

LATE MAMLUK PATRONAGE

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QANSUH AL-GHŪRĪ'S WAQFS AND
HIS FOUNDATIONS IN CAIRO

KHALED A. ALHAMZAH



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*Late Mamluk Patronage:
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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Arabic words appear in transliterated form in this text. I have followed convention used in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* with minimum changes such as no dots underneath the letters h and z for ح and ظ. The Reader is referred to the above-mentioned journal.

INTRODUCTION

THE MAMLUKS AND THEIR ARCHITECTURE

The Mamluks

The Mamluk Dynasty ruled Egypt and Syria for some two and a half centuries, between c. 1260 and 1517 (Fig. 1).¹ The period is divided into two moments on the basis of the place of residence of two groups of Mamluks involved in the ruling institution. The first of these, the Bahrī Mamluks, were brought by the preceding Ayyūbid rulers as slave soldiers. Chiefly Turks and Mongols, they ruled from c. 1260 to 1382.² Their residence was on the Island of ar-Rawda in the Nile where they got the name *bahri*, meaning the River. The later Mamluks, who ruled from 1382 to 1517, were Circassians and Kipchak Turks from the Caucasus and south Russian steppe. They were quartered in the towers or *burjs* of Cairo's Citadel as the result of which they are named the Burjī Mamluks.³ After the convulsions of the reign of Sultan Faraj (1399-1412), the Circassians regained their supremacy and maintained it without any serious challenge till the end of the Mamluk period.

¹ The date 1250 given for the beginning of the Mamluk regime is debatable since none of the five rules of Egypt in the decade 1250-60 is a Bahrī Mamluk. See Robert, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Up, 1986) 26.

² Sir William Muir, *The Mameluke or Slave Dynasty of Egypt* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1896) 5.

³ Ibn Iyās asserts that Sultan Qalāwūn was the first Mamluks ruler to use the towers of the Qal'ah as a barracks for his slave soldiers whom he refers to as *al-Mamalīk al-Burjīyya*. See Ibn Iyās, *Bada'i' az-Zubūr fī Waqā'i' ad-Dubūr*. ed. Muhammad Mustafa, 2nd ed., vol. 1, part 1 (Cairo: al-Hai'ah al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1982-) 362. They were apparently numbered at between 6,000 and 12,000. See Irwin 69; and Sir John Glubb, *Soldiers of Fortune-The Story of the Mamlukes* (New York: Stein and Day, 1873) 134.



Figure 1. Map of the Mamluk State in al-Ghūrī's reign

During the Burjī period the sense of racial solidarity among the Mamluks is far more pronounced than it is during the Bahrī period. *Al-jins* meaning the Race and *al-qawm* meaning the People are terms applied only to the Circassians, and the title *aṭ-ṭā'ifa*, meaning the Sect or Community was used to describe them as well.⁴ These Burjī Mamluks like their predecessors the Bahrīs, were purchased as children and educated in the Qur'ān and religious matters, and in *al-furūsiyya* or horsemanship. Being brought up under arms and keeping themselves distinct from the people they ruled, the Mamluks filled the ranks of the army. The most able, especially those favoured by the sultan, were freed and made officers as amirs of ten, fifty, a hundred, or a thousand.⁵ The Mamluk sultans themselves usually sprang from the higher ranks of the officer corps after frequently bloody struggles for succession to the throne among competing factions and claimants. As the Mamluk institution was not hereditary, the Mamluks renewed their ranks through the purchase of fresh

⁴ David Ayalon, "The Circassians in the Mamluk Kingdom," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 69 (1949): 142; Glubb 134.

⁵ Muir 4. These are ranks indicating the number of the soldiers under an officer's command.

slaves, who in turn, should circumstances be favourable and their own abilities sufficient, could rise to liberty, high office and fortune.

Throughout this period Cairo was the capital of the Mamluk state and seat of the sultan. In time the city became one of the largest metropolitan centers of the late medieval and early modern world. Although there were times of turbulence, Cairo knew under the Mamluks long periods of stability and prosperity. This Glorious or Protected City, as it is often called in the contemporary chronicles and documents, was a major intellectual center for the Islamic world. Muslim scholars, Sufis and students came from all parts of the Mamluk Empire as well as from other parts of the Islamic world such as North Africa, Spain, and Turkey to study, teach and work.

