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THE CITADEL OF CAIRO

A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture

BY

NASSER O. RABBAT



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إلى أمي وأبي
نهاد وعمر

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PREFACE

The Qal‘at al-Jabal (Citadel of the Mountain) in Cairo is the only urban citadel in Egypt and the last in a series of citadels constructed throughout Anatolia, Syria, and the Jazira in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is also the most monumental and most important of them, primarily because it was the seat, first of the Ayyubid, then of the Mamluk sultanate which dominated the political scene in the region between the twelfth and fifteenth century. It was begun in 1176 by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin) as the stronghold in a grand and ambitious defensive project that would encircle two cities—al-Qāhira, the Fatimid capital, and Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ, the economic hub of Egypt—within a single wall. The entire project was never realized, but al-Kāmil Muḥammad (r. 1200-38), Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s nephew, finished the Citadel and moved the court there in 1207-8. In the early Mamluk period, it was significantly expanded and divided into northern and southern enclosures. Two sultans, al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 1260-76) and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (r. 1293-1341, with two interruptions), endowed it with an impressive number of palaces and other structures and were responsible for redefining its position in Cairo from the plan of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, which sought to distance it from the city, to one that coupled physical seclusion with urban connections. It remained the seat of government in Egypt until 1874, but after the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad very little construction took place in it until Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha (r. 1805-48) established himself as the semi-independent ruler of Egypt in 1811. He renovated it entirely, strengthened its fortifications, and replaced the older dilapidated structures with many monumental buildings. Today, it is a tourist attraction, where visitors marvel at the awesome mosque and palaces of Muḥammad ‘Alī, the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and a few scattered remains from earlier periods.

Despite its significance as a royal center and as a major medieval military and palatial complex, to date the Citadel has attracted little scholarly interest. Aside from the pioneering study by Paul Casanova, “Histoire et description de la citadelle du Caire,” published in the *Mémoires publiés par les Membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire*, between 1894 and 1897, no modern scholar has

added much to our understanding of its architectural history. K. A. C. Creswell meticulously reconstructed the fortifications of the northern enclosure, but showed little interest in the southern enclosure in his "Archaeological Researches in the Citadel of Cairo," published in the *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* (1924). He later incorporated his findings into his magisterial study of Islamic architecture in Egypt, *Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, and appended a few remarks concerning sections of the walls that were inaccessible when he wrote his first study. He also noted that there was plenty still to be uncovered and reconstructed in the southern enclosure, but he himself produced only a short study on the location and form of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's Ablaq Palace and his waterworks.

Since 1959, when Creswell's book was published, our knowledge of the history and architecture of the Mamluks has greatly increased. Scores of relevant historical, legal, and archaeological documents have come to light. Several studies have been produced, the majority of them monographs on one monument or a group of structures and typological in method. A few analytical works dealing with various aspects of Mamluk architecture and urbanism have started to define the general characteristics of the period and to generate interest in theoretical and interpretive problems. But those who have written about the Citadel since Creswell and Casanova have only reiterated earlier interpretations. In the 1980s, renovations and limited excavations in the southern enclosure conducted by the Egyptian Antiquities Organization (EAO) uncovered a number of Mamluk remains in the terrace facing the city and in the entrance area, but none of these findings has been adequately published.

The present study will incorporate both textual and archaeological data into a reconstruction of the architectural history of the Citadel from its foundation in 1176 under al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn until it reached its most monumental form in the first half of the fourteenth century under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. We will examine the royal structures built within its walls and propose new definitions of the origin, development, and meaning of some of their most significant architectural and decorative elements. We will analyze the evolution of its functions within both the urban context of Cairo and the wider framework of Ayyubid and Mamluk institutions, politics, society, technology, and tastes. The topography of the Citadel and its plan of organization will be interpreted as the concrete manifestations of the new sociopolitical hierarchy imposed by the ruling Mamluks. The sultan

and his amirs resided in sumptuous palaces in or around it and held their ceremonies there. The army was stationed in the same enceinte, and the local population was restricted to the city at the foot of the hill. Large civic and charitable projects were established around it to function as buffer zones and as a way visually and spatially to emphasize the centrality of the sultan's abode in his capital. This concentric planning in which the Citadel acted as the physical and conceptual center marked the urban development of Cairo until the dawn of the modern age.

The study of the history of an architectural complex can be structured in various ways. One approach might be termed functional, that is, it groups the structures according to their uses. In the case of the Citadel, this would mean that structures would be separated into audience halls, mosques, palaces, courts, towers, gardens, and so on, and analyzed in light of the functions for which they were built and the changes these functions underwent over time. However, this classification would be imprecise historically, because most of the royal structures were not built for one particular function, and many of the buildings that would appear to have been meant for similar functions eventually were made to serve totally different ones. Another possible approach might be to classify buildings according to type: domed structures, vaulted halls, basilical halls, and so on. They would then be studied in terms of their distinctive features and compared with their antecedents and parallels in the Mamluk sultanate and elsewhere. Their origins and transformations in medieval Egypt and Syria would be determined, and their significance for the understanding of architectural development in that period evaluated. This approach requires a kind of evidence that is not available, and involves an abstraction of individual structures which would make it difficult to construct an overall conception of the Citadel as a whole. A more appropriate approach for our purposes is the chronological one, because it best describes the continuous building and rebuilding process that characterized the Citadel's development. In addition, although the available references do not provide specifics on the architecture or the spatial configuration of the Citadel's structures, they do help us reconstruct the functional and topographic relationships between them as they changed over time.

This study is the culmination of a pedagogical journey that was nurtured and encouraged by many people, some of whom will remain nameless, although their ideas quietly motivated my work. Others

have had more direct influence, and I would like to express my gratitude to them here. Laila ‘Ali Ibrāhīm, mentor and friend, took me by the hand, literally and intellectually, and opened my eyes to the Islamic Cairo she knows better than anyone. Irene Bierman of UCLA has unfailingly been there for me, sometimes across continents, whenever I sought her advice and backing. Oleg Grabar, formerly of Harvard University and currently at the Institute for Advanced Study, and Stanford Anderson and Arthur Steinberg of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have contributed their critical insights to the first version of this study which was my Ph.D. dissertation at M.I.T. (1991). By selecting the dissertation for the Humanities Award, the members of the 1991 Malcolm Kerr Dissertation Award committee encouraged me to broaden its scope and revise its content and premises. Over the last four years, Kristen Brustad, Shirine Hamadeh, Oleg Grabar, Nuha Khoury, Gülru Necipoğlu, and Yasser Tabbaa have each read and commented on a part of what was to become this study. Its shortcomings remain admittedly mine alone.

Margaret Ševčenko, editor of the Aga Khan Program, generously gave of her time and expertise in editing the work. Without her clear mind and sharp pen the text would have reminded many a reader of a fourteenth-century *hāshīa* (commentary). Peri Bearman, E. J. Brill’s editor of Islamic studies, has shown enough interest in my work to stimulate its recasting into a more intelligible form. In Cairo, Gloria Karnouk and Nāhid Šālīḥ of the Creswell Library at the American University in Cairo permitted me the unlimited use of the wonderful resources of the library. Fellowships for my research in Cairo were awarded by the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and M.I.T. (1987-88) and the American Research Center in Egypt (1989). A J. Paul Getty Postdoctoral Fellowship in the History of Art and Humanities (1993-94) afforded me the time away from teaching to prepare this book. An Aga Khan Program grant generously subsidized its publication. It is a privilege and a delight to acknowledge the support of all. Finally, the loving presence of Randa Shedid brought a sense of sharing to what would otherwise have been a solitary exercise.

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| Zakarya, <i>Palais</i> | Mona Zakarya, <i>Deux palais du Caire médiéval, Waqfs et architecture</i> |

NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION AND DATES

Clarity is the overriding concern in the use of Arabic names, terms, and phrases. The transcription system used follows that of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)*. Arabic names of buildings and other structures are capitalized and their English equivalents follow in parentheses at first use, e.g. the Burj al-Aḥmar (Red Tower); subsequent references use the Arabic name. Architectural, topographical, or administrative terms can be found in the glossary at the end. A few terms appear both capitalized and in lower case. For example, the phrase *dār al-ʿadl* (lit. “house of justice”) is used in Mamluk sources to designate both the administering of justice and the building in which this was performed. The term is italicized in lower case for the first, anglicized and capitalized for the second. To simplify the plural form of Arabic terms, the letter “s” is added, except where the collective noun is the standard term (e.g., *khāṣ-ṣakiyya*). Familiar geographical names such as Damascus, Aleppo, and Baghdad are used in their common English form. The name Cairo is used to refer to the whole capital city of Egypt, the names al-Qāhira and Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ are used to signify the two administrative entities—the Fatimid walled city and the old Islamic capital of Egypt.

Dates are given in Common Era years; A.H. (Hijrī) years are given only when required either by reference to an Islamic month, reference to an inscription date, or by citing an Arabic text which mentions a Hijrī year. In all cases, A.H. is added after the Hijrī date and the Common Era equivalent follows in parentheses.

References used more than once are cited from the beginning in abbreviated form; the complete citation can be found in the list of short references. Books and articles cited only a few times are cited in full in the notes in which they first appear; they then appear in abbreviated form in subsequent citations.

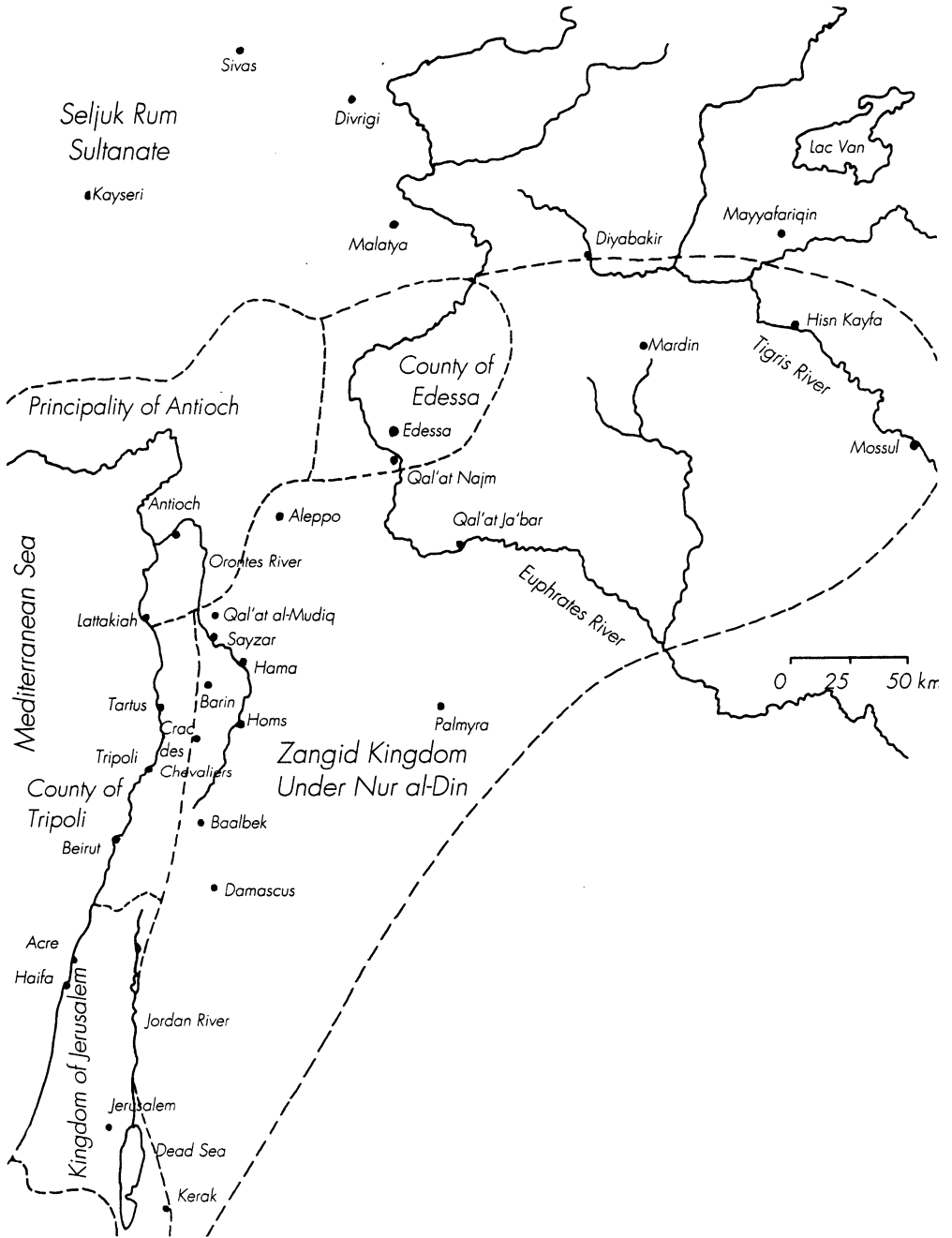


Fig. 1: Map of the Zangid Kingdom of Nūr al-Dīn and the Crusader states

CHAPTER ONE

WHENCE THE CITADEL

In the second half of the twelfth century, the Muslims finally formed a united front against the Crusader states that had existed for more than half a century in the Levant. Its uncontested leader and prime mover was Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the young prince who in 1146 had succeeded his father ʿImād al-Dīn Zangī ibn Aqṣunqur as the king (*malik*) of Aleppo; his older brother Sayf al-Dīn Ghāzī had inherited Mosul and its adjoining territories in the Jazīra. Between 1146 and 1151, Nūr al-Dīn led a series of military campaigns against the Frankish territories in northern and middle Syria. He regained the city of Edessa, which had previously been taken by his father; he eventually seized the entire county of Edessa and wrested a number of fortresses from the principality of Antioch and the county of Tripoli. By 1154, he had managed to add Damascus to his possessions, thus ending the division that had existed between northern and central Islamic Syria for more than a century (fig. 1). Early on in his reign, Nūr al-Dīn had announced his allegiance to the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad and declared his intentions to further the Sunni cause and to wage jihad against the Crusaders until all Islamic lands had been recaptured. Now he had acquired the territorial, political, and financial means to pursue these two goals. Circumstances dictated that Egypt be the stage for putting them both to the test.¹

Egypt had been ruled since 969 by the Fatimids, a heterodox Ismāʿīlī dynasty who had come from Ifrīqiyyā (present-day Tunisia) and who traced their lineage to Fāṭima, daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad and wife of his cousin ʿAlī, the fourth Rāshidī caliph and

¹ This historical account is based on Bundāri, *Sanā*, an abridgment of ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Barq al-Shāmī*; Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vols. 11-12; idem, *al-Tārīkh al-Bāhir fī al-Dawla al-Atābakiyya fī al-Mawṣil*; Ibn Shaddād, *Nawādir*; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, vol. 2; Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz*, vol. 3; Nikita Eliséeff, *Nur al-Din: un grand prince musulman de Syrie au temps des croisades (511-569 A.H. /1118-1174 A.D.)* (Damascus, 1967); R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus 1193-1260* (Albany, N.Y., 1977); Holt, *Crusades*; Andrew Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin* (Albany, N.Y., 1972); Malcolm Cameron Lyons and D. E. P. Jackson, *Saladin* (Cambridge, 1988).

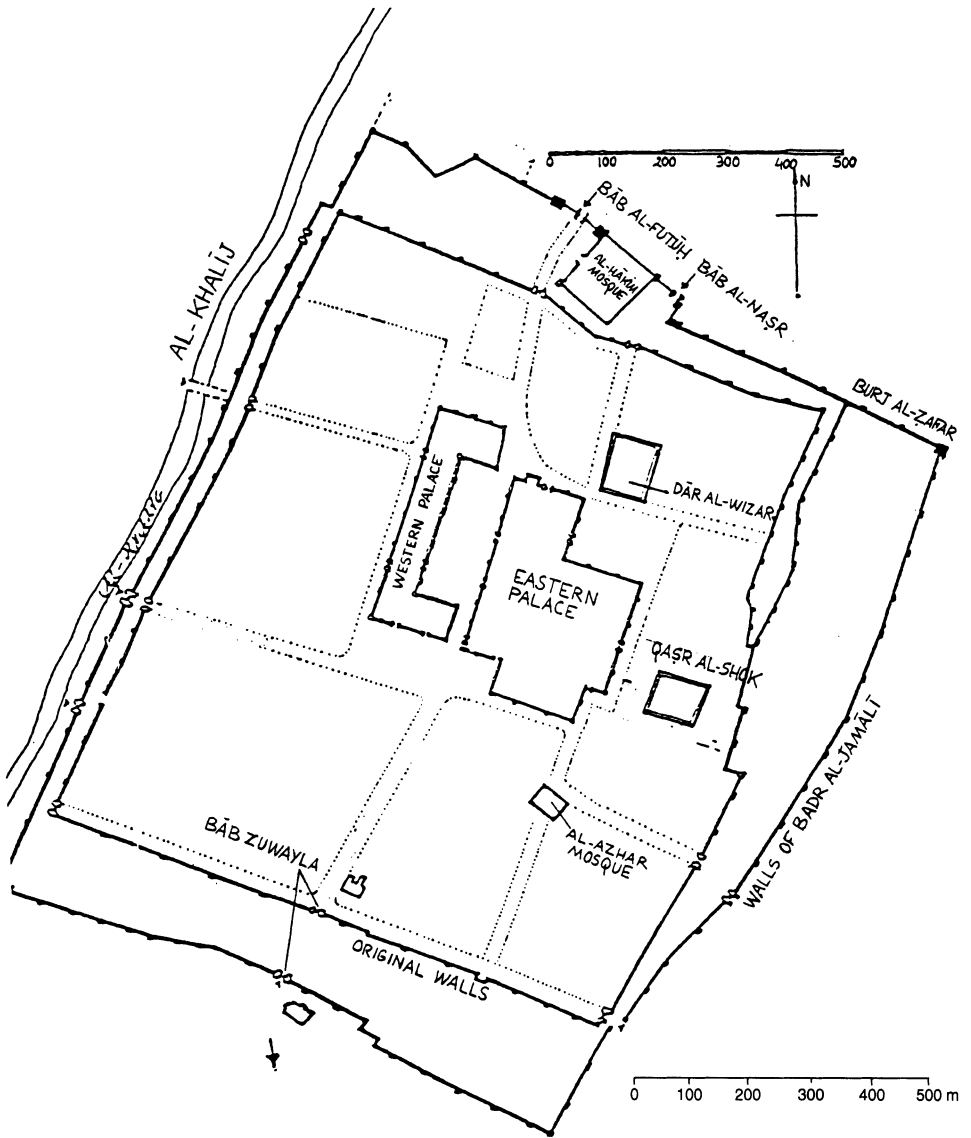


Fig. 2: Plan of Fatimid al-Qāhira

first imam for the various Shi'ite sects. Their capital was the city of al-Qāhira (the Victorious), which had been established by Jawhar al-Ṣiqillī, the commander of the invading Fatimid army, right after he conquered the country. It was situated two miles north of the older capital al-Fuṣṭāṭ along the way to Syria whence invaders came, and was surrounded by walls made of unbaked brick (*libn*).² Originally a rectangular camp, it rapidly developed into a royal city where the caliph, who was the ultimate temporal and religious authority, his family, his guards, and a large, mixed retinue of military and civilian functionaries, the *rijāl al-sayf* (men of the sword, i.e., military men) and the *rijāl al-qalam* (men of the pen, i.e., administrators), all lived. A main artery traversed it from south to north, and two caliphal palace complexes, the Eastern Palace and the Western Palace, occupied its center separated by a large open square, the Maydān Bayn al-Qaṣrayn (Square between the Two Palaces), which was used for official processions and army reviews. Two congregational mosques, al-Azhar (971–72) in the southeastern sector and al-Ḥākim (990–1010) near the northern wall, served its population. The rest of the city was parceled out to the tribal and ethnic groups that made up the Fatimid army for their residential quarters. For two centuries, the two cities grew side by side as separate entities: al-Qāhira as the political center of the caliphate, and al-Fuṣṭāṭ as the unwalled economic capital of the country, where the common people lived (fig. 2).

The Fatimids at first presented a serious threat to the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad, as they managed to extend their realm over much of Syria, the Hijaz, Yemen, and large parts of North Africa in addition to Egypt. But by the end of the eleventh century, they had lost most of their domains outside Egypt aside from parts of Palestine. Even their hold over what was left to them had been weakened, and, beginning with the vizierate of the Armenian general Badr al-Jamālī (r. 1074–94), political power had fallen into the hands of their viziers. In 1153, the Fatimid state lost its last Palestinian foothold in Ascalon when it was captured by Baldwin III, the Frankish king of Jerusalem, and ceased to be an active player in the power struggles in the eastern Mediterranean. Egypt was also ravaged by internecine struggles between rival groups, each trying to install its leader in the vizierate, and each seeking outside support from either the Franks or the Syrians. This vulnerability attracted the attention of both Amalric,

² Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1: 348, 359, 377.

king of Jerusalem, and Nūr al-Dīn, who realized that Egypt held the key to military and political supremacy in the region because of its wealth and human resources. Nūr al-Dīn, the champion of the Sunni revival in Syria (a movement begun by the Seljuqs to restore the dominance of Sunnism and to fight the various Shi'ite sects) and a partisan of the Abbasid caliphate, had the additional interest of wanting to eliminate the Fatimid caliphate and bring Egypt back into the orthodox fold.

In the years between 1164 and 1169, the two rivals, Zangids and Franks—each allied with local powerbrokers in order to establish a foothold in the country—fought over Egypt. Two campaigns, in 1164 and 1167, ended in stalemates. Nūr al-Dīn sent a third army in October 1168 in response to a plea by the caliph al-ʿĀḍid to counter the incursion of Amalric. The Franks had swiftly occupied Bilbaīs, northeast of al-Qāhira, massacred many of its inhabitants, and threatened the capital itself. As a last defensive measure, the ruling Fatimid vizier Shāwar ordered al-Fuṣṭāṭ emptied of its inhabitants and burned to prevent the Franks from using it as a base for their attacks on al-Qāhira. Its evacuation and destruction turned out to have been unnecessary, for Nūr al-Dīn's general Asad al-Dīn Shīrkūh and his army reached the Fatimid capital and forced the Franks to retreat without a fight.³

Unlike the two previous campaigns, this time Shīrkūh—probably following his master's orders—remained in the country, ostensibly to guard it from further Frankish invasions and to make sure that the third of Egypt's revenues promised Nūr al-Dīn was sent to Syria promptly. Shāwar, who had been cunningly switching allegiance from the Syrians to the Franks and back again for many years, realized Shīrkūh's real aims and tried to persuade him to leave Egypt. But in January 1169, Shāwar was killed and Shīrkūh was invested by the Fatimid caliph al-ʿĀḍid as vizier in his place, which made him the virtual ruler of the country. He did not enjoy that position for long, however; he died two months after his appointment. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb, his young nephew who had distinguished himself during the second expedition of 1167, was put forward by the senior

³ The extent of the damage the fire inflicted is unknown, but apparently it was less serious than Maqrīzī implies in his description; see MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 17–18, 45–50; Goitein, *Daily Life*, 12; Wladyslaw Kubiak, "The Burning of Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ in 1168: A Reconsideration of Historical Evidence," *Africana Bulletin*, 25 (1976): 51–64.

Syrian amirs in Egypt as the candidate to the vizierate in his place, though many of these same amirs coveted the position for themselves. The caliph al-ʿĀḍid appointed him vizier and conferred on him the two honorific titles, *al-malik* and *al-nāṣir* (the helper in victory), following the custom observed in the Fatimid court since the vizierate of Badr al-Jamālī.⁴ To the caliph and his advisers, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was the best choice they could hope for in the circumstances, as they thought him to be young, unexperienced, and lacking the total support of the Syrian amirs, some of whom in fact left Cairo in discontent and went back to Syria.⁵

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in Egypt

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's new post was precarious, for aside from having to manage a severely troubled, impoverished, and hostile country with a diminished military force, he was placed in the awkward position of owing allegiance to two opposing camps. He was both the highest official in the Ismāʿīlī Fatimid state and a general in the army of a Sunni ruler, Nūr al-Dīn, who was constantly pressuring him to overthrow the Fatimid caliph. For the time being, however, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn concentrated on consolidating his control over the country after having brutally crushed a revolt in Cairo led by the Sudanese troops in August 1169 and successfully repelled a joint Byzantine-Frankish attack on the Mediterranean port of Damietta in October. As a consequence of the suppression of the Sudanese rebellion, he was able to restrict al-ʿĀḍid to his palace and to appoint Bahā' al-Dīn Qarāqūsh al-Asadī, his majordomo who had been a mamluk of his uncle, as supervisor of the caliphal household. Soon afterward, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was reinforced by the arrival of a number of his family members, including his father Ayyūb ibn Shādhy who reached Cairo in early 1170. The father had been entrusted by Nūr al-Dīn to impress again upon his son the need to abolish the Fatimid caliphate and pronounce the khutba in Egypt in the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustanjid.

⁴ Ibn Shaddād, *Nawādir*, 36, explains that such honorific titles were conferred by the Fatimid caliph upon anyone who became the vizier in Egypt, even if by force.

⁵ Bundārī, *Sanā*, 39–43; Ibn Shaddād, *Nawādir*, 36–41; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 11: 298–301, 324–27, 33–43; Elisséeff, *Nūr ad-Dīn*, 627–40; Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, 50–68; Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, 6–29.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was as passionate a Sunni supporter as Nūr al-Dīn was, and definitely shared his master's goal of reclaiming Egypt for the Sunnis, but he also had plans of his own.⁶ He was very careful to implement the anti-Fatimid measures, partly because he did not want further to weaken his already vulnerable position, especially because several groups of disgruntled Fatimid supporters still had some power in the palace and in the provinces, and partly because he was cautiously trying to assert some measure of independence from his Syrian overlord. He slowly introduced a series of changes into the structure of the state and its Ismā'īlī symbols, but, contrary to his overlord's wishes, he had stopped short of restoring the sovereignty of the Abbasid caliphate to Egypt. He ordered the names of the first three Rāshidī caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān—who were anathema to the Ismā'īlīs—restored to their place before the name of 'Alī in the khutba invocation, and he eliminated the Shi'ite phrase “*ḥayy 'ala khayr al-'amal*” (praise to the good deeds) from the muezzin's call to prayer.⁷ He founded two madrasas, one in al-Qāhira for the Malikites and one in Fuṣṭāṭ for the Shafi'ites, and abolished the Ismā'īlī teaching in al-Azhar Mosque. He dismissed the Ismā'īlī chief judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) and appointed in his place a fellow Kurd and Shāfi'ite qadi, who proceeded to replace all the other Ismā'īlī qadis with Shafi'ite ones, thus effectively undermining the Fatimid hold over the judiciary. In the winter of 1170–71, he organized two expeditions against the Franks in southern Palestine and captured the castle of Aylah which stood on the caravan route from Syria to Egypt.

It is from this time that his first fortification work in Cairo dates. In the spring of 1171, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn started repairing the walls around Fatimid al-Qāhira, built by Badr al-Jamālī a century earlier, “because the greater part of them had been destroyed, and it had become an open road stopping neither entries nor departures.”⁸ He entrusted his lieutenant Qarāqūsh with the task of overseeing the project, and the

⁶ Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, 84–88.

⁷ Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 12: 263.

⁸ Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1, 2: 488, and Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz*, 3: 321; both reports are on the authority of a contemporary Aleppine chronicler, Ibn Abī-Ṭayy. Casanova, “Histoire,” 535. The English text is quoted from Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 2. On page 55, Creswell reports the discovery of an inscription slab during the demolition of the southwest wall of al-Qāhira in 1926 on which he read the title *amir* in front of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's name. This constitutes contemporary epigraphic proof that the fortifications were started before Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn became sultan. Creswell does not record the text of the inscription, nor does he say anything about its whereabouts.

building of fortifications seems to have become Qarāqūsh's specialty from then on.⁹ The same concern for defense could be observed elsewhere in Egypt: Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, after his first visit to Alexandria in May 1171, ordered its fortifications strengthened.¹⁰ Both these defense projects no doubt stemmed from his concern over the possibility that the Crusaders would renew their attacks following the Damietta debacle a year earlier. What was actually accomplished in either of them is not known, but as a vizier of a bankrupt state, his limited financial means would not have allowed for more than repairs of the existing walls; no new fortifications were undertaken.

In the fall of 1171, just before al-ʿĀḍid died of a mysterious ailment, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was finally ready to deal the last blow to the Fatimid caliphate. On Friday September 17, 1171, he ordered al-ʿĀḍid's name and titles to be replaced by the Abbasid al-Mustaḍī's in the Friday khutba, thus publicly abolishing the Fatimid caliphate. He immediately followed this with several acts aimed at consolidating this momentous coup. He sent emissaries with the long-anticipated news to both Nūr al-Dīn in Damascus and al-Mustaḍī in Baghdad, and ordered the decree announcing the demise of the Fatimids to be read in every town along the route to both cities. He confiscated the caliphal palaces and their contents, separated the men from the women of the late caliph's family, imprisoned them in isolated areas in the palace precinct so that they would die off, and expelled or sold their servants, slaves, and courtiers. He then distributed the spaces in the Eastern Palace where they had lived among his amirs, most of whom were also his kinsmen, gave the Manzarat al-Lū'lū'a (Lū'lū'a Pavilion) in the Western Palace complex to his father, and granted the rest of that palace to his brother al-ʿAdil Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr.¹¹

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn himself continued to live in the Dār al-Wizāra (Palace of the Vizierate), a large complex northeast of the Eastern Palace in al-Qāhira, which had been the official residence of the viziers since the time of al-Afḍal, the son of Badr al-Jamālī (1094-1121), who had built it for that purpose.¹² The association between the Dār al-Wizāra

⁹ Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Siyar*, 3, 2: 88, Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 2: 253, and Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 126, mention that Qarāqūsh was put in charge of the repairs of the fortification of Acre after it was conquered in 1189; he came with his men, animals, and equipment from Cairo after he entrusted the work on the walls of Cairo to an unnamed assistant.

¹⁰ Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1, 2: 486; Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāz*, 3: 320.

¹¹ Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1, 2: 506; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1: 384; idem, *Ittiʿāz*, 3: 347.

¹² Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1: 438-39. We know very little about this structure, which was later partly destroyed by the Mamluk sultan Baybars al-Jāshankīr in 1309 to

and the office of vizier allowed Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn skillfully to convey a low-key image to the Egyptians and to his overlord in Syria, who was growing suspicious of his intentions: although he was practically the sole ruler of Egypt, he was still, at least officially, Nūr al-Dīn's lieutenant.¹³ Between 1171 and 1173, without the means necessary to challenge him openly, he continued to pursue a circumspect policy of apparent loyalty to his master in Damascus, having his name pronounced in the khutba and struck on the coins he issued, and sending him the choice items from the confiscated Fatimid treasures along with moderate payments. All the while, he was consolidating his independent hold on Egypt, eagerly erasing all traces of Fatimid rule, and trying to extend his and his family's domain by sending armies against Nubia, Barqa, and Yemen. Moving out of the Dār al-Wizāra during that ambiguous interregnum would have deprived Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn of the symbol of the legitimacy he had acquired independently from Nūr al-Dīn as the vizier chosen by the last Fatimid caliph and would have sent the wrong signal to Nūr al-Dīn about his general's true aims.

In May 1174, before the hostility between them could deteriorate into an open clash, Nūr al-Dīn died. With his usual shrewdness, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn immediately claimed that he should be appointed the *atābek* (guardian and regent) of al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā'īl, Nūr al-Dīn's minor son and successor. Soon after sending this message, he led a campaign to Syria, ostensibly to enforce his claim, but actually to exploit the disputes that had erupted between the Nūri amirs over the regency and to seize Damascus and central Syria for himself, while al-Ṣāliḥ and his supporters retreated to Aleppo, where they were hoping that the Zangids of Mosul and the Jazira would join forces with them and form a front to check his further advance. He spent the next two years in Syria where, by combining diplomacy with war, he succeeded in neutralizing or subduing many of his opponents and in acquiring

clear the site for his khanqah. It seems to have been directly connected to Jamāliyya Street, for al-'Aziz, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's son, was said to have been able to look down upon the street from its *manẓara* (belvedere); see Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 3: 38.

¹³ A story repeated by many chroniclers, though clearly invented, illustrates the situation. In a council held among the Ayyubid family members to discuss the threat of Nūr al-Dīn's attacking Egypt, everyone boasted of his strength and vowed to repel him in case he attacked. Ayyūb shunned them all and warned his son that he would personally deliver him to Nūr al-Dīn if ordered to do so. Then, in private, he assured him of his full support and asked him to hide his real intentions toward Nūr al-Dīn in public; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 70.

territories that extended his domain to the Euphrates river. But despite his efforts, Aleppo and the Ismā'īli territory in central Syria defended by the castles known as *qilā' al-da'wa* (the castles of the mission) remained out of his reach, and a standoff with the Franks in Palestine blocked his attempts at making any territorial gains on their account.¹⁴

By the summer of 1176, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn decided to halt his campaign and to turn his attention to organizing his new acquisitions. He had become the suzerain of both southern Syria and Egypt, territorially a true sultan, although it is not sure that he ever actually used that title in his official protocol.¹⁵ To crown his success, and possibly to give the impression of legitimacy and continuity, he married 'Iṣmat al-Dīn Khātūn, the widow of Nūr al-Dīn, who had been living in her private quarters at the citadel of Damascus since the death of her first husband.¹⁶ Two days after the wedding, he left Damascus to return to Egypt. He reached al-Qāhira on 22 September 1176 and immediately set about putting order in its affairs and preparing a campaign to accomplish his ultimate objective of acquiring all of Islamic Syria and reconquering Jerusalem from the Franks.

Building the Citadel

Shortly after his entry into his capital, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn began a grand and ambitious defense project. He ordered a wall to be built that would encircle the two cities of al-Qāhira and al-Fuṣṭāṭ and a citadel to be constructed on a spur (*qurna*) artificially cut out of the Muqāṭṭam hills that would be the strong point of the fortifications (fig. 3).¹⁷ As he had done for the earlier and simpler fortification

¹⁴ Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, 81–110.

¹⁵ Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-Kubrā*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Ṭanāḥī and 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥuluw (Cairo, 1966), 5: 315. Al-Subkī, who lived in the fourteenth century, explains that the title sultan could only be given to someone who ruled two countries. The ruler of one country is a *malik*, and his allegiance to a sultan was determined by the power relation existing between them at the time. Al-Subkī uses the example of Nūr al-Dīn to prove his point. When Nūr al-Dīn's name was proclaimed from the minbars of Egypt and Syria together, he became eligible for the title of sultan. For the Ayyubid concept of the sultanate, see Humphreys, *Ayyubid Damascus*, 365–69. For a discussion of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's titulature, see Gaston Wiet, "Les inscriptions de Saladin," *Syria* 3 (1922): 307–28.

¹⁶ Bundārī, *Sanā*, 113.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 119; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 85; *idem*, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 233; Ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij*, 2: 52; Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1: 268; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 354.

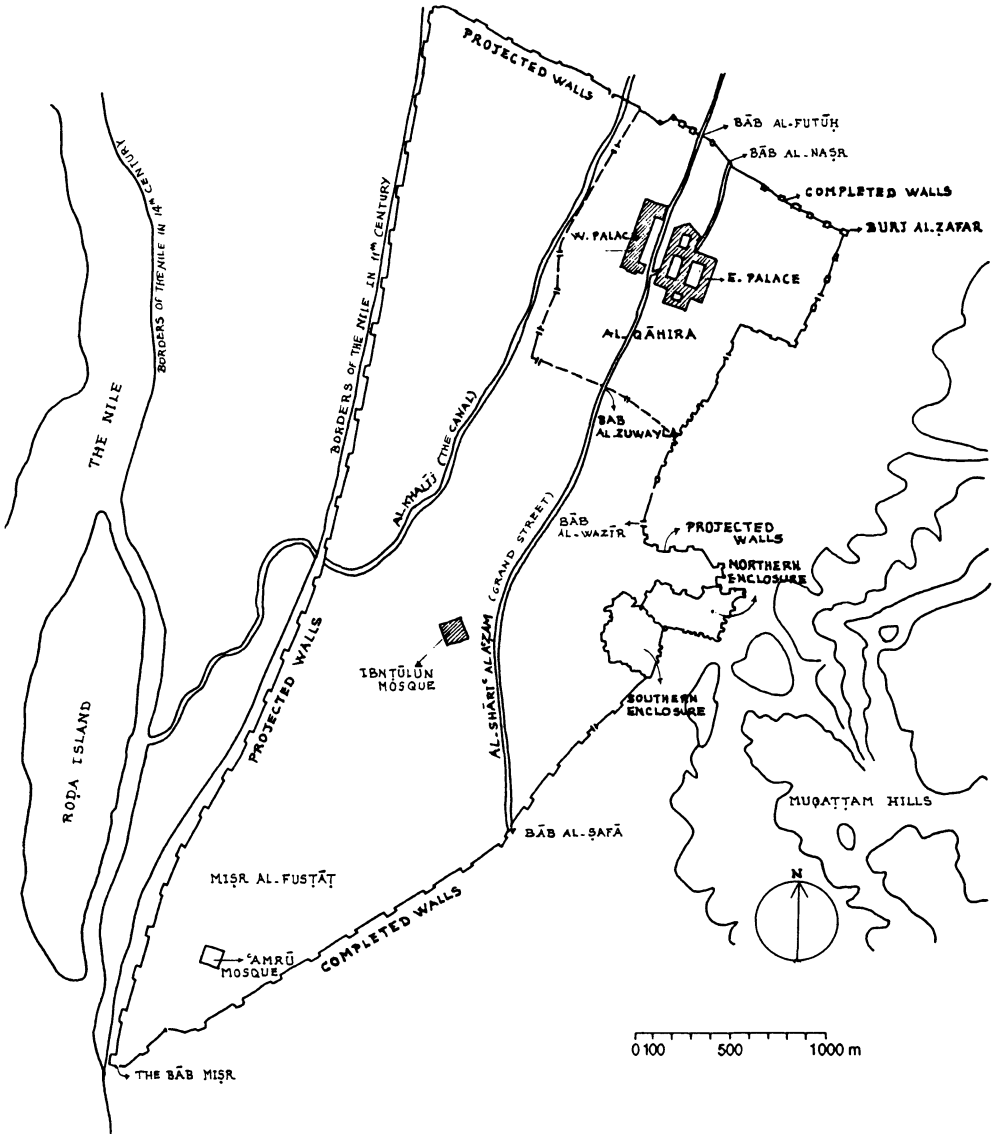


Fig. 3: Reconstructed plan of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's original fortifications

project of 1171, he appointed Bahā' al-Dīn Qarāqūsh to supervise the new project.

The contemporary chroniclers give a logical if rather pat reason for enclosing the two cities in one enceinte. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had said that "one enceinte is easier to defend than two, and it needs only one garrison."¹⁸ Obviously, the lesson of Amalric's invasion of 1169 and the burning of al-Fuṣṭāṭ was still vivid in Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's memory and was part of what lay behind the decision to fortify al-Fuṣṭāṭ. None of them, however, notes the similarity between this new plan and an earlier one attributed to the vizier Shāwar, who ordered a wall built around al-Fuṣṭāṭ when he heard of Amalric's preparations for invading Egypt in 1168.¹⁹ Maqrīzī is the only chronicler to report this event, but it stands to reason that Shāwar should think of building defenses for al-Fuṣṭāṭ, especially after the military operations of 1167 when Shīrkūh circumvented al-Qāhira and reached the south, proving that relying on its position on the road of invaders from the north was not adequate for securing its southern flanks. Shāwar did not have enough time to complete his wall, and he had to resort to the more drastic solution of evacuating and burning al-Fuṣṭāṭ when Amalric's army approached. But Maqrīzī names and locates eight gates that he attributes to Shāwar, three of which were demolished in the thirteenth century. Curiously, however, two of them, the Bāb al-Ṣafā (Gate of the Easterly Wind) and Bāb al-Qanṭara (Gate of the Bridge), reappear in Maqrīzī's list of gates built by Qarāqūsh after 1176.²⁰ Whether this means that Qarāqūsh only refurbished earlier gates rather than building new ones is impossible to verify since Maqrīzī is the only chronicler who mentions these names at all. It is clear, though, that whatever his dependence on older structures, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's project was fundamentally different from his predecessor's—his would join the walls of the two cities together. This would result in the unification of the two cities three centuries later, an outcome that must have been predictable from the beginning.

After he had abolished the Fatimid caliphate and ascended the

¹⁸ Quoted in Bundārī, *Sanā*, 119, and Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 201. Another chronicler, the famous Hanbali preacher, Sibṭ ibn-al-Jawzī, who was outspokenly critical of the rulers of his time and a bit biased toward Nūr al-Dīn, reported the building of the walls and the Citadel, but commented on them by saying, "He spent a fortune and nobody benefited from it"; see Sibṭ, *Mir'āt*, 338. The same statement is repeated in Ibn Taghri-Birdi, *Nujūm*, 6: 78.

¹⁹ Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz*, 3: 296.

²⁰ Idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1: 347.

throne, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn needed a new center of government; the Dār al-Wizāra was too closely associated with the deposed dynasty and with his own position in its last days as second in command. He also needed more space for his growing entourage once he had divided the Fatimid palaces among his amirs. He had been acquiring a large corps of mamluks, the Mamālik al-Nāṣiriyya, and he would want the citadel to serve both as a residence for himself and a billet for his army and to enhance his image as sultan and founder of a new regime. To that end, he was probably following the precedent set by those earlier rulers of Islamic Egypt who founded new dynasties and who built new centers to house their supporters and to announce the power shift they had enforced.²¹ When the army of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ conquered Egypt in 640, the site of the future capital of Islamic Egypt on the eastern bank of the Nile was sparsely inhabited and was guarded by the Roman fortress of Babylon (renamed Qaṣr al-Sham‘ by the Arabs, and still in part standing today). In 642, ‘Amr established his garrison town (*miṣr*) to the south, east, and north of the old fortress, parceled its sectors out among the groups from the various tribes that constituted his army, and called it al-Fuṣṭāṭ (probably after the Roman military term *fossatum*, or encampment). After the Abbasids in 750 chased the last Umayyad caliph Marwān and killed him as he attempted to flee across the Nile, they founded their new encampment, al-‘Askar (the Troops, so named because it housed the conquering Abbasid army), to the northeast of al-Fuṣṭāṭ. When Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn (r. 868–84), the amir sent by the Abbasids to govern the country, eventually proclaimed himself an independent ruler and established a dynasty, he constructed his enclosed complex between 876 and 879 to the northwest of al-‘Askar on the slopes of Mount Yashkur, west of the Muqaṭṭam hills. He allocated the lands surrounding it to the members of his entourage for their houses, and the whole settlement became known as al-Qaṭā’i‘ (the Allotments). It was eventually destroyed (except for the Ibn Ṭūlūn mosque) by another invading Abbasid army and its site absorbed into expanding al-Fuṣṭāṭ along with the remaining parts of the older al-‘Askar. All of these towns were erected on flat or slightly elevated land, and not one of them had been fortified.

²¹ Ibid., 2: 201; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 370, reports a story to that effect; the traveler Ibn Jubayr of al-Andalus who visited Cairo in 1183, says that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn intended to live in the Citadel when it was completed; see Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥlat Ibn Jubayr* (Beirut, 1964), 25.

Al-Qāhira, established by Jawhar al-Şiqillī in 969 as the capital of the new Fatimid caliphate, was fortified, but was not really a citadel, for it lacked the defensibility produced by a combination of protected location, controlled access, and imposing and forbidding architecture. Its site was not defended by any natural barrier, except perhaps in the west where the Khalij al-Kabīr (Grand Canal) functioned as a moat. Its walls were more symbolic than functional: they marked the caliph's domain, but could not have withstood a serious siege. As they had been made out of unbaked brick, they had almost disappeared within a century. The major axes of the settlement within were commercial thoroughfares open to traffic in the daytime; they linked the inhabited areas *extra-muros* to the north and south, which housed the Fatimid army divisions.²² The defenses of the city had been rebuilt midway through the Fatimid period, but no significant changes had been introduced: between 1087 and 1092, the vizier Badr al-Jamālī fortified al-Qāhira anew, this time with stronger brick walls and monumental stone gates. This rebuilding was probably induced by the contemporary developments in Syria, from where Badr and his army had come to save the caliph al-Mustaşir and where many of the local Seljuq rulers were engaged in fortifying their cities and constructing citadels. It may even have been carried out by Syrian builders, for at least three gates—Bāb al-Naşr (Victory Gate) and Bāb al-Futūḥ (Conquest Gate) in the north and Bāb Zūwayla (Gate of Zūwayla) in the south—are said to have been built by three Armenian brothers from al-Ruḥā (Edessa), and stylistically they do resemble contemporary north Syrian architecture.²³

Along with endowing al-Qāhira with new defenses, Badr al-Jamālī permitted many classes of people—Armenians who came with him, soldiers, and whoever could afford it—to build new houses or to refurbish old ones *intra-muros* in his effort expeditiously to rehabilitate the sections of the city that had been deserted and had deteriorated before his arrival in 1073.²⁴ Despite the change in the

²² S. D. Goitein, "Cairo: An Islamic City in the Light of the Geniza Documents," in *Middle Eastern Cities*, ed. Ira Lapidus (Berkeley, 1969), 80-96.

²³ Maqrizī, *Khitāṭ*, 1: 381; Abū Şāliḥ al-Armanī, *Tārīkh al-Shaykh Abū Şāliḥ al-Armanī*, ed. B. T. A. Evetts (Oxford, 1895), 65, speaks of "the tomb of Yūḥanna [John] the monk who designed the walls and gates of al-Qāhira for Badr," but does not say from where he came. On the architectural similarity between the three gates and north Syrian buildings, see Yasser Tabbaa, "Survivals and Archaisms in the Architecture of Northern Syria, ca. 1080-ca. 1150," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 33-36.

²⁴ Maqrizī, *Khitāṭ*, 1: 364.

composition of its population, however, al-Qāhira retained its primary role as the seat of the caliphate, and common people were not allowed to live there until Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn embarked on his restructuring of the city after the death of al-‘Āḍid.²⁵

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s plan to move his government center might not have been new, but his decision to build it as an urban citadel was a novelty in Egypt. Many reasons can be adduced to explain the decision.²⁶ One was personal security. Between 1175 and 1176, while he was building his empire in Syria, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn managed to escape two serious assassination attempts plotted by his enemies and undertaken by the *fidāwiyya* (Ismā‘īlī volunteers known in the West as the Assassins) who hated him as the destroyer of the Fatimid state, their former sponsor and spiritual fountainhead. During the same period, his deputies in Egypt suppressed three pro-Fatimid revolts. After these threats, Abū Shāma tells us, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn became very cautious and instituted tight security measures that included alterations to the structure of his tent to allow a small wooden tower-like enclosure (*lājūq*) to be placed in the middle of it in which he sat and slept, and to which he only admitted those he knew and of whose loyalty he was sure.²⁷ The same concerns can be read in his decision to establish a citadel as a safe base in his capital.

