image credit)

Figure 1: Friday mosques in the city centre of Cairo in 1277 (death of Sultan al-Zahir Baybars) (by the author).

Figure 2: Friday mosques in the city centre of Cairo in 1517 (Ottoman conquest) (by the author).

Figure 3: Patrons of Friday mosques in Cairo between 1300 and 1379

Figure 4: Patrons of Friday mosques in Cairo between 1380 and 1453

Figure 5: Patrons of Friday mosques in Cairo between 1454 and 1517

Figure 6: The minbar of the madrasa of princess Tatar al-Hijaziyya (1360) in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo. (Photo courtesy A. du Boistesselin)

Figure 7: The minbar of the mosque of Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (1415–20). (Photo by the author)

Figure 8: Foundation inscription of the minbar endowed by Sultan al-Zahir Jaqmaq (1438–53) to the complex of Sultan al-Zahir Barquq (1386). (Photo by the author)

## Notes

- 1 For an exhaustive assessment of the monuments built in Egypt, Syria, and Hijaz during the Mamluk period, see Michael Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien (648/1250 bis 923/1517)*, 2 vols., (Glückstadt, 1992).
- 2 Stephen R. Humphreys, "The Expressive Intent of Mamluk Architecture in Cairo: A Preliminary Essay," *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972), 69–119.
- 3 Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum, Égypte*, (Paris, 1903), 1: 65.
- 4 André Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 4 vols., (Paris 1967–88), 4: 204–11.
- 5 Leonor Fernandes, "Mamluk Architecture and the Question of Patronage," *Mamluk Studies Review* 1 (1997), 110–11. For a statement of the Shafi'i and Maliki stances towards the uniqueness of the Friday mosque by a fifteenth-century scholar, see Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk*, eds. Najwā Muṣṭafā Kāmil and Labība Ibrāhīm Muṣṭafā, 4 vols., (Cairo, 2000–07), 2: 48–50.