The Mamluks were great patrons of monumental architecture and fine arts. They adorned Cairo during this period with a variety of types of buildings for both public and private use. The amirs built large and beautiful palaces to accommodate their official, state activities and family life. Both the sultans and the amirs were also frequent patrons of mosques, *khanqāhs*, fountains, hospitals, and schools.

The year 1516 was a decisive date for the Mamluk state. In that year the Mamluk regime in Egypt and Syria under Sultan Qānsūh al-Ghūrī (1501-1516) was militarily defeated and the Mamluk state was overthrown by the Ottoman army led by Sultan Selim I. The defeat and with it the collapse of the Mamluk state were ultimately, however, the result of a number of factors, both internal and external. Among these, the shift in the routing of the international trade between Europe and the East from the eastern Mediterranean to the passage around the Cape of Good Hope after 1499 caused Egypt to lose its most important sources of income, those derived from the transportation of trade goods and from customs taxes. In addition the growing power of the Ottoman state on the Mamluk's northern frontiers undermined Mamluk military security, culminating in the invasion of Syria in 1516, the rout of Mamluk forces at Marj Dābiq north of Aleppo and the death of Sultan Qānsūh al-Ghūrī. The army fled back to Cairo and Selim, following it, marched south into Egypt and entered the Mamluk capital. Although some resistance led by Ṭūmānbāy continued for a few months, even this was soon brought to an end. Ṭūmānbāy was captured by Selim and put to death at Cairo's Bāb Zuwaylah. Al-Ghūrī, who was killed at Marj Dābiq, is thus considered the last real ruler of the Mamluk state.

The History of Mamluk Architecture: Status que and its Problems

The earliest descriptions of Mamluk architecture were impressionistic accounts of nineteenth-century European travelers that alluded to its importance, while at the same time dealing with it as something alien and exotic. Among the foremost examples of this genre are the account of David Roberts entitled *Egypt and Nubia* (1846-49) and of prise d'Avannes published as *L'Art arabe d'après les monuments du Kaire depuis le VII siècle jusqu'à la fin du*

XVIII (1869-77).⁶ Of special interest for their illustrations, they introduced the European public to an architectural tradition previously virtually unknown to it.

A more systematic approach to the study of Mamluk architecture starts to make its appearance late in the nineteenth century when monuments began to be examined formally, stylistically and archaeologically. The aim of this approach was to study systematically the typological elements of this architecture and to arrange them chronologically and regionally. An early example of this sort of survey was that done by Stanley Lane-Poole. Entitled *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt* (1886),⁷ it discusses different aspects of Islamic art and architecture in Egypt in chapters devoted to materials and techniques. Despite its brevity and superficiality, the book was, nonetheless, a pioneering work in that it for the first time explored in a systematic manner the defining qualities of the monuments with which it dealt.

Paul Casanova's *Histoire et description de la Citadelle du Caire* (1894-97)⁸ is another work very much in the same spirit as Lane-Poole's work, although it deals with a single monument rather than larger groups of works. As its title shows, it covers the planning and architectural evolution of the Citadel of Cairo from the Ayyūbid period to the period of Ottoman rule. To do so the author relies on both a close archeological study of the complex and on the examination of contemporary literary sources as they have a bearing on the site. The same techniques are used by Max van Berchem in his important, three-volume work entitled *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptiōum Arabicarum* (1894-1903).⁹ Although conceived of fundamentally as a study of epigraphy, recording and analyzing the historical inscriptions and verses from the Qur'ān found on the Islamic monument of Cairo, van Berchem also describes the location of the inscriptions that is their architectural and archaeological settings. This book sheds light on the iconographical problems involved in the study of the inscriptions and their relationship with the monuments as well.

⁶ David Roberts, *Egypt and Nubia, from Drawings Made on the Spot by David Roberts*. R. A. with Historical Descriptions by William Brockedon. F. R. S. Lithographed by Louis Hague (London: Moon, 1846-49); Prisse d' Avennes, *L'Art arabe d'a près les monuments du Caire depuis le VII siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIII* (Paris : Morel, 1869-1877).