Another inspiration for building a citadel may have been the general layout of Syrian cities, both Frankish and Islamic, all of which were fortified and almost always had a citadel built in or adjacent to them.²⁸ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had had ample opportunity to experience firsthand their virtues for defense. He was born in the citadel of Takrit in Iraq in 1138, where his father had been the castellan (*dazdār*) in the service of Mujāhid al-Dīn Bihrūz al-Khādim, an administrator of the Seljuqs in Baghdad. Legend has it that his father and uncle Shīrkūh were driven out of Takrit the night of his birth, and that they decided to join ‘Imād al-Dīn Zangī, whom they had helped six years earlier to escape the Seljuq army after an abortive campaign against Baghdad in 1132. Zangī, whose seat was in Mosul in the

²⁵ For a review of this urban history, see Janet Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton, 1971), 13-25; André Raymond, *Le Caire* (Paris, 1993), 1-85.

²⁶ Casanova, “Histoire,” 571-74; Creswell, “Researches,” 95-97; Raymond, *Le Caire*, 89-90.

²⁷ Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1, 2: 659-60; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 2: 45.

²⁸ An early proponent of this explanation was Stanley Lane-Poole, *Saladin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (New York, 1906), 119-20.

Jazira, welcomed the two brothers and appointed Ayyūb as the governor of the ancient fortified city of Baalbek in the Biqā' Valley, where Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn spent his childhood. He entered the service of Nūr al-Dīn in 1152 at the tender age of fourteen. In 1154, he moved with his father and uncle Shīrkūh to Damascus, where they both were appointed to important positions in the Zangid court: his father as governor of Damascus and his uncle as the commander of the army. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn soon displayed his merits, and Nūr al-Dīn selected him for a number of posts, including aide-de-camp. He spent the next fifteen years in Nūr al-Dīn's company journeying between the citadels and fortified cities of his realm, attacking those of his enemies and opponents, and learning how to rule a feudal state and how to lead an army.²⁹ It is probably during that same period that he adopted his master's broader goals of jihad and Sunni revival, his aggressive strategy in dealing with his neighbors, Muslim and Frankish alike, and his precautionary measures in building citadels and restoring fortifications.

Although Nūr al-Dīn does not seem to have had a concerted program for building defenses, he nonetheless strengthened the walls of a number of cities in his domains and refurbished many urban citadels, especially after two major earthquakes hit the area in 1157 and 1170. The fortifications of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Manbij, and Baalbek—all of which dated essentially from the Byzantine period with some Islamic modifications—were reconstructed and upgraded to withstand new developments in siege machinery. Nūr al-Dīn's builders introduced a number of military innovations, such as the round towers on the corners of walls and the barbican (*bāshūra*) gate, which were adapted in later defensive works by both Ayyubids and Franks. Nūr al-Dīn also renovated the citadels of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, and Hama, and added royal halls and mosques in both Damascus and Aleppo. He had structures built in other citadels, especially the two important ones on the Euphrates, Qal'at Najm and Qal'at Ja'bar, and those defending his borders with the Crusader states on the Orontes, such as Qal'at al-Mudīq (Apamea), Chayzar, and Bārīn (Montferrand) (see fig. 1).³⁰ Many of these citadels held out against Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's sieges during his first

²⁹ Bundārī, *Sanā*, 16; Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1, 1: 252, 2: 535–39; Ibn Khalīkān, *Wafiyāt al-A'yān*, 7: 139–50; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 35, 42; Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*, 26–33; Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, 3–6.

³⁰ Elisséeff, *Nūr ad-Dīn*, 705–20.

Syrian campaign after the death of Nūr al-Dīn between 1174 and 1176—especially Aleppo which did not surrender—and this must have underscored their military effectiveness and reinforced Ṣalāh al-Dīn's resolve to build his own citadel in his Egyptian capital.

Both Ṣalāh al-Dīn's Cairene citadel and Nūr al-Dīn's earlier Syrian ones, however, represent more than just concerns for defense and security in that particularly critical period or responses to advances in warfare, construction methods, and siege techniques. They are phases in a larger phenomenon of change in the architectural expression in the medieval Middle East that was manifest in the building or refurbishing of urban citadels as princely residences all over Anatolia, Syria, and the Jazira in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.³¹ Citadels in cities such as Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, and Hama in today's Syria; Mosul, Irbil, Takrit, and Sinjar in Iraq; Diyarbakir (Amid), Mayyafariqin (Silvan), and Hisn Kayfa in the Jazira; Kayseri, Sivas, Divriği, Alanya, and Konya in Anatolia all belong to the same series.³² These cities were capitals of more or less independent principalities that sprang up during the twelfth and thirteenth century with the disintegration of the Seljuqid empire. The construction or refurbishing of citadels in them heralded the new regimes whose roots were foreign and preferences were military. Many of the founding amirs of these dynasties were originally generals in Seljuq armies and *atābeks* of some junior Seljuq princes, such as Aqsunqur, Nūr al-Dīn's grandfather, who held the title *atābek* which was adopted by some contemporaries as the epithet for the dynasty, *al-dawla al-Atābikkiyya*. They were all also Turkish-speaking cavaliers of non-Arabic origin who belonged to a recently Islamized and staunchly Sunni military caste that dominated the political scene in

³¹ See the analysis of the appearance of citadels in Jere Bacharach, "Administrative Complexes, Palaces, and Citadels: Changes in the Loci of Medieval Muslim Rule," in *The Ottoman City and Its Parts: Urban Structure and Social Order*, ed. Irene Bierman, Rifaat Abou-el-Haj, and Donald Preziosi (New Rochelle, N.Y., 1991): 111-28, esp. 121-27.

³² To my knowledge, these citadels have not been studied as manifestations of a single phenomenon, although they were all constructed by rulers who sprang from the disintegrating Seljuq empire in the same period. Historical and topographic information on them has recently been made available through the publication of 'Izz al-Dīn ibn Shaddād, *al-A'lāq al-Khaṭira fī Dhikr Umarā' al-Shām wa-l-Jazira*, vol. 3, parts 1 and 2, *Tārīkh wa-Toboghrāphiyyat al-Jazīra al-Sūriyya*, ed. Yahyā 'Abbāra (Damascus, 1978), and T. A. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological Survey*, 3 vols. (London, 1987).

the eastern Mediterranean after the eleventh century.³³ They led armies made up mainly of Turkish and Kurdish free and manumitted cavalry, expanded their principalities through war, conquest, and intrigue, and distinguished themselves in jihad against a host of enemies: the Byzantines in Anatolia and northern Syria, splinter Shi'ite groups, the Crusaders in Palestine and on the Syrian coast, and, later, the Mongols. They all chose to live in citadels that stood on the edge of the city and enclosed their palaces, their audience halls, and barracks for their armies. On the periphery were their hippodromes for parades, military exercises, and polo games.

Salāḥ al-Dīn's world view, values, biases, and tastes had developed within this military frame of reference in which the coveted position was that of an amir and the choice residence was a citadel. Although he certainly planned his citadel both for defense and as a residence worthy of his elevated status and as a refuge away from a population of whose loyalty he was not sure and from the *Ismā'īlī fidāwiyya* who represented an imminent threat, his choice reflects his military upbringing and his conformity to the established tradition to which he belonged.³⁴ The Citadel was to be a stronghold within the fortified walls of the two cities of al-Fuṣṭāṭ and al-Qāhira, a sign of the coming of a new regime whose tastes and preferences were military, and a real and symbolic barrier between the rulers and the ruled.³⁵

³³ See the general remarks on the "Turkish" penetration of Anatolia, Syria, and Jazira in Claude Cahen, "La première pénétration turque en Asie-Mineure," *Byzantion* 18 (1946–48): 61–66; Shākir Muṣṭafā, "Dukhūl al-Turk al-Ghuzz ila al-Shām," *al-Mū'tamar al-Dawli li Tārīkh Bilād al-Shām*, ed. A. K. Garāybeh and A. A. Dūri (Amman, 1974), 303–4.

³⁴ A discussion along the same line is provided in Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 103–15; Yasser Tabbaa, "Circles of Power: Palace, Citadel, and City in Ayyubid Aleppo," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 181–91.

³⁵ This view is strongly emphasized in David Ayalon, "The Muslim City and the Mamluk Military Aristocracy," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 2 (1968): 311–29, esp. 324–25.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CITADEL TODAY

The Citadel, variably referred to as the Qal‘at al Jabal (Citadel of the Mountain), or the Qal‘at of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, or of Muḥammad ‘Alī, or of al-Qāhira, has changed a great deal since it was first built during Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s reign. Subsequent patrons, especially al-Kāmil (1200–38), al-Zāhir Baybars (1260–76), and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad enlarged it, divided it into northern and southern enclosures, re-arranged its interior, endowed it with an impressive number of palaces and other structures, and surrounded it with buildings, except on the east, where the slopes of the rocky Muqaṭṭam hills hindered construction. The later Mamluk sultans did not add much to it, but at the end of the fifteenth century they twice refurbished it. Under the Ottomans (1517–1798), it was divided into three semi-independent parts: the northern enclosure contained the barracks of the Janissaries (the main corps in the Ottoman army); the lower areas in the west became the residence of the al-‘Azab (the locally recruited troops); and the southern section of the southern enclosure was occupied by the pasha sent from Istanbul and his troops. Its interior was reorganized many times, though its surface area did not expand, and its ground level rose as new structures were built on top of old ones, but we do not know much about these changes. It was radically reconfigured in the first half of the nineteenth century when Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha razed the few structures that were still standing there, rebuilt most of its walls, changed its interior organization, added a monumental funerary mosque, four palaces, a hall of justice, an arsenal, a mint, a powder house, a huge terrace, and numerous barracks for the troops, and established new entrance routes to it. It remained the residence of his descendants and their seat of government until 1874, when Ismā‘īl Pasha (1863–79) moved to the newly built ‘Ābdīn Palace. During the British colonial occupation (1882–1946), it became the headquarters of the British army; troops were garrisoned in the structures Muḥammad ‘Alī had built for his army with very few modifications until 1946, when it was turned over to the Egyptian army. In subsequent years, it was gradually acquired, one section at a time, by the Egyptian Antiquities Organization (EAO), with the last army personnel leaving

the premises in the late 1980s. Its layout was reshaped again in recent years by the EAO to accommodate tourist movement around the remaining monuments, which erased many traces of the original plan that had escaped earlier transformations (pl. 1).

Most Ayyubid and Mamluk structures that we know to have existed in the Citadel have therefore irretrievably disappeared. The meager architectural remains today, both uncovered and still underground, are so scattered that they cannot offer a complete image of any of the missing structures. They provide a number of valuable details, but undocumented alterations subsequent to the original building add to the problems of reconstruction and make a determination of their pristine forms impossible. This difficult situation is compounded by the lack of topographic maps of the Citadel recording differences of levels and changes in outline, and by the trivial and uncertain graphic, photographic, or archaeological data available. Some medieval structures had been documented by a number of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European draftsmen who visited the Citadel before Muḥammad 'Alī demolished them.¹ But they are depicted when they had been in ruins for at least three centuries, and when their forms had been severely altered. By the time photography came to Egypt around the middle of the nineteenth century, they had already been destroyed. Still, photographic documentation would at least have preserved the appearance of the Citadel right after Muḥammad 'Alī's renovation, before the subsequent additions and alterations under the khedives and the British occupation forces which were stationed there after 1882 had been completed. It was not done, however, because those documenting the monuments of Egypt concentrated on pharaonic antiquities. Only a handful of photographers took any interest in Islamic sites and even fewer had access to the Citadel or thought it worth photographing.² Today, a systematic archaeological survey is not feasible, logistically or financially, and the ongoing development of the Citadel into a major tourist and cul-

¹ Most important are Ludwig Mayer, *Views in Egypt from the Original Drawings in the Possession of Sir Robert Ainslie Taken during His Embassy to Constantinople* (London, 1801); Robert Hay, *Illustrations of Cairo* (London, 1840); David Roberts, *The Holy Land, Egypt and Nubia* (London, 1842–49).

² Among them, Jakob August Lorent, *Egypten, Alhambra, Tlemsen, Algier: Reisebilder aus den Anfängen der Photographie* (Mainz am Rhein, 1861); M. Béchar, *L'Égypte et la Nubie, grand album monumental, historique et architectural* (Paris, 1887); P. Sébah, *Catalogue of Views in Egypt and Nubia* (Cairo, 1887).

tural attraction makes such a task an even more remote possibility in the future.³

What we have to work with at this stage is therefore admittedly meager. It consists of a series of plans all produced in the last 150 years, a handful of problematic reports from the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth century, some images and archaeological remnants, and the actual Citadel as it stands today. The first and most important of the plans was drawn by the savants attached to Napoleon Bonaparte's French expedition (1789-1801) and published in the encyclopedic *Description de l'Égypte*.⁴ It shows the Citadel as it stood around 1800 when the ruins of many Mamluk structures still remained. Unfortunately though, it was published in a scale six times smaller than that of the original relevé, which compromised clarity in the reduction process and blurred many of the details that must have existed in the original (fig. 4).⁵ Three other plans—by Casanova in 1892, a British colonel named Green in 1896, and Creswell in 1924—were drawn after the Citadel was remodeled and expanded by Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha during the first half of the nineteenth century and further altered by the British occupation army around the turn of the century, which together obliterated many of its older remains. A set of cadastral maps, on a scale of 1:500 and drawn by the staff of the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works between 1946 and 1951, only records the layout of the British and Egyptian military services inside the Citadel at the time and merely identifies older structures as either "remains" or "ruins." All contemporary plans copy either Green or Creswell and seldom add the modifications introduced in the second half of the twentieth century. What we will attempt to do here is to start from the layout of the Citadel today and conflate it with the plan of the *Description de l'Égypte* to propose a plan for the Citadel Qarāqūsh built for Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn by peeling away later additions and modifications, by identifying the sections of the extant walls which belong to it, and by delineating those portions which no longer exist but whose reconstruction would agree with the available architectural, archaeological, and textual data.

³ The latest addition is a 1,200-seat amphitheater called al-Maḥka which was planted in the middle of the northern enclosure, see *al-Ahrām Weekly*, 2–8 June, 1994, 4.

⁴ *Description de l'Égypte, état moderne, planches*, vol. 1 (Paris: Panckouke, 1821–29), plate 26 for the map of Cairo and the Citadel, and plates 67–73 for views, plans, and sections in the Citadel. All plates were reprinted recently in Cairo, see Zuhayr al-Shāyeb, *Waṣf Miṣr, al-Lawḥāt, al-Dawla al-Ḥadītha* (Cairo, 1986).

⁵ Jomard, "Description du Kaire," 348, no. 1.



Fig. 4: The *Description de l'Égypte* plan of the Citadel

As it stands today, the Citadel is composed of two enclosures occupying the high platform of the spur and a third, much lower enclosure divided into many sections and collectively called the *iṣṭabl* (stable), wedged between the western boundary of the spur and the open area that was once a maydan and a horse market. The two upper enclosures are separated by a curtain wall called the *Sūr al-Qulla* (Qulla Wall; the *qulla*, which means the high place or the keep, was probably nearby), which is almost 150 meters long and has at either end a huge round tower and a gate in the middle flanked by polygonal towers (fig. 5). Casanova named them the northern enclosure and the southern enclosure, noting that their differences in size, configuration, and function, and inconsistent technique of construction suggest they were not built at the same time.⁶ The first, or northern, is the largest enclosure; it is a solidly fortified irregular rectangle measuring approximately 560 meters from east to west and 320 meters from north to south built along the perimeter of an artificially hewn cliff and buttressed at varying intervals with round and square towers of various sizes. The second or southern and smaller enclosure (about 510 meters from north to south and 270 meters from east to west) has a much more jagged plan and is considerably less strongly fortified; it has only a few small towers on its eastern and northwestern sides. Its ground level is lower than that of the northern enclosure, and parts of its southern end have been built on raised foundations or accumulated debris. Its boundaries, especially the western and southern ones, were constantly redefined and expanded until the nineteenth century, as can be deduced from the remnants of various construction methods still visible along the length of the walls.

The Citadel today has three main gates, the *Bāb al-‘Azab* (‘Azab Gate), the *Bāb al-Jadīd* (New Gate), and the *Bāb al-Jabal* (Mountain Gate); none belongs to the original structure.⁷ The *Bāb al-‘Azab* is the main entrance to the Citadel’s lower enclosure; it faces west toward Rumayla Square (recently renamed *Maydān Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn*) across from the two gigantic mosques of Sultan Ḥasan and al-Rifā‘ī. Its arched opening is flanked by enormous, round towers, reminiscent of the *Bāb al-Futūḥ*’s towers (completed in 1087) on the northern wall of al-Qāhira. Built originally by Raḍwān Katkhudā al-Julfi, a Circassian Mamluk amir who died in 1754, it was the main gate to

⁶ Casanova, “Histoire,” 575–90.

⁷ The best description of the Citadel as it stands today is William Lyster, *The Citadel of Cairo: A History and Guide* (Cairo, 1990).

entrance to the stable enclosure, and, through a narrow path part of which is cut in the rock, to the southern enclosure above. This path continues straight up to a point below the walls of the northern corner of the southern enclosure where it turns left to ascend towards the Citadel. At this point and high on the walls is fixed a huge, headless eagle, which was first reported by the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, who lived in the Citadel around 1670.¹⁰ Inscribed within a frame that suggests an ancient Egyptian pylon, it is highly stylized with spread wings, exaggerated claws, and a tail that resembles an inverted five-petaled fleur-de-lis (pl. 2). Evliya Çelebi specifies that it had two heads, was painted in lively colors, and had two copper tongues.¹¹ The space left between its elongated neck and the rim of the frame leads to reconstructing the two missing heads as stemming directly from the trunk rather than having separate necks. The frame, the body of the eagle, and the field on which it is depicted are divided by embossed mortar bands, as if the whole composition were made out of successive courses, which is not the case. The course lines do not correspond to those on the wall upon which the eagle is attached, suggesting that this was not its original location. Indeed, the upper part of the wall was apparently rebuilt in Muḥammad ‘Alī’s time, and the eagle may then have been raised to a higher position.¹² Its provenance is unknown. It is commonly identified as Şalāḥ al-Dīn’s emblem, although Egyptian chroniclers are conspicuously silent about its presence and no other evidence, historical or epigraphic, corroborates this ascription.¹³

The lower enclosure is occupied by decrepit nineteenth-century warehouses and small factories for military gear and a few scattered older remains, probably from the Mamluk Burjī period (1382-1517) when the stable area rose in significance. Most notable among them are the Burj al-Rafrāf (Tower of the Canopy), which abuts the

¹⁰ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyāhatnāme*, ed. Mümin Çevik, 10 vols. (Istanbul, 1984), 9–10: 385–86.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 385; his description is corroborated by other European travelers of the eighteenth century; see Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries, Observations on Egypt* (London, 1743) 1: 32; Carsten Niebuhr, *Description de l’Arabie, faite sur des observations propres et des avis recueillis dans les lieux mêmes par Carsten Niebuhr* (Amsterdam, 1774), 1: 176.

¹² Casanova, “Histoire,” 725-28; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 39.

¹³ A. A. R. Aḥmad, “al-Runūk ‘ala-‘Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālik,” *al-Majalla al-Tārikhiyya al-Miṣriyya*, 21 (1974): 87. Yakoub Artin Pasha, *Contribution à l’étude du blason en Orient* (London, 1902), 93; Casanova attributes it to al-Kāmil.

Citadel's wall at its outermost protrusion on its western side, and a series of monumental stone corbels adjacent to it. The Burj al-Rafraf, accessible today only from the level of the southern enclosure, is a composite structure whose plan consists of two squares joined on axis and projecting out of the curtain wall. A complete vertical break in its walls goes down to the ground level, separating the two squares and showing that the smaller structure is a later addition to the original tower (fig. 6). An inscription slab fixed on the curtain wall north of the tower has the name of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the date 713 A.H. (1313) and is believed to have belonged on the tower, but was moved

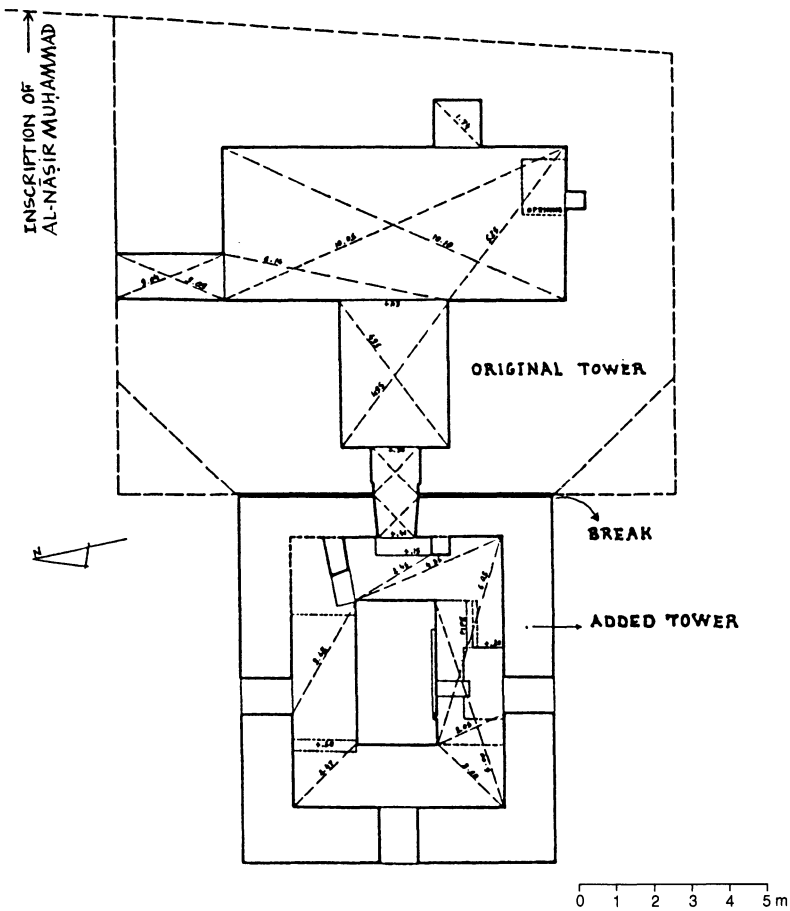


Fig. 6: Plan of the upper level of the Burj al-Rafraf

at a later date, perhaps when Muḥammad ‘Ali rebuilt the fortifications.¹⁴ The wall surfaces around the inscription have some *ablaq* courses of alternating black and white stripes, an arrangement characteristic of that time.

The southern wall of the Burj al-Rafrāf forms the boundary of the southern enclosure at that point. It extends to the southeast for 35 meters until it reaches the wall upon which the northwestern portico of Muḥammad ‘Ali’s mosque was built, then breaks at an almost exact right angle to continue to the southwest. This corner is occupied by a structure whose roof level is considerably lower than that of the southern enclosure. Its façade is made of five monumental stone corbels, separated by four pointed tunnel vaults; it extends to the south of the Burj al-Rafrāf for 35 meters (pl. 3). Each corbel consists of nine quarter-round moldings and is 5.5 meters high with a projection of 2.2 meters on average. The vaults run a little more than 10 meters deep; the depth of the area between the façade and the wall of the southern enclosure behind varies from 40 to 50 meters. Creswell wrote that the roof of the corbels was covered with debris, implying that some structure must have stood there that was high enough to have been reached from the platform of the enclosure above it.¹⁵ A thorough examination of this roof in the summer of 1988 for some trace of a structure built on it failed to reveal anything more than rubble; there were no remains of walls. The corbels were definitely meant to support something belonging to a project that was perhaps never completed; in any case, they are difficult to date.

Behind the corbels and vaults is a massive hall made up of five huge groin vaults, each measuring on average 9 meters on a side; the second and fourth vaults are flanked by two large iwans. Each of the two interior iwans is a square, 8 meters on the side; the two exterior ones are rectangles of approximately 8 by 6 meters. The whole forms an unusual double-cross plan (fig. 7). This monumental hall, hitherto unnoticed by modern scholars, fills the space between the end of the tunnel vaults and the wall of the southern enclosure, and definitely belongs to the stable enclosure.

No evidence firmly establishes dates or chronology for buildings in that area. Solely on the basis of observation, the double-cross hall seems to predate the tunnel vaults and the corbels on their façade. The disposition of the windows and doors in the centers of the two

¹⁴ Casanova, “Histoire,” 626–27; Van Berchem, *C. I. A., Égypte*, 1: 88.

¹⁵ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 263.

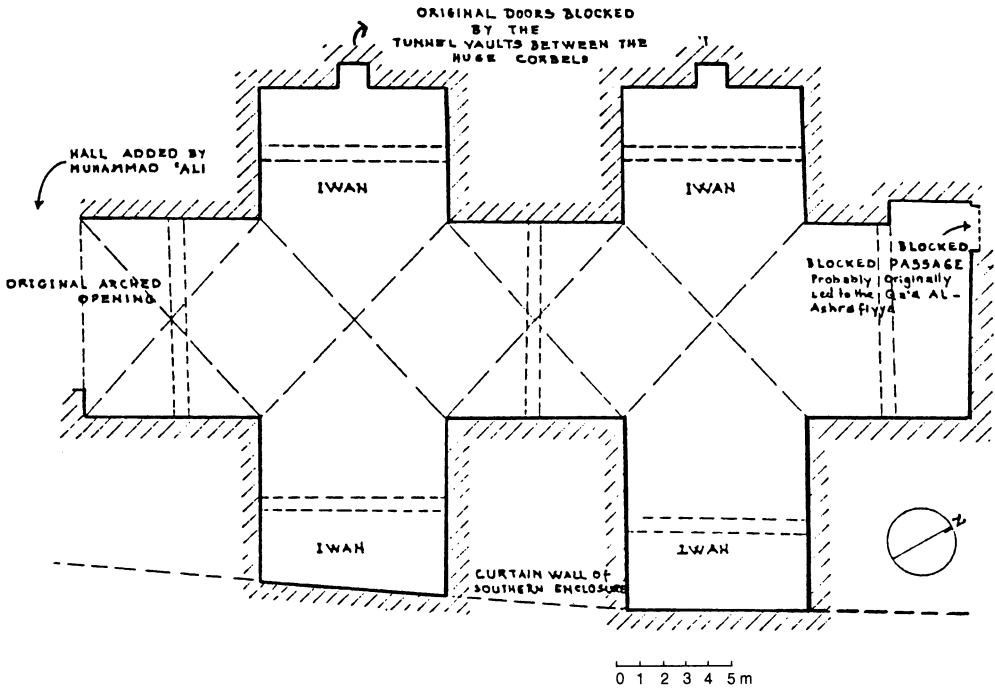


Fig. 7: Plan of the double-crossed hall behind the great corbels

side iwans in the hall facing the outside imply that it was built before, and separately from, the tunnel vaults which encroached on its outer walls and blocked its façade to the outside. In fact, the tunnel vaults were not built in accordance with the module of the hall behind them, because the first one south of the Burj al-Rafraf has the window of the iwan behind it almost centered, while the third has the one behind it on the side. The hall's side entrance, now obstructed by another hall that was added most probably by Muḥammad 'Alī, appears on an eighteenth-century print published by Arthur Rhoné as a large arched opening facing south into the stable area (pl. 4).¹⁶ The stone used in its walls and vaults is smaller than late Ayyubid and early Mamluk building blocks would be, but larger and rougher than Ottoman building stone in Cairo.

¹⁶ Published with no further identification in Arthur Rhoné, *L'Égypte à petites journées* (Paris, 1910), 67, and reproduced in my *The Citadel of Cairo* (Geneva, 1989), 13.

The question of dating is further complicated by the existence of two identical corbels flanking the top level of the Burj al-Rafraf. They look like the five corbels in front of the tunnel vaults, except that they are around 20 meters higher, and, curiously enough, do not appear in Rhoné's print. The upper corbels cannot be considered contemporaneous with the Burj al-Rafraf, that is, belonging to the fourteenth century, because the top of the tower was rebuilt several times, the most recent in Muḥammad 'Alī's time.

The second gate is the Bāb al-Jadīd, which stands at the end of the road ascending from the maydan in front of the Bāb al-'Azab to the southern enclosure. The road follows the old Sikkat al-Maḥjar (Passageway of the Quarry) up to the *daftarkhāne* (archive) of Muḥammad 'Alī (built in 1828) which is believed to occupy the site of the Mamluk *dār al-ḍiyāfa* (guest house). There, it bifurcates into two sections: one continues to the northeast toward the Northern Qarāfa behind the spur, and the other veers almost 180 degrees around the *daftarkhāne* to the right and passes under the northwestern corner of the northern enclosure. This section, an artificial ramp known as Shāri' al-Bāb al-Jadīd (Bāb al-Jadīd Street) and built by Mohammad 'Alī in 1826 for his carriage road, ends at the Bāb al-Jadīd. The gate itself is a rectangular, vaulted passageway flanked by rooms for the guards with a second story above. It leads up to another gate built by Muḥammad 'Alī, the Bāb al-Waṣṭānī (Middle Gate), an archway in the northwestern side of the southern enclosure next to the big round tower, the Burj al-Waṣṭānī (Middle Tower), that forms the northern end of the Sūr al-Qulla (see fig. 5). The configuration of the area sloping down to the northwest between the two gates is very confusing, for it was rebuilt by Muḥammad 'Alī and recently cleared which obliterated all traces of earlier arrangements.

The Bāb al-Jadīd's frontal part abuts the remains of the Bāb al-Mudarraġ (Gate of the Stairway), one of the original Ayyubid gates, which is now reached by a narrow passage left between the Bāb al-Jadīd's eastern flank and the curtain wall behind. A partial dig conducted by the Citadel's EAO team in 1988–89 directly below the Bāb al-Jadīd uncovered a number of the steps carved in the rock which belong to the stairway (*mudarraġ*) that originally led to the gate and that gave it its name. An inscription from the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn dated 579 (1184) still exists above the gate's slightly pointed arch, and three more inscriptions on the wall next to it—two cut in the rock and one on a slab—commemorate work undertaken by three sultans

from the Burjī period: Jaqmaq in 851 (1448), Qāyrbāy (not dated), and Tūmān-Bāy in 906 (1501).¹⁷ The arched opening leads into a domed square with two recesses equipped with arrow slits facing north and west. The dome and the curved surfaces of its four squinches are covered with a painted inscription band bearing the name and titles of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the date 709 (1310). Casanova proved that al-Nāṣir, who returned twice to the throne, painted his name and titles on three superimposed layers of stucco on these three occasions, but the stone surface underneath is undoubtedly Ayyubid and belongs to the original structure.¹⁸ The initial Bāb al-Mudarraǧ formed a bent entrance (*bāshūra*) that led into the Citadel, but its inward passage was blocked off in 1827 by Muḥammad ‘Ali when he built his Qaṣr al-Ḥarīm (Harem Palace) behind it (fig. 8).

The third existing gate, the Bāb al-Jabal, faces east and is almost at the intersection of the two enclosures but opens into the southern one. Its approach was drastically changed in the early 1980s to allow for a car park and entry coming from the Shāri‘ Ṣalāḥ Sālīm, a highway built in the 1960s that runs parallel to the Muqaṭṭam hills and connects northern with southern Cairo. The gate abuts a section of wall east of the large, round Burj al-Muqaṭṭam (Muqaṭṭam Tower), marking the beginning of the southern enclosure’s wall, which runs due south from it. Creswell proved through formal analysis that the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam could not have been built before the introduction of artillery, that is, the end of the fifteenth century, and that it was probably later.¹⁹ In fact, Evliya Çelebi attributes to Ibrāhīm Pasha—who was the *wālī* (governor) of Egypt in 1525 before he assumed the position of the grand vizier for Süleyman the Magnificent—a round and large tower, which he calls the tower of Ibrāhīm Pasha. From Çelebi’s convoluted description and other Ottoman Egyptian chroniclers who report that the same governor renovated the two round towers flanking the Bāb al-Qulla (Gate of the Keep), we can deduce that the tower of Ibrāhīm Pasha is the same as the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam.²⁰

¹⁷ Casanova, “Histoire,” 701–4; Van Berchem, *C. I. A., Égypte*, 1: 91–94

¹⁸ Casanova, “Histoire,” 627–29; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 33–34.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2: 8.

²⁰ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyāhatnāme*, 9–10: 384. Aḥmad Chalabī al-Ḥanafī al-Miṣrī, *Awḍāḥ al-Ishārāt fi man Tawalla Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-Wuzarā’ wa-l-Bāshāt*, ed. A. R. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm (Cairo, 1978), 105. Çelebi attributes to the same *wālī* a Burj al-Qulla, and likens it to the Galata Tower in Istanbul. But from his description and from the map of the *Description de l’Égypte*, (no. 62, Burj Khaznat Qulla or Burj al-Inkhāriyya) it becomes clear that this tower is a later addition in the middle of the

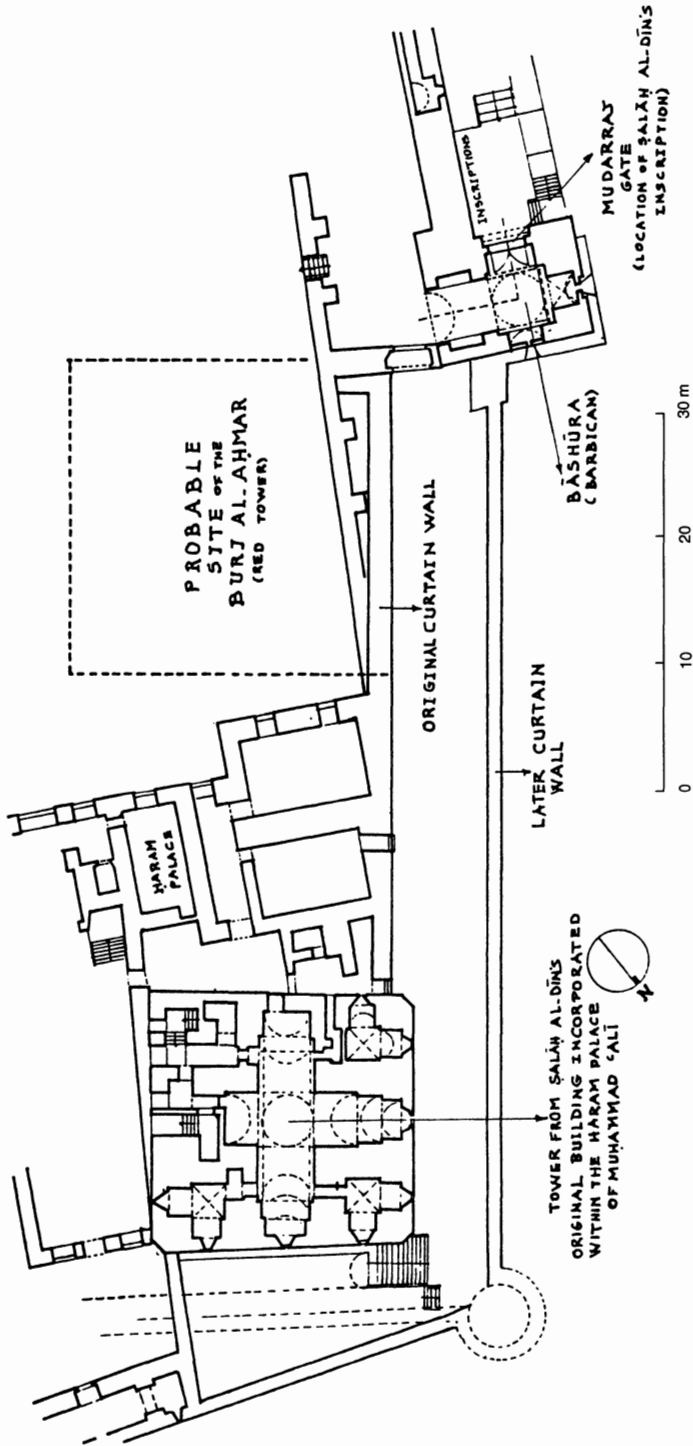


Fig. 8. Bāb al-Mudarrāj and the Qaṣr al-Ḥarīm

In its actual location, form, and orientation, the Bāb al-Jabal was constructed, along with its vestibule and the wall next to it, by the Ottoman *wāli* Yakan Pasha in 1785 when he built his palace there to replace fifteenth-century Mamluk pavilions and *qāʿas* and remodeled the fortifications around it; the palace does not survive (pl. 5).²¹ The gate leads into a recently cleared area in the southern enclosure bordered from the north by a 35-meter-long wall extending past the Burj al-Muqattam toward the southwest. The wall joins a small, round tower before it turns 90 degrees to the north around the famous Biʿr al-Ḥalazūn (Spiral Well) also known as the Biʿr Yūsuf (Well of Yūsuf, or Joseph, after the Patriarch Joseph, not after Yūsuf Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn),²² dug in the time of of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, and then runs into another small, polygonal tower abutting the southern corner of the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (fig. 9).

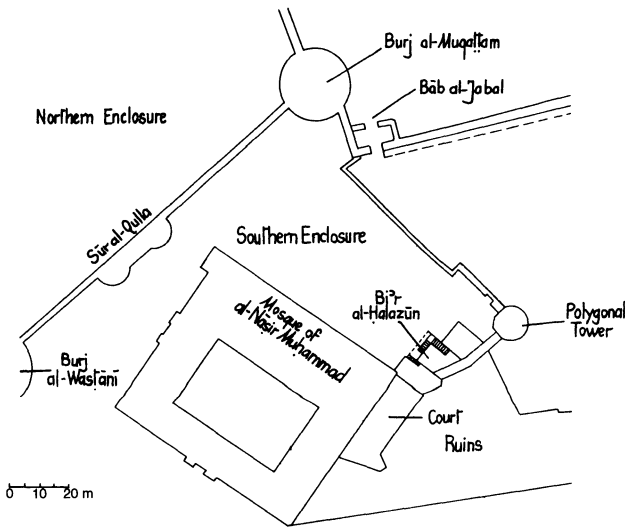


Fig. 9: Bāb al-Jabal to the Biʿr Yūsuf

northern enclosure, different from Baybars's Burj al-Qulla, and it was probably removed by Muḥammad ʿAli when he built his three Palaces of the Harem (Qaṣr al-Ḥarīm, the present-day Military Museum).

²¹ Casanova, "Histoire," 716–17; inscription in Van Berchem, *C. I. A., Égypte*, 1: 94.

²² Casanova, "Histoire," 574–75, dates the association of the Patriarch's name with a number of structures at the Citadel to around 1750, but could not explain it.

On the south, the area is bounded by the northern wall of a mint (*dār al-darb*) built by Muḥammad ‘Alī in 1812 over an older Ottoman mint. Midway between it and the mint lay a thick wall, unearthed recently and barely sticking above the actual ground level, that bears a resemblance in its thickness and its method of construction to walls from Ayyubid times; it may have been part of the original enceinte or of an early extension. It extends without any break for a length of 65 meters from a bend in the external walls built by Yakan Pasha to the southwest until it meets another wall recently built by the EAO to encircle a ruined area south of the Bi’r Yūsuf and the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The ruins occupy a triangular section marking the western border of the square in front of the Bāb al-Jabal and extending towards the southwestern façade of the mosque. They include the remains of a well with its *sāqiya* (water-wheel) and buried and ruined structures that present a composite group of Mamluk and nineteenth-century remains which are very difficult to disentangle. They may have belonged to the royal kitchen rebuilt twice by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in the fourteenth century and once by Muḥammad ‘Alī in the nineteenth. Their perimeter has recently been further truncated; the southern part of the old kitchen was removed to provide space for a series of services for tourists along the southern and western sides.

The area in front of the Bāb al-Jabal opens to the south into another open space, called a *ḥawsh* (enclosure or square), and once known as Ḥawsh al-Sarāya (Palace Square). This *ḥawsh* and the structures around it all belong to Muḥammad ‘Alī’s rebuilding. To the east is the mint, to the south the Sarāy al-‘Adl (Hall of Justice) and the east wing of the Qaṣr al-Jawhara now known as the Bijou Palace, and to the west, the west wing of the palace which includes on its ground floor a number of unidentifiable rooms that bear inscriptions in the name of the Mamluk sultan Qāyṭbāy (r. 1468–96), who is known to have constructed an audience hall there. The Bijou Palace was begun by Muḥammad ‘Alī in 1812 on the site where small Mamluk and Ottoman halls and *qā’as* had stood; it was totally rebuilt after two ravaging fires in 1820 and 1824. Its east wings, now ruined and closed, had once included administrative offices. Its west wing contained a *cour d’honneur*, an audience hall, and private quarters for the pasha and his family. The *cour d’honneur*, also known as the *salamlik* (men’s quarter), is built on a higher level against the great terrace of Muḥammad ‘Alī. Many of its halls burned down in 1972,

but it was then partially restored and opened as a museum displaying royal objects in the early 1980s. South of the Bijou Palace, which takes up the entire width of the southern enclosure, is a plant nursery and a mysterious building on the southwestern tip of the southern enclosure, which may have been an older mint, built next to a ruined domed shrine (see fig. 5).

North of the *ḥawsh*, the ground level becomes markedly higher. The ascent is made by a set of stairs and a ramp, both constructed by Muḥammad ‘Alī. The staircase, built against the northwestern corner of the *ḥawsh*, connects the lower level of the Bijou Palace with its *cour d’honneur* above. The EAO built a café along its length, under which a huge tank, probably built by Muḥammad ‘Alī, can still be seen. Between the staircase and the enclosed remains of the kitchen is the beginning of a straight, 130-meter-long carriageway which runs along the platform built by Muḥammad ‘Alī until it reaches the western tip of the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (pl. 6). There it turns for a short distance to the northeast before it ends at the square in front of the Bāb al-Waṣṭānī, thus connecting the southern and northern sections of the southern enclosure. The platform, built on the debris of older structures, extends for more than 300 meters along the western façade of the southern enclosure between the *cour d’honneur* of the Bijou Palace and the northern end of the enclosure where the Police Museum is housed today in Muḥammad ‘Alī’s school of artillery. At the center of this platform, on the northwestern corner of the southern enclosure, stands the gigantic mosque of Muḥammad ‘Alī, built between 1830 and 1857 in a classical Ottoman style and visible from almost every spot in Cairo, with its two slender pencil minarets soaring to a height of 82 meters and huge central dome. It is the best-known structure at the Citadel today and its name is commonly applied to the whole complex. The western portico of its *ṣahn* stands on top of the enclosure wall and overlooks the maydan. Its center is occupied by a brass clock tower, which was presented in 1845 to Muḥammad ‘Alī by Louis Philippe, king of France, in return for the obelisk which adorns the Place de la Concorde in Paris today.

North of the mosque the platform is bounded by two neo-Gothic structures: lavatories to the northwest and an entryway flanked by two turrets on the northeast leading to another open area known originally as the Sāḥat al-‘Alam (Place of the Flag). The entryway is contiguous with the British military prison which extends north toward the Police Museum. This last structure occupies the northern tip of

the southern enclosure. From various vantage points along the western parapet, the platform offers magnificent views of the city and its suburbs, the Nile, and the Giza Pyramids. Under its surface, the ruins of a number of earlier, mostly Mamluk, structures still exist: some are accessible by subterranean staircases; some have been uncovered and partially studied; others have been unearthed and buried again to maintain the arrangement of gardens and paths; and the majority are still underground and will probably remain there undisturbed for a long time to come.

Three spots, two of which were discovered in the 1980s, warrant some attention for they yield many clues about the Citadel's arrangement in the Mamluk period. Starting from the south and proceeding to the north, they are the vaulted halls, marked "ruined vaults" on the Colonel Green's map of 1896 and located along the western wall of the enclosure south of the mosque of Muḥammad 'Ali; the truncated remains of a *qā'a*, uncovered in 1985 north of the Burj al-Rafraf with four granite shafts nearby; and the top of a round tower decorated with lion reliefs and embedded in the western wall of the Police Museum at the angle where the western wall of the southern enclosure veers sharply to the southeast.

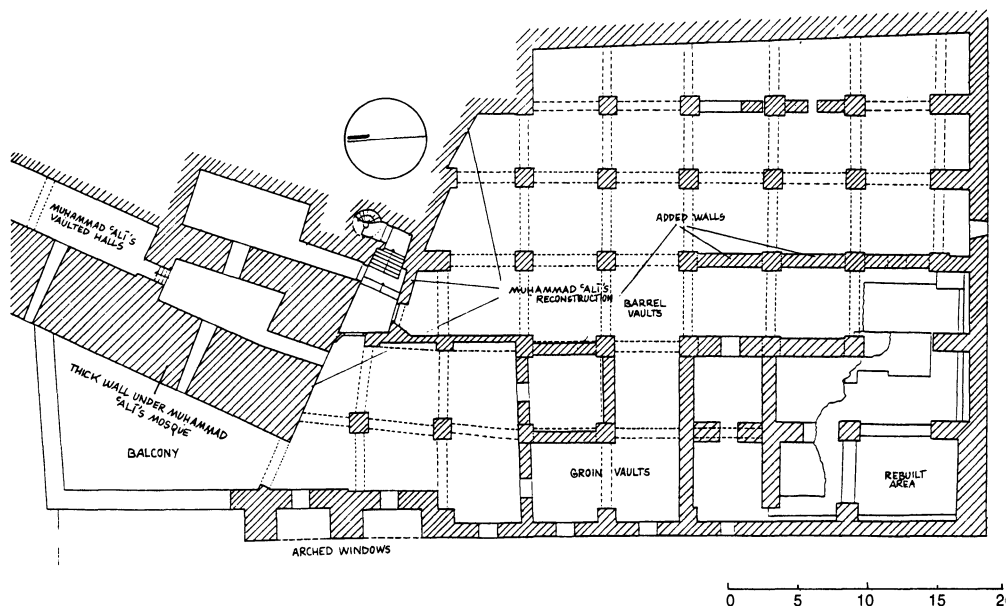


Fig. 10: Plan of the first lower level under the terrace

The first of these earlier structures is under a low platform adjacent to the *ṣahn* of the mosque of Muḥammad ‘Ali. This 34-meter-long platform still shows remnants of some brick walls; one wall has the imprint of a staircase. It extends along the southern enclosure’s walls and meets the outer southwestern wall of the mosque at a 60-degree angle. A door in the wall of the mosque leads to a spiral stone staircase characteristic of the Mamluk period. Below, a passage opens onto a huge vaulted hall to the south, just underneath the platform, and to three long barrel-vaulted halls to the north (fig. 10). The disposition of these three halls under and parallel to the wall of the mosque makes it almost certain that they were built at the same time as the mosque. The huge hall to the south is clearly different in construction and in date.