- 6 Françoise Micheau, "Baghdad in the Abbasid Era: a Cosmopolitan and Multi-Confessional Capital," in eds. Salma K. Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli and André Raymond, *The City in the Islamic World*, 2 vols., (Leiden, 2008), 1: 221–45.
- 7 For an exhaustive list and map of the Cairene Friday mosques at the end of the Mamluk period, see Julien Loiseau, *Reconstruire la Maison du sultan. Ruine et recomposition de l'ordre urbain au Caire (1350–1450)*, 2 vols., (Cairo, 2010), 2: 519–41, 600–12.
- 8 Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Change in Function and Form of Mamluk Religious Institutions," *Annales Islamologiques* 21 (1985): 92–93; idem., *Cairo of the Mamluks. A History of the Architecture and Its Culture*, (Cairo, 2007), 19; Fernandes, "Question of Patronage," 109.
- 9 Sakhawi, *Tibr*, 1: 50.
- 10 Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "al-Nasir Muhammad and al-Ashraf Qaytbay – Patrons of Urbanism," in eds. Urbain Vermeulen and Daniel de Smet, *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, (Leuven, 1995), 267–84; idem., *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 56–57.
- 11 al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa 'l-i'tibār fi dhikr al-khitāṭ wa 'l-āthār*, 2 vols., (Būlāq, 1853), 2: 275–76; Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 54.
- 12 Maqrīzī, *Khitat*, 2:296; Doris Behrens-Abouseif also mentions, according to the testimony of Ibn al-Mutawwaj quoted in Maqrīzī's *Khitat*, a Friday mosque founded by the Ayyubid sultan al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub (1240–49) within the citadel he built on the island of Rawda and later restored by Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh: *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 54. However, this foundation is not mentioned in the exhaustive list of the Friday mosques of Cairo (founded before the fifteenth century) drawn up by Maqrīzī in his *Khitat*. It is likely that the mosque attributed to Sultan al-Salih is the same as that built next to the Nilometer of Rawda by the vizir Badr al-Jamali, at the end of the eleventh century, and also restored later by Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh. Compare Maqrīzī, *Khitat*, 2: 245, 297 and Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rifaṭ duwal al-mulūk*, eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyāda and Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ 'Aḥshūr, 4 vols., (Cairo, 1939–73), 4: 534.
- 13 Edme-François Jomard, "Description de la ville et de la citadelle du Kaire," in *Description de l'Égypte*, second edn., 37 vols. (Paris, 1821–29), 18.2: 121.
- 14 Loiseau, *Reconstruire la Maison du sultan*, 2: 519–41. Doris Behrens-Abouseif puts forward two figures: about thirty new Friday mosques were built in Cairo during the third reign of al-Nasir Muhammad (1310–41), and no fewer than eighty between 1412 and 1516: Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 56–57.
- 15 Fernandes, "Question of Patronage," 108–09; Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 22–23.
- 16 In 1337, Sitt Hadaq, the former nurse (*dada*) of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad, established a Friday mosque in the vicinity of the Canal (al-Khalij), between Qantarat al-Siba' and Qantarat al-Sadd. Three years later, another female servant of the sultan, Sitt Maska, did the same in the vicinity of Qantarat Aqsunqur, Maqrīzī, *Khitat*, 2: 313, 326.
- 17 Maqrīzī, *Khitat*, 2: 245.
- 18 The mosque of Baybars (Jami' al-Zahir) in Husayniyya, by whose name (Daher) the area is known today, was built in 1267 in the location of the former hippodrome (*maydan*) of Qaraqush. The sultan also ordered the building of a Friday mosque on the Nile shore at Munsha'at al-Maharani in 1270. A third Friday mosque, in Minyat al-Umara', in the northern vicinity of Cairo, is known to be a foundation of Sultan al-Zahir Baybars: Maqrīzī, *Khitat*, 2: 130, 298, 299–300; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 26 (no. 4/104), 35 (no. 4/149), 50 (no. 4/258). Only two of his closest officers also established Friday worship in Cairo under his rule, both in the southern vicinities of the city: Emir Aybak al-Afram, in a *ribat* on the bank of Birkat al-Habash, and the vizir Ibn Hinna in Dayr al-Tin. Maqrīzī, *Khitat*, 2: 298, 303, 430; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 20 (no. 4/74), 42 (no. 4/194); Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 54–55.
- 19 The first Friday mosque in Cairo whose patron belonged neither to the civil servants of the sultan nor to the military officers was, to my knowledge, the mosque of al-Baqli, established in al-Qubaybat by the shaykh 'Ali al-Baqli, who died in 1297. See Maqrīzī, *Khitat*, 2: 245; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 83–84 (no. 11/3).