⁷ Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1886).

⁸ Paul Casanova's *Histoire et description de la Citadelle du Caire*, Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française du Caire VI (Paris: Librairie de la société asiatique, de l'école des langues orientales vivantes, de l'Ecole du Louvre, 1894).

⁹ Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptiōum Arabicarum*. "Première Partie Egypte I. Le Caire, Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique du Caire XIX (1900; Beyrouth: Librairie du Liban, 1979).

Martin Briggs, *Muhammadan Architecture in Egypt and Palestine* (1924)¹⁰ is another important early work that follows a more or less the formal and stylistic approach. Organized chronologically by dynasty, it makes no attempt to deal with the social or economic context of the architecture with which it deals but rather identifies the key Islamic monuments of the geographical region under consideration and describes the stylistic qualities which serve to characterize each period. Louis Hauteœur and Gaston Wiet's survey, *Les mosquées du Caire* (1932),¹¹ approaches its subject in much the same manner, describing the evolution and key examples of Cairene architecture from the middle of the seventh century through the Ottoman period. It includes chapters covering aspects of use, construction and historical development, but is principally for its excellent photographs.

The culmination of this approach is to be found in the monumental studies of K.A.C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (1932-40) and *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, (1952-60).¹² The first of these, consisting of two enormous folio volumes, deals with the evolution of Islamic architecture from the seventh through the tenth century. Although it includes the entirety of the Islamic East in its coverage, it nonetheless is of fundamental importance to the student of Cairene architecture for its exhaustive studies of such key monuments as the Azhar Mosque and the Mosque of Ibn Tulūn. *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt* is narrower in its focus, surveying the Islamic monuments of Egypt in the period between the coming of the Fatimids (960) and near the end of the Bahrī Mamluk period (1326).

A handful of theses, made at Collage of Archeology in Cairo University, deal with Mamluk architecture. The one with special interest is Muhammad Fahīm's *Madrasat as-Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī, Derāsah 'Athariyya Mi'māriyya (as-Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī Shcool, Archeological Study)*.¹³

Although the work of Creswell, Wiet, van Berchem and other practitioners of the stylistic and formal approach is of fundamental importance to any student of Muslim architecture in Egypt, it is rigidly archaeological methodology excludes from the field of legitimate examination many of the broader implications of the monuments with which it deals. Thus, the formal and stylistic approach fails to explain or even confront the whole issue of the dynamics of change that is how and why style evolves over time from dynasty

¹⁰ Martin S. Briggs, *Muhammadan Architecture in Egypt and Palestine* (1924; New York: Da Capo P, 1974).

¹¹ Louis Hauteœur and Gaston Wiet, *Les mosquées du Caire*, 2 vols. (Paris : Leroux, 1932).

¹² K.A.C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (Clarendon: Oxford, 1932-40); Creswell, *the Muslim Architecture of Egypt* (1952-60; New York: Hacker Art Books, 1978).

¹³ Muhammad Fahīm, "Madrasat as-Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī, Derāsah 'Athariyya Mi'māriyya," thesis, Cairo U, 1977. This work is useful for the measurement of the building.

to dynasty. Likewise, regional variations in style, i.e. questions having to do with the varieties of styles within and between provinces in any particular period, are largely ignored. The reason for this shortcoming would seem to have to do with the very nature of the archaeological approach itself, with its emphasis on the positivistic documentation of the specifics of particular monuments and its avoidance of broader speculation.

Oleg Grabar, in his critical article, "Reflections on Mamluk Art,"¹⁴ Points out that although the bibliography dealing with the field is extensive, its intellectual shortcomings are strikingly apparent. He asserts that with the new approaches —cultural and iconographical— introduced into the study of art history in recent years make it necessary that almost every aspect of Mamluk art be restudied. Indeed, he goes further and declares that the masterpieces of Mamluk architecture require more speculative treatment in order to address the full range of complex questions they raise and concludes with the thought that in suggesting different interpretations we may, perhaps, add to our knowledge both of the nature of Islamic art and of the methods of the history of art in general.