Trapezoidal in shape and badly damaged, it is 65 meters long and 45 meters deep and is covered with forty vaults. An arched opening at its northern end leads to a triangular balcony under the northwestern portico of Muḥammad ‘Ali’s mosque. This balcony, though apparently truncated as a consequence of the mosque’s construction, seems to be contemporary to the hall. Underneath this hall, there is another, lower hall extending to the south and measuring approximately 50 by 30 meters. It is made up of eleven vaults and opens on

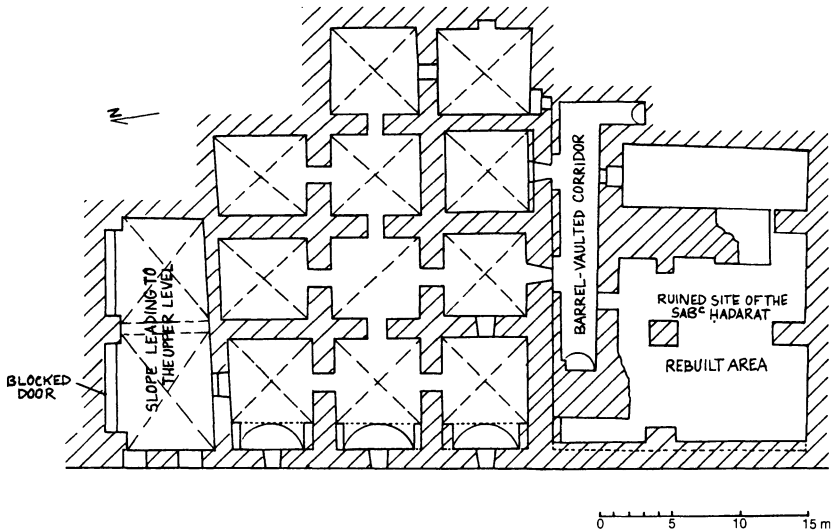


Fig. 11: Plan of the second lower level under the terrace

its southern side onto a lateral tunnel-vaulted corridor which has two doors on its other side leading to a ruined area (fig. 11). Hastily restored in the 1980s to complete the façade, this ruined area, whose remains extend to the upper hall above, covers the surface of six vaults. Below the windows of this last hall overlooking the maydan, there is another set of similar windows, blocked with masonry, which may reveal a third level below the two vaulted halls, but this is impossible to verify at present because there is neither access from the lower vaulted hall, nor is there any opening from the base of the wall behind the present army workshops in the lower enclosure (pl. 7). These two halls have never been studied, and no hypothesis about their origin and date has been advanced. They most probably formed the lower structures supporting the four *qā'as* of the Qaşr al-Ablaq (Striped Palace) built by al-Nāşir Muḥammad in 1314.

The second early structure on the terrace, a Mamluk *qā'a*, was discovered by chance when the EAO undertook excavations in the Sāḥat al-ʿAlam in 1985.²³ It stands at the western tip of the terrace, a short distance to the north of the Burj al-Rafraf. The longitudinal side of its plan is almost parallel to the side of the tower (fig. 12). In its present, incomplete form, the *qā'a*, like many Mamluk *qā'as*, is composed of two iwans with a *dūrqa'a* (lit. the entry to the *qā'a*) in the middle (fig. 13). Two passageways reached from opposite doors on either side of the *dūrqa'a* connected the *qā'a* with other structures or perhaps courtyards, but it is impossible at this stage of excavation to suggest what these structures were. The northern door leads also to a spiral stone staircase in a circular shaft that presumably went all the way to the roof of the *qā'a*. The structure has been identified by the EAO as the Qaşr al-Ablaq of al-Nāşir Muḥammad, but, given the available evidence, it is more probably the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya built by sultan al-Ashraf Khalil in 1292.

The 1985 excavation also uncovered four granite shafts lying one next to the other to the east of the *qā'a*. The four shafts have a continuous exaltation inscribed on them. The first column has *ʿizz li-mawlānā al-sulṭān*, the second *al-ā'zam al-malik al-ashraf*, the third *sulṭān al-Islām wa-l-muslimīn*, the fourth, *ʿazz Allāh ānşāruhu* (Glory to our master the sultan—the greatest al-Malik al-Ashraf—sultan of

²³ The preliminary report on the excavation was published by Maḥmūd al-Ḥadīdī and Fahmī ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm, "A'māl Tarmīm al-Qaşr al-Ablaq bi-Qal'at Şalāḥ al-Dīn," in *ʿAlam al-Binā'* 26 (April 1986): 4–16.

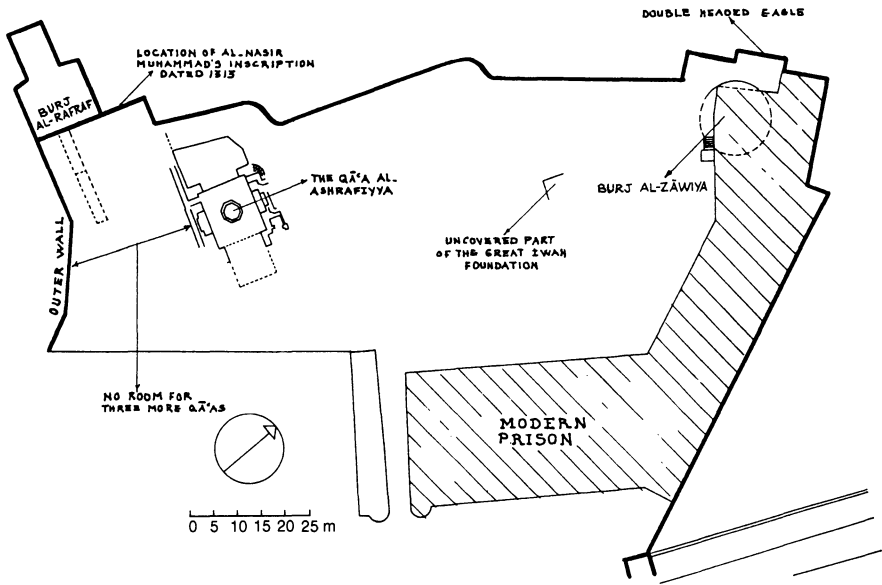


Fig. 12: Site plan of the excavated Mamluk qā'a

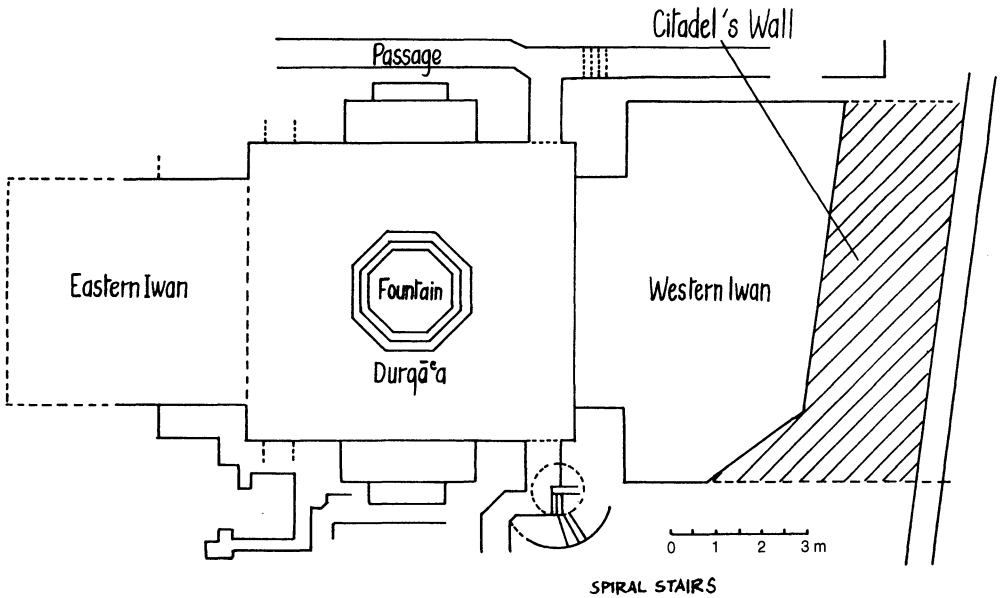


Fig. 13: Plan of the excavated Mamluk qā'a

Islam and Muslims—may God bestow glory on his supporters).²⁴ The EAO report suggests that these columns belonged to the *Iwān al-Kabir* (Great Iwan) of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, which was known to have had thirty-two huge granite columns. But the inscriptions on the shaft themselves invalidate this ascription. The honorific *al-ashraf*, carved on the second column, was not one of al-Nāṣir's titles, and the completeness of the inscriptions on the four columns indicates that they were a set, and not part of a larger group; they therefore could not belong to the thirty-two columns that formed the support of the *Iwān al-Kabir*.

The third early structure recently exposed during work done on the terrace is the upper portion of a tower peeping out of the western corner of the Police Museum (see fig. 12). The tower is round; its upper frieze of carved lions is the only part that shows above the ground level. This frieze is divided into eight segments, each consisting of two lions passant in relief flanked by projecting statues of the head, chest, and the two forepaws of an animal that most probably represents a lion as well (pl. 8). The lions are not identical, but they are of similar size and of the same carving style. Al-Zāhir Baybars used the lion passant as his *rank* (the word roughly means emblem), and adorned many of his buildings with representations of it. There is hardly any doubt that this tower was built by him as well, although it has no inscription identifying the patron.

Even though all earlier structures were reportedly removed by Muḥammad 'Alī to build his mosque and the terrace around it, it seems that the destruction was not so thorough as had been assumed. The accumulation of rubble and the constant rise of the ground level over the centuries before his replanning preserved the foundations of earlier structures intact under the ground. When his workers constructed the terrace they simply razed the higher parts of the standing structures and filled the depressions with their debris to even the level for the raised platform. Excavations in any area on the terrace will surely yield interesting results in terms of determining the extent and location of certain structures, such as the *Iwān al-Kabir* of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. In 1988, when part of the modern paving in the garden in front of the Police Museum collapsed it uncovered parts of a foundation wall made of large, dark blocks of stone which may have

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

belonged to the Iwān al-Kabīr. It was evident from the small section uncovered that the wall was aligned with the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Unfortunately the wall was buried again in 1989, and the garden replanted on top of it.

To the east of Muḥammad ‘Alī’s great platform and across the passage from the Sāḥat al-‘Alam stands the recently cleared square in front of the Bāb al-Waṣṭānī. It is flanked on the southeast by the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, on the northwest by the British military prison, on the southwest by the platform in front of the mosque of Muḥammad ‘Alī, and on the northeast by the Bāb al-Waṣṭānī. It leads, through a path running between the Qulla wall and the northeastern façade of the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, to the Bāb al-Qulla which is now the only entrance to the northern enclosure. Muḥammad ‘Alī had it renovated in 1826, and may have had it moved a bit from its original site. Originally, at least three other gates opened into the northern enclosure: the Bāb al-Mudarraj, whose approach was blocked by Muḥammad ‘Alī, and two other gates defended by semi-rounded towers, one at Burj al-Maṭār (Flight Tower) (all towers are identified with the names on the *Description de l’Égypte* map) along the southern wall of the enclosure and another at Burj al-Imām (Imam Tower) on the eastern wall. Both were discovered by Creswell, who demonstrated that they date back to the original building stage and were blocked up around the end of the fifteenth century.²⁵

The Bāb al-Qulla opens into a large square, recently landscaped, at the center of which stands an equestrian statue of Ibrāhīm Pasha, Muḥammad ‘Alī’s brilliant son and commander of his army. The square is bounded on the northwest by the Dīwān al-Ma‘ārif, a ministry of education of sorts established by Muḥammad ‘Alī and used until recently as the archival library (*dār al-wathā’iq*), and on the northeast and southeast by the massive Qaṣr al-Ḥarīm. Built by Muḥammad ‘Alī in 1826-27 and composed of three structures clustered together, this palace occupies the entire northwestern corner of the northern enclosure. It was originally surrounded by a wall to set it apart from the rest of the enclosure, but this is now destroyed. The palace was turned into a military hospital during the British occupation; after 1946, it was refurbished and reopened as a military museum.

²⁵ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 15–20.

A passage between the Qaṣr al-Ḥarīm and a group of structures to the south of it leads into the eastern side of the northern enclosure, the center of which was recently turned into a garden where fragments of mostly Ottoman columns, fountains, and basins are displayed. Most of the buildings still standing around the garden are either barracks or mess halls which date back to the Muḥammad ‘Alī and British periods; one hall on the southern side was recently converted into a carriage museum. The only building of note there is the mosque of Sulaymān Pasha standing in a corner in the northern wall of the enclosure. Founded in 1528 by Sulaymān Pasha al-Khādīm, the governor of Ottoman Egypt, this was the first, and to a certain degree stylistically the purest, Ottoman mosque in Cairo. It occupied the site of an older mosque, that of Sīdī Sāriyya built by Abū-Manṣūr Qaṣṭa, an Armenian amir who was a mamluk of al-Muẓaffar ibn Badr al-Jamālī and who was for a while the Fatimid governor of Alexandria.²⁶ The burial chamber of Qaṣṭa, which has an inscription plate on it dating it to the year 535 A.H. (1140), is under a dome on the western side of the mosque’s courtyard.

Excavations along the wall leading to the mosque in the late 1980s have uncovered a domed tomb chamber, attributed to al-Sheikh Muḥammad al-Ka’kī, a sixteenth-century imam of the mosque, which is all that is left of the Ottoman cemetery which occupied the site until Muḥammad ‘Alī built his palaces nearby. More systematic excavations undertaken by an EAO team in the 1991–92 season to the east and south of the mosque of Sulaymān Pasha have uncovered a hodge-podge of wall sections, some made of stone, some of burned brick, intersecting in random fashion, in addition to circular tanks made of brick. These remains are difficult to interpret, but since the area is known to have been occupied by billets from the time when the Citadel was built until the twentieth century, they at least testify to its frequent rebuilding and replanning.

Although most of the structures in the northern enclosure are fairly recent, its fortifications are mostly original. The curtain wall encircling it belongs to the first stage of the Citadel’s building; a very few sections were apparently rebuilt or reinforced in the late Burjī period or by Muḥammad ‘Alī. It follows the contour of the underlying rocky spur and its entire length is equipped with two walkways: one on top

²⁶ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 48, 203.

of the ramparts behind the crenellations and another through internal *chemins du rond* provided at regular intervals with recesses pierced with arrow slits to the outside and windows for lighting to the inside. A total of twenty towers buttress the crooked walls: three are huge, square towers along the southern portion of the walls; the rest are all rounded and of varying sizes, but generally smaller. Five are nameless. The names of the others date from the early nineteenth century since they were copied by the French savants who compiled the *Description de l'Égypte* between 1799 and 1801 from local informants when they surveyed the Citadel. None seems to be original.

The map of the *Description de l'Égypte* shows that the southern and eastern flanks of the northern enclosure have been altered minimally only since the end of the eighteenth century (fig. 14). The northern side, however, has been heavily rebuilt, especially between the Burj al-Şaĥrā (Desert Tower, no. 34) and the blocked Bāb al-Mudarraĥ. The old wall turned south to circumvent a huge depression, then turned north, south, and north again, but Muĥammad 'Alī realigned it when he built his Qaşr al-Ĥarīm and converted the added area into a garden behind the palace. He also razed two towers which appear on the map of the *Description*—a huge, square, unnamed one situated behind the Bāb al-Mudarraĥ, and a round one in the middle of the enclosure facing the Bāb al-Qulla, which the French called Burj Khaznat Qulla (Tower of the Qulla Treasury) or Burj al-Inkishāriyya (Tower of the Janissaries, no. 62)—and incorporated a third one, square and smaller in size, into the western wing of his Qaşr al-Ĥarīm (no. 69, labeled together with the larger tower as “ruined towers”).²⁷ The name Burj Khaznat Qulla may have come from the *qulla* attributed to al-Zāĥir Baybars, which was reportedly destroyed by al-Nāşir Muĥammad and replaced by another structure.

Muĥammad 'Alī's alterations of the northern enclosure's fortifications seem to have been minor, but his work inside it and in the southern enclosure and the 'Azab's lower enclosure radically modified their layout and form, though they kept their overall functional division. The northern enclosure's interior was completely rearranged; the old, maze-like residential section named Sūr al-Inkishāriyya (Janissaries Enclosure, nos. 11 and 26) in the *Description* because it was occupied by the Janissaries and their families during the Ottoman period, was replaced by modern barracks for the soldiers of

²⁷ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 28–35.

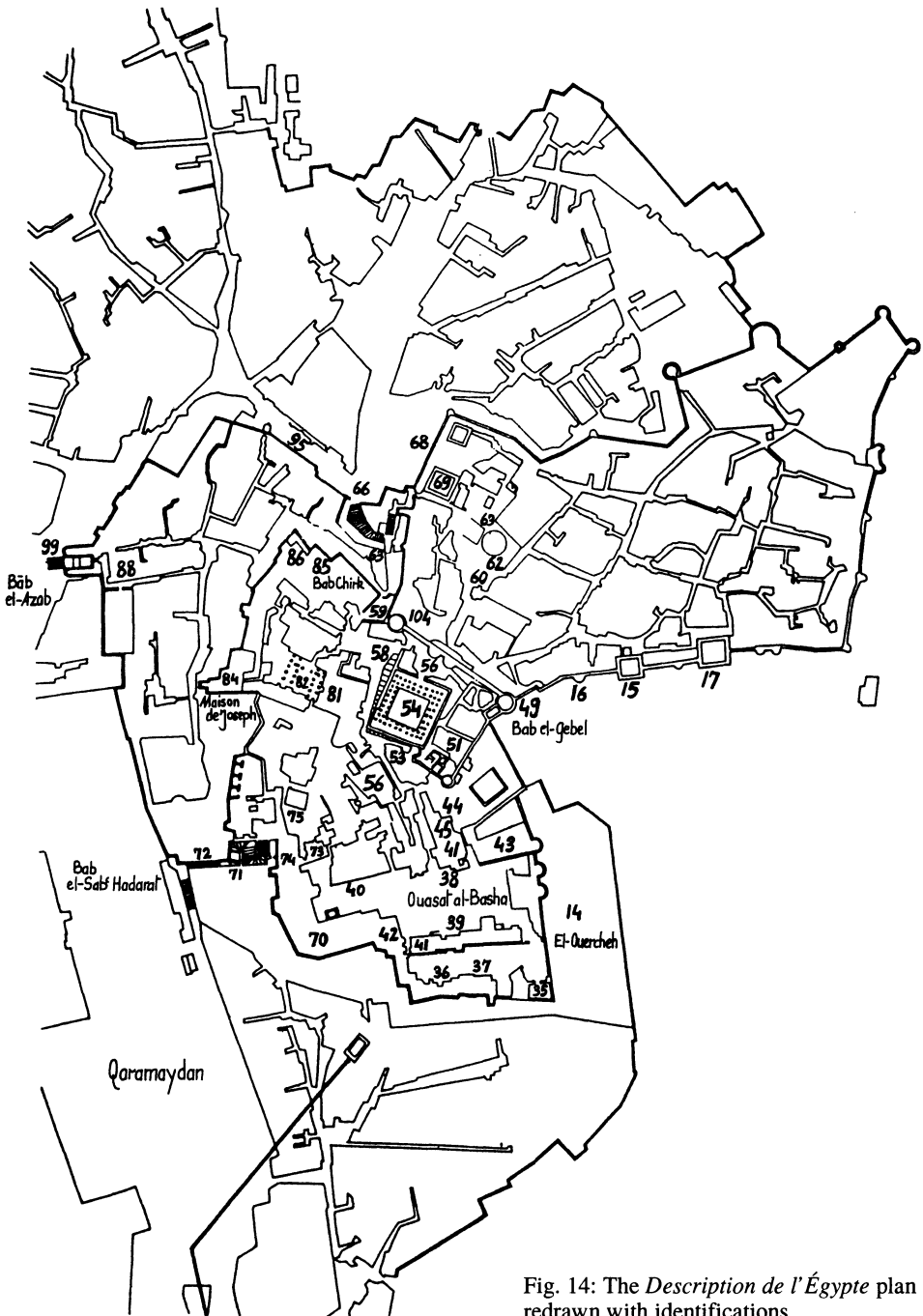


Fig. 14: The *Description de l'Égypte* plan redrawn with identifications

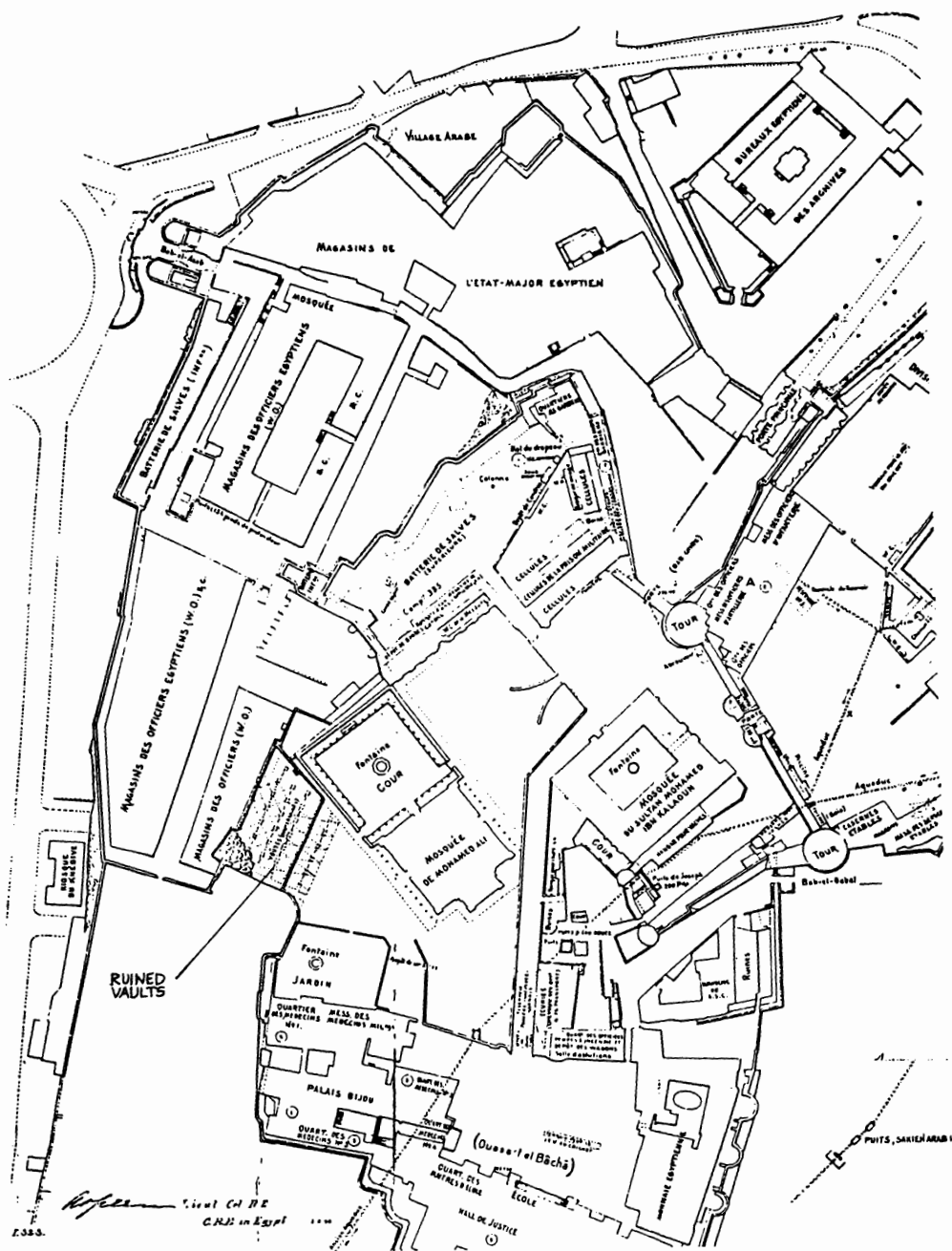


Fig. 15: Colonel Green's map of 1896

the *Nizām al-Jadid* (New Order), the name given to the army Muḥammad ‘Alī established in 1820. The lower enclosure was fortified anew and turned into an area for armaments manufacture, with workshops producing weapons, gear, and uniforms for the new army. The southern enclosure underwent the most monumental changes, although its royal associations seem to have been preserved, and even reinforced, with the building of the mosque of Muḥammad ‘Alī, his Bijou Palace, his hall of justice, his mint, the great raised platform that encompassed them all and the processional road that leads into it through the two gates, the Bāb al-Jadīd and the Bāb al-Waṣṭānī. The changes did not occur all at the same time. Between the building of the Bijou Palace in 1812 and the completion of the mosque in 1857, nine years after the death of Muḥammad ‘Alī, forty-five years had elapsed. Many setbacks had delayed the process, especially the damaging fires of 1820 and 1824. But the explosion in the same year of a powder magazine which had been installed in the ruins of a Mamluk palace was in a way auspicious for Muḥammad ‘Alī’s project. It caused the destruction of most of the Mamluk ruins which cleared the way for the construction of new buildings.

By superimposing the *Description* map and the one by Colonel Green from 1896 on the same scale, we can very easily trace the changes affected by Muḥammad ‘Alī and relate the description of the southern enclosure as it was in 1800 to its present layout (fig. 15). Only three structures seem to have been left untouched: the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (no. 54, mistakenly identified as the mosque of Sultan Qalāwūn), the fortified enclosure of the Bi’r Yūsuf on its qibli side (no. 51), and the mysterious building on the southwestern edge of the enclosure (no. 35) identified as the *Iṣṭabl al-Bāshā* (Stables of the Pasha), though the remains of its interior point more to a mint than a stables. Several sections of the curtain wall have also been modified to varying degrees. Some were just reinforced. The eastern and southern flanks, for example, were equipped with a new parapet with openings for rifles and strengthened with a thick glacis. Others were realigned to accommodate the new layout inside or to restrict access from older entryways, or both. The end result was to reduce the number of access points to two: the Bāb al-Jadīd and the Bāb al-Jabal. The loosely controlled area at the end of the stairs leading up to the Bāb al-Mudarraġ was totally reconfigured. The Bāb al-Jadīd was constructed on top of the upper section of the *mudarraġ*; the lower, curved section, prominently rendered on the *Description* map,

was buried and built over (nos. 66 and 63 respectively named Bāb al-Inkishāriyya, or Gate of the Janissaries, and Sikkat al-Inkishāriyya, or Street of the Janissaries). The wall rising along the eighteenth-century Sikkat al-Chorafā (Street of the Nobles, no. 95) was extended to abut the northwestern flank of the Bāb al-Jadīd and block access from below. Similarly, the upper part of the road carved into the rock linking the lower enclosure to the southern one was reworked and the entrance at its end, named the Bāb al-Shirk (Trapdoor Gate, no. 59) was removed. The northeastern wall of the southern enclosure was demolished and rebuilt further west, thus creating a large open area where the passage existed, but the passage itself was blocked by a parapet built between the Bāb al-Jadīd and the Bāb al-Waṣṭānī.

It is impossible to make any sense of the areas adjacent to the Bāb al-Shirk inside the southern enclosure on the *Description* map for the structures are marked only in hatched outline. The only discernible details are in the northern tip: the Burj al-Shakhṣ (Tower of the Man, no. 86), upon which the eagle relief was fixed, with underground storehouses nearby (no. 85). The mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was surrounded on two sides by rows of shops, each side identified as a specific suq. The northwestern façade was aligned with the stalls of the Sūq al-Barrānī (Outer Market, no. 58) and the southwestern façade with the Sūq al-Bāshā (Pasha's Market, no. 53). Facing the northeastern gate of the mosque, stood the Bāb al-Madāfi' (Gate of Cannons, no. 56), now called the Bāb al-Qulla, which led into the northern, or Janissaries, enclosure. The two round towers at the ends of the Qulla wall were named Burj al-Ṭabbalīn (Tower of the Drummers, no. 104) in the northeast, and Burj al-Ṣuffa (Tower of the Awning, no. 49; the present-day Burj al-Muqaṭṭam) on the mountain side. To the west of the mosque stood the Iwān al-Kabīr of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, called the Palais de Joseph on the map (Palace of Joseph, no. 82). The superimposed maps clearly show that the mosque of Muḥammad 'Alī was not built on the site of the Iwān al-Kabīr which stood where the lavatory structure and the terrace stand today, although this has been commonly asserted. Beyond the iwan was the building called the Maison de Joseph (House of Joseph or Yūsuf Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, no. 84) on top of the Burj al-Rafrāf, which had, according to Jomard's text, a *qā'a* with twelve granite columns surmounted by a dome.²⁸ In the eighteenth century, the third semi-inde-

²⁸ Jomard, "Description du Kaire," 352; *Description de l'Égypte, état moderne, planches*, vol. 1, pl. 67, middle of the drawing.

pendent part of the Citadel, the domain of the pasha, extended south of the Iwān al-Kabīr and the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. It was entered through a maze of paths running through the ruins of earlier palaces in the central section of the enclosure. At least two of these passages were equipped with gates: the Bāb al-Bāshā (Pasha's Gate, no. 45) and the Bāb al-Elowhyeh (Gate of the Elowhyeh, possibly a family name, no. 38).

Perhaps the most definitive change in the pattern of access to the Citadel during the replanning of Muḥammad ʿAlī was the elimination of the elaborate arrangement that provided a direct and regulated connection between the palatial southern enclosure and the maydan, almost 30 meters below. This complex structure, marked on the *Description* map as the Sabʿ Ḥadarāt (Seven Slopes or Ramps, no. 72),²⁹ began with a staircase in the shape of a reversed S inscribed in a square at the upper level linked with another staircase which runs in a straight line down to the maydan level to open by a small religious building next to a gate named Bāb al-Sabʿ Ḥadarāt (Gate of the Seven Ramps). The description provided by the French savants indicates that the S-shaped staircase was 3 meters wide and was cut in the rock for a length of 40 meters and a height of 20 meters. Between this staircase and the straight ramp there was another gate, marked Bāb el-Ouestāny (Wasṭānī or Middle Gate, no. 71) which stood at the upper end of the ramp carved into the mountain slope.³⁰ Its façade, as shown in a mid-nineteenth-century print, was crowned with a high arched opening inscribed in a rectangular frame that projects from the wall.³¹

The staircase must have been built by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to lead to the stables and the maydan when he rearranged the royal section and constructed the Qaṣr al-Ablaq in 1314. The name, Sabʿ Ḥadarāt, does not appear in the Citadel's descriptions from the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, but is attested in the late Mamluk period.³² Like the Sabʿ Qāʿat (Seven Qaʿas) and the Sabʿ Qibāb (Seven Domes), the

²⁹ Singular *ḥadara*, a ramp; Casanova, "Histoire," 644, believes it to mean something similar to *qāʿa*, in reference to the seven *qāʿas* that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is reported to have constructed for his harem. His contention is linguistically untenable.

³⁰ Jomard, "Description du Kaire," 351

³¹ Georg Moritz Ebers, *Egypt, Descriptive, Historical and Picturesque* (London and New York, 1881–92), 232. The print is undoubtedly older than 1881, because by that date the area had already been destroyed by Muḥammad ʿAlī.

³² See for example, Jawhārī, *Inbāʾ al-Ḥaṣr*, 250.

number seven in the name does not seem to denote the number of ramps; it referred to the symbolism of the number itself, which probably connoted wholeness.³³ There is no trace of the staircase today, and no source records its destruction, which must have taken place sometime during the second quarter of the nineteenth century after the beginning of Muḥammad ‘Alī’s replanning, because all early photographs of the Citadel, dated to the late 1850s, show this area in ruins.³⁴ It stood at the destroyed end of the lower vaulted hall south of the mosque of Muḥammad ‘Alī. When the EAO recently rebuilt the façade of the vaulted halls they followed the alignment of the extant pillars and blocked off the section of the façade overlooking the maydan with a solid masonry wall pierced with windows that correspond to the extant ones. This reconstruction is not based on the original wall, as it is known from representations belonging to the end of the eighteenth century.

The staircase of the Sab‘ Ḥadarāt led to a structure called the Bayt al-Tarazī (House of the Tailor, no. 75), perhaps because it was used by those engaged in embroidering the *kiswa* (cloth cover) for the Ka‘ba. Several European visitors, Maillet (1692–1708), Niebuhr (1761), Mayer (1801), and Viscount Valentia (1809), describe the remains of a magnificent palace on the western edge of the southern enclosure with boiseries, mosaics, and painted surfaces where the workers who embroidered the *kiswa* lived.³⁵ A note attached to the map of the *Description* says that the partially ruined Zāwiyat al-Burdaynī (shrine or mosque of al-Burdaynī, no. 74), probably the same as the mosque of al-Rudaynī, one of the mosques that existed on the site before the building of the Citadel, stood a little to the north of the Bayt al-Tarazī.³⁶ To the south of it a mass of buildings belonging to the domain of the pasha extended along the southwestern ramparts of

³³ The symbolism of the number seven in Egyptian Islamic architecture still has to be deciphered. In addition to those in the Citadel, we encounter the Seven Qa‘as in Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 59; the Seven Domes, a Fatimid series of domes in the desert near Cairo that apparently only numbered six, see Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 459; and the Tower of the Seven Qa‘as in Damietta, see Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 20: 180, among other names using the number seven. Seven may have referred to completeness and totality, rather than a specific number, as suggested by ‘Umar al-Daqqāq, “Manzilāt al-‘Adad Sab‘a fī al-Fikr al-‘Arābī,” *‘Adiyāt Ḥalab* 1 (1975): 53–108.

³⁴ See for example, Lorent, *Egypten, Alhambra, Tlemsen, Algier*, pl. 2. The picture, taken before 1860, shows the debris left after the demolition of the area.

³⁵ Casanova, “Histoire,” 635–41; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 261–3.

³⁶ *Description de l’Égypte, état moderne, planches*, vol. 1, pl. 26.

the enclosure, until they reached the structure identified as the Iṣṭabl al-Bāshā (no. 35) on the southeastern corner. They included an arsenal (*jabakhāneh*, no. 70) and two *sabils*, Sabīl al-Shāwishīyya (Fountain of the Gendarmes, no. 42) and Sabīl Shishmeh (Fountain of the Bathhouse, no. 36). The Sarāya al-Bāshā (Palace of the Pasha, no. 41), said by Jomard to be as delapidated as the much earlier Maison de Joseph (no. 84), was bordered by two plazas along its long sides: the Ouasaʿt al-Bāshā (Pasha's Square, no. 39) to the north and the Ouasaʿt al-Iṣṭabl (Stables Square, no. 37) to the south. A mosque on the northwestern corner of the Ouasaʿt al-Bāshā, the Jāmiʿ al-Dahāysheh (mosque of the Dahāysheh, no. 40), may have been a survival from the early fifteenth century. The name al-Dahāysheh is most probably a corruption of al-Duhaysha (possibly from *duhaysha*, the little wonder), the name of a *qāʿa* built in the private quarters of the sultan by the Baḥrī sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿīl in 1353.³⁷ The Burjī sultan Faraj ibn Barqūq is known to have erected a mosque named the Jāmiʿ al-Abyaḍ (White Mosque) near, or in, the Qāʿat al-Duhaysha, for the sons of sultans and their servants who lived in the royal complex.³⁸

The map of the *Description de l'Égypte* records the location and plan of several structures from the Mamluk period. Comparing it with the present layout of the Citadel determined the relative positions of these no-longer-existing structures vis-à-vis the existing ones. It would have been ideal to have an even older map so that we could go back further in time and establish the layout at an earlier stage, but unfortunately pre-eighteenth-century visual documentation is totally lacking. Only written sources are relatively abundant, and the reconstruction of the Citadel's layout in the early stages has therefore to rely almost exclusively on them.³⁹

References are found in chronicles to events that took place at the

³⁷ Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 273; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 212; Zāhiri, *Zubda*, 26

³⁸ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 327; also, a short study by Ṣāliḥ Lamʿī Mustafā, *al-Wathāʿiq wa-l-ʿImāra*, *Dirāsa fī al-ʿImāra al-Islāmiyya fī al-ʿAṣr al-Mamlūkī al-Jarkasī: al-Jāmiʿ al-Abyaḍ bi-l-Ḥawsh al-Sulṭānī bi-Qalʿat al-Qāhira* (Beirut, 1980), for a hypothetical reconstruction of this mosque and for the relevant section on it in the waqf of Sultan Faraj ibn Barqūq (1409).

³⁹ For the analysis of historical writing in medieval Egypt and Syria, see Claude Cahen, "Les chroniques arabes concernant la Syrie, l'Égypte, et la Mésopotamie de la conquête arabe à la conquête ottomane dans les bibliothèques d'Istanbul," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 4 (1936): 333-62; Ulrich Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit* (Freiburg, 1970); Donald Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk*

Citadel; in biographies of prominent persons who built the structures there or those who worked in them; in topographical tracts (*khiṭat*) which describe the layout of the Citadel and urban areas around it and the major structures in them; and last, and less frequently, in waqfs, which usually record the components and locations of endowed buildings, of which none directly pertains to the Citadel, but some reveal important information about structures in its vicinity. As different as the sources themselves may be, the references all fall into one of two categories: those that are direct and those that need interpreting. To the first group belong locations of structures, their relationships to their neighboring buildings, and passing remarks about specific spaces or features inside them. The second group comprises dates of building, patrons, reasons for building, and events, practices, and ceremonies that took place in the structures once they were built. These do not reveal anything directly about the architecture or planning, but they can give clues about the appearance and functions of the missing structures and the impressions they have left on their contemporaries, thus enriching the historical analysis and moving it to a higher level of interpretation.

Historiography: An Analysis of Arabic Annalistic and Biographical Sources for the Reign of al-Malik an-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun (Wiesbaden, 1970); Régis Blachère, "Quelques réflexions sur les formes de l'encyclopédisme en Égypte et en Syrie," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 23 (1970): 1-13; Shākir Muṣṭafā, *al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī wa-l-Mu'rikkhūn: Dirāsa fī Tatawwur 'Ilm al-Tārīkh wa-Rijālihi fī al-Islām*, 4 vols. (Beirut, 1978-93), 2: 139-304, all of vol. 3; 4: 7-227.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AYYUBID SULTANATE ACQUIRES A NEW CENTER

One day, while the Citadel was still under construction, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn went there with his brother al-Malik al-ʿAdil. When they arrived, he turned to his brother and remarked, “O Sayf al-Dīn [al-ʿAdil’s honorific title], I think I am building this Citadel for your sons.” Astonished, al-ʿAdil nonetheless aptly responded, “O *khawand* (lord), may God Almighty grant the world to you, your sons and the sons of your sons.” To this, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn replied, “You did not understand my reference; I meant that though I am successful (*najīb*) my sons will not be as fortunate as I am; and though you are not successful, your sons will be lucky instead.”¹ In other words, he was prophesying that his nephews, and not his sons, would be his successors on the throne of Egypt and would thus occupy the Citadel he was building to be his seat of government. This apocryphal story gave Maqrīzī a convenient excuse to digress into a less than original observation on a singular aspect of dynastic changes in Islamic history, namely, that power was passed to the progeny of a close associate or a relative rather than to the offspring of the founder.² But it also epitomizes the history of the Citadel in the Ayyubid period.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn of course turned out to be correct: none of his sons ever lived at the Citadel. Nor did he: he left Cairo for Syria in May 1182 and died there on 4 March 1193, without ever returning. His amir Qarāqūsh saw to the construction of both the Citadel and the walls around al-Qāhira and al-Fuṣṭāṭ while he was gone.³ The two projects were apparently conducted independently, however, and according to different schedules. Qarāqūsh could not complete the

¹ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 372–73; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 204, ascribes this report to Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir’s lost book *al-Rawḍa al-Baḥiyya fī Khiṭaṭ al-Qāhira al-Muʿizzīyya*, written in 1249, which was a primary source for both authors.

² Casanova, “Histoire,” 565, noted that Maqrīzī copied it from Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kāmil*, 11: 344.

³ As attested in three letters from al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil quoted by ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, the first two in the third volume of his *al-Barq al-Shāmī*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Ḥayārī (Amman, 1986), 81 and 97, the third in Bundārī, *Sanā*, 150–51.

larger task of erecting the walls around the two cities, but shortly after Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn departed he finished at least the first stage of what he set out to build in the Citadel. After him we do not know what, if any, work was done in the brief reigns of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's son, al-ʿAzīz (r. 1193–98), and of al-ʿAzīz's son al-Manṣūr (r. 1198–99), or the reign of al-Malik al-ʿAdil Sayf al-Dīn, who did indeed become the ruler of Egypt (r. 1199–1218). Al-ʿAdil's son, al-Kāmil Muḥammad (r. 1218–38), viceroy in Egypt and successor as sultan, completed the Citadel's construction, built a number of palaces, audience halls, and service structures in it, and moved there when he was viceroy in 1207–8. From then until the end of the Mamluk period in 1517, it was to remain the residence of all sultans and their royal army and the seat of the sultanate, with only a brief interruption between 1243 and 1249 during the reign of al-Kāmil's second son, al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, who moved with his mamluks to the citadel on Rawḍa Island in the Nile.

The Site of the Citadel

The Citadel was built on a 75-meter-high promontory that extends west from the cliffs of the Muqaṭṭam hills towards the Nile almost midway between the two cities of al-Qāhira and al-Fuṣṭāṭ. The site was selected by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn himself, according to Maqrīzī, by hanging pieces of meat in three different locations around al-Qāhira and deciding upon the one where the meat lasted longest.⁴ Maqrīzī may have inserted this anecdote, a common topos, to demonstrate the hygienic qualities of the site, always a significant consideration, but the main reason for the choice was surely its strategic importance. It overlooked and dominated the city of al-Qāhira in the northwest, the city of al-Fuṣṭāṭ in the south, and the scarcely populated land between them. A citadel built there would stand between the city and the desert, provide a vantage point from which to watch the roads leading into the city, and effectively control the north-south passage between it and the Muqaṭṭam hills. In addition, it was close enough that it would not be deprived of the city's support in the event of a siege and yet isolated enough to give the ruler refuge in times of civil unrest.

⁴ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 203; Casanova, "Histoire," 565.

The site was not entirely empty before 1176. The Qubbat al-Hawā (Dome of the Winds) was built there by Ḥātim ibn Hurthuma, the Abbasid governor of Egypt between 809 and 811, and used as a palace by all subsequent Abbasid governors of the country. It was not a single domed structure as the name suggests, but a pleasure pavilion suitable for royalty. Al-Mā'mūn, the seventh Abbasid caliph (r. 813–33), stayed in it when he came to Egypt in 832, which may have contributed to the regal aura it acquired, for all later historians of Cairo mention the Qubbat al-Hawā as the place where a series of events took place during al-Mā'mūn's visit. This early royal association was reinforced when it was included into the construction of Ibn Ṭūlūn's palatial complex as his private retreat; then it dominated the maydan, gardens, and menagerie which he constructed at the foot of the promontory where later the Ayyubid maydan would be built.⁵ The Qubbat al-Hawā was reportedly destroyed with the rest of the Tulunid palaces in 905 by the Abbasid army of Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān, and its site lay vacant until in the second half of the Fatimid period it became a cemetery and a number of funerary mosques were constructed in it.

The memory of the Qubbat al-Hawā persisted after it was destroyed, but acquired a religious character after its site became a cemetery. The Fatimid funerary mosque of Sa'd al-Dawla, who was probably a governor of Cairo during the caliphate of al-Āmir (r. 1101–30), was apparently erected over the remains of the Qubbat al-Hawā itself.⁶ We know nothing of its form and appearance, but it seems to have been the most important of the Fatimid mosques and turbas that stood on the promontory, for by the time Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn chose this site for his citadel, it had become known as the Jabal Masjid Sa'd al-Dawla (Mountain of the Mosque of Sa'd al-Dawla).⁷

⁵ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 202; also J. M. Rogers, "Qubbat al-Hawā," *EL*, 5: 297–98.

⁶ Muṣṭafā Jawād, "Mū'arikh al-Ahrām wa Abi al-Hawl," *al-Kitāb* 3, 6 (April 1947): 858–68, is a review of Jamāl al-Dīn Abi Ja'far al-Idrīsī (1173–1251), *Anwār 'Ulwiyy al-Ajrām fi al-Kashf 'an Asrār al-Ahrām*; for the reference see p. 865; a facsimile of one manuscript of this treatise was printed as no. 44 of series C of the Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic Islamic Science, ed. U. Sezgin (Frankfurt, 1988), see pp. 32–33; the full edition of *Anwār 'Ulwiyy al-Ajrām*, published under the title, *Das Pyramidenbuch des Abū Gāfar al-Idrīsī*, by Ulrich Haarmann (Beirut and Stuttgart, 1991), 32. On Sa'd al-Dawla's identity, see Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 114; also, idem, *Sulūk*, 1: 85, no. 5, where he is identified as a mamluk of al-Afdal ibn Badr al-Jamālī (1094–1121).

⁷ Bundārī, *Sanā*, 119. Later historians who copied al-'Imād's report omitted the name since it was no longer in use after the Citadel was built, see Ibn Wāṣil,

It is plausible to attribute the influence of that structure to its association with the memory of the Qubbat al-Hawā, which had earlier given its name to the entire spur as well. The mosque of Saʿd al-Dawla was later incorporated into the palaces built by al-Kāmil, and apparently either lost its name or its function as a religious structure in the process, for there is no further reference to it in the sources. By building the Citadel, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn restored to the site its original function established by the Qubbat al-Hawā as an appropriate location for a royal residence.

Maqrīzī lists ten mosques in addition to Saʿd al-Dawla's that stood on the site chosen for the Citadel; all of them were presumably incorporated into it as well.⁸ Casanova suggested locations and an order of alignment on the promontory for these mosques, but they remain conjectural since he depended solely on Maqrīzī's text, which he himself admitted was confusing.⁹ Of them only remnants of the mosque of Abū-Manṣūr Qaṣṭa built in 1140, also known as the mosque of Sīdī Sāriyya, still stands today; they can be found under the religious complex built in 1528 by Sulaymān Pasha along the wall on the northwestern tip of the Citadel.

The sources also offer some scanty information about two more of the mosques: Shaqīq al-Mulk's and al-Rudaynī's. According to Maqrīzī, the first was built in 1146 by Shaqīq al-Mulk Khusrūwān, a palace administrator under the caliphate of al-Ḥāfiẓ (r. 1131–49) and was located to the west of the mosque of Qaṣṭa along the wall of the Citadel.¹⁰ It was apparently still standing in the early Mamluk period, for one source says that a clerk was incarcerated in it in 1283.¹¹ Whether the structure was then still a mosque or had been converted into a prison we do not know: confining prisoners, especially if they were sheikhs, epistolographers, or jurists, inside a mosque was common in the Mamluk period. The second mosque, that of al-Rudaynī, was located at the southwestern corner of the palace area in the southern enclosure and survived at least until the beginning of the nineteenth century, as a note on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte* indicates.¹² Al-Rudaynī, a legal authority (*faqīh*) and hadith trans-

Muḥarririj, 2: 53; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1: 380; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 4: 41.