- 20 The mosque established before 1440 in the port district of Bulaq by Ibn al-Sunayti, in all likelihood a merchant who lived in the vicinity and was also the owner of two residential blocks (*rabʿ*) in Bulaq, might have been one of the last foundations by a civilian patron in Cairo. It was destroyed during the firestorm of Bulaq in May 1458. See Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 331; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Hawādith al-duhūr fī madāʾ l-ayyām wa ʾl-shuhūr*, ed. William Popper (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1930–42), 314.
- 21 Compare with Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 23, who sees in “the proliferation of Friday mosques founded by individuals who did not belong to the ruling establishment” evidence of “an increasing social flexibility in the Circassian period.”
- 22 Adam Sabra, “The Rise of a New Class? Land Tenure in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: A Review Article,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 8/2 (2004): 203–10.
- 23 The long reign of al-Ashraf Qaytbay (1468–96) witnessed the foundation by the sultan of six institutions where Friday worship was also held: a funerary madrasa in the *sahraʾ* (desert) necropolis built between 1470 and 1474; a madrasa on the hill of Qalʿat al-Kabsh in 1475; a *zawiya* north of Cairo near Qanatir al-Awizz in 1491; a Friday mosque outside Bab al-Qarafa at the entrance to the old necropolis in 1495; a Friday mosque in the vicinity of the Citadel near the Guesthouse called Dar al-Diyafa (date of foundation unknown); and a Friday mosque on the west bank of the Nile in al-Duqqa (date of foundation unknown). Apart from these new foundations, the sultan instituted Friday worship in the old Madrasa al-Suyufiyya established by Saladin in 1176–77. See Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī, *al-Dawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsīʿ*, Maktabat al-Qudsī, 12 vols., (Cairo, 1934–36), 1: 62 and 6: 208–09; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, 4 vols., (Cairo, second edn., 1982–84), 3: 45, 100, 280–81, 300, 329, 363; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 399 (no. 42/21), 434 (no. 42/187), 437 (no. 42/204), 442 (no. 42/229).
- 24 Behrens-Abouseif, “Change in Function and Form,” 81, 92–93; idem, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 76; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 1: 154–64.
- 25 Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:245, 423–25; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2:144 (no. 9C/203); May al-Ibrashy, “Cairo’s Qarafa as Described in the Ziyara Literature,” in eds. Richard McGregor and Adam Sabra, *Le développement du soufisme en Égypte à l’époque mamelouke*, (Cairo, IFAO, 2006), 269–97, no. 178.
- 26 Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 464; Ibn Taghribirdi, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa ʾl-mustawfi baʿd al-wāfi*, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 12 vols., (Cairo, 1956–2005), 6: 394 (no. 1245); Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 167 (no. 9C/328).
- 27 al-Shujāʿī, *Taʾriḫ al-malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥi wa awlādihī*, ed. Barbara Schäfer, *Die Chronik ash-Shujāʿī*; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 245; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Manhal*, 7: 415 (no. 1522). See also Hani Hamza, *The Northern Cemetery of Cairo*, (Cairo, 2001), 24.
- 28 See on this subject Charles S. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous. Ziyara and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt*.
- 29 Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 316–17; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 224–25 (no. 19B/13). See also Howayda N. al-Harithy, *The Waqf Document of Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn for his Complex in al-Rumaila*, (Berlin/Beirut, 2001).
- 30 Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 382–83; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 231 (no. 19B/48). See also Philipp Speiser, *Die Geschichte der Erhaltung Arabischer Baudenkmäler in Ägypten. Die Restaurierung der Madrasa Tatar al-Ḥijāziya und des Sabil-Kuttāb ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān Katkhūdā im Rahmen des Darb-al-Qirmiz-Projektes in Kairo*, (Heidelberg, 2001).
- 31 Friday worship was, for instance, never instituted during the Mamluk period in the madrasa established in Harat Bahaʾ al-Dīn by the Shafīʿī *qadī* Siraj al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Bulqini (d. 1389), who also used to teach in the Madrasat al-Hijaziyya, either by the founder or by any of this famous family of Cairene ulema. See Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 52; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 278 (no. 24B/1).
- 32 The support of students who were also supposed to perform Sufi rituals, making the foundation both a madrasa and a *khanqah*, is well attested in pious endowments: Behrens-Abouseif, “Change in Function and Form,” 81; idem, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 11; Jonathan Berkey, *The*

- Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo. A Social History of Islamic Education*, (Princeton, 1992), 56–60.
- 33 Ibn Taghribirdi, *Manhal*, 6: 144 (no. 1139); Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 299 (no. 26A/20); Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 76.
- 34 Dar al-Wathā'iq, document 12/72 (Amin, *Catalogue*, no. 78); Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 328; Sakhawi, *Daw'*, 4: 250 (no. 649) and 6:97 (no. 316); van Berchem, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, 1: 334 (no. 228); Plan particulier du Kaire (*Description de l'Égypte*), section 5, L-9, no. 16 (Gâma' el-Benât); Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 325 (no. 29/39).
- 35 Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 314.
- 36 Ibid 2:306; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 116 (no. 9C/46). See also Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Sakhāwī, *Tuhfat al-ahbāb wa bughyat al-tullāb fī- l-khitāt wa l-mazārāt wa l-tarājīm wa l-biqā' al-mubārakāt*, ed. Aḥmad Nasha'at (Cairo, 1937), 136.
- 37 Ibn Iyas, *Bada'i'*: 3: 301; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 437 (no. 42/205). A first attempt to raise a minbar in the Madrasa al-Mansuriyya took place in 1372–73, but was opposed by Shafi'i jurists: Fernandes, "Question of Patronage," 110.
- 38 Maqrizi, *Khitat*: 2: 290–93. This was the case, for instance, with the following buildings: the old Fatimid Masjid al-Fila, in the southern outskirts of Cairo, which was renovated and endowed with a minbar by Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad; the Ayyubid Madrasa al-Sahibiyya, restored in 1357 by the state controller (*nazir al-dawla*) Ibn al-Zubayr; the Ayyubid Madrasa al-Sayfiyya, restored before 1468 by the shaykh 'Uthman al-Hattab. See al-Shuja'i, *Ta'rikh*, 113; Maqrizi, *Khitat*: 2: 289–90, 371; Sakhawi, *Tuhfa*, 85–88; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā' al-ḥaṣr bi-anbā' al-ʿaṣr*, ed. Hasan Ḥabashī (Cairo, 2002), 383–84; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 192 (no. 9C/444), 227 (no. 19B/24).
- 39 Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa jāmi' al-ghurar*, ed. Hans Robert Roemer, *Die Chronik des Ibn ad-Dawādārī*, 9 vols. (Cairo, 1960–74), 9: 389–90; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 374–75; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 118 (no. 9C/55).
- 40 Sakhawi, *Tibr*, 1: 46–48; Fernandes, "Question of Patronage," 110.
- 41 Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 327.
- 42 Sakhawi, *Daw'*, 3: 176–77 (no. 682); Ibn Iyas, *Bada'i'*, 3: 231; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 430 (no. 43/163).
- 43 Wizarat al-Awqaf, doc. 938q. (Amin, *Catalogue*, no. 352), 1.83–101; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 408; Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 4: 610; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 324 (no. 29/36).
- 44 Jean-Claude Garcin, "Toponymie et topographie urbaines médiévales à Fustat et au Caire," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 27/2 (1984), 113–55.
- 45 Behrens-Abouseif, "Change in Function and Form," 92; idem, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 22; Jean-Claude Garcin, "L'insertion sociale de Sha'ṛānī dans le milieu cairote (d'après l'analyse des Ṭabaqāt de cet auteur)," in *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire* (RDA, no date), 159–68. Idem, "Les soufis dans la ville mamelouke d'Égypte. Histoire du soufisme et histoire globale," in eds. Richard McGregor and Adam Sabra, *Le développement du soufisme en Égypte à l'époque mamelouke*, 26–31.
- 46 Compare with Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 56–57, where she interprets the same process in terms of the "decentralisation" of the city.
- 47 Maqrizi, *Khitat*: 2: 391; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbā' al-ghumr bi-anbā' al-ʿumr*, ed. Hasan Ḥabashī, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1969–98), 3: 272; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 331 (no. 30/5).
- 48 One of the few exceptions is the Friday mosque built in 1427 by Emir Janibak al-Ashrafi in al-Sharī' al-A'zam, about 800 metres from his residence in the Hadarat al-Baqar. Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 331; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Manhal*, 4: 234 (no. 821); Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 344 (no. 33/41). For a listing of Mamluk emirs' residences in Cairo between 1380 and 1453, see Julien Loiseau, *Reconstruire la Maison du sultan*, 2: 575–85.
- 49 Sakhawi, *Tibr*, 1:121 and 3:145; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 312 (no. 26B/45).
- 50 Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 331; Sakhawi, *Daw'*, 11: 275.
- 51 Shuja'i, *Ta'rikh*, 116; Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2: 545; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 135 (no. 9C/150).

- 52 Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:92.
- 53 Shujā'ī, *Ta'rikh*, 116–17; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 315; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2: 155–56 (no. 9C/263).
- 54 Shaun O'Sullivan, "Coptic Conversion and the Islamization of Egypt," *Mamluk Studies Review* 10/2 (2006), 65–79.
- 55 Sakhawi, *Tibr*, 1, 287–88; Fernandes, "Question of Patronage," 110–11.
- 56 Sakhawi, *Tibr*, 2: 33.