Mamluk Architecture within its Culture

The historian of world systems and Islamic cultures Marshall Hodgson, in his study *The Venture of Islam*, reviewed briefly the scholarship on Islamic art and expressed his dissatisfaction with it for its lack of concern with the cultural environment which produced this art.¹⁵ Hodgson's critique should come as no surprise given the fact that he was a historian who viewed culture as the expression of complex systems molded by a variety of intellectual, social, and economic forces. What, in fact, Hodgson (and Grabar) called for was an approach to Islamic art and architecture which took into consideration the cultural environment which produced it.

As applied to Mamluk architecture, such a cultural approach would involve a study of the whole range of factors —stylistic, iconographic, social, economic, intellectual— that went into the shaping a specific building and political context in which a specific monument was produced, including its religious, economic, and intellectual environment, can serve as vital supplements to the formal approach for an understanding of matters such as the attitude of the patron or changes in style. Indeed, it is precisely these sorts of issues which are raised by Grabar in his essay on Mamluk architecture when he notes that if we accept the proposition that Mamluk architecture is a clas-

¹⁴ Oleg Grabar, "Reflections on Mamluk Art," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 1-12.

¹⁵ Hodgson says that although there are competent surveys of architectural monuments and art objects, interpretations show little acquaintance with the rest of Islamic culture, and are characterized by a stereotyped response to aesthetic problems. See Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol.2 (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1974) note 2 in 503.

sical moment of formal poise and equilibrium, then the question must be asked as to why this stage is found in Mamluk architecture and not in other contemporary Islamic architectural traditions as the Ottoman or Ilkhanid.¹⁶ Such a cultural approach could perhaps explain such seemingly contradictory tendencies as the acute contrast between the cruelty of most of the Burjī Mamluk sultans on the one hand and the generous patronage they gave to religious buildings, a problem which seems inexplicable to a scholar such as Briggs.¹⁷

Traditionally a variety of types of sources have been used by students of architectural history to reconstruct the modes of life of medieval Muslim Societies and to understand the character and meaning of Islamic art and architecture. Among these sources the buildings themselves are, of course, of primary importance. Obviously, the standing monuments, even ruined buildings, provide the physical basis for any study of planning, of the forms and techniques of decoration and of the methods and materials of construction. This type of source material has been used with great care and insight by architectural historians such as Creswell and Casanova, who approach the study of monuments formally.

Literary sources can be used to advantage as well, however. These range over a variety of literary genres, including chronicles, travellers' accounts, geographies, and topographies. From these sources we can derive important information concerning the original setting of the monuments, their function, and their meaning for their contemporaries, either users or visitors.

Finally a third category of potential source material bearing on architecture is constituted by official state documents and the records of religious courts. These include chancery correspondence, petitions, peace treaties, decrees, tax registers, curt registers and *waqfiyyas* or deeds of foundations.¹⁸ Of all these, it is perhaps this last category —*waqf* documents— that constitute, at least potentially, the most valuable single type of material for the study of architecture. This is because they frequently contain not only descriptions of specific monuments, but stipulations defining in the most precise detail the types of activities which were to take place within the confines of these monuments. They provide, in other words, a means by which not only the broad outlines of function can be postulated out even the minutest and concrete details of the lived within a foundation can be ascertained. As such have the potential not only to enhance our understanding of the particular monuments and institutions for which they were up, but analogy and generalization to provide insights into the functional specifics of Mamluk architecture as a whole.

¹⁶ Grabar 8.

¹⁷ Briggs 114.

¹⁸ Leonor Fernandes, "Notes on a New Source for the Study of Religious Architecture during the Mamluk Period: The Waqfiya." *Al-Abhath* 33 (1985): 3.