⁸ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 202–3.

⁹ Casanova, "Histoire," 557–64; MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 58. See, for instance, the contradictory remarks about the mosque of Shaqīq al-Mulk in Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 202–3.

¹⁰ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 445–46.

¹¹ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7: 274.

¹² *Description de l'Égypte, état moderne, planches*, vol. 1, pl. 26.

mitter (*muḥaddith*) who died around 1145, had lived in the mosque of Sa'd al-Dawla before moving there. Like the mosque of Sa'd al-Dawla, his mosque was included into the palaces built by al-Kāmil and retained its function as an oratory.¹³

As Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn must have recognized, the site had one limitation: its northern and western sides were exposed to the higher cliffs of the Muqaṭṭam hills rising more than 120 meters behind it. The danger was not so much that the site could be bombarded from these cliffs: catapults of the period were not capable of throwing projectiles over such a distance.¹⁴ It was rather that it could be attacked from the northeast or the southeast by troops moving along the edge of the hills which sloped down almost uninterruptedly toward it. To avoid that risk, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ordered the promontory cut from the rest of the Muqaṭṭam hills by quarrying its eastern side, thus artificially creating the platform on which the Citadel was built.

The Citadel that Qarāqūsh Built

During the first stage of construction, Qarāqūsh, with a speed that dazzled contemporaries, had the walls constructed, the stone cut for the escarpment that girdled the walls, a deep moat dug around the Citadel, and the road narrowed behind it. After listing these achievements, the sources express their admiration and astonishment by stating that Qarāqūsh “without divine help, could not have accomplished all the magnificent works in the Citadel in the few years it took” (from 1176 to 1184).¹⁵

Indeed, such a huge undertaking could not have been accomplished in the short time it took without immense financial resources and an enormous labor force, both of which Qarāqūsh apparently had. The letters of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil addressed to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and

¹³ Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-Sayyāra fī Tartīb al-Ziyāra*, (Cairo, 1907), 302; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'*, 1, 2: 398. Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 372, reports a story from Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's *al-Rawḍa al-Baḥiyya*, which indicates that al-Rudayni's mosque stood among al-Kāmil's palaces.

¹⁴ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 5–6, his rebuttal was prompted by the assertion of the *Description de l'Égypte*, 18, 2: 282, that “cet emplacement pour un château fort étoit mal choisi; du mont Moqattam, qui est au levant, on plonge dans l'intérieur du château, et l'on peut aisément le battre en ruines.”

¹⁵ Bundārī, *Sanā*, 119. This account by al-'Imād al-'Iṣfahānī is the earliest on the Citadel. Similar reports appear in Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1, 2: 687; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 2: 52–54; Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Siyar*, 3, 2: 88.

quoted by ‘Imād al-Dīn and ‘Imād al-Dīn’s own report on the Citadel confirm the abundant flow of funds throughout the reign of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, even when he was involved in costly military operations in Bilād al-Shām and in dire need of cash. Maqrīzī quotes Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir’s estimate that fifty thousand Frankish prisoners were employed in the building of the Citadel and the walls around the two cities (this is probably highly exaggerated but suggests a great many nonetheless).¹⁶ The Andalusian traveler Ibn Jubayr, who was in Egypt in 1183, when the Citadel was still under construction, saw thousands of them sawing the marble, cutting the huge stones, and digging the ditch that skirts the walls in the rock with pickaxes.¹⁷ The observation suggests that the stone was quarried from the site and then used to build the walls, a very practical solution which must have saved both time and money. Modern scholars have relied on it to refute the story, wrongly attributed to ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, an Iraqi physician who lived in Egypt at the end of the twelfth century, that Qarāqūsh destroyed a number of small pyramids in Giza so he could use their ready cut stone blocks for the Citadel and the city walls.¹⁸ The small pyramids were destroyed, but their stones were primarily used to build a bridge with forty-plus arcades, known as the Qanāṭir al-Gīza, that once connected al-Fuṣṭāṭ to Giza on the western bank and to the road to the delta beyond.¹⁹ Some stones may have been carried to the east bank of the Nile to build the riverine walls, but the three extra kilometers they would have to have been carried up a steep road to the site of the Citadel would have made the task too cumbersome and expensive to be expedient.

In the original plan of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, the Citadel was to be almost equidistant from the northern and southern extremities of the walls surrounding the two cities and to sit astride them, so that its eastern side would face outside the fortifications toward the desert. This plan was not carried out, but the Citadel had strategic significance inde-

¹⁶ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭat*, 2: 204; MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 61.

¹⁷ Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, 25.

¹⁸ Casanova, “Histoire,” 541-42; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 5; MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 62-64, cites both Baghdādī and Maqrīzī to the same effect although their reports are different.

¹⁹ Idrīsī, *Anwār*, 40-41; ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, *al-Ifāda wa-l-’Iṭibār fī al-Umūr al-Mushāhada wa-l-Hawādīth al-Mu’āyana bi-Arḍ Miṣr* (Cairo, 1869), 36; idem, *Relations de l’Égypte*, ed. Silvestre de Sacy (Paris, 1810), 171-72, are very clear that the use of stones from the pyramids was limited to the building of the bridge.

pendent of the walls, located as it was on the highest point between the Nile and the Muqaṭṭam hills that controlled the bottleneck between the city's eastern border and the hills. Defensibility and security were obviously the major concerns for Qarāqūsh when he set about building it, as the battlements and moat cut in the rock around its northern, eastern, and parts of its western and southern sides and the towers, bastions, and solid curtain walls built above the escarpments enclosing it from the northern, eastern, and parts of the western sides testify (see pl. 10). But aside from these fortifications, we only have some textual references and a few remains that unquestionably belong to his work. The remains include the main gate of the Citadel, the Bāb al-Mudarraġ, with its dedicatory inscription dated 579 A.H. (1183–84) and the stairway (*mudarraġ*) cut in the rock that leads to it; another path, carved in the rock of the promontory, that meanders its way up from the lower enclosure and around the western edge towards an entrance to the southern enclosure that no longer exists; and the Bi'r Yūsuf. Otherwise we know nothing about the arrangements he made for the Citadel's interior space or how far its original walls extended into the southern enclosure along the spur's edges facing the city.

Casanova and Creswell both believed the northern enclosure belonged to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's original enceinte. Creswell reconstituted its original plan by analyzing each and every structural elements along its perimeter and demonstrated that almost all of its small round towers, salients, and curtain walls—with the exception of the stretch in the northwest between the Burġ al-Ṣaḥrā and the Bāb al-Mudarraġ—were built by Qarāqūsh during Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's reign. The large square and round towers were added later either by al-ʿAdil or by his son al-Kāmil during his viceroyalty (1200–18), usually by encasing and enlarging the earlier, smaller towers. Creswell argued that the structural unity among these elements shows that the northern enclosure was a unified project from the start, and that, despite later fortifications, the general outline of the enclosure remained as Qarāqūsh established it until the late fifteenth century.²⁰

Unlike the northern enclosure, the southern one was built incrementally at various, undocumented intervals as the variety of stone sizes and shapes and course arrangements of its walls suggest. The

²⁰ Creswell, "Researches," 157–58; idem, *M. A. E.*, 2: 1–39. MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 60–63, accepts all of Creswell's conclusions.

last phase of building, and the one that obliterated many—but not all—traces of earlier work, is Muḥammad ‘Alī’s rearrangement of the enclosure’s contour over a period of forty-five years to close off many of the old access routes for security reasons, to accommodate the new structures he was concurrently building, and to give the entire enclosure a unified appearance by adding a continuous molding around the top of its walls. Scholars have long pondered whether any part of this enclosure, which was essentially what is there today, belongs to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s original work, and, if so, what its original layout was like. Opinions differ, although the main piece of evidence adduced in the arguments is the one and only contemporary report that records in detail the length of the walls around the cities of al-Qāhira and al-Fuṣṭāt and the Citadel. The measurements were established by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s royal office of accounts and copied directly by al-‘Imād al-Iṣfahānī, who, because of his high position at court, had access to official documents.²¹ Al-‘Imād’s figure for the Citadel’s perimeter, in which he included the dimensions of its towers and bastions as well, is 3,210 Hashimite cubits, the equivalent of either 2,103 or 1,977 meters, depending on the conversion value adopted.²² Casanova and Creswell both used the first figure to reconstruct the Citadel’s original plan and in the process discovered that it is greater than the circumference of the present northern enclosure, but smaller than the total of the two enclosures; however, they produced two different explanations for the discrepancy.

Although Casanova’s calculations resulted in a discrepancy of 300 meters of wall, he still maintained that the northern enclosure formed the original enceinte. He suggested that the southern enclosure, or the “royal complex” as he calls it, was an afterthought begun by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn after the fortified northern wall was completed to take advantage of its defensibility, but it was not finished until the time of al-Kāmil, to whom he attributed the original wall and gate between the two

²¹ Bundāri, *Sanā*, 119–20; the numbers are repeated by most Arab chroniclers of the Ayyubid period; cf. Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 2: 52–53; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmi‘ al-Ghurar*, vol. 7, *al-Durr al-Maṭlūb fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, ed. S. A. F. ‘Ashūr (Cairo, 1972), 41; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 84.

²² According to Casanova, “Histoire,” 535–37, and Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 39, one Hashimite cubit = 0.656 meter, which gives a total of 2,103 m. M. Diyā’ al-Dīn al-Rayyis, *al-Khirāj fī l-Dawla al-Islāmiyya ḥattā Muntaṣaf al-Qarn al-Thālith al-Hijrī* (Cairo, 1957), 274–77, gives the length of the Hashimite cubit as two Egyptian feet or one and one-third ancient Egyptian cubits which equals 0.616 meters. That makes the total 1,977 meters.

enclosures as well.²³ Creswell showed that Casanova mistakenly included into his calculation towers and sections built by al-Kāmil rather than Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and parts of walls built by Muḥammad ‘Alī in the nineteenth century. He subtracted their total and came up with a circumference for the original northern enclosure of almost 1,400 meters, leaving between 545 and 700 meters (depending on which figure one uses for the Hashimite cubit) unaccounted for. Creswell suggested that these 545–700 meters of wall extended from the two ends of the actual northern enclosure at the Burj al-Waṣṭānī and the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam far into the southern enclosure, but stopped short of reconstructing its layout or giving a date for the original wall separating the two enclosures.²⁴ He only postulated from the map of the *Description de l’Égypte* that excavations to the south and southeast of the Sūr al-Qulla would undoubtedly uncover portions of the missing walls.

Creswell had a positivist attitude toward architectural history: any attempt to reconstruct a structure that could not be archaeologically verified was not worth the trouble.²⁵ Since he also accepted the widely held belief that Muḥammad ‘Alī razed all traces of earlier arrangements, he overlooked a number of remains and entire structures underground that could have guided him to a more thorough reconstruction. Instead he limited his observations on the extent of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s original walls into the southern enclosure to hasty comments. Today, excavations inside the enclosure have become an even more remote probability than they were in his days, because of the implementation of the tourist-oriented plan of circulation and landscaping in most open areas to create an orderly environment. But it is still possible to conjecture a reconstruction using an approach that relies on textual evidence and the few archaeological remains available.

We first have to assume that the original enceinte extended from the Burj al-Waṣṭānī and the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam into the southern enclosure. This cannot be verified because the walls standing there today are definitely post-Ottoman—the southern stretch from the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam belongs to Yakan Pasha’s reconstruction of 1785,

²³ Casanova, “Histoire,” 575–76.

²⁴ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 39; MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 64–66, uses Creswell’s arguments but reaches a different conclusion.

²⁵ See the analysis of J. M. Rogers, “Architectural History as Literature: Creswell’s Reading and Methods,” *Muqarnas* 8 (1991): 45–54.

and that between the Burj al-Waṣṭānī and the Police Museum was rebuilt by Muḥammad ‘Alī as shown by the superimposition of the *Description* map and the contemporary one—but there is plenty of evidence in its favor. Creswell suggested that the wall inside the southern enclosure today that continues without a break for 65 meters southwest of the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam to the Ottoman polygonal tower which flanks the Bi’r Yūsuf may be part of the original enceinte.²⁶ A similar tower stands between the well and the southern corner of the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and is joined to the first tower by a curtain wall of late construction (pl. 9). The rubble lying around it makes it very difficult to retrieve the original plan of the area, but this apparent fortification of the well, illogical as it seems today, underlines its importance. It also suggests that it may once have formed the edge of the enceinte and that the towers could well be later modifications or improvements on earlier ones.

To reconstruct the original wall extending from the Burj al-Waṣṭānī is even more difficult. The changes and rebuildings in the area to its northwest stretching toward the Burj al-Shakhṣ (no. 86 on the *Description* map, the tower with the double-headed eagle on its western face) on the northern tip of the southern enclosure cannot be disentangled. But the Burj al-Shakhṣ, or more probably an older tower which stood in the same spot, must have belonged to the original enceinte because, like the walls of the northern enclosure, its foundation closely skirts the stone escarpment attributed to Qarāqūsh (pl. 10). The section of the curtain wall continuing south between the Burj al-Shakhṣ and the Burj al-Rafrāf (no. 84, the Maison de Joseph on the *Description* map) may also be original. Parts of its side facing west rest on carved stone escarpments, but it is impossible to determine their extent because many later structures in the lower enclosure below abut its foundations and obstruct any investigation there. Where it ended exactly is difficult to fix, but should be at or around the Burj al-Rafrāf.

A description of the Citadel by Ibn Faḍl-Allah al-‘Umārī written around the year 1330 provides an indirect clue that the Burj al-Rafrāf formed the southern border of the original enclosure.²⁷ It says, “The

²⁶ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 39.

²⁷ Casanova, “Histoire,” 576–78, struggled with a misleading copy of the same account reproduced in Maqrīzī’s *Khīṭat*, 2:204, and decided that what it implied was that the walls of the Citadel stopped at the fourteenth-century Qaṣr al-Ablaq, a fact that would have jeopardized the Citadel’s defensibility. He explained this discre-

Citadel is surrounded by a stone wall with towers and bastions until it reaches [*yantahī*, in the masculine form thus referring to the Citadel's wall] the newly built Qaṣr al-Ablaq of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, then from there on it connects with the quarters of the sultan in an arrangement which is not like the ways of towers of citadels."²⁸ The reference here is obviously to two different treatments of the exterior walls of the Citadel as observed by a high-ranking administrator during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who built the Qaṣr al-Ablaq and most other royal structures. The walls of the first section (i.e., the northern enclosure and the western side of the southern) are reinforced by towers and bastions and they stop at the Qaṣr al-Ablaq, which was built shortly before 'Umari wrote his description. The last sentence of 'Umari's description is confusing and syntactically incorrect. It may be construed as meaning that from the Qaṣr al-Ablaq to the quarters of the sultan—a distance which covers virtually all the rest of the western and all the southern sides of the southern enclosure—the wall was not buttressed with towers and bastions as fortifications normally would be. This is certainly the case today for that particular stretch of wall, but the area has been rebuilt several times since the fourteenth century.

The spur on which the Citadel is constructed does not underlie the whole area; at some point some parts of the platform were filled in.²⁹ Al-'Umari's sentence can also be construed as meaning that the Qaṣr al-Ablaq and the sultan's quarters were built on the edge of the spur which formed the foundation of the original enceinte so that its walls abutted them. If that is the case then it implies that the royal palaces of the fourteenth century were built outside the original enceinte and, when they were constructed, constituted the farthest extension of the Citadel. This is corroborated by what is known of the work of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who modified the organization of the southern enclosure *in toto* over his thirty-year rule. The structures that he added may have had their foundations on ground that was artificially raised to the level of the spur and incorporated into the Citadel's southern enclosure. This hypothesis is not backed by any of the many

pancy by assuming that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's initial plan did not include this area of the southern enclosure.

²⁸ 'Umari, *Masālik*, 140–41.

²⁹ Creswell, "Researches," 98; *M. A. E.*, 2: 5.

descriptions of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's structures from the Mamluk period, but it can be sustained by the configuration of the western part of the southern enclosure. The south wall of the Burj al-Rafraf, which does not rest on any escarpment and is built up from the stables level below, extends to the east for a distance of about 35 meters until it reaches the wall upon which the western portico of Muḥammad 'Alī's mosque was built. Then it breaks at an almost right angle to the south to run the width of that portico until it reaches the tip of the platform south of the mosque and across from the Burj al-Rafraf. This platform, which may be the site of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq, rests upon the great vaulted hall labeled "ruined vaults" on Colonel Green's map of 1896 which sits on top of two other vaulted halls. The three superimposed halls probably formed the palace's basements. They cover the height of approximately 30 meters between the ground level of the stables and that of the southern enclosure above, thus validating the assertion that the palace was constructed outside the spur proper on an artificially raised platform (see fig. 15).

It may be, then, that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's original wall ended where the Qaṣr al-Ablaq began. The palace may have stood at the angle where the wall turned west to join the area of the Bi'r Yūsuf, which may have constituted the southwestern border of the original Citadel built by Qarāqūsh. This arrangement is impossible to prove, yet if we are to believe the account of al-'Imād al-Iṣfahānī, then it would at least account for the difference between the Citadel's original circumference and the perimeter of the northern enclosure today. If we connect the end of the southern wall of the Burj al-Rafraf on the map to the tower behind the Bi'r Yūsuf, a distance of about 175 meters, we would have completed the periphery of a smaller, hypothetical enclosure within the southern enclosure. Starting from the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ to the Burj al-Shakhṣ to the Burj al-Rafraf and then joining the wall south of the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam, the circumference of this reconstructed enclosure is between 600 and 700 meters, depending on what parts are included in the area of the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ (fig. 16). This must be the lost section of the Citadel that Qarāqūsh built. The actual boundaries of the southern enclosure must have resulted from an expansion that took place after the original citadel was completed.

In Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's original plan, the Citadel depended on, and complemented, a system of defense based on surrounding al-Qāhira and al-Fuṣṭāṭ with fortified walls reinforced at the crucial points with

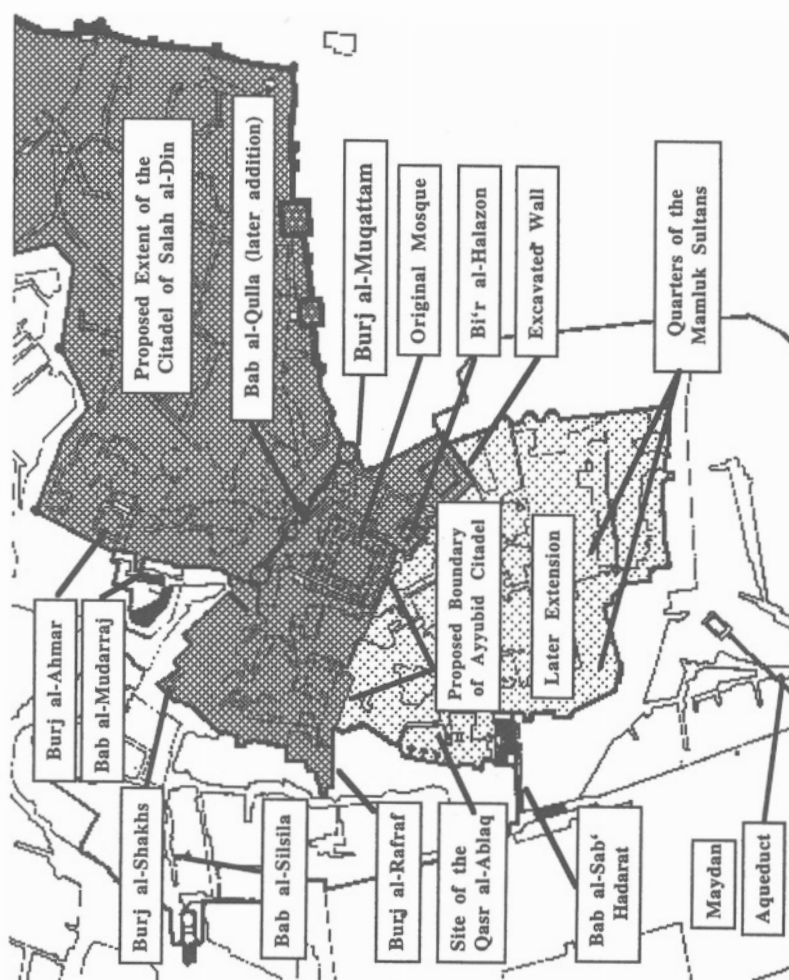


Fig. 16: Computer reconstruction of the proposed enclosure of Salāh al-Dīn

massive towers, such as the Burj al-Zafar (Victory Tower) in the northeast and Burj al-Maqṣ (Levy Tower, which no longer exists) in the northwest on the banks of the Nile.³⁰ The proximity of al-Qāhira and al-Fuṣṭāṭ made provisioning the Citadel easier. Water brought from the Nile on camelback, combined with the supply from the Bi'r Yūsuf inside the enceinte, would have allowed it to withstand long sieges. But when the first phase of construction was finished by Qarāqūsh in 1183-84, its defenses could no longer have depended on these larger fortifications, because they were not completed and the area to the west of the Citadel was still sparsely settled. In the late Fatimid and early Ayyubid period, especially after the shrinking of the eastern parts of Fuṣṭāṭ, it was covered either with cemeteries or heaps of rubble (*kīmān*).³¹ The Citadel could never have sustained an attack if its western flank had not been solidly built. The fortifications around the Bi'r Yūsuf, the carved section of the spur under the southern enclosure and the strong walls flanking it, which are all Qarāqūsh's works, confirm that the extension of the original enceinte into the southern enclosure did not go unfortified. The missing sections of its walls cannot be conclusively reconstructed, but they would have had some measure of fortification—towers, moat, and the like—along them from the beginning.

Accepting this scheme solves two logistical problems. First, in this reconstruction the Bi'r Yūsuf is within the original enceinte where it should be. This well, a masterpiece of medieval engineering, is about 90 meters deep, dug into the rocky ground south of the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (fig. 17). It is firmly dated to the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, for all the known Arabic sources credit it to Qarāqūsh, presumably as part of the Citadel's construction.³² If the northern enclosure originally constituted the entire enceinte, then the well, located in the southern enclosure, would have been outside its fortifications. This does not make much sense since depending on an external water supply imperils a citadel's ability to withstand a siege—any medieval

³⁰ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2:41-63; MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 52-58.

³¹ The usual view is that Fuṣṭāṭ was deserted as a result of the great fire set by Shāwar in 1168, but this hides the more sinister decline of the city's eastern flanks that followed the 1065-72 *al-Shidda al-'Uzma* (the Great Calamity) during the reign of al-Mustaṣṣir. See Kubiak, "The Burning of Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ in 1168," 51-64.

³² Bundāri, *Sanā*, 119; Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1, 2: 687; 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡhdādi, *al-Ifāda wa-l- I'tibar*, 36; Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Siyar*, 3, 2: 88; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 2: 53-54.

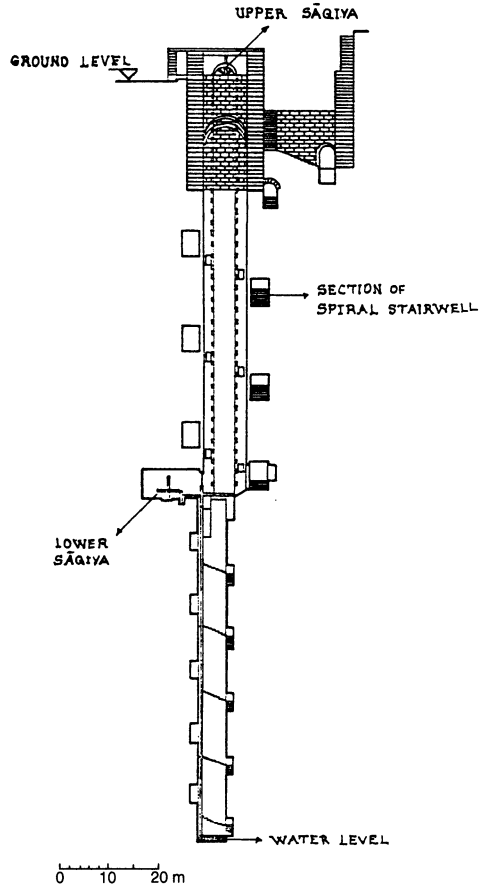


Fig. 17: Section through the Bi'r Yūsuf

citadel would have had all its vital services, including its water supply, within its walls.³³

Second, the site of the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is also incorporated into the proposed enceinte and may have been the site

³³ An anonymous Crusader reports that a citadel which he calls Exerogorgo (?), and which he describes as being a four-day journey from Iznik, had a well outside its main gate. It fell to the "Turks" (Muslims) in 1096, because when they besieged it, they cut off its water supply and forced the defenders to surrender; see *Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolimitanorum* (dated between 1085 and 1099), Arabic trans. Ḥasan Ḥabashī, *'A'māl al-Faranja wa-Ḥujjāj Bayt al-Maqdis* (Cairo, 1958), 20.

of the Citadel's original congregational mosque. A citadel in an Islamic city would have to have had a congregational mosque, so Şalāḥ al-Dīn's plan must have provided for one, although no source credits him with building it. Since the site reportedly had eleven mosques on it already, one of them could have been appropriated for the purpose. The sources do not corroborate this suggestion, but a mosque known as the Masjīd al-Qal'a (Mosque of the Citadel) is mentioned from at least 1250, when, we are told, the Friday sermons at the Citadel and in Mişr were pronounced in the name of the Ayyubid al-Nāşir Yūsuf after it was thought that his army had defeated the Mamluks.³⁴ In the beginning of Baybars's reign, the newly installed Abbasid caliph, al-Mustaşir Billah II, twice gave a sermon there on the occasion of his nomination in 1261.³⁵ Reports about the construction of the mosque of al-Nāşir Muḥammad in 1318 specify that the building replaced an older one in the same site, presumably a mosque that existed there from at least the beginning of the Mamluk, and possibly from the Ayyubid, period or even earlier.³⁶ Al-'Imād al-Işfahānī's report on the Citadel's circumference suggests that the mosque in that location may even have predated the Citadel. When he refers to the length of walls built by Qarāqūsh from the Citadel to the city of al-Fuṣṭāṭ, he begins with the phrase, "From the Citadel's wall on the side of the mosque of Sa'd al-Dawla...",³⁷ implying that the mosque had not been torn down when the Citadel was built and stood on the edge of the initial enceinte, exactly where the mosque of al-Nāşir Muḥammad stands in our proposed plan. The Mamluk congregational mosque at the Citadel may therefore have replaced the mosque of Sa'd al-Dawla which had been the most important structure on the site and may have been incorporated into Şalāḥ al-Dīn's Citadel.

No one mentions gates to Şalāḥ al-Dīn's original enceinte, but there must have been more than two of them as there were in all other citadels of the time. Mamluk historians list three gates in the fourteenth century: the Bāb al-Mudarraġ and the Bāb al-Qarāfa (Qarāfa Gate) or the Bāb al-Jabal, and the smaller Bāb al-Sirr (Secret Gate)

³⁴ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 374; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 7; 'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 1: 41.

³⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 101, he was an eyewitness. Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 302, and *Sulūk*, 1: 450, in the events of 1261 when the first Abbasid caliph in Cairo, al-Mustaşir Billah II, was installed; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 111; 'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 1: 296–97.

³⁶ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 213 and 325.

³⁷ Bundārī, *Sanā*, 119.

which opened into the southern enclosure facing the Iwān al-Kabir and was used only by the sultan and official guests.³⁸ They do not specify, however, whether the gates dated back to the original construction. Al-ʿUmarī, whose text was copied by Maqrīzī and Qalqashandī, says that the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ was turned towards Cairo and the Bāb al-Qarāfa or Bāb al-Jabal faced the mountain and was little used because it was very difficult to reach. He does not, however, say where the two gates were. Creswell convincingly demonstrated that the two buried bent entrances in the northern enclosure he discovered, one along its southern wall at the Burj al-Maṭār and the other in the middle of its eastern wall at the Burj al-Imām, and the two postern gates all dated from the early Ayyubid period.³⁹

The Bāb al-Sirr has disappeared, but its location is fairly well established. It stood near the present-day Bāb al-Wasṭānī on the northwestern side of the southern enclosure adjacent to the big Burj

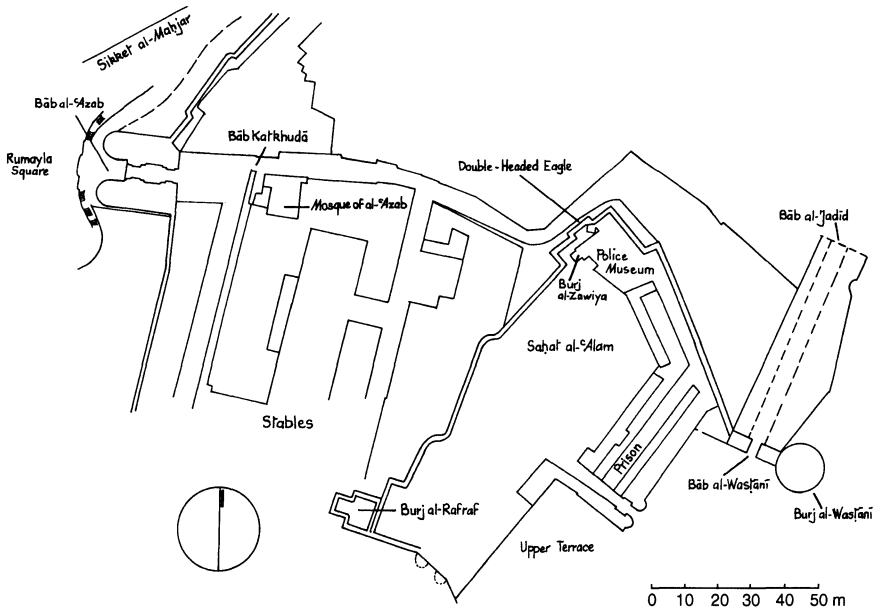


Fig. 18: The Bāb al-ʿAzab to the Bāb al-Jadīd

³⁸ ʿUmarī, *Masālik*, 141; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 374; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 204.

³⁹ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2:14–16, 18–20.

al-Waṣṭānī that forms the northern end of the Sūr al-Qulla (fig. 18). The area's configuration today is very confusing, for it was here that Muḥammad 'Alī ended his artificial ramp for the new carriage road leading to the Citadel's gate in 1825, which obliterated all traces of earlier arrangements. Qalqashandī speaks of the Bāb al-Sirr as reached through a "winding road contiguous to the Citadel's *bahrī* [facing the *bahr*, the Nile, or northwestern] wall."⁴⁰ This could only mean the carved path that skirts the northwestern side of the southern enclosure, which most probably belonged to the original enceinte. The part of the path that remains is similar in its execution to the work done in the northern enclosure, where the spur is cut away from the Muqaṭṭam hill by a ditch obviously carved at the same time as the construction of the towers above it (see pl. 10). The path originally led only to the Bāb al-Sirr and was connected to the passage that led to the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ, which formed, at least in the years between the Mamluks and Muḥammad 'Alī, the main entrance from the city.

The Bāb al-Mudarraǰ still stands today and it opens into the northern enclosure (pl. 11). It is firmly attributable to the original Ayyubid enceinte, although its area has been repeatedly rebuilt. The shape of the arch above its opening, the joggled voussoirs of its interior arches, and the disposition of tripartite engaged columns on the sides of the three alcoves inside its *bāshūra* are all characteristic of Ayyubid architecture, although the dome over the *bāshūra* and the arches of its four squinches are covered with a painted inscription band bearing the name and titles of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and possibly the date 709 A.H. (1310). Casanova suggested that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who returned twice to the throne, painted his name and titles on three superimposed layers of stucco on the three occasions of his enthronement, but the stone surface underneath is undoubtedly Ayyubid.⁴¹ The gate was originally named after the stairway (*mudarraǰ*), carved in the rock which led to it from the end of the Sikkat al-Chorafā (Street of the Nobles) ascending from the maydan level (see fig. 14). The access to the Citadel was purposely divided: there were stairs for the common people who had to dismount before entering, and a path to the Bāb al-Sirr reserved for the sultan and high-ranking officials and foreign envoys who would ride in on horseback.⁴²

⁴⁰ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 374.

⁴¹ Casanova, "Histoire," 627–29.

⁴² Sakhāwī, *Dhayl*, 82, records the difficulty in ascending these steps for two old jurists (*fuqahā'*) who used to visit the son of the sultan in the Citadel.

The original Bāb al-Qarāfa has disappeared; an Ottoman gate there today, adjacent to the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam and opening into the southern enclosure, preserves the name but not necessarily the location (see fig. 9). The area was built over more than once, most extensively in 1785 when Yakan Pasha constructed his palace there and obliterated all traces of its original organization. Where the original Bāb al-Qarāfa was, therefore, is unknown. Creswell conflated the location of the two gates he had discovered in the 1920s with the Mamluk reports and argued that the arched doorway under the rubble between the two half-round bastions of the Burj al-Imām is to be identified with the missing Bāb al-Qarāfa.⁴³ His argument, however, is not convincing. It could equally have been applied to the other entrance at the Burj al-Maṭār. Both have a distinctly Ayyubid shape and both have rectangular depressions, apparently intended for inscription slabs, over their arched openings, but the question cannot be taken further at this stage, for the the inscription slabs are blank. Moreover, the Burj al-Imām is far to the west, implying that the Raḥbat al-Qal'a (Citadel Square), which linked the two original gates, covered more than half the northern enclosure's surface, which is unlikely. The textual clues favor locating the original Bāb al-Qarāfa somewhere around the present site of the Bāb al-Jabal. The Sūr al-Qulla's end may have been further to the west to accommodate the Bāb al-Qarāfa within the northern enclosure, but it is impossible to prove or disprove this interpretation with the archaeological evidence available.

The inscription, affixed above the Bāb al-Mudarraġ, gives the date 579 A.H. (1183-84) and is among the rare documents contemporary with the original building (pl. 12). Its text, composed of nine lines of early Ayyubid cursive script, records the names of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, al-'Adil, and Qarāqūsh as the principal patrons of the Citadel, but does not expressly say that they completed it. One can infer, however, that a good deal was accomplished in its seven years of uninterrupted construction, for the text speaks of "this magnificent citadel." It also offers many clues about the message that the Citadel was meant to convey and its intended functions. It reads:

(1 to 3) In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. Lo, We have given thee [O Muḥammad] a signal victory. That God may forgive thee thy sins, that which is past and that which is to come, and may

⁴³ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 37-38

perfect His favor unto thee, and may guide thee on the right path. And that God may help thee with strong help [Qur'an 48:1–3]. Has ordered the construction of this magnificent Citadel, near the God-protected (4) city of Cairo, on a strong mound (*al-ʿarma*), which [the citadel] combines utility (*naḥʿān*) and embellishment (*taḥṣinān*), and comfort (*siʿatān*) and shield (*taḥṣinān*) to whoever seeks refuge in the shadow (5) of his kingdom, our lord al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn Abū-al- (6) Muẓaffar Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb, the reviver of the dominion of the prince of the believers (*muḥīyy dawlat amīr al-mūʿminīn*), under the guidance of his brother and heir apparent al-Malik al-ʿAdil Sayf al-Dīn Abī Bakr Muḥammad, the chosen friend of the prince of the believers (*khalīl amīr al-mūʿminīn*) (8) and under the supervision of the amir of his kingdom and the assistant to his rule Qarāqūsh ibn ʿAbdallah al-Malakī (9) al-Nāṣirī in the year 579 [1183-84].⁴⁴

This exceptional document establishes the image that the Ayyubid monarch sought to project of himself and his reign, through, first, the choice of Qurʾanic quotation. The first three verses of the *Sūrat al-Faḥ* (Sura of the Conquest), according to Islamic tradition, were revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad after his victorious entry into Mecca in 630, which secured his control over western Arabia. It was subsequently used by many Muslim conquerors to inscribe on buildings they erected to celebrate their conquests.⁴⁵ The quotation can be interpreted as alluding to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's having managed, after two years of strenuous campaigning (1183-84), to become the sole ruler of Syria. Or—and this is a more plausible interpretation since the inscription could be seen by all Cairenes entering the Citadel—it could refer to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's domination of Egypt and his spectacular rise from lieutenant in the Syrian army to sultan.

This second possibility has a precedent in the Mashhad al-Juyūshī, where Qurʾanic passages that include the first five verses of the *Sūrat al-Faḥ* are also inscribed, this time in the cupola in front of its mihrab. This enigmatic structure, looming high on the cliff of the Muqaṭṭam hill behind the spur of the Citadel overlooking the city and its surroundings, was constructed by Badr al-Jamālī, the commander of the Fatimid armies (*amīr al-juyūsh*, hence the name). Badr had

⁴⁴ Arabic text with a few variations and French translation in Van Berchem, *C. I. A., Égypte*, 1: 80-85; *Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe*, 9: 123-24; Casanova, "Histoire," 569–71.

⁴⁵ A list of similar inscriptions is in Erica Dodd and Shereen Khairallah, *The Image of the Word: A Study of Quranic Verses in Islamic Architecture*, 2 vols. (Beirut, 1981), 2: 118–20.

brought his army from Syria in 1074 in response to a plea by the caliph al-Mustansir to restore order to a country that has been beleaguered by six years of chaos, rioting, and internecine warfare. He built this structure in 1085 after he had consolidated his control over the entire country and had become the vizier, as well as army commander, leaving the caliph as a mere religious figurehead. Although the structure is identified as a mashhad (shrine) in its dedicatory inscription, and although it boasts an impressive minaret and its hall has a mihrab, scholars have puzzled over its real function since no settlement existed around it to warrant a minaret for the call to prayer and no reference to a saint has been found to explain the shrine ascription. The most current interpretation is that Badr built it as a memorial to commemorate his victories in Egypt and his elevation to the highest office in the land.⁴⁶ His means of communicating this message were both visible and legible, and in both cases his builders ingeniously used already established architectural and epigraphic topoi but manipulated and reordered them to control their meaning. Thus, a huge minaret was built on the highest cliff dominating the city where no minaret would be needed, but where such an Islamic symbol would be seen and understood by all the inhabitants of the two capitals.⁴⁷ Similarly, the Qur'anic passages would provide a sacred narrative that reiterated the claims and aspirations of Badr al-Jamali.

Salah al-Din's career in Egypt bears an astonishing resemblance to Badr's. He too came from Syria with an army sent in response to pleas from a despondent caliph, penetrated the Fatimid hierarchy, and reached the top. He too brought his own supporters—mostly Kurds, comparable to Badr's Armenian followers—and built his power base by assigning them important positions in the Egyptian army and administration. He too was faced with armed resistance by various factions in the Fatimid state and managed with great effort to subdue or eliminate them. Favorable historical circumstances

⁴⁶ Oleg Grabar, "The Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures, Notes and Documents," *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966): 7–46, esp. 27–29; Yusuf Ragib, "Un oratoire fatimide au sommet du Muqattam," *Studia Islamica* 65 (1987): 51–67.

⁴⁷ Farid Shafe'i, "The Mashhad al-Juyushi: Archaeological Notes and Studies," *Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honour of Professor K. A. C. Creswell*, ed. C. L. Geddes et al. (Cairo, 1965), 237–52, suggested that the minaret may have been intended as a watch tower, and that the entire structure should be seen as having a military purpose.

allowed Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to abolish the Fatimid caliphate, however, and assume the sultanate for himself, while Badr needed its legitimizing cover. Thus, it is plausible that the three verses of the *Sūrat al-Faḥ* on the Citadel's inscription were selected to confirm the commemorative character of the Citadel, consecrating, as it were, the ascendancy of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. It is also plausible to see in their choice a deliberate emulation of Badr al-Jamālī as an earlier military conqueror and savior of Egypt.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's claim to supremacy can also be read in the titles he assumed for himself or gave to his brother and his lieutenant. Most noteworthy is the honorific *muḥīyy dawlat amīr al-mū'minīn* (reviver of the dominion of the prince of the believers)—obviously a reference to the Abbasid caliph, not the recently deposed Fatimid one—which appears in many of his later inscriptions as well.⁴⁸ Compound titles of *amīr al-mū'minīn* were not a new phenomenon; they had been in use in both Fatimid and Abbasid chanceries for at least a hundred years before Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's time, and were regulated and ranked according to the relative power of their holders and their impact on the caliphate.⁴⁹ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's brother's honorific, *khalīl amīr al-mū'minīn* (chosen friend of the prince of the believers), appeared in the protocols of several Fatimid viziers in the eleventh century. It was probably appropriated by the Abbasids and bestowed upon al-'Adil as a specifically Egyptian title; it was later routinely granted to all the Ayyubid sultans of Egypt.⁵⁰

The title *muḥīyy dawlat amīr al-mū'minīn*, however, is unusual; it is both imperious and apparently self-styled. It had no precedent, nor did it have any equivalent even in the grandiose titles *yamīn* (right hand) and *qasīm* (associate) of the Great Seljuqs who flourished between 1087 and 1124. Those titles denoted a degree of partnership between the sultan and the caliph, although none in fact existed, whereas *muḥīyy dawlat* (reviver of the dominion) is flagrantly detached and boastful. It does not imply any sharing with the caliph of any dominion, but instead credits Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn with restoring the

⁴⁸ Gaston Wiet, "Les inscriptions de Saladin," *Syria* 3 (1922): 307–28, esp. 315–19.

⁴⁹ C. E. Bosworth, "Lakab," *Et*, 5: 618–31.

⁵⁰ Nikita Éliasséeff, "La titulature de Nūr al-Dīn d'après ses inscriptions," *Bulletin d' Études Orientales* 14 (Damascus, 1952–54): 155–96, esp. 192–94; Gaston Wiet, "Une inscription de Malik Zāhir Ghāzi à Lattakieh," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire* 30 (1930–31): 273–92, esp. 286–91.

caliph to the status lost by his ancestors to the Fatimids, thus publicly underscoring his dependence on the Ayyubid sultan. Clearly this is a legitimate claim, but it may have been embarrassing to Baghdad to recognize it. And indeed this may have been the case, for no record of such a title's having been granted by the caliph in Baghdad has been unearthed thus far.⁵¹ The title may have been a one-sided declaration, and asserting it was an act of independence, perhaps even of defiance, on the part of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn of the theoretically higher authority of the Abbasid caliph. It may also have been a way to remind al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allah (r. 1180-1225), the strong-minded caliph, of the services the sultan had rendered to the Abbasid dynasty, especially since al-Nāṣir had been reluctant to supply Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn with either material or moral support in his endeavor to carve out a greater Islamic empire.⁵²

The inscription also gives us the reasons for building the Citadel. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had ordered its construction "with the intention of combining utility and embellishment, and comfort and shield to whoever seeks refuge in the shadow of his kingdom." This declaration of purpose elegantly sums up its functional objectives and still manages to assert Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's independence by referring to his kingdom (*mulk*). But what is more extraordinary than the explicitness of this sentence is its presence in the inscription in the first place. Dedicatory inscriptions, though ubiquitous on Islamic monuments, rarely go beyond the identification of the edifice to describe the purpose of its construction, especially in secular buildings and in such a direct and self-explanatory manner. Even in the few buildings where there are descriptive inscriptions, the function is usually revealed indirectly through appropriate Qur'anic passages. For example, the Nilometer in Cairo (decorated on three occasions in 814, 847, and 861) is inscribed with suras 32:27, 16:10-11, 22:5 and 62, 25:50, 42:27, and 50:9, all of which speak of water, and the *bīmāristān* of Nūr al-Dīn in Damascus (decorated in 1283) has suras 10:59, 16:71, and

⁵¹ Wiet, "Les inscriptions de Saladin," 319. The question is further complicated by the existence of four inscriptions from the Citadel of al-Jundi in Sinaï, in which Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn is called *khalīl amīr al-mū'minīn*; Wiet, "Les inscriptions arabes de la Qal'ah Guindi," *Syria* 3 (1922): 58-65, 145-52; also Shemuel Tamari, "Two Further Inscriptions from Qal'at al-Jundi," in ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon, *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem, 1977), 261-65.

⁵² As evidenced by the tone of the letters that Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn sent to the caliph, cf. Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1: 241-44; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 2: 486-95; Bundāri, *Sanā*, 235-40.

26:78–80, which deal with God's will in healing the sick.⁵³ That such a statement of purpose is there must be taken to represent the great significance the Citadel had for its builders to the point where they felt the need to break with established epigraphic tradition in order to express it.

The rhyming prose of the passage recalls the style mastered by the famous epistolographers of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, especially al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil (1135–1200), his executive administrator in Egypt, and al-ʿImād al-Iṣfahānī (1125–1201), his private secretary. They both acted as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's spokesmen, composing and disseminating his ideas and his views, and publicizing his exploits and military victories. They both also left abundant correspondence both private and official. And although later imitations of their style are commonly dismissed as verbal acrobatics, the prose of these two masters in no way interferes with the precision and clarity of their expression.⁵⁴ The few references to the building of the Cairene fortifications in the correspondence between al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn manifest the same concern for clarity of expression and address the same general themes of shelter, defense, and monumentality.⁵⁵ One can argue that the author of the inscription may have been al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil himself, not only because of the stylistic similarity between it and his own writing, but also because he was the highest administrator in Egypt who had the mastery of the language it displays. He could have been entrusted with its composition, since the supervisor Bahā' al-Dīn Qarāqūsh was notorious for his ignorance of Arabic.⁵⁶

The Completion of the Citadel by al-Kāmil

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had meant the Citadel to become the seat of the Ayyubid sultanate he was patiently constructing, but he had died in 1193 before either plan could be achieved. Before his death, he had divid-

⁵³ Dodd and Khairallah, *Image of the Word*, 1: 27–41.

⁵⁴ C. Brockelmann, "al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil," *EI*², 4: 376–77, and H. Massé, "ʿImād al-Dīn," *EI*², 3: 1157–58.

⁵⁵ Examples in Bundārī, *Sanā*, 150–51; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭat*, 1: 380.