Waqf and Waqf Documents

The terms *waqf* and *habs* are Arabic terms meaning to prevent or to restrain. *Waqf* is charity, and as such real estate or other properties made *Waqf* cannot be sold, bought, presented as a gift, or inherited. The basic element of *Waqf* in Islamic Law is that the foundation or donation be publicly promulgated before witnesses. By this act the *Waqf* becomes *'aqd laẓīm*, which is an irrevocable legal transaction. This promulgation can be only made by a person who is free and independent, sane, mature, a Muslim, and without debt. The *Waqf* is legitimate when it is implemented on real estate or movables, or on what the people have customarily made *Waqf*. The purpose of the making of *Waqf* is to restrain the *manwāqif* that is the object of the endowment, to separate it from private ownership and to make charity of its substance or of the incomes produced by it.¹⁹

Generally speaking, there is an agreement between the four schools of Sunnī Islam on these principals, although Hanifite jurists also consider *wāqf* to be legally a form of lending. Thus, according to jurists of the Hanifite School, the usufruct of the *manwāqif* goes to the *waqf* but the *manwāqif* itself stays in the property of the *wāqif* or the donor.²⁰

There are two kinds of *waqf*. One is called *waqf khayri* that is endowment for buildings of a religious purpose or public nature such as mosques or *madrasa*. The other is called *waqf dhuri* or *waqf ahli*, a family endowment for the relatives of the *wāqif*.²¹ The idea that served as the basis of both kinds of *waqf* is an old one that can be traced back to pre-Islamic times. Indeed, pious foundations similar to the *waqf khayri* are attested as far back as the Fourth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, while family endowments begin to make their appearance in the Fifth Dynasty. Institutions similar to *waqf* are also found in the Roman and Byzantine periods. However, there exist significant differences between the Byzantine pious endowment and the Islamic *waqf*, especially with respect to the notion inherent in the latter that God is the actual owner of the *waqf*, and with regard to the manner in which the two were made legal, the ways in which they impacted on society and the nature of their administrations.²²

The earliest Islamic *waqfs* date back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and in Egypt the first *waqfs* were established at the time the Muslims entered the country in the fifth decade of the seventh century. In earliest Islamic times *waqfs* were limited to charity and to the care and maintenance of

¹⁹ Burhān ad-Dīn at-Tarābilsī, *Al-Is'af fi 'Abkā, al-'Anqāf* (Beirut: Dar ar-Rā'id al-'Arabī, 1981) 14; W. Heffening, "Wakf," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, iv (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1934) 1096-1103; Muhammad M. Amīn, *Al-Anqāf wa al-Hayāt al-'Ijtimā 'iyyah fi Misr 1250-1517* (Cairo: Dār an-Nahdah al-'Arabiyya, 1980) 1.

²⁰ At-Tarābilsī

²¹ Amīn 11-12; Heffening 1198.

²² Amīn 12-13.

mosques.²³ However when the Ayyūbids came to power in the twelfth century, they began to use *waqfs* in their struggle against Shī'ism, in particular for the building schools to teach orthodox Sunnī Islam, and for the freeing the prisoners of war who had been taken by the Franks.²⁴

During both the Fatimid and the Ayyūbid periods (969-1260) *waqf* was administered by the head of a branch of the central government known as the *Dimān al-'Abbās* or Department of Waqfs headed by the *Nāẓir al-'Abbās* or superintended for charitable foundations who had beneath him a subordinate official responsible for turning over to the state treasury a portion of the usufruct of the *waqf*. It was required that the *Nāẓir al-'Abbās* be a person of high morality and have a thorough knowledge of the religious sciences and of the regulation and legalizing of *waqf*. That he enjoyed an unusual degree of independent authority is clear from the fact that his orders were to be executed even without the permission of the sultan.²⁵

Although agricultural lands were made *waqf* for religious and charitable foundations already in Fatimid and Ayyūbid periods, during the Mamluk period, not only were agricultural lands given as *waqf* but other types of real estate were placed under restraint on a large scale as well.²⁶ In time, it seems, the majority of urban real estate, including houses (*dūr*), shops (*hawānīt*) and residential palaces (*rab'*) in Mamluk Egypt came to be owned and administered by and through pious or family endowments. In addition, it is estimated that almost half of the agricultural land in the countryside was made *waqf*.²⁷ As a result the *waqf* institution came to play a role of enormous political, social, economic and religious importance in the life of the Mamluk period.