⁵⁶ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafīyyat al-A'yān*, 7: 206, says that he saw a line written on Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's cenotaph in Damascus that was composed by al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, which strengthens the suggestion here. For Qarāqūsh, see the study by Paul Casanova, "Karakouch," in *Mémoires publiés par les Membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire* 6 (Cairo, 1897), 447–61.

ed his domains among his sons and had given minor provinces to his brother al-‘Adil and some nephews. In Egypt, his successor was his second son al-‘Azīz ‘Uthmān, who, during his short five years of rule, tried but failed to assert his authority over his brothers and kinsmen in Syria. When he died in a hunting accident in 1198, he was succeeded by his son al-Manṣūr Muḥammad, a boy of ten who, although only a nominal sovereign under the tutelage of two of his uncles, did not last on the throne for more than a year. His last regent was his father’s uncle al-‘Adil Abū Bakr who finally deposed him in 1199. This cunning survivor and master manipulator had managed between 1193 and 1199 to dominate his nephews and to bring under his control all of Egypt, Damascus, and *al-Sharq*, or the East, which was the name given at that time to Ayyubid territories in the Jazira and Anatolia. Aleppo was the only kingdom to remain in the hands of a son of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, al-Zāhir Ghāzī, who nonetheless thought it wiser eventually to marry a daughter of al-‘Adil and to nominate their son as his heir. Al-‘Adil divided his domains among his sons and some other members of the Ayyubid clan, but retained both the title of sultan and overall sovereignty. In 1200, he assigned the office of viceroy (*niyāba*) in Egypt, the most coveted and most prominent position in the sultanate, to his eldest and ablest son al-Kāmil Muḥammad, who was also named heir.⁵⁷

What work was accomplished at the Citadel during the decade following Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s death is unknown. Construction appears to have been carried on for a while, though we have no idea of its extent and duration.⁵⁸ We can assume, however, that very little was achieved before the project was abandoned altogether at an unspecified time in the early years of al-‘Azīz’s reign, and remained neglected until al-Kāmil became viceroy.⁵⁹ Neither al-‘Azīz nor his son could have devoted much attention to such a grand and expensive enterprise during that troubled time, when they were busy with intrigues, shifts of allegiance, and struggles between Ayyubid family members. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the reports on the sultan’s place of residence during that same period. Al-‘Azīz had

⁵⁷ On al-‘Adil, see Humphreys, *Ayyubid Damascus*, 87-123; Holt, *Crusades*, 60-63.

⁵⁸ Bundārī, *Sanā*, 119; Abū Shāma, *Rawḍatayn*, 1, 2: 687; al-As‘ad ibn Mamātī, *Kitāb Qawānīn al-Dawāwīn*, ed. ‘Azīz S. ‘Aṭīyya (Cairo, 1943), 341, speaks of the continued financing of the works during the early years of al-‘Azīz’s reign.

⁵⁹ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 2: 203; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 2: 54.

resided in the Citadel for a while during his father's lifetime, probably to supervise work in it, but moved to the Dār al-Wizāra upon ascending the throne.⁶⁰ The official seat of the kingdom of Egypt remained in the Dār al-Wizāra throughout his reign and the short interlude when al-Manṣūr ruled. Al-ʿAdil, too, stayed at the Dār al-Wizāra every time he was in Egypt and never lived in the Citadel.⁶¹ The status of the Dār al-Wizāra was reflected in the alternate name applied to it—Dār al-Sulṭān (Seat of the Sultan)—probably to show that it had been elevated from a vizier's to a sultan's palace.⁶²

Things changed when al-Kāmil became viceroy in 1200. He seems to have taken an immediate interest in completing the Citadel and in turning it into his official residence. Perhaps he wanted to have his own power base as the ruler of the country and the deputy of the sultan. To that end, he refurbished its fortifications, strengthened its towers and added a few new ones, and constructed several palatial structures in or next to it. When all was completed, he moved there with his family and court in 604 A.H. (1207–8), while his father was sultan.⁶³

Al-Kāmil also seems to have decided not to continue the idea of fortifying the two cities of al-Fuṣṭāṭ and al-Qāhira when he realized the excessive financial burden it would impose. The decision was apparently made after the death of Qarāqūsh in 1200, or so Maqrīzī implies.⁶⁴ The project had been dragging on for some time, but no serious effort were made to complete it. Ayyubid rulers before al-Kāmil, and even al-Kāmil himself, were prompted in periods of danger to fortify areas from which the expected attacks might come, but the project would fall into neglect again when the crisis had passed.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 372; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 1: 364, and 2: 203.

⁶¹ The Dār al-Wizāra is explicitly named as the seat of the kingdom during al-ʿAziz's rule, Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 3: 38, and in the period of al-Aḡḡal, *ibid.*, 93, and that of al-ʿAdil, whenever he was in Cairo, *ibid.*, 162 (601 A.H. [1203]), 207 (607 A.H. [1209]), and 226 (611 A.H. [1213]).

⁶² Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 1: 438; Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Siyar*, 4, 1: 7, 16–18; ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 3: 242.

⁶³ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 373; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 204.

⁶⁴ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 1: 379–80. MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 103, mistakenly translates Maqrīzī's sentence as referring to the halting of the work after the death of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, although it is clearly referring to Qarāqūsh's death. Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 2: 53, states that the work was not stopped after the death of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.

⁶⁵ Creswell, *M.A.E.*, 2: 55–59, and MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 111–14, discuss the extent of work done in the period after Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 116, states that al-Muzaḡffar Taqī al-Dīn ʿUmar, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's nephew and deputy in Egypt for

This erratic process left whole areas unwallled, especially along the Nile and the immediate vicinity of the Citadel, which meant that the Citadel could no longer depend on a larger defense system, but had to be fortified independently. The enlargement and fortification of Qarāqūsh's towers and the addition of new massive square towers at critical points along the eastern, northern, and western curtain wall may have been part of this plan.⁶⁶

The western border of the Citadel remained unchanged during al-Kāmil's reign; it seems that no substantial building was done in the adjacent areas after Ṣalāh al-Dīn died. The Citadel was, and remained for the first half century of its existence, essentially unconnected to either al-Qāhira or al-Fuṣṭāṭ and vulnerable to attacks from the west. When the defensive walls of the city's enceinte failed to reach the edges of the Citadel as planned and the whole project was dropped, the reinforcement of the part of the Citadel where al-Kāmil and his family lived and his treasury was deposited obviously became particularly urgent. Al-Kāmil probably strengthened the defenses of the southern and western sectors as he did on the northern and eastern sides, but this cannot be verified today. He also planned a service zone west of the Citadel to provide additional means of defense to replace the incomplete enceinte, in addition to establishing real and symbolic barriers between his residence and the city. He ordered the markets for horses, donkeys, and camels to be moved to the Rumayla nearer the Citadel; the area subsequently became known as the Sūq al-Khayl (Horse Market). In 1213, he also established a maydan south of the Rumayla, where the maydan built by Ibn Ṭūlūn stood more than three centuries earlier, to be used for military parades and training. To keep the maydan's lawn watered he built three tanks next to it to store water brought from the Nile.⁶⁷ The arrangement of the maydan and the Sūq al-Khayl justifiably led Casanova to credit al-

a short period, ordered the construction of stone walls around the city of al-Fuṣṭāṭ in 1185, as if it were a separate project from the general fortification plan, and (1: 181) reports al-Aḫḫāl's attempt in 1199 to build the ramparts of the city as defense against al-'Adil's impending attack from Syria (English translation in MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 112). Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Siyar*, 4, 1: 20, 27, and 2: 75, 81, reports many short-lived attempts to complete the fortifications during the rules of al-'Adil, al-Kāmil, and al-'Adil II.

⁶⁶ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 1–39; MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 127.

⁶⁷ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 374; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 228. Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Siyar*, 4, 1: 50, refers to the maydan next to the Citadel in conjunction with the celebrations after the circumcision of al-'Adil II in 1226.

Kāmil with building the royal stables under the Citadel, probably next to the maydan, to benefit from its use as pasture for the horses. Contemporary chroniclers do not mention stables as one of al-Kāmil's additions, but it stands to reason that a sultan whose army depended totally on cavalry and who chose to locate the seat of his sultanate in a citadel with a maydan next to it would have to provide considerable stabling for his horses and those of his guards and the army.

The structures al-Kāmil erected inside the Citadel are occasionally mentioned in the sources, but we know very little about what they were called, where they stood, and what they were like. Al-Idrisī says that al-Kāmil "chose the western side of the Citadel for his residence and his harem and fortified it." Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī reported that al-Kāmil "built in the Citadel palaces worthy of the sultanate, moved his treasury and private quarters there from the Dār al-Wizāra, and lived in it during his reign" (1218–38). He then adds that "the house where the Fatimid family was imprisoned was also in the Citadel," without specifying who constructed it or when. Maqrīzī and Qalqashandī, who gave the same account, also credit al-Kāmil with another structure, the Burj al-Aḥmar (Red Tower).⁶⁸

The Burj al-Aḥmar seems to have been the dungeon of choice at the Citadel; several illustrious people were imprisoned there in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. It was erroneously identified with the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam, but a number of references pieced together suggest that it actually stood opposite the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam on the western side.⁶⁹ During the first reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (1293–94), a fight between the amirs ended in the siege of the Citadel, and al-Nāṣir climbed to the Burj al-Aḥmar to speak with those who were blocking the entrance, presumably near the Bāb al-Mudarrāj.⁷⁰ During one of the fiercest fights for the throne in 1389 between Sultan Barqūq and Amir Miṅṭāsh, the sultan and the caliph rode together down from the Citadel through the Bāb al-Iṣṭabl, which opened onto the maydan, and stopped in front of the Burj al-Aḥmar

⁶⁸ Idrisī, *Anwār*, 32; Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī, *al-Mughrib fī Hulā al-Maghrib*, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Hulā Ḥadrat al-Qāhira*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār (Cairo, 1970), 390–91; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 372; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 204; idem, *Sulūk*, 1: 202. They both copied their information from Ibn 'Abd-al-Zāhir's lost book of *Khīṭaṭ*.

⁶⁹ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 376–77, note by the editor Muḥammad Ramzī.

⁷⁰ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 29, fol. 78; Baybars, *Tuhfa*, 140; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 800.

behind the guest house (*dār al-ḍiyāfa*).⁷¹ This latter structure stood north of the Citadel either where the *daftarkhāne* of Muhammad ‘Ali now stands, or further to the northwest.⁷² This places the Burj al-Aḥmar somewhere along the western wall of the northern enclosure not far from the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ.

There is no tower on that wall today, but the map of the *Description de l’Égypte* shows two square towers behind the curtain wall between the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ and the northwestern corner of the northern enclosure, whose dilapidated remains were razed by Muḥammad ‘Ali in the nineteenth century (see fig. 8). In plan and size, they greatly resemble other Ayyubid towers, the Burj Kirkiliyān (Tower of the Forty Serpents) and the Burj al-Ṭurfa (Tower of the Marvel), along the north wall. They must have been built in the Ayyubid period to fortify the original wall of the northern enclosure and to control access through and defend the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ before the extensions undertaken in the late Mamluk period pushed the boundary further out and rendered them obsolete.⁷³ The events reported in the sources as having taken place in the Burj al-Aḥmar suggest that it was the larger of the two towers standing right behind the *bāshūra* of the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ. This implies that there was no separating wall between the military and the palatial parts of the Citadel until later, for no source speaks of a barrier between the Burj al-Aḥmar and the *dār al-salṭana* (the private quarters of the sultan), which was presumably in the present-day southern enclosure. The tower was renovated by Baybars with ashlar stone sometime after 1260.⁷⁴

Casanova, and MacKenzie after him, ascribed to al-Kāmil several other structures inside the Citadel, although no source explicitly attributes any of them to him. They include the iwan (which was the

⁷¹ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tāriḫ*, 9, 1: 81.

⁷² William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans* (Berkeley, 1955), vol. 15, map no. 7, Cairo: citadel, locates the palace north of the Citadel. Ibn al-Furāt, *Tāriḫ*, 9, 1: 82, says that the sheikh Niẓām al-Dīn was buried in his khanqah over the high place (*sharaf*), next to the *dār al-ḍiyāfa*. This will push the location of the guest house further northwest than the *daftarkhāne*. Sakhāwī, *Dhayl*, 45, 343, reports the building of the mausoleum and madrasa of Qanibāy al-Jarkasī, and specifies that it was near the *dār al-ḍiyāfa*. This madrasa still exists today (no. 136 on the 1952 map of Islamic monuments of Cairo), although it is dated to the year 1503, and Sakhāwī placed its building in 1442. The latter site is more plausible.

⁷³ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 31–33, and fig. 13.

⁷⁴ Ibn-Shaddād, *Tāriḫ al-Zāhir*, 341.

main audience hall), the Bāb al-Qulla and the Bāb al-Sirr, a mosque, dovecotes (*abrāj al-ḥamām*), the Qāʿat al-Šāḥib (Hall of the Vizier), and a royal library (*khizānat al-kutub*).⁷⁵ It seems that any structure mentioned in the sources before the time of al-Zāhir Baybars was credited to al-Kāmil, although many of his Ayyubid successors or the early Mamluk sultans before Baybars could have been responsible for some building in the quarter of a century that separates the two reigns. His immediate successor, al-ʿAdil II (r. 1238–40), did sponsor some work during his short reign, although no specific structure is ascribed to him.⁷⁶ Casanova’s arguments can only validate the attribution of the dovecotes, the mosque, and the royal library to al-Kāmil. A source he did not know supports his crediting of the first iwan at the Citadel to al-Kāmil: Baybars al-Manšūrī, writing in the early fourteenth century, mentions the ceremony of recognition of the second Abbasid caliph al-Ḥākim as having been held at the “Iwān al-Kabīr al-Kāmili” at the Citadel in 1261, which could only mean that the structure was constructed by al-Kāmil.⁷⁷

A DĀR AL-ʿADL (hall of justice) should also be added to the list, for it too is called in the sources the Dār al-ʿAdl al-Kāmiliyya.⁷⁸ It was located at the narrow end of the northern enclosure where it meets the southern enclosure today and overlooked the *durkāh* (canopied entrance or vestibule) of the Bāb al-Qulla (see fig. 14).⁷⁹ It probably belonged to the first stage in the construction of the Citadel’s administrative section since this area contained many other administrative buildings such as the Dār al-Niyāba (Residence of the Vicegerent) and the Qāʿat al-Šāḥib. It is impossible, however, to fix a date for its construction or for any of al-Kāmil’s other structures, since the sources speak of them only in passing without even providing their names.

There is no mention of the DĀR AL-ʿADL of al-Kāmil as having been used as a hall of justice during al-Kāmil’s time, although the name implies that it was. During the reign of al-Šāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, al-Kāmil’s second son, the structure appears to have been used as it was intended. One account states that in 1239 Sultan al-

⁷⁵ Casanova, “Histoire,” 592–601; MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 127–34. Some of Casanova’s conjectures can be interpreted in different ways.

⁷⁶ Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Siyar*, 4, 2: 96, 119.

⁷⁷ Casanova, “Histoire,” 592, uses an unspecified Coptic source to claim that the word *hibān* used there is the same as *iwān* and should be considered a direct reference to al-Kāmil’s building. Baybars al-Manšūrī is quoted in ʿAynī, *Iqd*, 1: 348.

Ṣāliḥ delegated the authority to hold the sessions of *al-naẓar fī-l-maẓālim* (which literally means “to consider or to look into acts of injustice”) to a triad of military men (*jund*), in a specific but unnamed place. Two of them are further identified: the first was al-Sharīf Shams al-Dīn, the judge of the army (*qāḍī al-‘askar*), and the second, named *al-faqīh* ‘Abbās, was the preacher (*khaṭīb*) of the Citadel’s mosque.⁸⁰ Both must have lived in the Citadel in order to attend to their work, which implies that the DĀR AL-‘ADL they sat in was that of al-Kāmil. The structure was apparently neglected after al-Ṣāliḥ’s death, for the sessions of *maẓālim* were moved out of the Citadel and were held in the madrasas he had built in Fatimid al-Qāhira (1239–45) during the reign of the first Mamluk sultan al-Mu‘izz Aybak (r. 1250–57).⁸¹ By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the DĀR AL-‘ADL of al-Kāmil was given a new use as the residence of a great amir and office holder, Sayf al-Dīn Ṭirjī, who had duties that required his constant presence at the Citadel.⁸²

Al-Kāmil’s plan fixed the general configuration of the Citadel for centuries to come: the northern part became the fortified military enclosure; the southern part contained the ceremonial and private quarters of the sultan; and at the foot of the hill, to the west of the Citadel, lay the services necessary for an army of cavalymen, from the markets of horses and other pack animals to the maydan for equestrian exercises and stables for the horses of the sultan and his close amirs. It is very difficult to determine the location of al-Kāmil’s palaces on the present plan of the Citadel, but if the suggested circumference of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s Citadel is correct, then they should have been clustered in the northwestern part of the southern enclosure overlooking the Sūq al-Khayl.

In 1206, just as his son was completing the palaces in the Citadel, al-‘Adil ordered the rebuilding and the refurbishing of the citadel of Damascus. This project may have been started to repair the damages caused by earthquakes in 1200 and 1201, but it was most probably also designed to strengthen its obsolete defenses and reorganize its

⁷⁸ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 63, where he is reporting the disobedience of an amir who barricaded himself in the old DĀR AL-‘ADL of al-Kāmil, which was then his residence in the Citadel; Baybars, *Tuhfa*, 224.

⁷⁹ For the various meanings of *durkāh*, see Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 47.

⁸⁰ Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, *Siyar*, 4, 2: 107; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 5: 242.

⁸¹ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 208; idem, *Sulūk*, 1: 373.

⁸² Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31, fol. 99; the amir lived there in the year 1330.

interiors.⁸³ The work on these fortifications was completed between 1206 and 1217, as attested by the many inscriptions on the walls of several towers, for, unlike the citadel of Cairo which has only a foundation inscription, the citadel of Damascus has at least seven inscriptions from the Ayyubid period.⁸⁴ This may be the result of differences in financial planning and construction strategy. In Damascus, the sources say, al-ʿAdil assigned to each of his senior amirs the responsibility for building a new tower in the Citadel, a procedure that saved him large sums of money. It was also shrewd politics: in Damascus, al-ʿAdil had with him all the prominent and consequently dangerously fickle and ambitious Ṣalāḥī amirs, who were formerly attached to his brother Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (hence the name) and who did not necessarily support him. By compelling some of them to sponsor and supervise the construction of the towers, he not only kept them busy but absorbed some of their income to the service of the state and elicited proof of their loyalty and submission.⁸⁵ In Egypt, both more secure and farther from the scene of the action, remained only those reliable amirs, who were either very junior or simply more to be trusted, chosen by al-ʿAdil to stay with al-Kāmil.

This method of distributing responsibilities would be encountered again and again under the Ayyubids and the Mamluks in both Syria and Egypt. The single exception was the Citadel of the Mountain, where construction was paid for directly by the sultan's treasury and labor was supplied by Frankish war captives, a practice forbidden by the Qur'an, but widely practiced.⁸⁶ The use of prisoners of war is attested from the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn by the Andalusian traveler Ibn Jubayr who saw them working on constructions in Cairo and explained their forced employment as a way of relieving the burden on "those of the Muslims [presumably peasants and the city's riffraff] who might have been used in this public work."⁸⁷ Egyptian sources corroborate this report. Maqrīzī, for example, mentions that Ṣalāḥ al-

⁸³ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 3: 182; ʿAbd al-Qādir Rihāwī, *Qalʿat Dimashq* (Damascus, 1979), 65-71. The main source of information for the rebuilding of the Damascus Citadel is Abū Shāma, *al-Dhayl ʿala-l-Rawḍatayn*, ed. M. Zāhid al-Kawtharī (Cairo, 1947).

⁸⁴ Six of these inscriptions carry the name and titles of al-ʿAdil; see Rihāwī, *Qalʿat Dimashq*, 276-78.

⁸⁵ Humphreys, *Ayyubid Damascus*, 148; also previously noted by Jean Sauvaget in his "La citadelle de Damas," in *Syria* 2 (1930): 59-90 and 216-41, esp. 226.

⁸⁶ Qurʾān, 76: 8-9 for the injunction against the use of prisoners for forced labor.

⁸⁷ Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, 25; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 204.

Dīn summoned Qarāqūsh to Acre to rebuilt its fortifications in 1187, and that he came with his “tools, animals, and prisoners.”⁸⁸ In 1219, al-Kāmil used prisoners in one of his projects in Giza across the river from al-Fuṣṭāt. During the reign of his son al-‘Adil II, a group of Frankish captives were again chained and put to work on the Citadel. In 1243, al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Din Ayyūb sent the Frankish prisoners to work on the construction of his new citadel on Rawḍa Island.⁸⁹ There are no such reports for the large Syrian state projects, probably because it was safer to send Frankish prisoners to Cairo than to Syria where they could conceivably have been rescued by an attack from their coreligionists in the Latin kingdoms.

Both citadel projects, in Cairo and Damascus, appear to have been part of a larger plan initiated by al-‘Adil to restore and strengthen all the major citadels in his domain. Between 1205 and 1215, a period of relative tranquillity and a semblance of unity in the Ayyubid realm, one new citadel was built at the Jabal al-Ṭūr (Mount Thabor) and the citadels of Aleppo, Bosra, and ‘Ajlūn were refurbished in addition to those at Damascus and Cairo.⁹⁰ This is probably why Creswell ascribed the large towers in the northern enclosure to al-‘Adil rather than al-Kāmil, although all the Arabic sources speak of the latter as the one who completed the Citadel. From the very beginning of his term as viceroy, al-Kāmil resided in the Citadel, presumably to supervise its construction. Al-‘Adil was almost always in Syria during the period between 1200 and his death in 1218, and could not have supervised any major work in Egypt. When he visited Cairo, he stayed at the Dār al-Wizāra and conducted the affairs of the sultanate from there, while al-Kāmil remained at the Citadel, clearly to underline his independence.⁹¹

At some unspecified time, al-Kāmil is said to have contemplated the idea of transferring his treasury to the Citadel of Kerak in Transjordan because its isolated and rugged location provided a more reliable refuge than Cairo, but he subsequently decided to stay with his family and treasury in the Citadel of the Mountain, after having strengthened its defenses and organized its interior. Safety was always a concern at the time when princes were insecure and fearful

⁸⁸ Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 1: 126.

⁸⁹ Ibn al-Muqaffa‘, *Siyar*, 4, 2: 96, and 107.

⁹⁰ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 38–39.

⁹¹ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Maṭlūb*, 155.

of contenders who might covet their territories or their wealth.⁹² Even when external dangers had been largely curtailed, security and defensibility remained the major criteria in the choice of residence for the many competing Ayyubid princes and their dependent amirs in Syria and Egypt. A citadel afforded secure shelter for their families and belongings and a retreat in time of need. Al-Kāmil is reported to have kissed the threshold of his Citadel and said, "I saw my soul in my Citadel," which roughly means "I regained my peace of mind in my Citadel," when he returned from a particularly risky campaign in Syria.⁹³

All the little principalities that dotted the map of twelfth-century Syria and Jazira had one or more citadels in their territories that functioned as the seat of their government and the residence of their rulers or their appointees. They all included palaces, administrative buildings, barracks, and stables inside them, and support structures (*sāqiyas*, tanks, and the like) and a maydan outside. In their impregnability, monumentality, and luxury, they came to represent to these princes the physical manifestation of their power and dominion, which was emphasized by the trappings of sovereignty such as the royal insignia and the gilded titulaires carved or inscribed on their surfaces or the banners and flags hanging from their ramparts and towers. In this respect, the Citadel of Cairo did not differ from any Syrian citadel in the twelfth century, except in size and the complexity of its functions because of the large region administered from it. Two contemporary Ayyubid citadels, one in Damascus and the other in Aleppo, had comparable functions as seats of government, but neither the same importance nor the same significance.

Egypt proper had no citadels outside Cairo, but there were a series of fortresses, such as the Qal'at al-Jundi (Citadel of the Soldier) at the edge of the Sinai, built or refurbished by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, on its border with the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. These citadels were solely military in function; no independent amir, or even appointed governor and representative of the sultan, lived in or administered a region from them. All Egypt was ruled from the Citadel of the Mountain. Minor amirs were sent out to the provinces as governors to carry out

⁹² A relevant passage about the reasons for building the citadel of Mayyāfāriqin in 1012 by Naṣr al-Dawla ibn Marwān is in Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Fāriqī, *Tārīkh al-Fāriqī*, ed. B. A. 'Awaḍ (Cairo, 1959), 107–8.

⁹³ Sibṭ, *Mir'āt*, 700–1.

the decisions of the center. This governing structure may have been envisioned for Egypt because the country was perceived by its people and their rulers alike as a clearly delimited entity with a specific character and fixed natural boundaries. Throughout history the country had been ruled from a center, and Egyptians displayed a proto-national affinity with their land long before the evolution of nationalism in modern times.⁹⁴ This idea could only enhance the significance of the Citadel of the Mountain as the center of political power in Egypt. It also meant that the functions that the Citadel was intended to fulfill were both more numerous and more complex compared to those expected of the Syrian citadels.

A few years after al-ʿAdil’s death in 1218, al-Kāmil had managed through a combination of alliances, campaigns, and diplomacy to assert himself as the supreme monarch over his brothers and cousins in Syria and Jazira, effectively deserving the title and prerogative of sultan. He organized his sultanate following the example of his father and his uncle before him into a confederation of Syro-Jaziran principalities ruled by family members and dependents, over whom he could exercise substantial control from his capital in Egypt. This hierarchical structure headed by al-Kāmil reinforced the importance of the Citadel of the Mountain even further as the seat of the Ayyubid empire where decisions concerning the whole realm were made. The paramount role of the sultan and his immediate entourage elevated it to the political, administrative, military, and symbolic center, first of the Ayyubid, then of the Mamluk, sultanate. Thirty years after his death, it had finally fulfilled the function sought by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. From then throughout the Ayyubid and Mamluk period, the Citadel remained, with brief interruptions, the seat of the sultan and his court.

Al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb and the Rawḍa Citadel

Al-ʿAdil II succeeded his father al-Kāmil to the throne of Egypt in 1238, but was unable to contain the ambitions of his older brother al-

⁹⁴ This idea that Egypt had a specific character and was a clearly defined entity is the theme of many historical and analytical studies. See, for example, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge, 1986). A lengthy study of the character of Egypt is Jamāl Ḥamdān, *Shakḥsiyyat Miṣr, Dirāsa fī ʿAbqariyyat al-Makān* (Cairo, 1970), especially the introduction and the first two chapters.

Şāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb. In the following two years, al-Şāliḥ, originally invested by his father with the kingdom of the East (northeastern Syria and parts of the Jazira), managed to wrest power from his brother and in 1240 installed himself as the new sultan in Cairo.⁹⁵ He added Damascus to his possessions in 1245 after a long and bloody series of conspiracies, campaigns, and betrayals. The ascent of al-Şāliḥ caused an unusually vicious struggle among Ayyubid princes and destroyed the solidarity that had characterized the family's history. The last vestiges of the system of collective sovereignty—regional ruling princes recognizing the ultimate authority of a sultan—that had been adopted by all the preceding great Ayyubid sultans—Şalāḥ al-Dīn, al-ʿAdil, and al-Kāmil—withered away. Al-Şāliḥ's character played as important a role in this development as did the circumstances of the period. He was an overly ambitious and suspicious man, embittered and alienated from his family. He had confined his brother al-ʿAdil II in the Burj al-ʿAfiya (Convalescence Tower) at the Citadel and cut off all communication with him before he had him assassinated in his prison, a vile act unprecedented in Ayyubid history.⁹⁶ In the beginning of his ascent to independence, he had relied heavily on the Khawarizmian mercenaries who had been in the Jazira since the death of their master Jalāl al-Dīn Khawārizm Shah in 1231, and later on he purchased and trained Turkish mamluks, whose number by far surpassed the mamluks of his peers or predecessors. During the course of his reign, they became his most trusted soldiers, used to counter the plots against his person and his throne. He kept them apart from the rest of the army and showered them with all kinds of favors. The political power that they acquired during al-Şāliḥ's reign and the limiting of their loyalties to his person rather than his family eventually induced them to drop their allegiance to the Ayyubid house after the death of their master in 1249 and to seize the government for themselves.

Although al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb was noted for his excessive enthusiasm for buildings, especially pleasance pavilions, maydans, and gardens, he contributed very little to the architectural development of the Citadel of the Mountain.⁹⁷ He only sponsored one new structure

⁹⁵ Humphreys, *Ayyubid Damascus*, 264.

⁹⁶ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 326; Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 241. The name Burj al-ʿAfiya does not appear again in the sources.

⁹⁷ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 183; idem, *Sulūk*, 1: 301, 341; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 5: 278.

there, the Qā'a al-Şālihiyya, and refurbished the maydan at the foot of the spur. The *qā'a* was one of the Citadel's most monumental formal halls and remained in use for a variety of functions long after al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb's death.⁹⁸ Exactly where it was is not known; it possibly stood somewhere in the northern tip of the present southern enclosure within the boundary of al-Kāmil's royal complex. It was once used as a prison for an important amir, which means that it could not have been connected to the private apartments of the Mamluk sultans situated in the central section of the enclosure.⁹⁹

If al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb built very little at the Citadel of the Mountain, it was primarily because he decided to abandon it less than a year after he had ascended the throne. The multitude of intrigues, plots, internecine fights, and the constant shifts in power that plagued his career before he seized control in Egypt and southern Syria had convinced him that he needed greater security in his capital. He sought it both by surrounding himself with handpicked and trusted mamluks and by moving away from the city's population and even more from the old regime's amirs and the multitude of troops that resided in the Citadel of the Mountain, of whose loyalty he was suspicious. To that end, he resolved to build a new citadel as his residence in Cairo. Another reason for that decision may be the same as that usually given for the building of Samarra by the Abbasid caliph al-Mu'taṣim in 836, namely that the other regiments stationed in Baghdad and the population objected to the Turks in their midst.¹⁰⁰ In Cairo, there was no popular reaction as there had been in Baghdad, but contemporary sources refer to trouble in the city and among the troops caused by al-Şāliḥ's Turkish mamluks. Resentment of their rapid rise in the army was mounting and feelings were running high.¹⁰¹

Al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb chose for his new citadel a perfectly secluded site, Miṣr Island (known today as Rawḍa Island), in the middle of the Nile opposite the city of al-Fuṣṭāṭ and away from the metropolitan area (see fig. 3). The Nile presented a barrier between the site and the city,

⁹⁸ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 212, states that it was a royal residence until it burned down in 1285, but Zāhiri, *Zubda*, 86, says that it remained in use until the building of the Qaṣr al-Ablaḡ in 1311, which is more plausible.

⁹⁹ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 29, fol. 95; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 835. The event took place thirteen years after the *qā'a* burned down, which means that it had been restored after the incident.

¹⁰⁰ Ayalon, "The Muslim City and the Mamluk Military Aristocracy," 315–19.

¹⁰¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1, 1: 269.

which he made even more formidable by widening the rivulet that separated the island from the city shore and by shifting its inlet so that water could run in it year-round instead of only in the flood season. The island had been endowed *in toto* by Taqī al-Dīn ‘Umar, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s nephew, upon his Madrasa al-Taḳawīyya in al-Fuṣṭāṭ which he had established in 1171 (it is no longer extant). Al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb started by renting the island from the supervisor of Taqī al-Dīn’s waḳf for a period of sixty years and ordered most of the buildings on it demolished to clear the ground for his new citadel.¹⁰² He then ordered the building of a defensive wall reinforced by towers, whose number varies in the sources from seventeen to sixty. In any case it was a large number for the citadel’s size, and may have been meant to underline the seclusion of the new citadel. The majority of structures inside it and along its walls, including the towers which overlooked the Nile, were either residential or pleasure constructions. The sources mention belvederes (*manāẓir*, sg., *manẓara*), porches (*maqā’id*, sg., *maq’ad*), and residential halls (*qā’āt*, sg., *qā’a*) located along the two sides of the citadel facing the river.¹⁰³ One of these halls survived until the coming of the French at the beginning of the nineteenth century and was illustrated in the *Description de l’Égypte*.¹⁰⁴ It was located at the southern tip of Rawḍa Island and was contiguous with the eastern wall of the ninth-century Miqyās (Nilometer). It was composed of a two-iwan, rectangular space with a dome in the center in the form of an oblong supported on four sets of columns, each composed of three columns arranged as a triangle. It was bordered from the north and west by unidentifiable courts and rooms, and was reached through a vestibule that led to a double bent entrance. The plan and arrangement of this hall are reminiscent of a number of other Ayyubid and Artuqid palaces scattered in the citadels of Syria and Jazira and dating from the late twelfth to the mid thirteenth century, such as those in the citadels of Aleppo, Ṣahyūn (Saone), Najm, and Diyarbakir.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Ibn al-Muqaffa’, *Siyar*, 4, 2: 107, laments the destruction of St. Jacob Church; Sibṭī, *Mir’āt*, 737; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 183, speak of more than thirty *masjids* demolished; MacKenzie, *Cairo*, 72–74.

¹⁰³ Ibn al-Muqaffa’, *Siyar*, 4, 2: 117, Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 185; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 5: 278.

¹⁰⁴ *Description de l’Égypte, état moderne, planches*, vol. 1, pl. 23; redrawn and discussed in Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 84–87.

¹⁰⁵ Tabbāa, “Circles of Power,” 181–91. Oktay Aslanapa, “Erster Bericht über die Ausgrabungen des Palastes von Diyarbakir,” *Istanbulur Mitteilungen* 12 (1962):

The construction of the Rawḍa Citadel lasted for three years (1240–43), at the end of which it was close enough to completion to allow al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb to move in with his family, servants, and his estimated one thousand select *garde du corps*. He made the citadel the *dār al-saltāna* and lived there for the remainder of his reign. The Citadel of the Mountain, however, was not totally deserted and even appears to have retained some of its functions and symbolic significance: the barracks of the rest of the Egyptian army and the bureaucratic apparatus of the state remained there. But al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb's moving out no doubt had a marked effect on its status, especially when he transferred the dockyards (*şinā'a*) for his warships from Mişr al-Fuṣṭāṭ to the Rawḍa Island and ordered his amirs to build new residences for themselves on the Giza shore opposite his new citadel, effectively creating a new center of power in the city.¹⁰⁶ A strange symbolic rivalry must have ensued between the two citadels during that period: both were considered centers of government, and every time al-Şāliḥ's army won a campaign, both were decorated for the victory celebration.¹⁰⁷

The Citadel of Rawḍa had almost entirely disappeared less than a century after its building. It was deserted shortly after the death of al-Şāliḥ, and successive Mamluk sultans scavenged its marble, stone, and timber for their own constructions in the city. Its memory survived only in the name of al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb's mamluks. This regiment of Şāliḥī mamluks, mostly of Kipchak Turkish origin, were eventually called the "Baḥrī" mamluks, a name deriving either from their place of residence, the Qal'at al-Baḥr, (*baḥr*, means sea in Arabic, and in Egypt is the name for the Nile), or from their function, which may have been to man the warships which would be sent out to protect Nilotic navigation and the riverine cities.¹⁰⁸ The transfer of the dockyards to the island and the assembly of a standing fleet around the Rawḍa Citadel, both decreed by al-Şāliḥ, were measures presumably taken to face up to a possible Frankish sea attack on the Delta cities of Damietta and Rosetta.¹⁰⁹ If this was the mamluks' assign-

115–28. Paul Deschamps, "Le Château de Saone et ses premiers seigneurs," *Syria* 16 (1935): 73–88.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn al-Muqaffa', *Siyar*, 4, 2: 137.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij*, 5:339.

¹⁰⁸ Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 1: 340, for the first explanation; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1, 1: 270, for the second. See also David Ayalon, "Baḥriyya," *El²*, 1: 944–5.

¹⁰⁹ Maqrizī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 183.

ment, then calling them the seamen (*al-bahriyya*) was certainly appropriate.

These mamluks of the Nile soon became the real masters of the Citadel of the Mountain. Shortly after the death of al-Şāliḥ in 1249, they killed his son Tūrān-Shāh, who had arrived only three months earlier from the Jazira to assume the throne and to lead the Egyptian army in the counterattack against the Crusaders led by the French King Louis IX in Damietta. They then wrested the power from the Ayyubid house and established a sultanate that was to last more than two and a half centuries (1250-1517). During this long period, they made the Citadel of the Mountain the center of the state where sultans, amirs, and army resided and where government business was conducted, just as Şalāḥ al-Dīn had intended.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EARLY MAMLUK PERIOD

The assassination of Tūrān-Shāh by his father's mamluks in 1250 marked the end of the Ayyubid sultanate in Egypt.¹ But the Ṣāliḥī Mamluk amirs who contrived to eliminate him did not seem to have any clear plan for seizing the government. It took them several attempts before they could solve the problem of ruling without a legitimizing Ayyubid figurehead. In the meantime, Syria remained controlled by its Ayyubid princes for another decade. The most prominent of those princes, al-Nāṣir Yūsuf (the great grandson and namesake of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn), led many futile attempts to bring Egypt back to the Ayyubid fold. The Mamluks managed to hold on to their recently gained rule of Egypt, but it was not until the Mongol invasion of Syria in 1260 and the fall of the already weakened Ayyubid principalities there that they had a chance to prove their military and political superiority by defeating the Mongols and to extend their hegemony to almost all the Ayyubid territories.

The Reign of al-Mu'izz Aybak (1250–57)

When the Ṣāliḥī amirs convened to choose a sovereign after they had killed Tūrān-Shāh, they settled, surprisingly, on a woman. Her name was Shajar al-Durr (Trees of Pearl), and she was, like them, a slave of either Turkish or Armenian origin. She had been the favorite concubine of their late master al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb and his unfailingly faithful companion throughout his long and torturous career before he ascended the throne. She became the first and only sultana in Islamic history who had all the prerogatives of a sultan's rule accorded her. Coins were struck and the Friday khutbas were pronounced in her name as the queen (*malika*) of the Muslims and mother of al-Malik al-Manṣūr Khalīl (*umm Khalīl*), the son she bore al-Ṣāliḥ, who died in infancy during his father's lifetime. Her reign, however, did not last long. She was forced to relinquish the title

¹ Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 26–34; Holt, *Crusades*, 82–89.

under growing pressure less than three months after her investiture, though she maintained her hold on the government until she died in 1257.

Most Mamluk sources disapproved of her appointment on religious grounds, but they praised her strong, resolute character and wisdom, an opinion shared by her Šāliḥī amirs. They chose her as sultana partly because they appreciated her qualities and her loyalty to their deceased master al-Šāliḥ, and partly for the crucial role they expected her to play in the transfer of political power from the Ayyubids to themselves. Among the reasons for choosing her as well was the fact that she controlled the Citadel of the Mountain, showing that it remained the symbolic and effective center of the sultanate for the army and amirs of al-Šāliḥ, even though the Rawḍa Citadel was still the residence of the Baḥrī mamluks.² Throughout the Mamluk period, occupying the Citadel of the Mountain signified a *de facto* domination.

Shajar al-Durr appears to have balked at abdicating; a compromise was reached when she was talked into marrying a senior Šāliḥī amir, ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak al-Turkmānī, who had been the *atābek al-‘asākīr* (commander-in-chief of the army), to share power with her. Aybak assumed the title *al-mu‘izz* (the succor). But a few days after his investiture with the sultanate, a dissatisfied faction of the Baḥrī amirs forced him to share the rule with a minor Ayyubid prince, al-Ashraf Mūsā, who, they hoped, would be both the legitimizing cover for Mamluk rule vis-à-vis the disgruntled Ayyubid princes in Syria and their entering wedge to domination. Musa’s name alone was struck on coins, but Aybak retained real power and, in true Ayyubid fashion, worked hard at building his own corps of mamluks, al-Mamālīk al-Mu‘izziyya.

The Baḥrī leader, Fāris al-Dīn Aqṭāy al-Jamadār, began to act as an independent ruler in direct challenge to Aybak’s authority, and even assumed a royal title, *al-malik al-jawād* (the generous). He also sent to the Ayyubid lord of Hama, al-Muẓaffar, asking for his daughter in marriage, a marriage that would enhance his prestige and reinforce his political standing. When al-Muẓaffar agreed, Aybak was greatly alarmed, especially, we are told, when in 1254 Aqṭāy asked to bring the Ayyubid princess to the Citadel to live with him, imply-

² Ibn Shāhin al-Malṭī, *Nuzhat al-Asaṭīn fī man Wullīyya Miṣr min al-Salāṭīn*, ed. M. K. D. ‘Alī (Cairo, 1987), 67.

ing that al-Mu‘izz would move to the city.³ Aybak was torn between refusing Aqṭāy’s demand, which would have increased the rift between the two and their opposing parties, or allowing him to move to the Citadel. The latter choice would “permit Aqṭāy to strengthen his hold on the Citadel, so it would be impossible for al-Mu‘izz to evict him later, which would translate into Aqṭāy having the upper hand in ruling.”⁴ This incident set a precedent in Mamluk history: time and again, factions would fight over the Citadel as a way either of upholding or imposing their leader as sultan. Aybak finally resorted to a radical solution: he arranged for Aqṭāy’s assassination at the Citadel, forced his Bahri supporters to flee Egypt, and deposed the Ayyubid prince, thus becoming the sole ruler of the country. But even then, it seems that the legitimacy question was still unresolved; Aybak’s coins carried the name of al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, with his own name appearing only after that of his deceased master.⁵ It seems that a Mamluk state was still insecure on its own, with local groups and foreign powers resenting the slave origin of its grandees; claiming the legacy of al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb was among the few ways available for Aybak to hold on to the rule.

During his seven-year reign, Aybak resided with Shajar al-Durr in the palaces left by the Ayyubids at the Citadel and appears to have added nothing to them. On the contrary, he is noted chiefly for his neglect of the architectural achievements of his predecessors, perhaps in a deliberate attempt on his part to efface their traces. He abandoned al-Kāmil’s maydan at the foot of the Citadel of the Mountain, deserted the Rawḍa Citadel, and stripped expensive construction materials, such as marble, wood, and iron grilles from it to build a new madrasa in al-Fuṣṭāṭ.⁶ Aybak may have felt compelled to endow the Madrasa al-Mu‘izziyya to conform to the practice expected of a Muslim ruler at that time and to follow the examples of his Ayyubid predecessors. But it seems that he had very little interest in diverting his energy or his financial resources to sponsoring large architectural projects. He found the easiest solution in confiscating an extant

³ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 388; Baybars, *Tuḥfa*, 34; Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 259.

⁴ Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1: 58–59. Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 10–12, and Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:383, have a similar report.

⁵ Paul Balog, *The Coinage of the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt and Syria* (New York, 1964), 75–76.

⁶ ‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 1: 44; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Intiṣār li Wāsiṭat ‘Iqd al-Amṣār*, ed. K. Vollers (Cairo, 1893), 4:35, 53–54, 92–93.

structure, the Dār al-Mulk (Palace of Sovereignty), and turning it into a madrasa, and in appropriating the materials for its building from the Rawḍa Citadel. In so doing, he saved money and erased at one stroke both an Ayyubid symbol and a real danger, since the Rawḍa Citadel had been the stronghold of the Baḥrī amirs, his serious contenders to the throne, until he had ordered them out in 1251.⁷ If he had left it intact with its fortifications and residences, the Baḥrī amirs would have been able to use it as a power base Aybak could not control. This was especially critical at the time when Aqṭāy and his party formed an almost independent authority in Egypt. His expropriation of the madrasa's site also served both goals. The Dār al-Mulk was built by the Fatimid vizier al-Afḍal and refurbished by al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb to be used as a guest house since it faced his palaces at the Rawḍa Citadel across the Nile.⁸ Replacing it with a madrasa and its endowed services helped break the centrality of the Rawḍa Citadel in the city and effaced the memories of previous rulers attached to both structures.

Casanova attributed an important structure at the Citadel of the Mountain, the Qā'at al-'Awāmīd (Qā'a of the Columns), to Shajar al-Durr, but the source he used records only that she was responsible for some sort of a dais (*martaba*), or maybe a throne, in the *qā'a*.⁹ The real builder of this *qā'a* must have been al-Kāmil, although this is not recorded anywhere. It is first mentioned in 1254, when al-Mu'izz Aybak posted three of his mamluks in its vestibule (*dihlīz*) to kill Fāris al-Dīn Aqṭāy.¹⁰ This account indicates that the *qā'a* shared the

⁷ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 381, specifies that Aybak ordered the evacuation of the citadel; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 23, states that the Rawḍa Citadel was deserted by the "Turks."

⁸ Ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij*, 5: 334; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13: 196, comments that "although the madrasa's span from the outside is of the best construction, its interior space is not so impressive"; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1: 60; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 14, say that its *dihlīz* is very wide and very long, while the structure itself is proportionally small. Aybak was probably trying to achieve monumentality without paying much attention to the interior of the madrasa which would not carry as weighty a message as would the façade.

⁹ Casanova, "Histoire," 602–3, his source, Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1, 1: 286, clearly says that *martabat khātūn* (dais of the lady), which is in the Qā'at al-'Awāmīd, is attributed to Shajar al-Durr. For the various meanings of *martaba*, see Ghālib, *Mawsū'at*, 370; for the various meanings of *qā'a*, see Goitein, *Daily Life*, 63–64; Saleh Lamei Mostafa, *Madrasa, Hanqah und Mausoleum des Barquq in Kairo: mit einem Überblick über Bauten aus der Epoche der Familie Barquq* (Glückstadt, 1982), glossary, p. 177.

¹⁰ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 390, *idem.*, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 383; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1, 1: 291;

same vestibule with the treasury (*khizāna*), which would be plausible, since sultans used to keep the treasury within the confines of their private quarters. The Qā'at al-'Awāmīd was probably a principal reception hall, accessible to amirs, among a series of other structures forming in their totality al-Kāmil's *dār al-salṭana*, where the sultan, his wives, concubines, children, and eunuchs lived. It should have been located in the area closest to the public and ceremonial parts of the palatial complex so that to enter it an amir would not have to go through the sultan's private quarters. If the general locations of private and public spaces in the later stages in the development of the palatial complex followed the space assignments that were established under al-Kāmil, then we may infer that the *qā'a* overlooked the Qarāfa al-Ṣughra (Little Cemetery) to the southwest within the limits of the original confines of the Ayyubid citadel.

A reference to a later use for the Qā'at al-'Awāmīd stresses its public and ceremonial character: when Baybars convened the notables of his sultanate to verify the pedigree of the first Abbasid refugee to his court in 1261, the meeting took place there.¹¹ The *qā'a*'s function changed at some unrecorded time, for in the fifteenth century it appears to have become strictly reserved for the harem and is listed as the private residence of the sultan's favorite wife.¹² This may have been one of its purposes from the beginning, and its accessibility to amirs during Aybak's reign may have been due to the unusual status of Shajar al-Durr. It is possible that it was intended as a reception hall for the ladies, elevated to some sort of a throne hall with the construction of the dais by Shajar al-Durr, and then used briefly as a public ceremonial hall in Baybars's time when his new audience hall was under construction. The other possibility is that the original iwan or audience hall at the Citadel, built by al-Kāmil, is one and the same as

Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 53; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durra al-Zakiyya*, 25, reports the account of his grandfather, who was a Baḥrī mamluk, that Aqṭāy was assassinated in the *dihlīz* of the treasury. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of this account.

¹¹ Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13: 231; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 301; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 109; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1, 1: 313; , use the term *al-iwān* for the hall; Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-Zāhir*, 100, was present at the ceremony and calls it the Qā'at al-'Awāmīd; so does Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 181, although he was not an eyewitness.

¹² Zāhirī, *Zubda*, 26; Sakhāwī, *Dhayl*, 209, reports that in 1448, al-Zāhir Jaqmaq ordered his first wife, who was given the title the *khawund al-kubrā* (grand lady), moved from the Qā'at al-Kubrā (Grand Qā'a), that is, the Qā'at al-'Awāmīd to the Qā'at al-Barbariyya, because she had lost her place as the sultan's favorite.

the Qā'at al-ʿAwāmid (hence its accessibility to the amirs), which was later incorporated into the private palaces after Baybars built his new hall. The ambiguity of the character, public or private, of this *qā'a* may have originated in the days when Shajar al-Durr was a recognized decision-maker in the sultanate, besides being the sultan's favorite, and later his only, wife.

In 1257, Shajar al-Durr had al-Mu'izz Aybak assassinated in his private quarters at the Citadel. Why is unclear. The chroniclers attribute it to jealousy, but it seems rather to have been her fear of losing power. Aybak, in a move reminiscent of that taken by Aqṭāy a few years earlier, had proposed to the king of Mosul Badr al-Dīn Lū'lū' that he marry his daughter. This union would have improved his political standing locally and regionally, but might have spelled the dismissal of Shajar al-Durr as queen and partner. When Aybak's murder was discovered, the Mamālik al-Mu'izziyya tried to kill Shajar al-Durr in revenge for their slain master, but her *khushdāshiyya* (comrades),¹³ the Bahrī mamluks, defended her. She was, however, dragged from the *dār al-salṭana*, the vaguely defined structure, or group of structures, in the original small southern enclosure, and imprisoned in the Burj al-Aḥmar. Her *khushdāshiyya* could not protect her for long; she was eventually brought back from the tower to the private quarters of the sultan's family (*dūr*) and killed by the slave girls of Aybak's first wife. Her body was thrown into the moat behind the Citadel, on the Qarāfa side, where it remained for three days before she was properly buried in the mausoleum (*qubba*) she had built for herself near the two venerated shrines of Sayyida ʿAtika and Sayyida Ruqayya south of the mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn.¹⁴

Aybak was succeeded by his son al-Manṣūr ʿAlī (1257–59), who turned out to be an insignificant and transitional ruler. A mamluk of his father, al-Muzaffar Quṭuz, soon took over the sultanate under the pretext that the approaching Mongol threat needed a stronger and older sultan to stand up to it. Quṭuz marvelously fulfilled his promise.

¹³ *Khushdāshiyya* is a frequently encountered term in Mamluk sources. Essentially it refers to mamluks who were members of the same household or belonged to the same master. It signifies, however, both the collective name of the group and their loyalty to each other because of their past common bond of servitude. The word itself is an arabized composite of the Persian expressions, *khōjā-ṭāsh*, which means "comrade in service." See in Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 388–89, no. 3, the comments of the editor Muḥammad M. Ziyāda; Holt, *Crusades*, glossary, p. 223.

¹⁴ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Maṭlūb*, 384–85; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 403–4; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 6: 377–76; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1, 1: 294–95.

On 3 September 1260, he led the Mamluk army of Egypt to a victory at the battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt (Spring of Goliath) over the Mongol army that Hülegü had left in Syria. This victory proved to be a turning point for the Mamluk state. Many Ayyubid principalities, which had been deprived of their ruling princes by the sweeping Mongol invasion, fell to the advancing Mamluks and were promptly annexed to Egypt. But Quṭuz did not live to savor his newly acquired prominence; a group of his amirs killed him in Ṣālihiyya on his way back to Cairo. The leader of the conspirators was the Bahṛī amir Baybars al-Bunduqdārī who was a close collaborator of Fāris al-Dīn Aqṭāy, the amir who had been slain by Quṭuz on Aybak’s order eight years earlier. Baybars was soon recognized as the new sultan by the vicegerent (*nāʾib*) Aqṭāy al-Mustaʾrib who was left behind by Quṭuz at the Cairo Citadel and who reportedly talked the other amirs into swearing the oath of allegiance to him.¹⁵

The Reign al-Zāhir Baybars (1260–76)

Although he was the fifth Mamluk sultan (counting Shajar al-Durr as the first), al-Zāhir Baybars was the first Bahṛī mamluk to ascend the throne. Some modern historians call the whole first part of the Mamluk period (1250–1382) the Bahṛī period, but strictly speaking, this name is inaccurate since the *bahriyya* did not become the masters of the state until Baybars’s ascent in 1260.¹⁶ Mamluk chroniclers dub the same period “*dawlat al-turk*” (the Turkish state), a more accurate description of the character of the state and the origin of its founders than “Bahṛī period.” Aybak was a Turkish, but not a Bahṛī, mamluk. He was a senior Ṣāliḥī amir and had become his master’s taster (*jāshankīr*) before 1240 when al-Ṣāliḥ was still the deputy of his father in the east (Jazira and north Syria), long before the Bahṛī regiment was constituted.¹⁷ The first half of Aybak’s reign had been dominated by several competing, and sometimes antagonistic, groups of mamluks in addition to the *bahriyya*, such as the ‘Azīziyya (the

¹⁵ For the circumstances of the first decade of Mamluk rule in Egypt until the ascendancy of Baybars, see Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 26–41; Peter Thorau, *The Lion of Egypt: Sultan Baybars I and the Near East in the Thirteenth Century*, trans. P. M. Holt (London, 1991), 27–88.

¹⁶ Ayalon, “Le régiment Bahṛīya dans l’armée mamelouke,” *Revue des Études Islamiques* 19 (1951): 133–41; idem, “Bahṛīyya,” *EI*², 1: 944.

¹⁷ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 4.

mamluks of al-‘Azīz, the Ayyubid ruler of Aleppo, who was their *ustādh*).¹⁸ But by the second half, Aybak had driven most of the Bahrī amirs out of the country and elevated his Mu‘izziyya mamluks to the most powerful positions. Quṭuz had been a Mu‘izzī amir who continued his master’s policy and promoted his *khushdāshiyya*, the Mu‘izziyya. The Bahrī amirs were not favored during his short reign until, out of necessity, he joined forces with Baybars and his Bahrī companions exiled in Damascus and Kerak just before he set out to meet the Mongols.

After his accession, al-Zāhir Baybars immediately set about rebuilding a united sultanate of Egypt and all of Ayyubid Syria, which had been ruined by the Mongol onslaught. In a short time, he cunningly managed to suppress all assertions of autonomy among dissatisfied Ayyubid princes in central Syria and Transjordan, enterprising Mamluk amirs in Damascus and Aleppo, and freebooting Arab and Turkoman tribes in Upper Egypt and the Euphrates region. He tried to secure his sultanate’s boundaries and keep its lines of commerce open (especially the importation of young mamluks from the Crimea) by entering into a series of alliances with many of his neighbors, such as the Byzantines, the Genoese, and the Mongols of the Golden Horde. He also campaigned relentlessly against the Crusader states and reconquered many of the castles and cities they had held along the Syrian and Palestinian coasts. But his shrewdest and most farsighted decision was to provide the Mamluk regime with an Islamic legitimizing apparatus in the form of a caliph.

Baghdad had fallen to the Mongol troops of Hülegü in 1258 and the Abbasid caliphate had been eradicated after the caliph al-Musta‘sim Billah was killed. Baybars took advantage of the dispersal of the Abbasid family members who survived the Mongol massacre to bring one of them to Cairo. The fugitive was recognized as caliph with the regnal title of al-Mustaṣir Billah II, and was in turn required to delegate his political authority to Baybars and to invest him not merely with Syria and Egypt, which he actually held, but also

¹⁸ The *ustādh* is the owner and the master of a mamluk and the head of a military household, Holt, *Crusades*, glossary, p. 225. The relationship between an *ustādh* and his mamluk is likened sometimes to that of a father to his son, with all the implications of bonds, mutual responsibility, and interdependency. Al-Manṣūr Lājīn, who advanced his own mamluk Mangutimur above the rest of the great amirs, was killed because he was considered responsible for his mamluk’s actions. Ibn Taghri-Birdi, *Nujūm*, 8: 99, comments that “the wicked son brings damnation on his father.”

with the eastern provinces, the Hijaz and the Yemen, together with all future conquests. In his 1261 khutba of investiture, delivered in the mosque of the Citadel, al-Mustansir II acknowledged Baybars as the leading sultan of Islam, the deputy of the universal caliph, and the leader of jihad.¹⁹ When al-Mustansir II was slain in an ill-fated campaign against the Mongols in 1261, Baybars brought another Abbasid to Cairo and installed him as caliph with the title of al-Ḥākim bi Amr Allah. He, too, had publicly to delegate his authority to Baybars in a khutba that he pronounced at the Citadel's mosque in 1262.²⁰ From then until the fall of Egypt to the Ottomans in 1517, an Abbasid caliph was kept in Cairo as a legitimizing figurehead in ceremonies of investiture, and even, in some instances, as a tool in the hands of the sultan to bestow religious sanction on the rules of allies elsewhere in the Islamic world, but with no real political role to play.²¹

Baybars is regarded as the true founder of the Mamluk system. He organized its military structure, reformed its administration, and initiated its economic recovery. He also introduced new and fundamental changes to the structure of the government, which until his reign had merely duplicated that of the Ayyubids. The origins of this restructuring can be traced in part to his admiration for Mongol practices, which was apparent in many of his actions. He boasted on many occasions of the affinity between the Mongols and the Kipchaks, to whom he belonged. For instance, he once told the emissaries of a French king, "Thanks to God, no more war is to take place between the Mamluks and the Mongols, who are, after all, of the

¹⁹ For the khutba, see Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawd*, 102–10; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 98–104; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durra al-Zakiyya*, 73–79; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 453–57; Qalqashandī, *Subh*, 10: 111–16. See also Holt, "Some Observations on the Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 47 (1984): 501–7; Thorau, *Baybars*, 110–17.

²⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawd*, 141–47; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 187–90. Al-Ḥākim delivered the same khutba in 1291 after al-Ashraf Khalil released him from house arrest and ordered him to praise his conquests publicly; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 773–74; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8: 128–29.

²¹ On the relationship between caliph and sultan, and the invented legal rationale for what was enforced by the Mamluks, see Ibn Jamā'a, *Tahrīr al-Aḥkām fī Tadbīr Ahl al-Islām*, ed. Hans Kofler, "Handbuch des islamischen Staats und Verwaltungsrechtes von Ibn Jamā'a," *Islamica* 6–7 (1934): 257–59. Zāhirī, *Zubda*, 89–90, quotes Ibn Jamā'a's opinion without naming him, lists the Muslim rulers who sought investitures from the caliph, and asserts that the title of sultan should be given only to the ruler of Egypt because of his direct investiture by the caliph. See also Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, "Une institution mal connue: le Khalifat abbaside du Caire," *Cahiers de Tunisie* 20 (1972): 11–23.

same ethnic background, and they should not let each other down.”²² He may have appropriated his own emblem, the lion passant to the left, from Mongol prototypes.²³ He welcomed Mongol deserters, called Wāfidiyya (Newcomers) in the sources, to his capital and granted many of them amirial positions and *iqṭāʿ* in the army. He adopted some Mongol legal, military, and behavioral codes to the Mamluk system, and introduced a number of positions and offices in the army and the administration which he modeled after Mongol precedents.²⁴

Several of these new offices were, for the first time in Egypt, assigned to the *rijāl al-sayf* (men of the sword) rather than civilians, which indicates the military orientation of his reforms.²⁵ But his main objective was to mold a highly centralized hierarchy of Mamluk amirs with the sultan at the apex. His most trusted associates were, as expected, the Bahṛī amirs who were his *khushdāshiyya* and shared with him the same *ustādh*, al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb. They accompanied him in his years of wandering in Syria (1250-59), when Egypt was controlled by Aybak and after him Quṭuz. He promoted them, granted them large *iqṭāʿ*s, presented them with lavish gifts and favors, and even set up a special bureau (*dīwān*) for them. They formed his immediate entourage and were, we are told, “the guardians of his Citadel in his presence and absence.”²⁶ But, unlike his predecessors,

²² Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 8: 37. The sentence clearly carries a conviction besides its obvious political purpose.

²³ Didier Gazagnadou, “Note sur une question d’héraldique mamluke: l’origine du ‘lion passant à gauche’ du sultan Baybars I al-Bunduqāri,” *Der Islam* 66 (1989): 98–101.

²⁴ Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 182–86; Maqrizī, *Khitāṭ*, 2: 221. The influence of Cengiz Khan’s penal code, the *Yāsa*, on the Mamluk legal system was repeatedly debated in modern scholarship. An extreme, and somehow fanciful, view that regarded the Mamluk sultanate as an outpost of the Mongol state is A. N. Poliak, “Le caractère colonial de l’état mamelouke dans ses rapports avec la Horde d’Or,” *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 9 (1935): 231–48. A reassessment with a long discussion that brought the question back to the realm of unproved hypotheses is Ayalon, “The Great Yasa of Cengiz Khan: A Reexamination,” *Studia Islamica* 33 (1971): 97–140 (pt. A); 34 (1971): 151–80 (pt. B); 36 (1972): 113–58 (pt. C1); 38 (1973): 107–56 (pt. C2); Thorau, *Baybars*, 256–57; further evidence from hitherto unpublished Mamluk sources in Donald Little, “Notes on Aitamiš, A Mongol Mamluk,” *Beiruter Texte und Studien* 22 (1979): 387–401, reprinted in *History and Historiography of the Mamluks* (Collected Studies) (London, 1986).

²⁵ Holt, *Crusades*, 90–98; Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 70–73; Ibn Shaddād, *Tārikh al-Zāhir*, 239–44, 311; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 182–87, gives a detailed review of Baybars’s administrative innovations.

²⁶ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 74; English version in Holt, *Crusades*, 91.

Baybars did not grant hereditary fiefs. He replaced the old feudal system by allocating revenues from *iqṭāʿ*s to Mamluk amirs as long as they served in the army or government but maintaining control over their administration. As a consequence his amirs were no longer semi-autonomous lords; they lived not on their franchised lands but in the capital, and had to depend on the central government for their revenues.²⁷ With these two reforms in place, the new structure of the Mamluk hierarchy was well established and, despite all its inherent impediments, lasted for more than two centuries.

Al-Zāhir Baybars was the first sultan of Egypt since the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to have his reign recorded in detail. This is probably because he belonged to a special class of energetic rulers, along with Zangī, his son Nūr al-Dīn, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, and later Qalāwūn and al-Ashraf Khalīl, who were able to channel the immense repercussions of the Crusades and Mongol attacks to mount their counteroffensives and who deliberately used their image as defenders and supporters of Islam to advance their political agenda both abroad and at home.²⁸ A special place is reserved in Islamic historiography for these rulers as heroes and exemplary rulers comparable only to the Rāshidī caliphs, and they are immortalized as well in heroic tales that developed from popular lore. To this day, songs, epics, and stories still celebrate the person and rule of Nūr al-Dīn, of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, and of al-Zāhir Baybars.²⁹

Our best sources for Baybars's numerous architectural projects are accounts by his two contemporaries Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir (1223-92) and ʿIzz al-Dīn ibn Shaddād (1216-85) who were both employed in his administration, and to a lesser extent that of Shāfiʿ ibn ʿAlī (1251-1330), a clerk (*kātib*) in Baybars's royal chancery and a neph-

²⁷ David Ayalon, "The System of Payment in Mamluk Military Society," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 1 (1958): 37-65, 257-96.

²⁸ Emmanuel Sivan, *L'Islam et la Croisade, idéologie et propagande dans les réactions musulmanes aux Croisades* (Paris, 1968), is the most complete study to date on this neglected topic; see also Krawulsky's introduction to ʿUmārī, *Masālik*, 15-37.

²⁹ The most prominent example is the *Sīrat Baybars* (*Roman de Baïbars*) translated by Georges Bohas and Jean-Patrick Guillaume from an Aleppine manuscript written in the early nineteenth century, of which eight volumes have been published since 1985. It is too early to conduct any full-scale study on the relationship between the real-life Baybars and the epic's hero, but for a preliminary discussion, see J.-P. Guillaume, "Présentation," in *Les enfances de Baïbars* (Paris, 1985), 20-35; also Rudi Paret, "Sīrat Baybars," *EP*, 1: 1126-27.

ew of Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir who wrote a critical abridgment of the sultan’s biography his uncle had written.³⁰ Ibn Shaddād alone provides an exhaustive list of the considerable number of structures Baybars built in every city in the sultanate. Later chroniclers, such as Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, in his biographical dictionary, and Ibn Taghri-Birdī, the fifteenth-century chronicler and son of a Mamluk amir, give shorter lists of Baybars’s structures that depart slightly from Ibn Shaddād’s. Together, these sources provide detailed accounts of his works in and around the Citadel; none of these buildings remains today.

Al-Zāhir Baybars was the third sultan of Egypt to have a lasting impact on the development of the Citadel of the Mountain. It attained under him a new status as the center of the Mamluk sultanate that encompassed both Egypt and Syria. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn had started its construction, but he had not finished it and never lived there; al-Kāmil made it the seat of the Ayyubid sultanate. Baybars, after some hesitation, decided to enlarge and refurbish it, and rearrange its interior spaces to conform to the new Mamluk structures of the state and the army. He also strengthened some of its defenses, endowed it with many royal structures, provided it with additional water by constructing cisterns and watercourses, and actively involved himself in planning the urban expansion around it.

Baybars’s Buildings around the Citadel

At the beginning of his reign, Baybars had a modest number of mamluks and greatly depended on the support of his great amirs and their regiments of mamluks who formed integral parts of his army. During his years of wandering in Syria, he had neither the time nor the resources to establish a strong household of his own mamluks. So when he ascended the throne, he immediately began to augment the ranks of the royal mamluks (*al-mamālik al-sultāniyya*) while constantly looking for ways to appease and accommodate his great amirs and their mamluks. He needed to oversee their actions and at the same time keep them away from his residence at the Citadel of the

³⁰ P.M. Holt, “Three Biographies of al-Zāhir Baybars,” in *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, ed. D. O. Morgan (London, 1982), 19–29; J. Pederson, “Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir,” *EI*², 3: 679–80, and D. Sourdel, “Ibn Shaddād,” *EI*², 3: 933.

Mountain, where they could easily execute a coup d'état, for they far outnumbered his own troops. For some time, he thought of resurrecting the Rawḍa Citadel, deserted since Aybak's time. In 1261, he ordered Amir Jamāl al-Dīn Mūsa ibn Yaghmur, his master of the household (*ustādār*), to refurbish it and restore its *qā'as*. He also distributed its towers among the amirs, and made each of them responsible for rebuilding one by requiring that they establish their households, their storehouses (*buyūtat*, sg. *bayt*), and their stables there.³¹

Baybars wanted to create centralized barracks for the troops of the great amirs at the Rawḍa Citadel, as distinguished from the royal troops quartered at the Citadel of the Mountain. He also wanted the new barracks to house the regiment of Jandāriyya (probably the mamluks attached to the office of *jandār*, who fulfilled the functions of swordbearer, executioner, and head of the sultan's security guards), a use in line with that under al-Şāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb when Baybars's own regiment of *baḥriyya* was lodged there. The idea of refurbishing the Rawḍa Citadel was later dropped for reasons unknown, but it is possible that Baybars may have realized that it was a potential power base for his amirs over which he would have no direct control.³²

Instead he devised another plan for quartering the amirs and their troops, where they could be supervised and at the same time kept away from his own residence. It is probably at this juncture that Baybars conceived the complex plan at the Citadel of the Mountain that would create separate zones of activity with the royal palace at the center. He built residences for the closest and most trusted great amirs inside the Citadel, thus starting a practice that would reach its greatest elaboration under al-Nāşir Muḥammad. He established palaces for other great amirs and encouraged the rest to build palaces on their own in areas below the Citadel and around the maydan, both because these amirs were indispensable to him and because, in the peculiarly Mamluk conception of the sultanate, they were also strong enough to aspire to his throne, so that he needed to keep them closely supervised.

³¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 90; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 192, no. 7; Qalqaşhandī, *Şubḥ*, 3: 373; Maqrizī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 184; idem, *Sulūk*, 1: 445.

³² Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 125, records the punishment of two Baḥrī mamluks who were sent to work at the Rawḍa Citadel; Ibn Shaddād, *Tāriḫ al-Zāhir*, on p. 347, says that the Citadel building was not completed, but on p. 343, he reports that Baybars used the debris of al-Şāliḥ's belvedere (*manāzir*) from the Rawḍa Citadel to furnish new constructions.

This double motive, segregation and suspicion, was to govern the organization of the Citadel and its relationship to its urban context from then on, with suspicion becoming the leading factor in the second half of the Mamluk period, known as the Burjī period, when factional strife multiplied and sultans succeeded one another at an incredible rate. Ibn Taghri-Birdī, being of mamluk extraction himself and well informed about the Mamluk polity, understood this rationale better than any of the earlier chroniclers from whom he drew his information on the Citadel, when he stated that Baybars “feared that his mamluks might interfere in the affairs of the city’s population if they resided among them.”³³ Perhaps this remark was inspired by the state of affairs in Cairo when Ibn Taghri-Birdī himself was writing in the middle of the fifteenth century, and people were constantly harassed and overburdened by the amirs and mamluks who lived among them. Separating the mamluks from the population, however, may well also have been Baybars’s purpose, not because of any imminent friction between the amirs and the population, but to secure the sultan’s center and create a reliable barrier between the royal and the urban spheres. Furthermore, having the amirs live within range of the royal residence and still removed from it conformed with the hierarchical Mamluk structure as it was developed by Baybars at the same time and complemented his equally centralizing *iqṭāʿ* system.

Baybars’s housing for his amirs led to urban expansion south of Fatimid al-Qāhira; the neighborhoods of the mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn, the Birkat al-Fil, and the east-west Shāriʿ al-Aʿzam (Grand Street) became new residential districts (fig. 19).³⁴ The sources refer several times to the palaces and religious endowments that were located in these districts built by amirs whose names appear during Baybars’s rule. By the time he died, the areas to the northwest, west, and southwest of the Citadel were all integrated into Cairo’s urban fabric, with very few areas left vacant. This development obviously affected the nature of the relationship between the Citadel and the city, which had by now become connected. It may have been part of the plan contemplated and probably even started by al-Kāmil, who had ordered the animal markets shifted to the vicinity of the Citadel and con-

³³ Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 191.

³⁴ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 359-60; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 196-97; Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafīyyāt wa-l-Dhayl ‘Alayhā*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut, 1973), 1: 242.

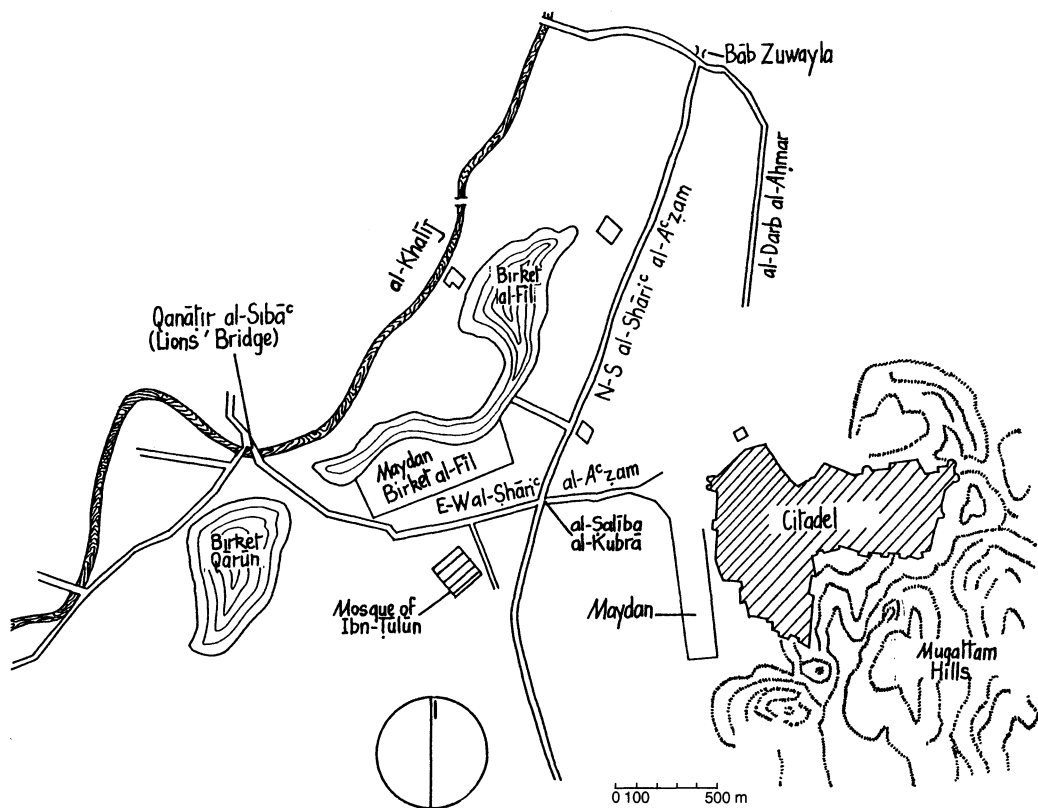


Fig. 19: Reconstruction of the Citadel's surroundings in Baybars's time

structed the maydan at the foot of the spur, although, as Ibn Saʿid al-Maghribi reported, the built-up areas were still further to the north and west and the land surrounding the Citadel was still uninhabited during the Ayyubid period.³⁵

Equestrian facilities. Baybars constructed two maydans where the *furūsiyya* exercises, the principal form of Mamluk military training, and polo games (*al-kura* or *al-akra*) took place: the Maydān al-Zāhiri, built southwest of al-Qāhira on newly recovered land in al-

³⁵ Ibn Saʿid al-Maghribi, *Mughrib*, 390–91, says that “the land under the Citadel was dusty and had no built-up or green areas,” which shows that he saw it between 1207, when al-Kāmil moved to the Citadel and 1213, the date given for the establishment of the maydan.

Būrjī (the present-day area of Bāb al-Lūq) from which the Nile had receded in the thirteenth century, and the Maydān al-Qabaq (named after the game of *qabaq*),³⁶ also known as the Maydān al-Aswad (Black Maydan) built in the area north of the Citadel which later became the Qarāfa al-Kubrā (Great Cemetery).³⁷ For his own exercises, he seems to have favored the former. Some of the *qā'as* and belvederes he is reported to have built around it may have been even more monumental than the ones he built at the Citadel.³⁸ This large-scale construction project was prompted by economic considerations; Baybars had no intention of creating a competing center of power. The building of a maydan may have been the best solution for stabilizing the land gained from the Nile and at the same time appropriating it for the sultan. Building it near the river also eliminated the need to transport water to keep the grass alive in the scorching heat. Later on, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad turned it into a garden (*bustān*), before zoning its land for urban development, because the Nile had in the meantime receded much further and the task of watering had become very costly.³⁹

The maydan at the foot of the Citadel, first built by al-Kāmil and known variously as the Maydān al-Qal'a (Citadel Maydan), the Qarāmaydan (Black Maydan), or the Maydān al-Akhḍār (Green Maydan), was not rebuilt, but Baybars refurbished the surrounding area. He established several stables for his steeds and those of his closest mamluks, and a house for the royal elephants north of the maydan on the edge of the horse market. He turned an old mausoleum (*turba*) under the Citadel and overlooking the maydan into a DĀR AL-ʿADL and founded a hammam west of the horse market and attributed it to his son al-Malik al-Saʿīd. He constructed a large stable for his son's and his mamluks' horses in the southern end of the maydan between the two gates of Qarāqūsh's wall leading to the

³⁶ *Qabaq*, lit. pumpkin, a game where horsemen shoot a pumpkin-like object hanging on a high pole while riding past it; see, Nabil M. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, *al-Khayl wa-Riyādatahā fi ʿAṣr Salāṭin al-Mamālīk* (Cairo, 1976), 66–67, no. 6.

³⁷ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 145, 198–99; David Ayalon, "Notes on the Furusiyya Exercises and Games in the Mamluk Sultanate," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961): 38–39.

³⁸ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 342–44, lists a *qubba* and two monumental *qā'as* Baybars built for himself, and twelve *qā'as* for his courtiers and amirs and for some state functions.

³⁹ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 117, 198; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 191, no. 6, and 9: 37, no. 1.

Southern or Little Qarāfa, and increased the water supply by building a well and a large cistern nearby.⁴⁰ He also erected a watercourse (*qaṣṭal*) to bring water from the well of the *dār al-baqār* (house of oxen), opposite the Sayf al-Islām gardens to another well near the Bāb al-Silsila (which no longer exists but is marked on Colonel Green's plan), and from there to the main well of the Citadel, probably the one near the Bi'r Yūsuf. It was said to be surrounded with a high wall—which probably means that it was raised like an aqueduct—and Baybars's royal titles were inscribed on it in gold.⁴¹

Water supply. The well of the *dār al-baqār*, or rather the tower with the *sāqiya* on its top, still stands today behind the madrasa of Sultan Ḥasan. It is referred to in the waqf of Sultan Ḥasan as the Bi'r al-Naqqāla (Carrying Well) that takes the water to the sultan's stables across the horse market (fig. 20).⁴² *Dār al-baqār*, as its name indicates, was some sort of stable for the oxen used to turn the water-wheel, and was later turned into a palace and horse stable by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴³ Its name survived until the Ottoman period as Ḥadarāt al-Baqār, the street behind the madrasa of Sultan Ḥasan, known today as Sikkat al-Muḏaffar (a distortion of al-Muzaffar, from the dome of Sinjar al-Muzaffar, built there in 1322).⁴⁴

The *sāqiya* of the *dār al-baqār* must have been built before Baybars's time, most probably by the Ayyubid prince Sayf al-Islām, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's brother, or one of his descendants, to provide water for their gardens. The gardens of Sayf al-Islām, which were called the "Gardens of 'Abbās" in Fatimid times, had been appropriated by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's family together with most other Fatimid properties. They lay to the west of the madrasa of Sultan Ḥasan and extended toward the Birkat al-Fil (Elephant Pond), now no longer extant (see fig. 19). Baybars bought them from the last Ayyubid and later divided them into building lots.⁴⁵ The watercourse must have been built

⁴⁰ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 342.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 342. The report is confusing but it nevertheless elucidates an important aspect of how the Citadel was supplied with water.

⁴² Awqāf 881q, waqf of Sultan Ḥasan ibn al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, dated 15 Rabi' II 760 (1359), p. 20, l. 11.

⁴³ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 68.

⁴⁴ 'Ali Pasha Mubārak, *al-Khīṭaṭ al-Tawfiqiyya al-Jadīda*, 20 vols. (reprint. Cairo, 1969), 2: 43–44; M. Georges Salmon, *Études sur la topographie du Caire, la Kal'at al-Kabch et la Birkat al-Fil* (Cairo, 1902), 113–14, and map.

⁴⁵ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 364, 476; Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 279–80; Idrīsī,

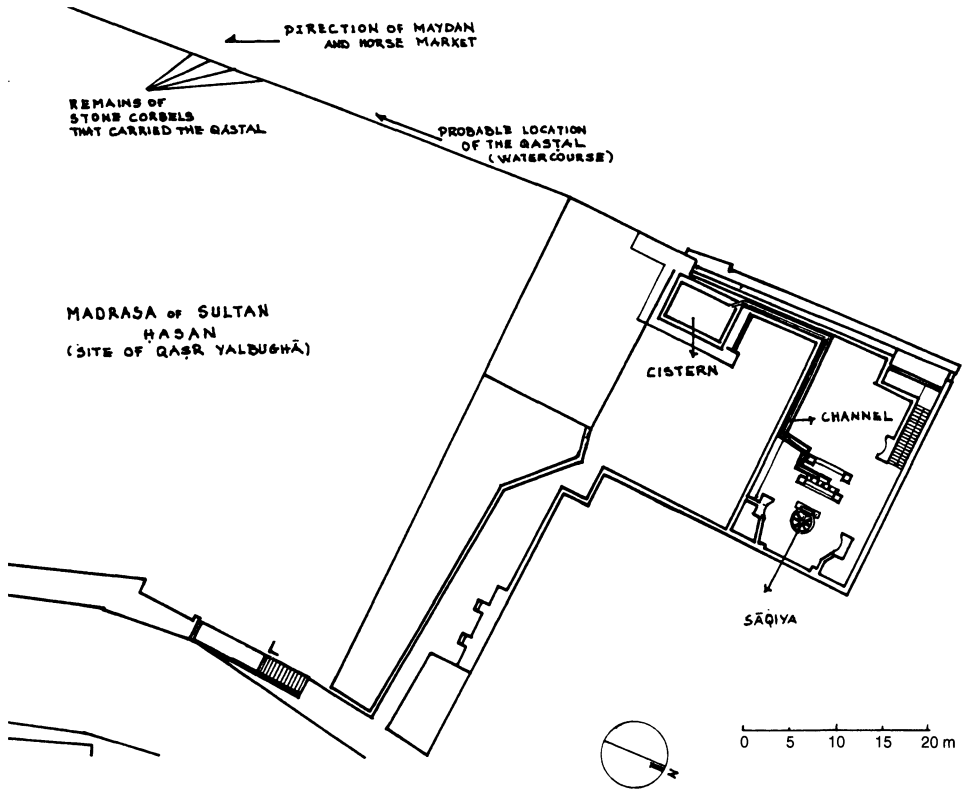


Fig. 20: Plan of the *sāqiya* of the *dār al-baqār* behind the madrasa of Sultan Ḥasan

after he acquired the gardens. The stone corbels that must have carried a stone channel above can still be seen along the southwestern façade of the madrasa of Sultan Ḥasan. To reconstruct the part that crossed the Rumayla is impossible, but we have a clue that allows us to reconstruct the end of the channel on the Citadel side. The waqf of Ḥasan al-Rūmī (1535) states that the entrance vestibule contained a channel (*majrā*), built before the *zāwiya*, that carried the water to the Citadel's Bāb al-Silsila.⁴⁶ That all this was undertaken to provide the

Anwār, 2, speaks of a *manẓara* on the Birkat al-Fil where an Abbasid envoy was staying in 1226.

⁴⁶ Awqāf 1079, waqf of Ḥasan ibn Ilyās al-Rūmī, dated 8 Shawwal 941 (1535), l. 25–26. Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 123, attributes similar works to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad on

Citadel with an additional source of water shows how quickly it was expanding, especially its palatial side which this new water supply served.

The Dār al-‘Adl al-Zāhiriyya. Al-Zāhir Baybars built or renovated a DĀR AL-‘ADL under the Citadel. His two biographers, Ibn Shaddād and Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, give inadequate reports about this structure, although they elaborate on his ardor to uphold the principle of justice and to attend *mazālim* sessions. Ibn Shaddād speaks only of a fenced, square platform (*maṣṭaba*) installed in the middle of the court in front of the Citadel gate, covered by a canopy to protect it from the sun and the rain, and designated for the public sittings of the vicegerent and the vizier. In the same list of structures, he mentions a *ṭablakhāna* (drummary, a place where the military band played at specific times during the day)⁴⁷ that Baybars built for his son al-Malik al-Sa‘īd across from the DĀR AL-‘ADL under the Citadel, without attributing the second structure to him.⁴⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir reports that in 1262 Baybars ordered the renovation and remodeling of a building under the Citadel and the establishment of the DĀR AL-‘ADL in it, suggesting that the structure existed before Baybars’s times.⁴⁹ Maqrīzī, too, in two different statements, says that Baybars built, or renovated, the DĀR AL-‘ADL.⁵⁰ Casanova demonstrated that the structure was a mausoleum (*turba*) of a Fatimid family of princes, the Banū al-Muhtār, but mistakenly assigned its refurbishing and transformation into the DĀR AL-‘ADL to al-Kāmil without any historical basis.⁵¹ Baybars is the patron who restored that *turba*, which was probably in disrepair like many other Fatimid remains, put it to a new use as the DĀR AL-‘ADL, and added the canopied *maṣṭaba* in front of it for less formal ceremonies.⁵² He sat in the DĀR AL-‘ADL on Mondays

the same site, but calls the preexisting well, the Bi‘r al-Zāhiri (Well of al-Zāhir), which further proves Baybars’s work to provide the royal stables with a new source of water.

⁴⁷ William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans*, map no. 7, Cairo: citadel.

⁴⁸ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 341–42.

⁴⁹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 182.

⁵⁰ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 205, 213; idem, *Sulūk*, 1: 501.

⁵¹ Casanova, “Histoire,” 608; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 236, and Ibn Taghri-Birdi, *Nujūm*, 9: 74, corroborate the report of Shāfi‘ ibn ‘Alī, cited by Casanova.

⁵² Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 501; Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 210, says that Baybars sat under the awning (*ṣuffa*) in the *maṣṭaba* next to the *dār al-‘adl* to review the parades in the maydan.

and Thursdays, both to inspect *mazālim* petitions and to review the Mamluk army, unlike his Ayyubid and Mamluk predecessors who delegated this duty to their deputies.⁵³ After his death, the structure became known as the DĀR AL-‘ADL AL-QADĪMA (the old), and was occasionally used for official events presided over by high-ranking administrators.⁵⁴ It was converted into a *ṭablakhāna* in 1322 during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁵⁵ The *ṭablakhāna* was refurbished by Sūdūn Amīr Ākhūr (the superintendent of the royal stables) in the first decade of the fifteenth century; he added a second floor above it, for it was originally an enclosure without a roof.⁵⁶ It was still in use, or misuse, at the end of the fifteenth century when a dispute between the amirs, fought around the Citadel as usual, made the *ṭablakhāna* a strategic place to hold.⁵⁷

The site of Baybars’s DĀR AL-‘ADL is difficult to ascertain, because the carriage route Muḥammad ‘Alī completed in 1825 changed the topography of the area so completely. Al-Nāṣir’s *ṭablakhāna*, or Baybars’s DĀR AL-‘ADL, was supposed to have been located between the Bāb al-Silsila and the Bāb al-Mudarraġ. The Bāb al-Silsila (probably the present Bāb Katkhudā) was the main royal entrance to the Citadel from the maydan. The Bāb al-Mudarraġ was the last and closest to the present-day road (Sikkat al-Maḥjar) of a series of gates which formed the public entrance to the Citadel and stood at the end of a stepped path that ascended from a spot near the Bāb al-Silsila to an elevation 15 meters above the maydan.⁵⁸ Baybars’s

⁵³ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 205; Ibn-Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 277–82. For a list of cases reviewed by Baybars in the *dār al-‘adl*, see Jorgen Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State: Mazalim under the Bahrī Mamluks, 662/1264-789/1387* (Leiden, 1985), 144–47.

⁵⁴ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7: 259; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 712; report the assessment of a poll tax (*jawālī*) from non-Muslims in 1283 there. Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 206, says that the structure was used for *mazālim* sessions presided over by the *nā’ib* until the reign of Qalāwūn.

⁵⁵ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 205, 213, and, *Sulūk*, 2: 236; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 74.

⁵⁶ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 213, says that the addition was strategically sound, for the *ṭablakhāna* stood in front of the Ashrafiyya Madrasa (built in 1375) which could have been used as an entrenchment from which to shoot at the Citadel.

⁵⁷ Ibn al-Shīḥna, *al-Badr al-Zāhir fī Naṣrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qāyṭbāy*, ed. ‘Umar al-Tadmuri (Beirut, 1983), 82–84, describes the battle in 1496 between the supporters of Muḥammad, the son of Qāyṭbāy, and Qānshūh Khamsmi’a, a great amir and usurper, around the Citadel.

⁵⁸ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 205, speaks about the Bāb al-Mudarraġ, the Bāb Sārya, and the Bāb al-Darfil as if they were situated along the same path. Casanova, “Histoire,” 610–12, explains the disposition of gates described by Maqrīzī.

DĀR AL-‘ADL was somewhere along this 300 meter-long-path. It had to be high enough for the sultan to sit in the royal stand under the awning (*suffa*) to review parades in the maydan and horse market.

A brief reference in the waqf of the *zāwiya* of Ḥasan al-Rūmī, built in 1522, further establishes the location of Baybars’s DĀR AL-‘ADL. The waqf, dated to 1535, states that the *ṭablakhāna* of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was above the *zāwiya*, which still stands today on the eastern side of the road leading to the original Bāb al-Mudarraǰ.⁵⁹ The waqf also specifies that the *zāwiya* is situated between the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ and the Bāb al-Silsila, exactly the site given in Maqrīzī’s *Khīṭaṭ* as that of al-Nāṣir’s *ṭablakhāna*. Baybars’s DĀR AL-‘ADL, then, was under the Citadel, alongside the road named Sikkat al-Rumayla on the map of the *Description de l’Égypte*, and might have stood where Muḥammad ‘Alī’s *daftarkhāne* stands today (see fig. 19).

Baybars’s Buildings at the Citadel

It is not possible from the limited sources available to reconstruct what Baybars built at the Citadel chronologically, but its results are discernible and indicate a preconceived plan. He appears to have been the one who decided to divide the Citadel into two distinct enceintes separated by the Sūr al-Qulla (Qulla Wall): a military and an administrative area in the north and a palatial complex in the south for the sultan and his entourage, which were then subdivided into smaller and more specialized areas. The northern enclosure seems to have been given many new *qā‘as* for administrative functions, all crowded into its western end, around the Raḥbat al-Qal‘a (Citadel Square), to which the passageway of the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ led.⁶⁰ The enclosure’s eastern side remained allocated to the lodging of the mamluks who formed the royal army of Egypt. The southern enclosure started to take the shape that it would later assume. The semi-public and ceremonial structures faced the administrative complex across from the Sūr al-Qulla, with the royal palaces along the edges. Baybars extended the royal section of the southern enclosure to the west and south to accommodate the new structures he added. In this extension he exploited a commanding view of the capital to the north-

⁵⁹ Waqf of Ḥasan al-Rūmī, line 21, see Muḥammad Ḥussām al-Dīn Ismā‘īl ‘Abd-al-Fattāḥ, “Mantiqat al-Darb al-Aḥmar,” Master’s thesis, Aşyūt University, 1986, 311.

⁶⁰ ‘Umari, *Masālik*, 141; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 372; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 204.

west and southwest. This direction of expansion was not new; rather it was in line with the original orientation of the palaces al-Kāmil built.⁶¹ The originality in it appears to be more in the emphasis on visual contact with the city below the hill than in the expansion itself.

Sūr al-Qulla. No source refers to the construction of the Sūr al-Qulla which separated the two enclosures before 1320, when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad rebuilt the Bāb al-Qulla, enlarged its vestibule (*durkāh*), and added a second door to it.⁶² When that gate was first built is not known, but it may have been during Baybars's reign because he is credited with building a *qulla*, which gave the gate its name, and which was demolished by Qalāwūn in 1286.⁶³ There are many concise references to the Bāb al-Qulla, and they all indicate that its function was to control access from the Citadel to the sultan's palatial complex.⁶⁴ Its form is unknown, although it seems to have been more of a guarded passage than just an opening in a wall. Ibn al-Furāt inadvertently gives a few clues to its position and configuration, when, in reporting an encounter between two antagonists in al-Ashraf Khalīl's government in 1291, he speaks of a long passageway with doors at either end.⁶⁵ Inside the passageway was a stone bench for the master of the household (*ustādār*) and the supervisor of the palaces (*nāẓir al-buyūt*) to sit while waiting to be admitted to the palace and a vestibule that led to the royal wardrobe (*firāshkhāna*). Ibn al-Furāt's text, written in the fifteenth century and therefore after the gate's rebuilding, indicates that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad cleared the area between the Bāb al-Qulla and the eastern side of his mosque in 1318, suggesting that the Bāb al-Qulla originally led into a maze of structures and vestibules between it and the original mosque of the Citadel in the southern enclosure, rather than to the open space that exists there today (pl. 13).

The complexity of this area supports the contention that the Bāb al-Qulla was added after other structures were already in place. Since

⁶¹ Idrīsī, *Anwār*, 32; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij*, 5: 160, says that al-Kāmil saw a funeral passing under the Citadel from his palace.

⁶² Baktāsh al-Fakhri, *Beiträge*, 169; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8: 38, but the editor calls Baybars's structure a *qubba* (dome) rather than a *qulla*.

⁶³ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 212.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 2: 212; Casanova, "Histoire," 646–47, lists a few references from Ibn Taghrī-Birdi to clarify the location of the original Bāb al-Qulla.

⁶⁵ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8: 109; a truncated version is given by Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 762.

Baybars had built a *qulla* there, it may have been meant to provide the sultan, his family, and his bodyguards with a last refuge in case of attack. It is plausible that the sultan was as wary of an outside assault as he was of an inside insurrection, and that his choice of location for his *qulla* reflects this double threat. It follows that the *qulla* would be accompanied by a curtain wall that separates the military and administrative parts of the Citadel from the sultan's domain. This step fits nicely with the proposition that Baybars created a series of barriers to accommodate the functions of the hierarchy of his Mamluk amirs, after he had decided to drop the idea of using the Rawḍa Citadel for that purpose.

An overall plan of organization that may have dated from the time of al-Kāmil emerges from this reconstruction. The undivided and much smaller Ayyubid Citadel may have been arranged so that the sultan's domain overlooked the city and the military area faced the desert. The two were separated by the Raḥbat al-Qal'a, which lay at the western end of the present northern enclosure, between the two main gates of the Citadel. It stands to reason that the square would be the point of entrance for the Citadel, because from there traffic could split off to the barracks or the palaces as appropriate. The Sūr al-Qulla appears to have been erected parallel to the long side of the Raḥbat al-Qal'a further to demarcate the two spheres of action. In the center of the wall was the Bāb al-Qulla, the sole entrance for commoners and soldiers to the sultan's southern enclosure during the day. It was closed at night to isolate the palaces from the outside, a custom that may have been copied from Fatimid practices in the Qaṣr al-Sharqī (Eastern Palace) in Cairo.

Amirial qā'as. Baybars is credited with building a few residences for his amirs at the Citadel. They included a large house (*dār*) for his son al-Malik al-Sa'īd, with a few small *qā'as* next to it for the prominent *jamadāriyya*,⁶⁶ a *qā'a* for Bilik al-Khazindār, a house for Amir Sunqur al-Ashqar, three connected *qā'as* for Amir Baysarī, and a square platform (*maṣṭaba*) in the middle of the square facing a gate (probably the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ) covered with a canopy.⁶⁷ Some of

⁶⁶ A *jamadār* is usually the sultan's wardrobe master, one of the ceremonial offices in the Mamluk court, whose duties extended beyond merely taking care of the sultan's wardrobe, Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5: 459. The *jamadāriyya* appear to have been constituted into a separate regiment from early on, perhaps even from the time of al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb.