²³ The Mosque of 'Amr at Fastāt is considered the first *waqf* foundation in Egypt. The earliest surviving document of *waqf* is preserved in al-Maqrīzī's *Khitāt*, (part 2, 135), which concerns the Well of al-Watāwīt and the remains of its inscription dated 355/965. The first known assignment of agricultural lands in Egypt to a pious endowment is attested in the *waqf* of Abi Bakr Muhammad bin 'Alī al-Mathra'ī, an employee of the *Kharāj* or land tax administration who started his job in 318/930, that is after the fall of Ibn Tulūn's state. The lands themselves were located at Birkat al-Habash. The endowment document is recorded in al-'Umārī's book *al-'Intisār li Wasītat 'Iqd al-'Amsār*, (part 1, 55-56) and is dated 307/919. See Amīn 33-39. The earliest example of a document for a family *waqf* in Egypt is the one established by a certain ash-Shāfī'ī, who made his house in Fustāt along with its furnishings an endowment for his descendants. The act is recorded in ash-Shāfī'ī, *al-'Umm*, (vol. 3, 281-283), quoted in W. Heffening 1100.

²⁴ Amīn 1, 180-1.

²⁵ Amīn 1, 65-67.

²⁶ Amīn 12, 52; Ahmad Darrāj, *L'Acte de Waqf de Barsbay* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1963) 13.

²⁷ Amīn 1.

The *Dīwān al-'Awāqif* in the Mamluk period came to be staffed by a variety of officials. Especially important among these was the *shādd al-'amāra* or overseer and the *mu'allim* or *mubandis*, who visited the various buildings and properties of a particular *waqf* and reported to the *qādī* or religious judge before whom the *waqf* had been registered on their condition. Fernandes assumes that the *qādī* approval was necessary for repairs or other alterations to be made. The *dīwān* had to ensure that *waqf* incomes were spent legally and that building alterations and repairs did not violate the strictures of Islamic Law. The reports of the *mubandis* were kept in the court where they were witnessed and registered.²⁸

In the very late Mamluk period the job of *Nāẓir al-waqāf* was eliminated because bribery and corruption became widespread even among the people who filled religious jobs. It was abolished in Dhul-Hijja 901/1496, but revived by the last Mamluk sultan, Qānsūh al-Ghūrī, who appointed Muhammad bin Yūsuf to the office for less than a year in 907/1501. He was followed by al-Mu'iz 'Alā ad-Dīn 'Alī bin al-Imām who remained in this position until the end of the Mamluk era.²⁹

There were several reasons why *waqfs* were so extensive in the Mamluk period. Of particular importance was the political situation, especially the relationship between the rulers and their subjects and the relationship among the people of the ruling class. The sultan or his amirs, in order to compensate for their alien origin and to legitimate their rule in the eyes of their Egyptian and Syrian Arab subjects, established many endowments for both religious and public purposes. Moreover, the Mamluks found in the *waqf* a useful means of protecting their personal wealth from confiscation by the sultan and the state, events which frequently took place in the environment of intense competitions for control of the sultanate which existed among members of the Mamluk ruling elite.

Mamluk *waqfs*, more often than not, combined both *khayrī* and *abli* elements, in that where the usufruct of the *manqūf* surpassed the need of the *waqf*, this extra income would go to the *wāqif* and his family. Thus, family self-interest guided the Mamluks in making donations to religious institutions, for this activity was also as a way of providing for the future of the donor's family. The need to make such provision is apparent given the fact that the children of the Mamluks were excluded from high positions in the army and the state bureaucracy. The provisions of pious endowments, however, could stipulate that the founder's heirs serve in perpetuity as the administrators of the

²⁸ Fernandes 7-8. The State in Egypt did not interfere in the establishment or administration of *waqfs* until the time of the Umayyād judge Tawba bin Nīmīr in the reign of Hishām bin 'Abd al-Malik, who established a special *dīwān* or office and registers. This was, in fact, the first such *dīwān* in the Islamic state. See Amīn 1, 48.