⁶⁷ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārikh al-Zāhir*, 341.

these structures were at the western end of the northern enclosure, probably to provide living quarters for the office-holding amirs in the administrative area, which, according to al-ʿUmari, formed the northern and eastern borders of the Raḥbat al-Qalʿa (fig. 21).⁶⁸ The rest may have been in the southern enclosure near the royal quarters, but this can not be confirmed from the sources.

The house of al-Malik al-Saʿīd Baraka Khān was built near the Bāb al-Mudarraġ and the Dār al-Niyāba (Residence of the Vicegerent), with windows overlooking the Raḥbat al-Qalʿa. Its construction date is not known, but could not have been before 1264, when al-Malik al-

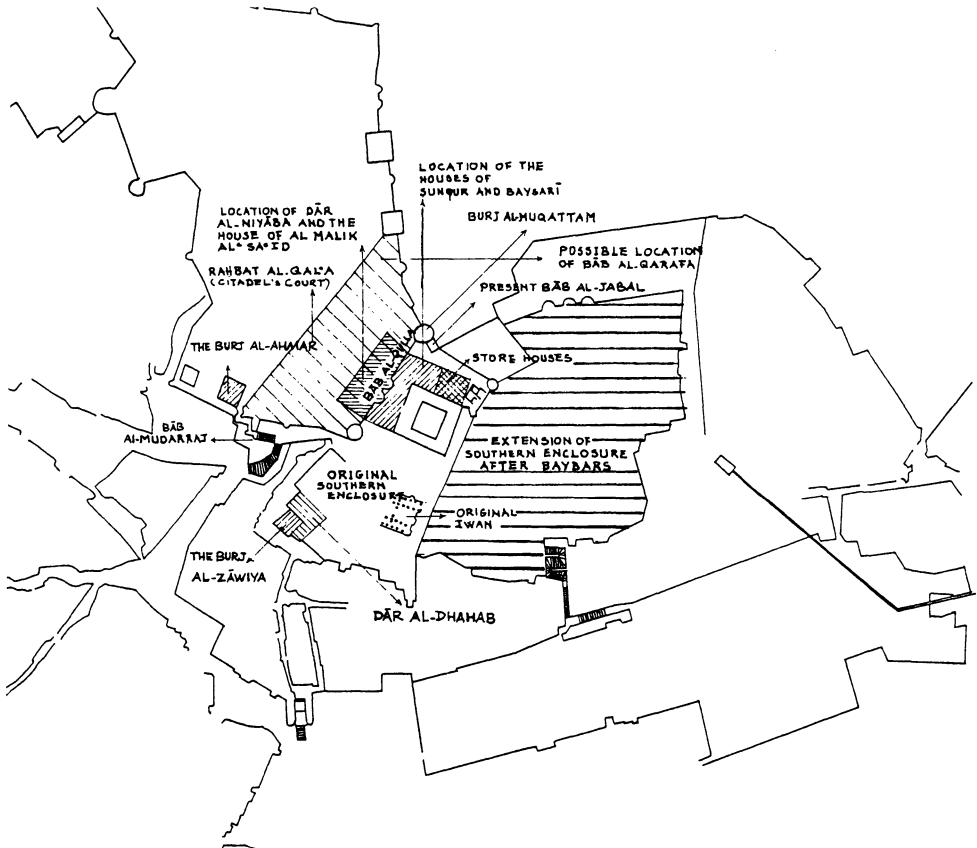


Fig. 21: Reconstruction of the Citadel's division under Baybars

⁶⁸ ʿUmari, *Masālik*, 141-43; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 210; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 372.

Saʿīd, then a boy of four, was named co-sultan, and probably even later. In fact, the site was occupied by a big depression (*jūra*), which was dug by order of Baybars in 1264 to scare the Dhimmīs (Christians and Jews) into paying more tribute by threatening to burn them in it.⁶⁹ Baybars later filled it up by constructing sixteen vaults, which presumably formed the basement for the house he erected for his son. This basement was used as a cistern by plastering its interior surface with *khāfiqī* (an Egyptian waterproof mortar); water was brought there by a *sāqiya* outside the Citadel, perhaps the *sāqiya* of *dār al-baqār*.⁷⁰ The house remained in use for a long time and seems to have been allocated regularly to one of the office-holding great amirs, such as Amir Taghji, who was one of the great amirs during the sultanate of al-Manṣūr Lājīn (1296–98).⁷¹

Bilik al-Khazindār was an extraordinary Zāhiri mamluk who was appointed in 1268 at the age of eighteen to the prestigious post of vicegerent (*nāʾib al-salṭana*) in Egypt, a position second only to the sultan himself. Baybars built him the Dār al-Niyāba on the southeast or qibli side of the vestibule (*durkāh*) of the Bāb al-Qulla, overlooking the Raḥbat al-Qalʿa. According to Ibn Shaddād, the *dār* was a *qāʿa* which had a large iwan with a gallery (*riwāq*) on top supported on four wooden ornamented pillars. The Dār al-Niyāba was the organizational focus of the administrative area with other structures intended to house state functions, such as the Qāʿat al-Ṣāhib (Vizier's Hall), the *bayt al-māl* (treasury), the *dīwān al-jaysh* (army department), and the Qāʿat al-Inshāʾ (Chancery Hall) constructed around it.⁷²

Shams al-Dīn Sunqur al-Ashqar and Badr al-Dīn Baysarī al-Shamsī were probably Baybars's two most devoted Baḥrī *khush-dāshiyya*; some chroniclers call them his "two wings."⁷³ Baysarī, moreover, had been Baybars's companion since the beginning of their careers as mamluks; they were brought together from their

⁶⁹ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 640; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 12: 477; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 321.

⁷⁰ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 341; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 190, does not say what the basement was used for, although he probably copied his report from Ibn Shaddād.

⁷¹ Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 14: 613; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-Fikra fī Tārīkh al-Hijra*, vol. 10, ed. S. M. Elham, *Kitbuga und Lagin* (Freiburg, 1977), 28; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 387, 397; ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 3: 423.

⁷² ʿUmari, *Masālik*, 143; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 371; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 205.

⁷³ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 290; Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 287; ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 2: 186.

native land to the Ayyubid realm as slaves, sold separately to different masters, and then met again in Cairo when they both entered the service of al-Şāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb.⁷⁴ Building these structures for the two amirs at the Citadel kept them nearby, which was useful for Baybars both because they belonged to his circle of advisers and because he could watch them for any signs of disloyalty, since, according to the Mamluk system, their claims to the throne equaled his. Sunqur al-Ashqar's house was built in 1267, but its location is unknown. We know it had an iwan, a *majlis*, and a *ḥurmiyya*, which, though unsubstantial as a description, nonetheless provides a few clues about the architecture of amirial and royal residences.⁷⁵

Iwān is both the most frequently encountered and most problematic term in medieval Islamic architecture. Its meaning expanded from its Persian origin as an open audience hall to the many metamorphoses it underwent in various classes of Islamic architecture. In a Mamluk *qā'a*, an iwan was simply the space opening onto the central space of the *qā'a*, usually through an arch.⁷⁶ *Majlis* is usually translated as a sitting room without any particular architectural features. But the work of both D. S. Goitein on the Geniza documents, which date from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, and Hazem Sayed on Ayyubid and Mamluk waqfs showed that *majlis* denotes an architectural element with a specific plan and appearance which distinguish it from any other element.⁷⁷ It normally has a T-shaped arrangement, with a deep room in the center, called *ṣadr* (back or center), flanked by smaller and narrower spaces, known as *kummayn* (sleeves). It was separated from the central space of the *qā'a* or from the courtyard by a portico (*riwāq*) which usually had three doors corresponding to the three parts of the *majlis* and folding doors of carved or plain wood (fig. 22).⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 290; Şafadī, *Wāfi*, 10: 329; Kutubi, *Fawāt*, 1: 235; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 3: 240.

⁷⁵ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 341; Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 330; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 570.

⁷⁶ Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 17-18; Goitein, *Daily Life*, 67; Mostafa, *Madrassa des Barquq*, glossary, p. 176.

⁷⁷ Goitein, *Daily Life*, 64-67; Hazem Sayed, "The Development of the Cairene Qā'a: Some Considerations," *Annales Islamologiques* 23 (1987): 31-53.

⁷⁸ Hazem Sayed, "The Rab' in Cairo: A Window on Mamluk Architecture and Urbanism," Ph.D. diss., MIT, 1987, 119-55, argued that the T-shaped space with a portico and three doors may have been a specific category of *majlis*, known as a *ḥirī*, after the city of al-Ḥīra in the Jazīra. He also sketched a chronology of the development of residential spaces in Cairo from the *majlis*-based to iwan-based *qā'a* between the years 1150 and 1400.

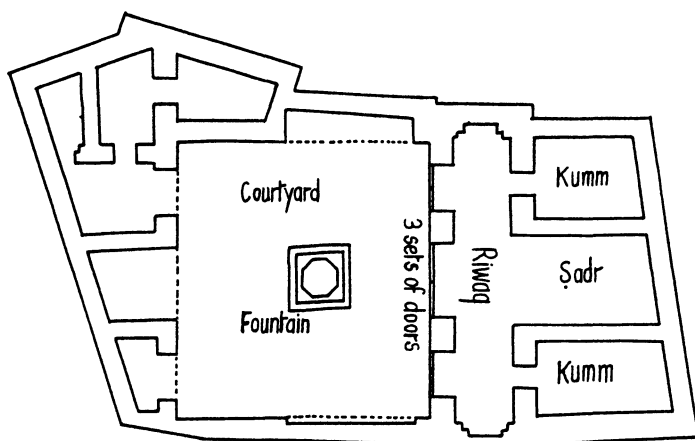


Fig. 22: A typical plan of a *Majlis*

The exact meaning of the word *hurmiyya* in the Mamluk architectural vocabulary is not established yet, nor is its etymology.⁷⁹ Three derivations have been thus far suggested. The first is *ḥaram*, which means “the segregated” or “the protected,” and which is usually taken as a reference to the women’s room. Both Goitein and Ibrāhīm and Amīn adopted this definition for a *qā’a hurmiyya*, although there is nothing in the examples they produce from the Geniza documents and from Mamluk waqfs respectively that support it.⁸⁰ Another is the colloquial term *ḥarāmī*, which means thief, referring to the status of the room as stolen, or inserted between two levels. Jean-Claude Garcin, following a reference of Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, defines a *qā’a hurmiyya* as that situated between the first and second floors, which is usually understood as a mezzanine. But the only evidence he adduces to support this reading is a passing remark in a waqf dated to the year 1475, whereas the usage in many other waqfs contradicts it.⁸¹ Still another is *ḥurr*, which means the center of the

⁷⁹ For the different derivations of the root *ḥ-r-m*, see J. G. Hava, *al-Farā'id al-Durriyya, ‘Arabī/Inglīzī* (Beirut, 1982), 120.

⁸⁰ Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 36; Goitein, *Daily Life*, 63-64 and no. 92.

⁸¹ Garcin, “Habitat,” 206, and reference 2, reads *hurmiyya* as *ḥarāmīyya* which would mean that its origin is the term *ḥarāmī*. Another term in the architectural vocabulary of the period, *mustaraqa*, is derived from a verb that means to steal (*saraqa*) and is also understood as mezzanine, see Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 105-6.

house, and which is sometimes used to designate the central courtyard.⁸²

Hurmiyya was usually used as a qualifier for a type of *qā'a*, the *qā'a hurmiyya*, rather than a part of a *qā'a* as Ibn Shaddād's descriptions suggest. There it appears where the word *durqā'a* (which literally means the entry to the *qā'a*) would have been expected, for the latter is usually the space that both *iwan* and *majlis* opened onto.⁸³ Given its possible derivation from *hurr*, it may have referred to a specific type of central space and thus was the equivalent of *durqā'a*, which was perhaps a more general term. Another possibility is that *durqā'a* was a local Cairene term for what was a *hurmiyya* elsewhere.⁸⁴ Ibn Shaddād, who was from Aleppo and who came to Cairo late in life to serve in Baybars's administration, may have been applying Aleppine terminology to describe Cairene structures. He uses *hurmiyya* several times when he lists a component of the *qā'as* built by Baybars; the word *durqā'a* does not appear at all in those descriptions.

The expression *qā'a hurmiyya* appears in a few waqf documents, but the context in which it is used does not always make its meaning clear. In the waqf of Sultan al-Muzaffar Baybars al-Jāshankīr (1308–10), a *qā'a hurmiyya* is described as having one *iwan* and a *durqā'a*, the former roofed, the latter open (*kashf*), which suggests that it is a *qā'a* with only one sitting room that opens onto an uncovered space.⁸⁵ In the waqf of Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbāy (1422–38), a *qā'a hurmiyya* is described as having two *iwans* and a *durqā'a*, the most common *qā'a* arrangement.⁸⁶ The text does not specify whether the central space of this *qā'a* is roofed or open. The *qā'as* mentioned in the two waqfs are older than the waqfs themselves. In fact, the *qā'a* in Baybars al-Jāshankīr's waqf belonged to the palace of al-Khaw-lānī, who is mentioned as one of the lesser amirs who followed Baybars and his companions when they left Aybak in Egypt and went into exile in Syria in 1254.⁸⁷ The *qā'a* in Barsbāy's waqf was part of

⁸² Ghālib, *Mawsū'at*, 130–31.

⁸³ For *durqā'a*, see Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 50–51.

⁸⁴ This hypothesis is corroborated by Goitein, *Daily Life*, 64, where he states that he found the term in only two documents from Alexandria.

⁸⁵ Dār al-Wathā'iḳ al-Qawmiyya 22/4, waqf of Sultan Baybars al-Jāshankīr, dated 26 Shawwāl 707(1307), in Sayed, "Rab," 326.

⁸⁶ Awqāf 880q, waqf of Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbāy, several dates, first 16 Jamāda II 827 (1423) and last 24 Rajab 841 (1437), 67, lines 2, 8, 9.

⁸⁷ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 392.

the palace of Salār, who was the vicegerent until 1309, the *terminus ad quem* for the building. The two *qā'as*, then, were more or less contemporaneous to Baybars's *qā'as* at the Citadel.

A *qā'a ḥurmiyya* is probably a place whose central space, or *durqā'a*, is open to the sky. Ibn Shaddād may have used the term to designate the open central space itself, whereas the two waqfs use it to refer to a *qā'a* whose central space is unroofed. That *hurmiyya* is not encountered in descriptions of later Mamluk *qā'as* corroborates the observation advanced by a number of scholars about the general tendency in the development of the Cairene *qā'a* type toward the reduction of the central space and its roofing by a cupola.⁸⁸ The *qā'a* of Sunqur al-Ashqar and other similar contemporary *qā'as* appear to belong to a transitional subtype, in which the central space was still too large to be roofed.

Ibn Shaddād says about Baysarī's structure that it consisted of three contiguous *qā'as* with all their dependencies (*huqūq*) and an apartment (*tabaqa*) above the *ṭishtakhāna* of the Citadel. This brief description offers us a clue as to the location of this structure, and perhaps that of Sunqur al-Ashqar as well, which would fit the proposed hierarchical arrangement of residences at the Citadel. *Ṭishtakhāna* literally means "house of the washbasin," and the structure was used to store bowls, basins, cushions, and carpets.⁸⁹ It was one in a series of royal storehouses (*al-buyūt al-sultāniyya*) which included, in addition to the *ṭishtakhāna*, the *ḥawā'ijkhāna* (pantry), the *firāshkhāna* (tent room), and the royal kitchen.⁹⁰ These service structures, along with unspecified houses for amirs located nearby, were razed in 1318 when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad enlarged and monumentalized the mosque of the Citadel. The texts state that the area that was cleared for the rebuilding was on the qibli (southeast) side of the mosque;⁹¹ thus, the storehouses could have been anywhere along the southeast wall of the mosque, but they most probably were on the end closer to the actual Sūr al-Qulla. Ibn al-Furat indicates that the door of the old *firāshkhāna* was on the site where the northeastern gate to

⁸⁸ Garcin, "Habitat," 170–75; more exhaustive is Sayed, "Cairene Qā'a," 31–53.

⁸⁹ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4:10–11.

⁹⁰ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 205; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 10–13. For these services, see 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid, *Nuẓum Dawlat Salāṭin al-Mamālik wa-Rusūmahum fī Miṣr* (Cairo, 1982), 2: 18–33.

⁹¹ Casanova, "Histoire," 622–23; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 325; Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 118; Baktāsh al-Fakhri, *Beiträge*, 167.

al-Nāṣir's mosque was in his time; this means that the storehouses were located closer to the northeastern side of the mosque, facing the Sūr al-Qulla, than to its qibli side.⁹² Baysari's building was connected to the *ṭishtakhāna*, and even extended above its first floor, which suggests that this amirial residential structure was erected across the Sūr al-Qulla from the Raḥbat al-Qal'a inside the sultan's domain, and perhaps inside the second door of the Bāb al-Qulla that separated the two enclosures of the Citadel (see fig. 21).

In the western and southern sections of the southern enclosure, inside the royal part of the Citadel, Baybars built his ceremonial and most monumental structures, as well as some functional and service buildings. One was the Dār al-Dhahab (House of Gold), which appears to have been his private reception hall. He constructed two *ṭibāqs* (barracks)⁹³ overlooking the court outside the Citadel mosque, and opening onto the area of the iwan for his mamluks. He also renovated the Burj al-Aḥmar and the Burj al-Zāwiya (Tower of the Corner) near the Citadel's Bāb al-Sirr (Secret Gate), and built another *ṭibāq* next to it. But his major ceremonial building was a great domed structure (*qubba*) which he erected in the Raḥbat al-Ḥabārij (Court of Ḥabārij).⁹⁴

Dār al-Dhahab. Among Baybars's royal structures, Ibn Shaddād, al-Kutubī, and Ibn Taghrī-Birdī all speak of a Dār al-Dhahab.⁹⁵ Ibn Shaddād calls it a *qā'a*, and tells us that Baybars himself named it the Dār al-Dhahab, perhaps a reference to the by then celebrated Bayt al-Dhahab of Khumārawayh (r. 884–96), the son and successor of Ibn Ṭūlūn, or the Qā'at al-Dhahab of the second Fatimid caliph al-'Azīz (r. 975–96), which was the principal ceremonial hall at the Eastern Palace.⁹⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir and Maqrīzī mention only a new house

⁹² Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8: 109.

⁹³ In this context, *ṭabaqa* means an apartment, usually one situated on the upper level of a building; *ṭibāq* is a group of *ṭabaqas* constructed together as a barrack; see Amin and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 75–76; Laila Ibrāhīm, "Middle-Class Living Units in Mamluk Cairo: Architecture and Terminology," *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* 14 (Dec. 1978): 26–28; 'Abd al-Laṭīf Ibrāhīm 'Alī, "Wathīqat al-Amīr Akhūr Kabīr Qarāqujā al-Ḥasānī," *Majallat Kulliyat al-Ādāb* 18, 2 (Dec. 1956): 184, no. 3.

⁹⁴ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 339–41; Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, 10: 339–40; Kutubī, *Fawāt*, 1: 242; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 3: 257; 'Aynī, *Iqd*, 2: 177.

⁹⁵ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 340; Kutubī, *Fawāt*, 242.

⁹⁶ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 1: 316, for Khumārawayh's palace, and 385 for al-'Azīz's *qā'a*. For the role these and other period palaces must have played as precedents in the development of Mamluk residential architecture, see Garcin, "Habitat," 165–67.

(*dār al-jadīda*) built by Baybars at the Citadel and that it was completed in 1265; they describe it as lavishly ornamented.⁹⁷ From the concurrence of dates of building and locations among the sources, we can agree with Casanova that all these names referred to one and the same structure, which overlooked the Sūq al-Khayl.⁹⁸ The site cannot be positively fixed; we only know it was “near” (*‘ind*) the Bāb al-Sirr, but that and all the other places mentioned as being near it have disappeared. The Bāb al-Sirr must have been the gate leading to the square in front of the Iwān al-Kabīr, mentioned in Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir’s report, for that was the only gate that might have commanded a view of the horse market, although it was neither secret nor the only *bāb al-sirr* at the Citadel. The term *bāb al-sirr* turns up often in the sources and waqfs, and probably simply denoted any private door reserved for the family as opposed to a main door for visitors.⁹⁹ The Citadel’s several *abwāb al-sirr* were apparently used by the sultan, high amirs, and officials, and otherwise kept closed.

The Bāb al-Sirr in front of the iwan was the ceremonial entry to the palatial complex on official occasions.¹⁰⁰ It was most probably located at some point along the wall near the present-day Bāb al-Waṣṭānī on the northeastern side of the southern enclosure and was removed by Muḥammad ‘Alī when he rebuilt the whole area in 1825. The map of the *Description de l’Égypte* shows a gate (no. 59) that opened into the palatial complex, opposite the Iwān al-Kabīr, called the Bāb al-Shirk (Trapdoor Gate), a name that may be a holdover from the days when it was used as the private gate for the sultan.¹⁰¹ The map does

⁹⁷ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 246; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 544; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 212.

⁹⁸ Casanova, “Histoire,” 610–12, deduced from his sources that al-Zāhir’s house and the one he built for his son al-Malik al-Sa‘īd stood opposite each other across from the depression (*jura*). He relied in his reconstruction on a manuscript of Ibn Taghrī-Birdī’s chronicle at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in which the distorted text could be understood as he interpreted it. The published *Nujūm*, 7: 190–91, and the older sources, make it clear that al-Malik al-Sa‘īd’s house was in the northern enclosure and the Dār al-Dhahab in the southern.

⁹⁹ Ibrāhīm ‘Alī, “Wathīqat Qarāqujā,” 226, no. 17; Zakarya, *Palais*, 112; Sayed, “Rab’,” 125, 460; Amin and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 19.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Umārī, *Masālik*, 144, says that the sultan has many secret gates; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 371–72, lists the Bāb al-Sirr in front of the iwan among the three gates of the Citadel.

¹⁰¹ Casanova, “Histoire,” 593–94; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 36; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 8: 172, no. 1, and 9: 181, no. 3, where Ramzī identifies the Bāb al-Sirr with the Bāb al-Shirk, and notes Muḥammad ‘Alī’s rebuilding of the area. He, however, asserts that Bāb al-Sirr is the same as the Bāb al-Sab’ Ḥadarāt, which was in a totally different location.

not show any structure, or ruins of a structure, on either side of the Bāb al-Shirk, but at some distance to the north on the tip of the wall of the southern enclosure, no. 85 is designated “subterranean stores” near the Burj al-Shakhṣ. These badly ruined underground spaces are still accessible today from underneath the Police Museum. Two *qāʿas* still remain, with a passageway (*dihlīz*) between them. The windows of the larger *qāʿa* overlook the winding carved path, and may have had a view onto the horse market. Although it is impossible to assert that this was the *qāʿa* of Baybars, its existence underground proves that the sub-surface level of that side of the southern enclosure may yield more undiscovered structures and the Dār al-Dhahab might well be one of them (see fig. 21).

Ibn Shaddād says that the Dār al-Dhahab consisted of a *majlis*, an iwan, two *ṣuffas*, and a *ḥurmiyya*, and was surmounted by a single *ṭabaqa* which had a *ṭayyāra* over the *qāʿa*’s *bādhāhanj* (windcatcher or ventilator). The *qāʿa* appears to have been similar to that of Sunqur al-Ashqar in its arrangement of the two areas for sitting, the iwan and the *majlis*, on either side of the central *ḥurmiyya*. It differs in that it had two *ṣuffas* (alcoves), reminiscent of the smaller, side iwans that existed in the prototypical biaxial plan of a Cairene *qāʿa*.¹⁰² The two *ṣuffas* of Baybars’s *qāʿa* could have been two simple alcoves, or more elaborate arrangements of multiple arches, usually three together, supported on slender columns on each side of the *durqāʿa* that would be found in similarly ornate Mamluk *qāʿas* at a later date, such as the 1334–39 *qāʿa* in the Palace of Bashtāk (pl. 14).

The *ṭabaqa* in Ibn Shaddād’s description probably referred to a simple room on an upper floor. He does not say how the *ṭabaqa* and the *qāʿa*’s *bādhāhanj* were related. In a Mamluk *qāʿa* a *bādhāhanj* is usually in the form of an open shaft rising above either one of the iwans or one of the *martabas* or nooks (*khazāʿin*, sg. *khizāna*) on the sides of the iwans.¹⁰³ The side of the *bādhāhanj* facing the direction of the desirable breeze was open and covered with a wooden grille. The roofing of the shaft slopes back so as to direct the fresh air inside

¹⁰² A *ṣuffa* in a medieval *qāʿa* is a shallow alcove; see Sayed, “Rabʿ,” 145, no. 212; Zakarya, *Palais*, 149, gives a definition based on later waqfs of the partly ornamental, partly functional three-arched *ṣuffa*.

¹⁰³ Zakarya, *Palais*, 115; Amin and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 19. David A. King, “Architecture and Astronomy: On the Ventilators of Medieval Cairo and Their Secrets,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104, 1 (1984): 97–133, analyzed all available data from medieval sources.

and downward. The sentence could mean that the *ṭabaqa* was constructed above the *bādhāhanj*, for the word *ṭayyāra*, which means “the one flying over,” usually signifies the room on top of the whole structure. However, a room above the windcatcher could obstruct the circulation of air, and there are no examples of such an arrangement among the surviving *bādhāhanjs* or in waqfs. Another, more plausible interpretation, though one that makes the sentence redundant, is that the *bādhāhanj*’s surface is itself the *ṭabaqa ṭayyāra*, or that the *ṭabaqa ṭayyāra* occupied the part of the roof behind the *bādhāhanj*. Be that as it may, the text does indicate that the *qā’a* had a ventilator, and that its roof had relatively little other construction.

In his short sentence, Ibn Shaddād actually gives a description of a space that belonged to one of the dominant variants of the *qā’a* type in the period 1250–1300 as tabulated by Hazem Sayed.¹⁰⁴ The *qā’as* of both Baybars and of Sunqur al-Ashqar properly fit the general formal characteristics of that variant at that stage of development. An iwan and a *majlis* on both ends of a *qā’a* represent the transitional stage between the double-*majlis qā’a*, which prevailed in the Fustāṭ houses of the early Fatimid period, and the double-iwan *qā’a*, which became the norm in Cairo’s residential architecture from the fourteenth century on.¹⁰⁵ In this regard the *qā’as* of the Citadel appear to conform to the general trends in Cairene residential architecture. They may have been more monumental than ordinary residential *qā’as*, either in their overall volume, or their roof height, or in their space, or the lavishness of their decoration. But there is no indication of that in the available sources. Remains of contemporary amirial *qā’as* around the Citadel and elsewhere in Cairo tend to have volumes grander than those of later residential *qā’as* from the Circassian period, but we have no basis for comparison with contemporary Cairene *qā’as* belonging to ordinary people, of which no examples remain.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Sayed, “Rab’,” 154–55; idem, “Cairene Qā’a,” 44, indicates that the variant with one *majlis* and one *qā’a* constituted one third of the total.

¹⁰⁵ Goitein, *Daily Life*, 67, notes that the word *iwān* is absent from his documents before the advent of the Mamluk period.

¹⁰⁶ The development of Mamluk *qā’as* is traced in Alexandre Lézine, “Les salles nobles des palais mamelouks,” *Annales Islamologiques* 10 (1972): 149–205; Jacques Revault, “L’architecture domestique du Caire à l’époque mamelouke,” in Revault et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire, époque mamelouke*, 39–125; Laila Ibrāhīm, “Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo,” *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 47–59; formal monumentality in Mamluk architecture is succinctly discussed in Sayed, “Rab’,” 35–54.

Burj al-Zāwiya. Baybars is credited with the restoration of a tower referred to in Mamluk sources as the Burj al-Zāwiya (Tower of the Corner), probably named after its location at a right-angled bend in the wall (*zāwiya*). Ibn Shaddād and Kutubī locate this tower near the Bāb al-Sirr; Ibn Taghri-Birdī puts it near the Bāb al-Qal'a (Gate of the Citadel, presumably meaning the Bāb al-Mudarraġ).¹⁰⁷ It is most likely the one called the Burj al-Shakhṣ (no. 86 on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte*), which stands where the western wall of the southern enclosure veers sharply to the southeast to form a right angle. An Ottoman source locates the Burj al-Shakhṣ near the upper gate (*al-bāb al-fūqānī*), the Ottoman name for the original Bāb al-Sirr of the Citadel.¹⁰⁸

This tower, whose top was recently uncovered during some renovation work done at the northern corner of the southern enclosure before the establishment of the Police Museum there, is possibly the only structure surviving of the ones Baybars built. It is round in section with an upper frieze of carved lions on the only part above what is now ground level. The frieze is divided into eight segments, each consisting of two lions passant to the left in relief flanked by projecting statues of the head, chest, and forepaws of an animal that is most probably meant to be a lion as well (see pl. 8).¹⁰⁹ The lions are not identical, but they are of similar size and carved in the same style. Al-Zāhir Baybars used the lion passant as his *rank* and adorned many of his buildings with representations of it, such as the Qanāṭir al-Sibā' (Bridge of the Lions) which crossed the main canal (*khalij*) bringing the Nile water to al-Qāhira.¹¹⁰ There is little doubt that this tower was

¹⁰⁷ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 341; Kutubī, *Fawāt*, 1: 242; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 190.

¹⁰⁸ Muṣṭafā Ibrāhīm, *Waqā'i' Miṣr al-Qāhira Bayn 1100 wa 1150*, MS H.O.38, Vienna National Library (copy at Creswell Library, AUC, Cairo), 123.

¹⁰⁹ Nasser Rabbat, "Rank," *El²*, 7: 431–33. The question as to whether the animal in Baybars's *rank* is a lion or another member of the cat family remains unsolved. The Arabic word for his *rank* is *sab'*, which means lion or wolf; see Abū Hilāl al-Askarī, *Kitāb al-Talkhīs li-Ma'rīfat Asmā' al-Ashyā'*, ed. 'Izzat Ḥasan (Damascus, 1970), 2: 644.

¹¹⁰ For the extant examples of Baybars's *ranks*, see Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 148–54. Maqrīzī, *Khiṭāṭ*, 2: 147, and Yūsufī, *Nuzha*, 264, say that al-Nāṣir removed Baybars's *rank* because he did not like seeing the emblem of another sultan on monumental structures. Al-Ashraf Khalīl also removed Baybars's *rank* from several structures in Damascus, notably from the walls of its citadel; see Abū Shāma, *Dhayl al-Rawḍatayn*, 237.

built by him as well, although it has no inscription identifying the patron.

A Burj al-Sibāʿ (Tower of the Lions) is in fact mentioned in the sources, but it is not attributed to Baybars, or to anyone else for that matter. According to the texts, it is located precisely where the discovered tower is, near the Bāb al-Sirr.¹¹¹ The Tower of the Lions of the texts was used to confine the two caliphs, al-Ḥākim (r. 1262–1302) and his son and successor al-Mustakfī (r. 1302–40), and their families: the former because Baybars and Qalāwūn after him did not want to risk having an independent-minded caliph; the latter because he more than once enraged al-Nāṣir Muḥammad by sanctioning the rule of the usurper Baybars al-Jāshankīr and by acting as a legal authority higher than the sultan.¹¹² One of these instances is mentioned in Ibn Taghrī-Birdī's chronicle where he calls the structures the Dār al-Ṣālihiyya and the Dār al-Zāhiriyya.¹¹³ Most sources speak of the Tower of the Lions only as the dwelling for the caliph, and a few chroniclers even name it the Burj al-Khalifa (Tower of the Caliph).¹¹⁴ If Ibn Taghrī-Birdī is to be trusted, the difference in the placenames may imply that there was a residence, the Dār al-Zāhiriyya, named after its builder al-Zāhir Baybars, inside the Tower of the Lions, an indirect indication that the tower was also built by Baybars. The other name used by Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, the Dār al-Ṣālihiyya, may refer to the *qāʿa* of al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, which was near the walls overlooking the maydan.

Baybars is reported to have “enveloped” or “covered” (*ghashshā*) the Burj al-Zāwiya with two covers or coats (*ghishāʿyn*, dual of *ghishāʿ*), which is a difficult sentence to interpret. The shaft of the round tower is hidden from the northwest and northeast sides behind straight walls which intersect at an acute angle, following the carved path underneath that led up to the Bāb al-Sirr of the southern enclosure. The lower parts of these walls are either Ayyubid or Mamluk,

¹¹¹ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31, fols. 63, 79.

¹¹² For al-Ḥākim, see Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 29, fol. 92; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8: 230. For al-Mustakfī, see Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 416; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāmina fī Aʿyān al-Miʿa al-Thāmina*, 4 vols. (Hyderabad, 1929–32), 2: 142; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ*, 1, 1: 474.

¹¹³ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 8: 148.

¹¹⁴ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 403; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 115, reports that al-Mustakfī was incarcerated in Burj al-Sibāʿ and his cousin in another, unnamed, tower, just like his father al-Ḥākim who had been forced to live there. Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 1: 92; ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 3: 359; call the tower Burj al-Khalifa.

their upper parts may have been rebuilt by Muḥammad ‘Alī. The original walls may have been Baybars’s two added “coats.” The report on the Burj al-Zāwiya also states that Baybars extended corbels (*rawāshin*, plural of *rawshan*) out of his tower. These may have been the lion sculptures protruding from the uncovered tower. He is also said to have constructed a dome on top of the tower, whose ceiling he ornamented. Adding domes to preexisting towers is a practice that will be encountered several times. Ottoman and French sources speak of the pleasant impression produced by the view of the Citadel’s many domes on top of its towers.¹¹⁵ The underlying purpose seems to have been aesthetic, especially in the Mamluk period when many new constructions at the Citadel were sited and oriented to provide views of the city and the Nile.

The Qubba al-Zāhiriyya. Perhaps the most monumental of Baybars’s structures was the domed hall called the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya and mentioned in all the sources which record his constructions at the Citadel. It was supported by twelve marble columns of different colors, was profusely ornamented, and had figures of the sultan and his amirs represented (*ṣuwwirat*, which could mean “painted”) on its walls.¹¹⁶

Three of the four sources that give the location of the *qubba*, Ibn Shaddād, al-Kutubī, and al-Yūnīnī, place it in a court named the Raḥbat al-Ḥabārij (?) (Court of Ḥabārij). These references, instead of giving us a clue to the site, confuse matters considerably, for that name is found in no other source, and the word *ḥabārij*, moreover, has no known meaning. It does not seem to have been a toponym, which would at least have proved that the orthography is correct. It may simply be a copyist’s error. The earliest chronicler who uses the word is Ibn Shaddād; he could not have copied it from another source, because he was a contemporary of Baybars and known to have relied on his own observations in chronicling Baybars’s rule.¹¹⁷ There is only one surviving manuscript, and it is said to be an auto-

¹¹⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyāhatnāme*, 9-10: 384–85; *Description de l’Égypte, état moderne, planches*, vol. 1, pl. 68, shows three towers on the southern wall of the northern enclosure with conical domes on their tops.

¹¹⁶ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 340; Kutubī, *Fawāt*, 1: 242; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13: 275; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7:190. For another discussion of this *qubba*, see Michael Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien (648/1250 bis 923/1517)* (Glückstadt, 1992), 1: 29–31.

graph copy. His account is summarized by al-Yūnīnī and al-Kutubī, who also report on Baybars's constructions at length and in whose texts the word *ḥabārij* also occurs. Both are Syrian scholars of the fourteenth century who may have relied totally on Ibn Shaddād without either having seen the Citadel or having had firsthand knowledge of its toponymy.¹¹⁸

The fourth chronicler, Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, also copied his information from Ibn Shaddād or one of the later Syrian authors. The editor of Ibn Taghrī-Birdī's published text writes that the two manuscripts he used in editing the work had the word *khārij* but he replaced it with *ḥabārij* because that is how he found it in Yūnīnī's and Kutubī's texts.¹¹⁹ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, a Cairene and the son of an important Mamluk amir, had easy access to the Citadel. He apparently considered *ḥabārij* a misspelling of the court's name and corrected it to *khārij* on the basis of his knowledge of the Citadel's toponymy. *Khārij* (outer), for the Raḥbat al-Khārij (Outer Court), is a more appropriate designation for a court, but Ibn Taghrī-Birdī was a fifteenth-century historian reporting events of the thirteenth century, so we cannot be sure that the name he used is the original one.

Locating this court also presents a problem, for there is no other reference to an "outer court" in the Citadel from any period. Ibn al-Furāt relates among the events of the year 1284 that Qalāwūn ordered the demolition of the *qubba* of Baybars to build a new *qubba* in "the court," without specifying which court.¹²⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, who wrote a eulogistic chronicle of Qalāwūn's reign similar to the one he wrote for Baybars, states that Qalāwūn's *qubba* was in the Raḥbat al-Ḥamrā (Red Court).¹²¹ This is the second name used to designate what appears to be the same court, since Qalāwūn's *qubba* replaced that of Baybars. Like the Raḥbat al-Ḥabārij, the name Raḥbat al-Ḥamrā is not encountered in other sources. Al-Ashraf Khalīl restored, or perhaps rebuilt, the structure attributed to his father (the sources are very unclear about the extent of work achieved during his short

¹¹⁷ See the editor's introduction to Ibn Shaddād, *Tārikh al-Zāhir*, 24-27.

¹¹⁸ Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, 3: 451-52, for Kutubī's biography, and 4: 382, for Yūnīnī's biography; English biographies in Little, *An Introduction to Mamluk Historiography*, p. 57 for Yūnīnī and p. 67 for Kutubī.

¹¹⁹ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 190, and no. 1.

¹²⁰ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārikh*, 8: 38.

¹²¹ Ibn-'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrif al-Ayyām wa-l-'Usūr fī Sirat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, ed. Murād Kāmil (Cairo, 1961), 139.

reign). This last structure was in turn destroyed in 1311 by Khalil's brother and successor, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, to be replaced by his famous Iwān al-Nāṣirī, also known as the Dār al-ʿAdl. The location of this iwan is marked on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte*, where it is labeled the Palais de Joseph (no. 82). The court in which it stands is actually the Raḥbat al-Qalʿa (Citadel Square), bordered on the eastern side by the mosque of al-Nāṣir, which replaced the original mosque of the Citadel, and on the west by the iwan. It was on almost the same location as the court that today extends to the north-east of the mosque of Muḥammad ʿAli. It appears that this site was always occupied by the main court in the Citadel. What may be deduced from all this is that the iwan of al-Nāṣir stood at the same place as the *qubba* of Baybars, and that the elusive Court of al-Ḥabārij could only have been the main court of the Citadel, the one called in later sources the Raḥbat al-Iwān (Court of the Iwan) (see fig. 21).

Part of the confusion results from the complex range of meaning that the two words, *iwān* and *qubba*, communicated in medieval times, and from their apparent interchangeability in our sources. Both normally denoted architectural elements: the first a vaulted hall open at one end or a raised portion of the floor in a vaulted hall, the second any kind of dome. Yet both were used to designate an entire structure in a number of instances throughout pre-Islamic and Islamic history. In commemorative architecture, the word *qubba* often signified the mausoleum of an amir or a pious man, which was usually, but not always, a cubical structure covered with a dome.¹²² In the palatial context, *qubba* is less common, but it is still encountered in a few famous examples, especially in the early or classical period. There are references to the Qubbat al-Khaḍrā (the Green Dome) as the name of a number of Umayyad palaces in Damascus, Wasit, and Rusafa, and the early Abbasid palace built by Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr in the center of the round city of Baghdad.¹²³ Later palaces with the same generic name, *qubba*, are also attested as far afield as Egypt and North Africa. They include the Qubbat al-Hawā (Dome of the

¹²² For the various types of *qubba* as mausolea, see Ernest Diez, "Qubba," *El²*, 5: 289–96.

¹²³ References in Oleg Grabar, "al-Mushatta, Baghdad and Wasit," in *The World of Islam: Studies in Honour of Philip K. Hitti*, ed. J. Kritzeck and R. B. Winder (London, 1959), 105–6; Jacob Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Studies* (Detroit, 1970), 239–40, no. 22.

Winds), which was built in 809-11 on the hill upon which the Citadel was later constructed and the palace known as the Qubba (la Cuba) in Palermo, Sicily, built for the Norman king William II in 1182.¹²⁴

Similarly, the word *iwān* is used in several instances to designate an entire palace. The most important examples are the legendary *Iwān Kisrā* (Arabic for Chosroes), the Sasanian palace in ancient Ctesiphon, and the *Iwān al-Kabīr* (Great Iwan), which was the main ceremonial hall in the Fatimid Eastern Palace in Cairo built by al-ʿAzīz in 979.¹²⁵ These palaces were presumably named after their most visually impressive element, whether iwan or dome. Both features appear to have represented one underlying concept: monumentality, in both its formal and spatial aspects. The iwan in a palace seems to have conveyed, in most cases, a ceremonial value as the place of honor in which royal audiences took place. The dome, too, seems to have symbolized authority and domination.¹²⁶

At the Citadel of the Mountain, *iwān* and *qubba* appear both to have been used to designate the main ceremonial hall in the Mamluk palatial complex. The structure known as the *Iwān al-Qalʿa* (Iwan of the Citadel) is mentioned in the sources from the time of al-Zāhir Baybars on, for he was crowned there in 1259.¹²⁷ Neither he nor his predecessors are credited with its building, however. After the murder of al-Mustanṣir in 1261 in his campaign against the Mongols, another Abbasid claimant was produced and recognized as caliph with the title *al-ḥākīm bi amr Allah* (the ruler by the order of God) in 1262 in a ceremony at the *Iwān al-Kabīr* of the Citadel.¹²⁸ Baybars

¹²⁴ A recent book on La Cuba is Giuseppe Caronia and Vittorio Noto, *La Cuba di Palermo (Arabi e Normanni nel XII Secolo)* (Palermo, 1988); Lézine, "salles nobles des palais Mamelouks," 70, and no. 3.

¹²⁵ In every Arabic lexicon, *iwān* is mentioned in connection with the Iwan Kisra, see, for example, A. A. al-Bustānī, *al-Bustān* (Beirut, 1927), 1: 85; E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London and Edinburgh, 1863-1893), 1, 1: 129. This monument might have represented the archetype for iwans; see Nasser Rabbat, "The Iwans of the Madrasa of Sultan Ḥasan," *American Research Center in Egypt Newsletter*, 143/144 (Fall-Winter 1988-89): 5-9.

¹²⁶ For iwan, see Oleg Grabar, "Iwan," *EI²*, 4: 287-89; for the dome, see E. Baldwin Smith, *The Dome: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Princeton, N.J., 1951, repr. 1978), 41-44.

¹²⁷ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 70; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 1: 372; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durra al-Zakiyya*, 63; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 438; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 102.

¹²⁸ Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 141; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durra al-Zakiyya*, 94; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 96; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13: 236; Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 186; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 477; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 119.

al-Manṣūrī called the structure the “Iwān al-Kabīr al-Kāmīl,” suggesting that the iwan was built by al-Kāmīl.¹²⁹ We know that Baybars built a *qubba* supported on twelve columns as an audience hall. We know it was located in the Citadel’s court, where the Iwān al-Kabīr was located. We do not know whether this *qubba* replaced the iwan. Ibn al-Dawādārī, who generally speaks of Baybars holding audiences in the iwan, says in one instance that Baybars “sat in *al-iwān wa-l-qubba* with the newly appointed caliph,” not long after the latter’s confirmation ceremony, implying that the two words refer to a single structure.¹³⁰ Maqrīzī offers us another clue when reporting the celebration of the circumcision of Baybars’s second son Najm al-Dīn Khidr in 1273. He says that “Baybars sat in the seat of his sultanate in the Qubba al-Sa‘īda.”¹³¹ Other sources always assigned the seat of the sultanate to the Iwan of the Citadel.

It is possible from the few references we have to deduce that the building that Baybars erected as the *qubba* was either an addition to or part of the iwan of al-Kāmīl, for we have no report that the iwan was demolished when the *qubba* was constructed. The use of the two words, *iwān* and *qubba*, together or interchangeably in designating a single structure could be interpreted in one of two ways. It may signify that the original structure of al-Kāmīl did not have a dome, and that the building of Baybars added a dome to it and caused viewers to shift their emphasis from the iwan to the dome when they mentioned the new audience hall. Or it may mean that both architectural elements belonged to Baybars’s rebuilding and both were prominent in the perception and description of the new hall so that people used them interchangeably at will. In fact, the Citadel iwan, reconstructed at least four times in the following sixty years, always featured both a dome and iwans.

The walls of the *qubba*’s interior were decorated with a cycle of princely scenes. Ibn Shaddād says that the scenes represented Baybars and his amirs and retinue in the day of the procession (*mawkib*). Instead of proceeding to describe the scenes, he cites parts of a poem by Abī al-Fityān Muḥammad Ibn Ḥayyūs (d. 1081), one of the most acclaimed poets of Bilād al-Shām in the Seljuqid period,

¹²⁹ ‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 1: 348, on the authority of Baybars from his still unpublished *Zubdat al-Fikra fī Tārīkh al-Hijra*.

¹³⁰ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durra al-Zakiyya*, 73, for the reference to the iwan and *qubba*, pp. 63, 94, 303, where he mentions only the iwan.

¹³¹ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2:112.

which he says almost depicts the representations on the *qubba*'s walls. It is a very meager source of information to rely upon: a poetical quotation written in praise of a structure used to describe another structure that belonged to a different time and place. But given the lack of information on figural representations in Mamluk palaces, the poem does furnish a few clues to the composition and the topic represented:

And you behold the birds of the air upon its sides
 Some in flight, others perching
 And racehorses whose hooves never leave the ground
 As though they gallop beneath their riders
 Then those who hurl thunderous blows that do no harm
 And those who wear *yalmaqs*¹³² that cannot be removed
 A group of them have drawn their shining blades, and another
 Has drawn his bow, whose arrow has no target
 And cannot leave the bow
 And his snares are always fatal for the birds¹³³

If the themes described in this quotation correspond to the scenes in Baybars's *qubba*, then Ibn Shaddād's account does not tell us everything. He says that Baybars had his figure and those of his courtiers represented as in the procession. Obviously, the scenes depicted by Ibn Ḥayyūs are hunting scenes. The men portrayed may have been mamluks, for they are the ones who usually wore *yalmaqs*. The existence of birds perching implies that there were also trees, probably in the background. Birds were hunted both by bow and by snare. We are not told if the men who drew their blades were part of the hunting scene as well. Unfortunately, we have no clue as to whether these scenes were composed in a manner similar to hunting scenes in other media, such as metalwork or miniature painting.

Figural representations in Islamic architecture, though not very common, appeared in many regions and different periods. The *qubba* of Baybars was not the first structure in Egypt to be decorated with figural representations, and not even the only one of his constructions at the Citadel to have them.¹³⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir tells us that the "*dār*

¹³² A *yalmaq*, a word of Turkish-Mongolian origin, means "a furred coat of the Tartars (Mongols)," see Hava, *al-Farā'id al-Durriyya*, 904.