²⁹ Amīn 122-24.

waqf with a certain fixed income, thus enabling Mamluk founders to assure the material security of their descendants.³⁰

A second motive animating the Mamluk founders of *waqfs* was surely religious. As most *waqf* documents make abundantly clear, the Mamluk sultans and the amirs founded places of worship and established institutions for charity and religious learning as good deeds for the expiation their sins. The *waqf* of Amir Qarāqja al-Husnī, the supervisor of the stables of Sultan Jaqmaq (842-57/1438-53) and the builder of a *madrasa* near Bāb Qantarāt al-Jamāmīz in Cairo, illustrates the way in which piety was explicitly identified as a motive for the establishment of a pious foundation. Known from contemporary historical accounts as a generous patron, he in fact states specifically in his *waqf-ḥiyya* that the act of foundation is made in the hope of attaining God's favour as a reward for the performance of pious charity.³¹

Finally, *waqfs* were also used as a device for protecting the donor's wealth and for enhancing his political power and prestige. As is well known, trade, internal and international, flourished under the Mamluks and was engaged in by many members of the ruling elite, including the sultans themselves. Although normally the profits of such enterprises would have been subject to various state-imposed dues and tariffs, when they were carried on under the guise of *waqf ahli*, since such foundations were in principal, charitable acts, and since, according to Islamic Law charity is a sort of self-taxation, the income of such enterprises would have escaped state taxes. Likewise, *waqfs* were used as a device for political self-promotion and self-aggrandizement. In the atmosphere of political infighting and competition that existed between the Mamluk sultans and the amirs, the building of splendid architectural settings for charitable and religious institutions and the provision of those institutions with lavish endowments served to enhance the donor's prestige and power.³²

Given these realities, it is clear that *waqf* documents constitute a potentially valuable source of insight into the social and political history of the Mamluk period and that they can provide a great amount of information relevant to the biographies of founders and builders. A useful source for the

³⁰ Amīn 69-83; Ira Marvin Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967) 74; Liala 'Alī Ibrāhīm, *Mamluk Monuments of Cairo* (Cairo: Qandarni dell'Istituti Culturali per la R.A.E., 1976) 10-12.

³¹ See 'Abd al-Latīf Ibrāhīm, "Wathīqat al-'Amīr Ākhūr Kabīr Qarāqja al-Husnī," *Majallat Kulīyyat al-Ādāb*. Cairo U. 18. 2 (1956): 187, 194-5. That the founder's motives were not entirely guided by disinterested piety, that the *waqf* was also established out of a concern for the pious foundation first to himself for his own lifetime, and after his death to his descendants in perpetuity, assuring in this way that his descendants would be guaranteed at least a modest income in all succeeding generations. The document itself, dated to the year 845/1441-42 is numbered 92 in archives of the Ministry of waqfs, Cairo.

³² Amīn 88-97.

prosopography, titulature and protocols of the Mamluk sultans, *sūfi shaykhs*, *qādīs*, *'ulama*, and members of other classes, *waqf* documents are also a valuable source for the names of the offices in the state ruling institution and the parallel religious institution, for the definition of criteria for the appointment of persons to these posts, for an explanation of the ways in which these jobs were filled, and for their salaries and perquisites. In addition, these documents give a detailed picture of the daily life of the people, of the media of exchange, and of the prices of land and buildings.³³ Finally, *waqf* documents are a potentially rich source for the study of Islamic architecture since all these factors have a bearing in one way or another on building activities and on architecture as an expression of function, that is on architecture's context and meaning in terms of the social and economic life of the period.

Review of Literature on Mamluk Architecture and Waqfs

Not surprisingly, given the prominent place occupied by *waqf* in Mamluk society, there exists an extensive scholarly literature on the institution of *waqf* and on *waqf* documents, their legal status, and their importance as sources for social, economic and political history, for understanding of chancery practices, and for the religious life of the Mamluk state.³⁴ There also exists a somewhat more limited literature which seeks to exploit *waqfiyya* as source for the study of Mamluk architecture and architectural history.

Recognition of importance for the *waqf* for the study of Islamic civilization is in no way the invention of modern scholarship. Mamluk historians were well aware of its importance and considered *waqf* documents to be one of their most valuable sources. Among historians of the Mamluk period al-Maqrīzī devotes a section of his book *Al-Khitāṭ* to the administration of *waqf* documents for the description of the monuments in Cairo.³⁵

In modern scholarship, the earliest scientific and systematic work on Mamluk *waqf* was published by L.A. Mayer in his book entitled *The Buildings of Qāyṭbāy as Described in his Endowment Deed*. Mayer asserts that the greatest value of Sultan Qāyṭbāy's *waqfiyya* lies not so much in the fact that it lets us visualize the buildings, that it makes it possible for us to restore them to their original form, as it does in its clarification for us functions and functionaries connected with them, the workings of the institution for which the structures

³³ Amīn 3.

³⁴ Amīn notes three distinct approaches used by modern scholars in dealing with *waqf* document: 1) the publication of *waqf* document without annotations; 2) the use of *waqf* documents as a source for the general or social history of the Islamic Middle Ages; and 3) the publication of *waqf* with annotation. See Amīn 6-7.

³⁵ Ahmad bin 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā'iz wal 'Iṭibār fī Dhikr al-Khitāṭ wa al-Aṭhār*, vol: 2 (Cairo: Dār at-Tbā'a al-Miṣriyya, Būlāq, 1270/1853) 294-6.

served as an architectural setting and the very life for whose sake these buildings were erected.³⁶

Ahmad Darrāj published a summary of the *waqf* of Sultan Barsbāy in his book entitled *L'acte de waqf de Barsbay*. In it he gives excerpts from the *waqfiyya* in its original language combined with an introduction and annotation in French. Unfortunately, the study depends on the summary of the *waqfiyya* found in Dār al-Kutub al-Maṣriyya rather than on the full text of the original document itself.³⁷ The work is useful to shed some light on the history of Barsbāy's reign but is of relatively little value for its architectural insights.

It is the work of 'Abd al-Latīf Ibrāhīm more than any other that revolutionized the study of Mamluk *waqf* document as they relate to architecture. Of particular significance were his dissertation "Asr as-Sultan al-Ghūrī" (Historical and archeological Studies on the Documents of al-Ghūrī's Reign), and the paper entitled "Al-Wathā'iq fi Khidmat al-Āthār, al-'Asr al-Mamlukī" (Documents in the Service of Archeology: The Mamluk Period) which he presented in Baghdad in 1957.³⁸ The latter discusses, with extracts quoted from Mamluk *waqfs*, the importance of *waqf* documents as a source for the description of different types of buildings including secular structures such as palaces, apartment complexes, inns, shops, and public baths, and religious and commemorative building such as *madrāsas*, mosques, and tombs. He also describes ways in which these documents can be used as sources for the reconstructions of city planning for a number of Middle Eastern cities.

Other important articles published by Ibrāhīm on the subject, include "Wathīqat al-'Amīr Ākhūr Kabīr Qarāqja al-Husnī" (The Document of The supervisor of Stables Amir Qarāqja al-Husnī) which gives the entire text of the *waqfiyya* of the Amir Qarāqja al-Husnī preceded by an introduction and followed by a full annotation,³⁹ and "At-Tawthīqat ash-Shar'iyya wa al-Ishhadat fi Zahr Wathīqat al-Ghūrī," (The Attestation and the Registration

³⁶ L.A. Mayer, *The Buildings of Qāyṭbāy as Described in his Endowment Deed*, (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1938). The *waqfiyya* of Ṣultan Qāyṭbāy is numbered 886 in the Ministry of Waqfs, Cairo.

³⁷ Darrāj 13. The summary is catalogued 3390, Tarīkh, in the Dār al-Kutub al-Maṣriyya, Cairo, and the unabridged *waqfiyya* is numbered 880 in the Ministry of Waqfs, Cairo.

³⁸ 'Abd al-Latīf Ibrāhīm, "Dirāsāt Ta'rikhiyya wa 'Athāriyya fi Wathā'iq min 'Asr as-Sultan al-Ghūrī," diss., Cairo U, 1956. Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to look over this dissertation since I was informed that the Cairo University no longer holds it. The paper was presented to *al-Mu'tamar ath-Thānī lil Athār fi al-Bilād al-'Arabiyya*, 18-28 feb, Baghdad, 1975, 'Abd al-Latīf Ibrāhīm, "Silsilat ad-dirāsāt al-Wathā'iqiyya, 1: al-Wathā'iq fi Khidmat al-Āthār, al-'Asr al-Mamlukī" (Cairo: Jami'at ad-Duwal al-'Arabiyya, 1958) 205-287.

³⁹ Ibrāhīm, see note 29.