¹³³ *Dīwān Ibn Ḥayyūs, Abī al-Fityān Muḥammad*, 2 vols., ed. Khalil Mardam Bek (Damascus, 1951), 2: 569. I am grateful to my friends Shawkat Toorawa and Michael Cooperson for their help in understanding and translating the poem.

¹³⁴ Laila Ibrāhīm, "Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo," 52, collected references of precedents in royal structures from Egyptian sources.

al jadīda" (new house), that is the Dār al-Dhahab, also had representations of soldiers.¹³⁵ The chronicler recited a poem of his own composition to praise the structure; in this poem it is apparent that representations in architecture were not foreign to him. He also alludes to a difference between Baybars's choice of representation and those of his predecessors, in which Baybars's qualities as a fighter and a leader of armies are stressed. From the known themes of the Islamic princely cycle, Baybars is said to have preferred scenes of horsemen and warriors to surround him in his *qā'a*, unlike the rulers before him who chose to portray themselves among singers and in drinking settings, possibly a direct reference to Fatimid and Tūlūnid precedents. Ironically, however, he died in 1276 at the Qaṣr al-Ablaq he had built in the outskirts of Damascus of complications following a night of drinking *qimiz* (fermented mare's milk), a treacherous alcoholic beverage favored by both the Turks and the Mongols.

Like Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and al-Kāmil, Baybars was buried in Damascus although he had prepared a mausoleum for himself in Cairo. Like his two predecessors, he was a man of action and a fighter. We are told that "people in his time were constantly interested in weapons, in training, and in *furūsiyya* exercises," a trait that not only marked the behavior of his mamluks and soldiers, but also appeared in his choice of buildings, in their exterior appearance, and in their interior surface articulation.¹³⁶ Except for the *qubba*, the structures he built at the Citadel were functionally necessary, and the little we know about their arrangements and plans gives us no evidence of interest in pomp or monumentality. We are also told that, unlike other rulers, he opted to have only scenes of warriors and hunters depicted on the walls of his two audience halls at the Citadel. Baybars did in fact organize the Citadel and build new structures in it, but it had to wait for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to monumentalize it and adorn it with lavish palaces and courts.

¹³⁵ Ibn-ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 246; again the verb used in the poem is *ṣawwar* (to paint).

¹³⁶ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 317; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 111; idem, *Sulūk*, 1: 512.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CITADEL UNDER QALĀWŪN AND AL-ASHRAF KHALĪL

Mamluk rule in Egypt and Syria (1250-1517) was based on a one-generation aristocracy and came closer to a meritocracy—rule by the most qualified among the amirs belonging to the upper echelon of the army—than it did to a hereditary system.¹ Service in the Mamluk army was the only path to political power in the sultanate. For that reason, the army was a very exclusive institution. It was open only to non-Arabs, and consisted mainly of Turks in the first half of Mamluk rule, called the Turkish or Baḥrī period, and Circassians in the second, called the Circassian or Burjī period. It also included small numbers of Mongols, Kurds, Greeks (*Rūm*), and others in its ranks, but they were all given Turkish names regardless of their origin, perhaps as a sign of distinction or an attempt at integration. Most of the soldiers, especially those serving in the main regiments, started their careers as *mamlūks* (that is, slaves destined to be freed). They were brought from their native lands—the Dasht-i-Kipchak in southern Russia, the Crimea, and Caucasia—at a young age, preferably before puberty. Once they had arrived in the Mamluk realm, they were bought either by the sultan or the amirs to be trained for a number of years before they were manumitted and conscripted into the army to begin their ascent through its ranks, sometimes all the way to the top—that is, to the position of sultan. With few exceptions, the Mamluk army was closed to non-mamluks, even to the sons of mamluks who were born free and called *awlād al-nās* (the sons of the distinguished people); they were compelled either to join the less prestigious auxiliary corps, the *ḥalaqa* (lit. ring), or to become administrators or scholars.

¹ Holt, *Crusades*, 138-50; idem, "Mamluks," *EP*², 6: 322-23; Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, Introduction; David Ayalon, "Aspects of the Mamluk Phenomenon," *Der Islam* 53 (1976): 196-225; 54 (1977): 1-32; Krawulsky, Introduction to 'Umari, *Masālik*, 45-68; Jean-Claude Garcin, "Le système militaire mamluk et le blocage de la société musulmane médiévale," *Annales Islamologiques* 24 (1988): 93-110; Ulrich Haarmann, "Miṣr," *EP*², 7: 165-69; Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, 3 (Aug 1994): 373-92.

The sources furnish little information about the training of mam-luks in amirial households and their careers after manumission, but we know a fair amount about those bought by the sultan, whose household was obviously the largest and most organized in the realm. They were lodged in special barracks (generally called *ṭibāq*) at the Citadel and put through several years of rigorous training including a religious education that inculcated in them a military mentality and a respect for Islamic tenets. They were then freed, conscripted as soldiers (*jund*) in the royal mam-luks corps (*al-mamālik al-sulṭāniyya*), and given a salary (*jāmikiyya*), a horse, and a sword. After a certain period as a soldier (*jundi*), any royal mam-luk could acquire a function (*wazīfa*) and the right to purchase his own mam-luks. Then, instead of a *jāmikiyya*, he would receive an *iqṭāʿ* (revenues from land allotment), which would be calculated and collected by the state treasury and then disbursed to him as his stipend. Then he could rise through the ranks to the position of amir, or commander, of a unit of cavalry usually made up of his own mam-luks, and would be assigned a larger *iqṭāʿ* whose revenues would include a portion for the *jāmikiyyas* for his mam-luks as well. The first amirial grade was that of *amīr khamsa* (amir of five horsemen), followed by *amīr ʿashra* (of ten to twenty horsemen), *amīr arbaʿin* (of forty to seventy horsemen), and finally *amīr miʿa* (of a hundred horsemen). From this last rank rose the high officials, the provincial governors, and the sultans.²

The hold on power at the top was always precarious: any great amir could become sultan provided he could gain the support of the majority of the great amirs in Cairo, or of the governors of the Syrian provinces who, at least theoretically, all had equal claims to the throne. The jockeying for power took place when a sultan died—or was killed—without having designated an heir, as when Baybars acceded to the throne after the assassination of Quṭuz, which he apparently masterminded. Otherwise, the natural tendency of every sultan was to appoint his favorite son as his successor and to do his best to secure that succession. Then almost immediately after his

² On the Mamluk training system, see David Ayalon, "L'esclavage du Mamelouk," *Oriental Notes and Studies* 1 (1951): 1–66, esp., 9–26; also, idem, "Mamlukiyyat: (B) Ibn Khaldun's View of the Mamluk Phenomenon," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980): 340–49, esp., 345–46, for a translation of Ibn Khaldun's passage on the education of mam-luks; R. Stephen Humphreys, "The Emergence of the Mamluk Army," *Studia Islamica* 45 (1977): 67–99; 46 (1977): 147–82.

death, a struggle would follow among the great amirs, who usually were the *khushdāshiyya* of the deceased sultan or his former mamluks, to wrest the sultanate from the successor he had designated. The strongest among them, and the one who had managed to procure the support of the majority, ended by removing the reigning son and installing himself as sultan. Regardless of where the plot to topple the sultan was hatched, the final showdown always took place in or around the Citadel.

Baybars had done everything possible to ensure the succession of his son al-Malik al-Saʿīd Baraka Khān (named after his maternal grandfather, the Turkoman Khawarizmian chieftain Berke Khān). He had named him co-sultan in 1264, when Baraka Khān was only four years old, educated him in statecraft under the supervision of his able vicegerent Bīlik al-Khazindār, and later married him off to the daughter of Amir Qalāwūn al-Alfī, whose preeminence among the Ṣāliḥī amirs was by then unmistakable, in the hope of securing the latter's support and allegiance when the time came. In spite of all these preemptive steps, however, Baraka Khān's reign lasted barely two years (1277–79) after his father's death, and it was precisely the father-in-law, Qalāwūn, who led the dissatisfied amirs in deposing Baraka Khān and installing his younger brother Badr al-Dīn Salāmish in his stead. Qalāwūn in fact wanted the throne for himself; he only intended for Salāmish to serve as a figurehead in the transitional period needed to appease the Zāhirī amirs (followers and former mamluks of al-Zāhir Baybars) who held the major castles and cities in the sultanate.³ A few months later, after he had removed the most influential of the Zāhirī amirs from their positions, he deposed Salāmish and installed himself as sultan.

No construction seems to have taken place at the Citadel during the short reigns of Baybars's two sons. Baraka Khān had his name attached to a number of structures in and around the Citadel, but these had all been built by his father, probably to assert in some visible way the dynastic continuity he had boldly and openly pursued from the time he appointed his son as heir apparent in 1264, until he had him officially recognized as co-sultan in 1268 and started sharing some of

³ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7: 147–48; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 656; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 288. It appears that Qalāwūn's contemporaries guessed that this was his tactic, and even accepted it.

the ruling responsibilities with him.⁴ A house was built for Baraka Khān in the Citadel; a hammam in his name was established in the Sūq al-Khayl north of the maydan; a place under the Citadel near the DĀR AL-‘ADL was constructed for the *ṭablakhāna* (military band) attached to his troops; and stables for his horses were added near the walls of the city north of the Citadel. Other halls and service structures were also built in his name around Cairo and Damascus.⁵

The term *khāṣṣakiyya*, which appears to designate a special group of mamluks, occurs for the first time in the sources immediately after the death of al-Zāhir Baybars.⁶ *Khāṣṣakiyya* is the colloquial rendition of the Turkish *khāsseki*, in turn derived from the Arabic *khāṣṣa*, “select,” “special,” a word generally denoting members of the upper class or a privileged group around some leading figure (originally the caliph).⁷ In the Mamluk period, the *khāṣṣakiyya* were the most trusted royal mamluks who functioned as the sultan’s bodyguards and pages.⁸ We do not know when this group was constituted into a specific corps with set duties and prerogatives, but Baybars may have introduced the principle of *khāṣṣakiyya* when he reorganized the Mamluk army. The *khāṣṣakiyya* of Baraka Khān, invariably described as young, privileged, and inexperienced, seem to have been those mamluks chosen by Baybars to study and exercise with his son and perhaps even to live in the royal palace. When Baraka Khān became sultan, they surrounded him and dominated his reign, causing a rift between him and the great Ṣālihi amirs of his father, which made his later fall easy to bring about.⁹

⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Rawḍ*, 203–9, 338; Baybars, *Tuḥfa*, 52; Yūnīnī, *Dhayl*, 2: 406; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 515–16; Thorau, *Baybars*, 152–53, 196.

⁵ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 341–45.

⁶ ‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 2: 186–90; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 644; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 179; M. Quatremère’s translation of Maqrīzī’s *Histoire des sultans mamlouks, de l’Égypte, écrite en arabe par Taki-Eddin-Ahmad-Makrizi* (Paris, 1837), 1: 158, no. 3, gives the first definition of the term in modern scholarship.

⁷ See M. A. J. Beg “al-Khaṣṣa wa-l-‘Āmma,” *El²*, 4:1098–1100.

⁸ David Ayalon, “Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 (1953): 203–28 (part 1); 448–76 (part 2); 16 (1954): 57–90 (part 3); esp. part 1, pp. 213–16; idem, “Khāṣṣakiyya” *El²*, 4: 1100; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 179–80, no. 4; Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 62–63; Holt, *Crusades*, 223, calls them the Mamluks of the Privy Chamber which is a misleading approximation.

⁹ Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 14: 299–300; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 643–55

The Reign of Qalāwūn (1280–90)

When Qalāwūn assumed the throne in 1280, he took the regnal title *al-manṣūr* (the victorious).¹⁰ Unlike most of his Mamluk and Ayyubid predecessors, al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn became sultan late in life, after he had acquired a large number of well-trained mamluks and after he had mastered the political game through several decades of being an amir. He swiftly proceeded to establish his control over the sultanate by appointing his own mamluks, the Manṣūris who were raised in his household, as governors of the provinces. In this way he established an efficient, loyal, and durable power base. He went down in history as the only Mamluk sultan who managed to found a dynasty, for the rule remained in his family for more than a century after his death. Even when the sultanate was usurped during the long reign of his second son, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the three usurpers, Kitbughā, Lājīn, and Baybars al-Jāshankīr, were Manṣūri amirs and their reigns were seen by some Mamluk chroniclers as a continuation and not an interruption of the dynasty's reign.¹¹ Moreover, the memory of Qalāwūn was so hallowed that newly appointed amirs swore their oaths of allegiance at his tomb, as they once had at the tomb of his *ustādh* al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, the founder of the *baḥriyya* regiment and titular patron of the Mamluk regime.¹² But his memory surpassed that of his *ustādh*. Unlike al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb whose tomb was used for this purpose only for as long as his Ṣāliḥi mamluks were alive, Qalāwūn's tomb maintained its aura of sanctity among the Mamluks for decades after his death.¹³

Though he did not build many structures in his lifetime, al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn is one of the few Mamluk sultans whose name is associated in the public memory with a major architectural project. To this day, he is remembered for the complex, the Bimāristān al-Manṣūri,

¹⁰ The primary source for Qalāwūn's reign is Ibn-'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrif al-Ayyam wa-l-'Uṣūr fī Sirat al-Malik al-Manṣūr*; its only surviving manuscript, however, covers only five years of Qalāwūn's reign. Two later sources deal with the whole reign, Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa-Jāmi' al-Ghurur*, vol. 8, *al-Durra al-Zakiyya fī Akhbār al-Dawla al-Turkiyya*, and Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, vols. 7 and 8.

¹¹ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 326. This view certainly reflects current concepts of family and mamluk bonds and should remind us of the difficulties we face when we attempt to interpret their social structure, when even the examples and analogies their historians used are inspired by the specificities of the Mamluk system.

¹² Maqrīzī, *Khiṭat*, 2: 385

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2: 380–81.

he constructed in 1283-84 in the center of al-Qāhira on the site of the Fatimid Qaṣr al-Gharbī (Western Palace) and endowed with a generous waqf; it included a madrasa and a *qubba* (here a mausoleum) which still exist, and a hospital (*bimāristān*, an unusual endowment for the time) which has disappeared. One reason for Qalāwūn's enduring reputation is the monumentality of his complex and its prime location in the center of al-Qāhira, which makes it such a visible and prominent component of the image of the city. Another was the *bimāristān* which was open and free for all, and still another the *qubba* which remained for so long the place where Mamluk amirs pledged their loyalty. Yet another was that its endowment was among the largest in the history of Egypt, and, unlike many other waqfs, withstood long periods of unrest almost intact, and continued to yield sufficient revenues to maintain the buildings properly until the nineteenth century.¹⁴

Qalāwūn's fame as patron of this great architectural project may have been the reason behind the erroneous ascription of the mosque of the Citadel to him instead of his son al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. This confusion started early in the Ottoman period and lasted until late in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Early maps of the Citadel, including that of the *Description de l'Égypte* and that of Grand Bey (1868), carried this misidentification. Qalāwūn, however, is reported to have sponsored a few structures at the Citadel. They are the Dār al-Niyāba, the Burj al-Manṣūrī, and the Qubba al-Manṣūrīyya. He is also credited with establishing a special regiment of royal mamluks whom he quartered in the towers (*abrāj*, sg. *burj*) of the Citadel and called the *mamālik al-burjiyya* (mamluks of the towers), hence the name Burjī we use today to designate the second half of the Mamluk period (1382–1517), because most of its sultans came from this *burjiyya* regiment.¹⁶

¹⁴ The waqf of the Bimāristān al-Manṣūrī was published by Muḥammad Muḥammad Amin as an appendix to the first volume of al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabih fi Ayyām al-Manṣūr wa-Banih* (Cairo, 1976), 295–396; Amin discusses the importance of the large endowment in keeping the complex functional for a long time, 308–9. See also, idem, *al-Awqāf wa-l-Hayāt al-Ijtimā'iyya fi Miṣr* (Cairo, 1980), 155–75, where he repeats much the same assessment.

¹⁵ See, for example, Muṣṭafā Ibrāhīm, *Waqā'i' Miṣr al-Qāhira*, 157, where he names the mosque after Qalāwūn when reporting an event that took place in 1711.

¹⁶ Maqrizi, *Sulūk*, 1: 756; Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 308; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1, 1: 362; David Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," part 1, p. 223, and idem, "Burdjiyya" in *EI*², 1: 1324–25.

The *mamālīk al-burjiyya* appear to have been distinguished primarily by ethnic solidarity and were otherwise less clearly separated from the rest of the army. They were chosen primarily on the basis of their country of origin: most were Circassians, a few were either Armenian or Greek from Anatolia or Āṣ (Abkhazians).¹⁷ Their selection as *burjiyya* does not seem to have carried any elevation in status. They were assigned positions among the *silāhdāriyya*, the *jumaqdāriyya* (of *jumaqdār*, ax-bearer), *jāshankīriyya* (of *jāshankīr*, taster), and *ushāqiyya* (of *ushāqī* or *jift*, stable-attendant). It is unclear whether the *khāṣṣakiyya*'s positions as *dawādāriyya* (pl. of *dawādār*, pen-box holder, epistler), *suqāt* (pl. of *sāqī*, cupbearer), *jamadāriyya* (pl. of *jamadār*, wardrobe master), and *khāzindāriyya* (pl. of *khāzindār*, treasurer) were regarded as higher, or more favored and better rewarded, than those of the *burjiyya*, but several hints support such an idea.¹⁸ A cursory survey of titles the higher amirs had in the mid Bahrī period reveals that most of them were *suqāt*, which may mean that they have started their careers as *khāṣṣakiyya*.¹⁹

Towers at the Cairo Citadel, like anywhere else, were intended primarily as strongholds for defense. From early on, however, they were often also used as temporary fortified residences or as prisons for amirs and other high officials. Qalāwūn was the first sultan to use a number of them as barracks for his *burjiyya* mamluks, perhaps for security, or because of overcrowding in the Citadel. Circassians were mistrusted by other mamluks, especially the Kipchaks who constituted the ruling elite from whose ranks the sultans came in most of the Bahrī period.²⁰ Hostility and jealousy ran deep and may have been the prime reason for separating them from the rest of the royal mamluks and for housing them in the towers where they could be better

¹⁷ All sources agree that the Circassians formed the majority among the *Burjiyya*, then they add either the Abkhazis, Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 756, or Greeks, Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 308; or Armenians, Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 2: 214.

¹⁸ For the *khāṣṣakiyya*'s positions at court, see Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 2: 214; Ayalon, "Khāṣṣakiyya" *EI*², 4: 1100.

¹⁹ Leo A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* (Oxford, 1938), 10; William Leaf and Sally Purcell, *Heraldic Symbols, Islamic Insignia and Western Heraldry* (London, 1986), 73, note that the most frequently encountered ranks on Mamluk objects are those of the *sāqī*, followed by the *silāhdār*, *jamadār*, and *dawādār*. If this were not the result of coincidence in the survival of art objects, it could be construed as indicating that these amirs were the richest, and thus the most favored.

²⁰ David Ayalon, "The Circassians in the Mamluk Kingdom," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 69, 3 (1949): 135–47; idem, "Cerkes" in *EI*², 2: 21–25, esp. "Mamluk Period," 23–24, and references there.

contained.²¹ Ironically, these suspicions were borne out more than a century later, when a Burjī Circassian, Barqūq (1382–89, 1390–99), abolished the Qalawunid dynasty and installed the Circassians in power for the remainder of the Mamluk period.

Overcrowding in the Citadel resulted from the rapid increase in the purchase of mamluks by the Bahṛī sultans in the second half of the thirteenth century. Al-Šāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, the founder of the *bahriyya* regiment, from whose ranks the future Mamluk sultans sprang, was able to amass almost a thousand Kipchak mamluks during his sultanate. Baybars is reported to have acquired four thousand mamluks, mostly Kipchaks. Qalāwūn doubled that number and did not restrict himself to one ethnic group. He seems to have been well aware of the need to maintain absolute superiority in the number of mamluks in his household vis-à-vis the mamluks of the great amirs if he wanted the rule to remain in his family. Maqrīzī ascribes to him the revelatory saying, “All kings are remembered by their wealth or monuments, and I have established bastions to defend me, my progeny, and all Muslims; those are the mamluks.”²² He then selected 3,700 of his non-Kipchak mamluks to form the *burjiyya* regiment. Al-Ashraf Khalil is said to have wanted to raise the number of his royal mamluks to ten thousand, but it is not clear whether he succeeded.²³ The sources report no building activity at the Citadel in this short period to match this surge in mamluk purchase; Qalāwūn may have been forced to use the towers to house his *burjiyya* for lack of other space.

Using the towers for this purpose would not have been possible before Qalāwūn’s time, for it would have jeopardized the Citadel’s defenses. That consideration, however, ceased to be important when it became clear that Cairo would no longer be threatened by either Crusader attacks, like those led by Amalric which prompted the building of the Citadel in the first place, or Mongol assaults following the two defeats inflicted on their armies in Syria in 1260 and

²¹ They were also locked in their *ṭibāqs* at night, see Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, vol. 29, S. M. Elham ed., *Kitbuga und Lagin* (Freiburg, 1977), 80-81, moment before he was assassinated in 1298, sultan Lājīn asked the main conspirator, Kurji, the head of the Burjī Mamluks (*muqaddam al-Burjiyya*), if he had locked them up. The same report is in Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 856, and Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 8: 102. Ibn Taghrī-Birdī adds that the Burjī Mamluk regiment had become known in his time as the *mamālik al-ṭibāq*.

²² Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 213.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2: 214; Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 69–70.

1281. The coincidence of this urgent need for space with the diminishing strategic value of the towers and their capacity as controllable lodgings made them the logical choice for Qalāwūn's *burjiyya* mamluks. The shortage of quarters for the swelling numbers of mamluks was to become chronic. Qalāwūn's two sons, al-Ashraf Khalīl and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, razed structures more than once at the Citadel to make room for new *ṭibāqs* for the mamluks.

Dār al-Niyāba. Qalāwūn is credited with building the Dār al-Niyāba for his vicegerent (*nā'ib*) Ḥusām al-Dīn Ṭurunṭāy al-Manṣūrī in 1288, but the structure was actually built by Baybars for his *nā'ib*, Bilik al-Khazindār. Qalāwūn probably renovated that structure, added a second-floor apartment for his vicegerent which was called the Ṭabaqa al-Ḥusāmiyya (of Ḥusām al-Dīn Ṭurunṭāy), and opened the window (*shubbāk*) on its ground floor that Ṭurunṭāy is reported to have sat in regularly when he presided over official proceedings.²⁴ Unless the word *shubbāk* in this context means some sort of a niche in the wall, the setting described suggests that the attendants and petitioners would have to stand outside while clerks surrounded Ṭurunṭāy inside the *qā'a*. The Ṭabaqa al-Ḥusāmiyya had a *manzara*; it burned down in 1321. It seems to have been considered a separate unit which could be assigned functions different from the rest of the structure, such as the ceremonial reading of the hadith collection of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. In one instance, it is reported to have been left unoccupied when Amir Ulmās took up residence in Dār al-Niyāba in 1326.²⁵

Al-ʿUmarī speaks of a ceremony held regularly in earlier times in the Dār al-Niyāba as having been a scaled-down version of the bi-weekly royal ceremony (*al-mawkib al-sultānī*) with a public audience (*khidma*) and a banquet (*simāt*).²⁶ It ceased when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad abolished the office of the vicegerent by the end of his third reign in 1337, approximately the time when al-ʿUmarī was writing.

²⁴ Casanova, "Histoire," 647-48; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 214-15; Yūsufī, *Nuzha*, 348. The iwan on the first floor was the most important and ceremonial feature of the structure until the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad; see Baybars, *Tuḥfa*, 187, 191.

²⁵ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 100, for the religious recital; 31: 8, for the Manzara al-Ḥusāmiyya; 31: 74, for the appointment of Ulmās.

²⁶ ʿUmarī, *Masālik*, 107, 116; copied by Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 16-17; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 215. Both added details on the changes of the rules in the Burjī period. The word *mawkib*, which literally means procession, was used in Mamluk sources to denote ceremony as well; see Paula Sanders, "Marasim," *EP*², 6: 518 and "Mawakib," 6: 849-52.

This ceremonial practice certainly dates to the period of Qalāwūn precisely because the sources credit him with having built the structure in which it took place, even though it definitely existed from at least the time of al-Zāhir Baybars. This mistaken ascription to Qalāwūn of a building by his predecessor may be read as a sign, not of the importance of Qalāwūn's architectural additions, which were not particularly distinguished, but of the changes introduced by him to Dār al-Niyāba's function and significance, which erased the memory of Baybars's work and uses. In Baybars time, the *qā'a* seems to have been used only as a residence for the *nā'ib* Bilik al-Khazindār; no ceremonial function was attached to it. Qalāwūn, who is said to have favored Ṭurunṭāy, must have instituted the condensed procession and banquet as one of the vicegerent's duties and privileges. That new function may also have prompted the building of the *shubbāk* to provide a focal point in the hall for Ṭurunṭāy to sit in when he presided over the mini-banquet. The Dār al-Niyāba was reportedly razed, along with other administrative structures, by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad when he abolished the office of *nā'ib* in 1337, but this seems to be incorrect; it could not have been entirely destroyed, for it was rehabilitated in 1343 shortly after his death. It then became the real center of government where the daily troop reviews, the administration of *iqṭā'*, and the biweekly audiences with a banquet were held.²⁷

The Burj al-Manṣūrī. Qalāwūn also built a huge tower, the Burj al-Manṣūrī, next to the Bāb al-Sirr al-Kabīr (Great Secret Gate) in 1283, and erected above it some "rooms with a view" (*mushtarafāt*, sg. *mushtaraf*) whose walls were covered with marble.²⁸ The *mushtarafāt* of Qalāwūn belong in the same category as Baybars's dome above the Burj al-Zāwiya and the *rafrāf* that al-Ashraf Khalīl later built above the Burj al-Rafrāf. Building rooms on top of towers was apparently a royal privilege. In addition to taking advantage of the view, it perhaps emphasized the status of the royal residence by literally raising it above the other buildings in the Citadel to make it visu-

²⁷ Shujā'i, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 235; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 215; idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 410–11; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 10: 32.

²⁸ *Mushtaraf*, as an architectural term, does not appear in any of the lexica consulted. Its derivation from *sh-r-f*, "to overlook," supports its interpretation as a "room with a view." It should not be confused with *sharārif* which means merlons.

ally commanding. Qalāwūn moved to these *mushtarafat* a year later according to Qalqashandī and Maqrizī, on the authority of Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, presumably from his lost book on the topography of Cairo, *al-Rawḍa al-Bahiyya al-Zāhira fi-Khiṭaṭ al-Mu‘izziyya al-Qāhira*, since Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir’s chronicle of Qalāwūn’s reign mentions neither the construction of the tower nor the transfer of his residence there.²⁹ But no other chronicle of Qalāwūn’s reign, including Maqrizī’s own *Kitāb al-Suluk*, mentions it either, though most sources record the burning of the Burj al-Manṣūrī and the *ṭibāqs* next to it in 1315, during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.³⁰ The group of mamluks who lived in the *ṭibāqs* were *silāhdāriyya* (of the *silāhdār*, the arms-bearer), according to Nūwayrī, and *jamadāriyya* (of the *jamadār*, wardrobe master), according to Maqrizī. Both groups were among the *khāṣṣakiyya* whose job it was to surround the sultan in ceremonial processions, which suggests that the *ṭibāqs* were inside the palace complex and that Qalāwūn’s tower opened onto the palatial complex.

Although this tower was heavily damaged from the fire and possibly replaced by another, unreported structure, one can propose a site for it. The Bāb al-Sirr al-Kabir mentioned in the accounts is most probably the same as the Bāb al-Sirr in the southern enclosure used by the sultan and his important visitors. It stood at the end of the path ascending from the lower enclosure, and therefore the tower must have been located somewhere along the northeastern wall of the enclosure overlooking the path carved in the spur between Baybars’s Burj al-Zāwiya and the round tower called today the Burj al-Waṣṭānī because it stands next to the Bāb al-Waṣṭānī (it is called the Burj al-Ṭabbālīn or the Tower of the Drummers, no. 104 on the map of the *Description de l’Égypte*) (see fig. 14).³¹ This last name may have been a distortion of an older, Mamluk name, the Burj al-Ṭablahāna (Tower of the Drummer), whose first appearance in the sources

²⁹ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 370; Maqrizī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 204. Although Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir’s annals of Qalāwūn’s reign, *Tashrif*, are not complete, the years in question, 1283–84, are covered in it, and no mention of the building of the tower is to be found.

³⁰ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31, fol. 90, calls the *ṭibāqs* next to it, Tibaq al-Silahdāriyya; Baktāsh al-Fakhri, *Beiträge*, 163, says only the *ṭibāqs* of the mamluks without specifying their occupation; Maqrizī, *Suluk*, 2: 157 calls them *jamadāriyya*.

³¹ Jomard, “Description du Kaire,” 351; reproduced in Casanova, “Histoire,” 718, and Sayyed, *Waṣf al-Qāhira*, 230. He, however, discusses neither the history nor the name of the tower.

dates to the year 1389, and whose builder is not recorded.³² It is possible that the Burj al-Manṣūrī was in the same location as the later Burj al-Ṭablahāna. It could have been rebuilt after it had burned down and assigned the new function of housing the military band, or it might just have been named after the *ṭablahāna*, which stood on the slope of the hill south of it.³³ This last Mamluk tower was replaced with another tower, the Burj al-Waṣṭānī, at an unknown time, because, according to Creswell, this last tower standing there today could not have been constructed before artillery came into use in the late fifteenth century, and therefore probably belongs to the Ottoman period (pl. 15).³⁴

Thus the Burj al-Manṣūrī may have stood where the Burj al-Waṣṭānī stands today, although this hypothesis is very difficult to confirm. We have no textual reference to the reconstruction of a tower in the location of the Burj al-Manṣūrī and no certain chronology for buildings along the northwestern wall of the northern enclosure, between the Burj al-Ṭablahāna or the Burj al-Waṣṭānī and the proposed location of the Burj al-Aḥmar. Nor do we have any archaeological evidence to support any conjecture, because Muḥammad ‘Alī’s reconstruction has been particularly damaging to the topography of the area extending north from the Burj al-Waṣṭānī to the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ and the area extending west from the Burj al-Waṣṭānī to the Burj al-Zāwiya.

The Qubba al-Manṣūrīyya. Qalāwūn’s most important addition to the Citadel was the Qubba al-Manṣūrīyya, called the Iwān al-Manṣūrī in later sources. Ibn al-Furāt says that Qalāwūn ordered it built to replace Baybars’s Qubba al-Zāhiriyya, which he had torn down in 1286.³⁵ From the wording of Qalāwūn’s order as it is recorded, it is

³² Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9, 1: 81, says that Sultan Barqūq ordered the display of his banners on the Burj al-Ṭablahāna al-Sulṭāniyya.

³³ Casanova, “Histoire,” 737–38, suggests that the tower was named after the *ṭablahāna* of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad which stood nearby. The tower itself could have been turned into a *ṭablahāna* during the reign of Barqūq, who is known for having changed the functions of many structures in the Citadel.

³⁴ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 31–32, asserts that the construction technique of the tower puts it in the early Ottoman period.

³⁵ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8: 38. Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 212, says that Qalāwūn demolished the *qulla* of Baybars and built a *qubba* in its place on exactly the same date Ibn al-Furāt gives for the tearing down of Baybars’s *qubba*. The concurrence of dates suggests that Maqrīzī’s sentence should have *qubba* instead of *qulla*. The mistake must be in the printed text not the manuscript. The *qulla*, also built by Baybars, was not rebuilt until the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

very difficult to know whether the demolition of Baybars's *qubba* was total or partial; other Mamluk sources tend to pass the event over in silence.³⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, who held high chancery positions under Baybars, Qalāwūn, and al-Ashraf Khalil and who was a semi-official court historian for both Baybars and Qalāwūn, does not refer to any demolition when he reports Qalāwūn's building of his *qubba*. His account of the Qubba al-Manṣūriyya was included in a panegyric to Qalāwūn, similar to the one he had written earlier to eulogize Baybars. This put him in a delicate position, and he probably thought it best to ignore the demolition of Baybars's *qubba* rather than try to justify an action that must have been prompted solely by Qalāwūn's wish to erase his predecessor's traces. This problem did not exist for Ibn al-Furāt, who was chronicling events that happened more than a century before he wrote them down.

The few references we have suggest that both buildings belonged to the same general type: each had a central dome resting on arches supported by columns, surrounded by iwans on all four sides. Qalāwūn's *qubba* appears to have been the more grandiose version; Baybars's reportedly had only twelve columns, but Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir tells us that the Qubba al-Manṣūriyya had ninety-four small and large columns, not counting those on the porticoes (depending on how we interpret the word *riwāqat*).³⁷ This number, if correct, must have included all the columns in the *qubba*, both those supporting the dome and those adorning the interior and exterior surfaces of the building. Decorative columns could be numerous, especially in early Mamluk buildings where double-arched windows with three engaged columns each were the norm. They can be found on other structures of Qalāwūn, such as his other *qubba* in his complex in Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, completed in 1285 (pl. 16), and the one he built in 1283-84 for his wife Fāṭima Khātūn, also known as *umm al-Ṣāliḥ* (al-Ṣāliḥ's mother) after her son al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī, Qalāwūn's favorite son and heir apparent.

Building the Qubba al-Manṣūriyya and tearing down the Qubba al-

³⁶ Mamluk sources tend to be vague in their general use of building terms. Casanova, "Histoire," 616, noted the apparent interchangeability of the verbs *banā*, *anshā*, and *'ammara* in designating either building or rebuilding. I suggest that *anshā* meant to build from scratch, but the two other verbs were applied indiscriminately.

³⁷ Ibn-'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrif*, 139. *Riwāqāt* (sing. *riwāq*) may have meant either side alcoves, or just arcaded porticoes, or a mixture of both.

Zāhiriyya can be ascribed to Qalāwūn's wish to be the patron of this most visible and public structure in the palatial complex, for he did not demolish any other structure Baybars had built. The successors of Qalāwūn, his two sons al-Ashraf Khalīl and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, rebuilt this same audience hall within the next half-century, presumably because they, too, wanted to have their own names attached to it. By the time Khalīl demolished his father's hall in 1293, the sources were calling it the Iwān al-Manṣūrī instead of the Qubba al-Manṣūrīyya. From then on, the structure's name changed in the sources from the Iwān al-Manṣūrī to the Iwān al-Ashrafī, and later to the Iwān al-Nāṣirī, following its various rebuildings. Eventually, it was simply called the Iwān or the Iwān al-Kabīr.

The sources offer no explanation for the switch from the word *qubba* to the word *iwān*; it may simply reflect a local, contemporary development. Qalāwūn had built a funerary *qubba* in Bayn al-Qaṣrayn in al-Qāhira, which was also known as the Qubba al-Manṣūrīyya, so using *qubba* for his throne hall at the Citadel would have caused some confusion. But a more contextual explanation is that the meaning of the word *qubba* had evolved in a way that obscured its secular and majestic architectural association. Domes in the Islamic lands, as elsewhere, were first regarded as symbols of preeminence and sovereignty in both secular and funerary architecture: in secular architecture a dome was a prerogative of the ruler; in funerary architecture it signaled the burial place of any important figure.³⁸ The Mamluks, probably following the precedent of the Fatimids, popularized this connotation of nobility by including a *qubba* in one of their most important royal insignia, the *jitr* (Persian *chatr*), also known as the Qubba wa-l-Ṭayr (the Dome and the Bird), a dome-shaped parasol with a golden bird on top of it usually carried above the sultan in processions.³⁹ But in medieval Cairo, with the spread of domed mausolea for religious and public figures, the funerary con-

³⁸ Ernst Diez, "Kubba," *EP*², 5: 289–96, overlooks the secular connotation of the word. Oleg Grabar, "From Dome of Heaven to Pleasure Dome," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 49, 1 (March 1990): 15–21, shows that in Islamic architecture, as in its classical predecessor, the dome is most often related to kingship.

³⁹ 'Umari, *Masālik*, 98; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 473, 4: 7–8; M. 'Akkūsh, "al-Qubba wa-l-Ṭayr Aw Mithāl min-Rusūm al-Mulk wa-Ālātihi fī Dawlat al-Mamālik bi-Miṣr Kamā Waradat fī Ṣūra Fārisiyya," *al-Muqtataf* (June 1932): 46–51. (A translation of R. L. Devonshire. "An Egyptian Mameluke Feature in a Persian Miniature." *Apollo* 14, 83 [Nov. 1931]).

notation of *qubba* had become so dominant that the word was slowly abandoned in the palatial architectural vocabulary of Mamluk Egypt and became applied solely to funerary domes.⁴⁰

The word *iwan* replaced *qubba* in designating the throne hall at the Citadel because it had no funerary associations and because the royal connotation it did have had remained fairly consistent throughout the medieval period. Architecturally, an *iwan* always meant either a hall open at one end or a palace. From early Islamic times, *iwān*, as a term for an entire structure, seems to have been connected in some way to the concept of exemplary majesty as illustrated by the countless medieval Arabic poetic references to the legendary palace called *Iwān Kisrā* in Ctesiphon (Ar. *al-Madā'in*), which is evoked as a symbol of grandeur although very few people really saw it. In fact, the expression *Iwan Kisrā* and the image of *Iwan Kisrā* in the medieval collective memory might have offered the source for the architectural denotations, as well as the memorial connotations of the word *iwān*.⁴¹ Over time, the word's meaning developed to encompass all types of audience or reception halls, such as the Cairene great iwans of the Ṭūlūnids and Fatimids, but it retained its ceremonial and royal connotations. This is most probably why it replaced *qubba* in the names of the structures of al-Ashraf Khalīl and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, though at least al-Nāṣir's is said to have had a huge dome in its center. Both structures conveyed an image of royal grandeur appropriate for the ceremonies they were built for.

The Reign of al-Ashraf Khalīl (1290-93)

Qalāwūn's designated heir and co-sultan, his first son al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī, died in 1288, two years before his father. Qalāwūn is reported to have mistrusted his second son al-Ashraf Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl to the point

⁴⁰ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The *Qubba*, an Aristocratic Type of *Zāwiya*," *Annales Islamologiques* 19 (1983): 1–7, notes other uses of the word *qubba* in Mamluk Cairo, though in the Burjī period, that strengthen the argument that the term has definitely migrated to the funerary domain.

⁴¹ Rabbat, "The Iwans of the Madrasa of Sultan Ḥasan," 5–6; For the Arabic poetic references, see Father Anstās al-Karmalī (the Carmelite), "Salwā al-Asrā fī Iwān Kisrā," *al-Mashriq* 5 (1902): 740–46, 780–86, 834–40; 'Abd al-Salām 'A. Fahmī, *Iwān al-Madā'in bayn al-Buḥturī wa l-Khāqānī: Dirāsa Adabiyya Muqārana bayn al-Qaṣidatayn al-'Arabiyya wa l-Fārisiyya* (Jeddah, 1983), Introduction.

that he refused to sign his document of investiture (*kitāb al-‘ahd*) which was drafted by the chancery after the death of al-Ṣāliḥ ‘Alī, but Khalil nonetheless became sultan when his father died suddenly in September 1290 in his camp near Cairo while he was preparing to lead an attack on the port city of Acre in Palestine, the last base held by the Crusaders. Unlike Baraka Khān, whose circumstances of accession were otherwise similar, al-Ashraf Khalil proved to be an able, if overly ambitious ruler. During his short reign (1290–93), he managed to complete the mission first undertaken more than a century earlier by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb, the sultan with whom he shared the same honorific title—he cleared the Syrian coast of Crusaders. His energies were not just directed to his military campaigns. He had many plans for the restructuring of the state and the economy. He is said to have contemplated a redistribution of lands and revenue by initiating a new survey of agricultural land (*rawk*), which would have changed the structure of the Mamluk army and state, and which was later accomplished by his brother and successor al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴²

Contemporary chroniclers, especially the Syrians, complain about the destruction al-Ashraf Khalil inflicted upon the fortresses and citadels of his realm. He ordered the coastal fortresses of Palestine to be dismantled after they had been recaptured from the Crusaders. He destroyed some castles, such as the citadel of Shawbak, in the interior Syrian plain. Even in the citadels of his two capitals, Damascus and Cairo, he razed several structures.⁴³ The reason usually given for the demolition of the ex-Crusader castles was to prevent a sea-borne attack from Europe, but in fact, it may have been a pretext to further a long-term economic plan. Khalil may simply have wanted to render these port cities unsafe for international trade so that it would be redirected from Syrian to Egyptian ports, which were firmly under his control. The citadel of Shawbak had in any case been partially destroyed by an earthquake early in 1292, and may therefore have been structurally unsound. Dismantling it would also prevent its use as a stronghold by the rebellious Banī Faḍl, the chief bedouin

⁴² Ulrich Haarmann, “Khalil” *El²*, 4: 964–5; Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 76–82.

⁴³ Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jazarī, *Jawāhir al-Sulūk fī l-Khulafā’ wa-l-Mulūk*, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, MS 7575H, fol. 164; Nūwayri, *Nihāya*, 29, fol. 72; Zetterstéen, *Beiträge*, 23; Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, 13: 405. They all complain about the demolition of the Syrian castles.

tribe in the Syrian desert, with whom he was having trouble at the time.⁴⁴

Contrary to what the chroniclers would lead us to believe, Khalil did not neglect the citadels of Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo, the three largest cities in his realm. In fact, he appears to have involved himself in fortifying them and in renovating and adding a few structures. He did not have time to finish all the projects he started, but he certainly accomplished a good deal. In Aleppo, he completed the reconstruction of the citadel undertaken during Qalāwūn's reign by the *nā'ib* (governor) Qarāsunqur al-Manṣūrī following thirty years of neglect after Hülegü's forces had dismantled it in 1260. Khalil's name, titles, and the date 691 A.H. (1292) and Qarāsunqur's name and titles are inscribed on its main gate.⁴⁵ In Damascus, his *nā'ib* 'Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujā'ī built several structures inside the citadel, which, judging by the names given them, were richly ornamented ceremonial spaces. One was a monumental wooden baldachin or canopy (*tārīma*), another a dome called the Qubbat al-Zarqā' (Blue Dome) because it was covered with blue tiles, and another *qā'a*, called the Qā'at al-Dhahab (Hall of Gold), probably because of the gilded plaques that covered its ceiling.⁴⁶ He also enlarged the maydan west of the walled city south of the river Baradā to accommodate the *furūsiyya* exercises.⁴⁷

Sanjar al-Shujā'ī had originally made his name under Qalāwūn as a construction supervisor (*shādd*), first of the mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn, Qalāwūn's wife, near the mausoleum of Sitt Nafisa in Cairo, and then of the complex in Bayn al-Qaṣrayn with the *bīmāristān*, madrasa, and the Qubba al-Manṣūriyya in 1283–84.⁴⁸ In 1292, he was entrusted by al-Ashraf Khalil to remain at the Qal'at al-Rūm (Roum Kale, or the Citadel of the Greeks) on the Euphrates to refur-

⁴⁴ 'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 3: 157–65.

⁴⁵ Inscription in Ernest Herzfeld, *C. I. A., Syrie du Nord, deuxième partie* (Cairo, 1955), 1: 89–90. References in Muḥammad Rāghib al-Ṭabbākh, *I'lām al-Nubalā' bi-Tārīkh Ḥalab al-Shahbā'* (Aleppo, 1924), 2: 337–38; Jean Sauvaget, *Alep* (Paris, 1941), 1: 167–68.

⁴⁶ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1: 444. For the meaning of *tārīma*, see Goitein, *Daily Life*, 72.

⁴⁷ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkirat al-Nabīh*, 1: 140; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13: 323, 327; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 775; 'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 3: 80; Riḥāwī, *Qal'at Dimashq*, 153–56, proposes locations for the buildings.

⁴⁸ Ibn-'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrif*, 55; Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 29, fol. 28; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 406–8; Shujā'ī's biography in Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, vol. 15, ed. B. Radtke (Wiesbaden, 1979), 475–78.

bish and fortify it after he had conquered it from the Armenians.⁴⁹ Later in the same year, he was recalled from his governorship in Damascus back to Cairo and was ordered to carry out building projects in the Citadel and around it. He was left behind in the Citadel in 1293, when the sultan and his army went on a campaign to northern Syria, to rebuild the structures Khalīl had demolished.⁵⁰ His name is connected in particular with the rebuilding of the iwan of Qalāwūn at the Citadel, which was renamed the Iwān al-Ashrafī (after al-Ashraf Khalīl) after he reconstructed it.

Another great amir in the service of al-Ashraf Khalīl, the Amir-Jandār ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak al-Afram, was also known as an experienced master of public works. He had been responsible for many large-scale constructions, fortifications, and waterworks during the reigns of both Baybars and Qalāwūn. He supervised the reconstruction of the Ḥuṣn al-Akrād (Crac des Chevaliers) after it was stormed by Baybars in 1271, and a palace north of the Aleppo citadel in the same period.⁵¹ He too was involved in numerous constructions which al-Ashraf Khalīl commissioned during his three-year reign. One major and vital project with which he was associated was the building of an intake tower to bring water from the Nile to the Citadel in a *majrā* (water channel) which was to be built over the walls of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The project was started but not finished by Khalīl: al-Afram was only able to complete the well and the four waterwheels at the river intake; they were used later by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁵² Khalīl planned to increase the water supply at the Citadel, presumably anticipating further construction and possibly enlargement. As it was, he left an architectural legacy that included at least two palatial structures, the Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya or the Qaṣr al-Ashrafī (as Maqrīzī calls it in one instance) and the Iwān al-Ashrafī, a royal pergola (*raḡraf*), and possibly lesser service buildings. Had he lived longer, his plans for the Citadel might have altered its development.

⁴⁹ Baybars, *Tuḥfa*, 131; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 778; ‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 3: 116.

⁵⁰ Al-Jazarī, *Jawāhir al-Sulūk*, fol. 209.

⁵¹ Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 151, 156. On al-Afram’s career, see Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 38, and references.

⁵² Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 80; Shujā‘ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 95. Other, later chroniclers attribute the whole project to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, but Nūwayrī was an eyewitness.

The Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya

Al-Ashraf Khalil had the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya built in 1292 and inaugurated it on the occasion of the circumcision of his younger brother Muḥammad and his nephew Mūsā, the son of his deceased brother al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī.⁵³ It is not known whether he intended to use his *qā'a* as a private reception hall, as his brother al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had meant his Qaṣr al-Ablaq to be, because he died before he could put it to use again. Throughout the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya, the only structure belonging to his predecessors that he did not demolish and rebuild, was put to several uses, all of them temporary. Early in his rule, it appears to have been the sultan's private throne room, as opposed to the iwan which was the public hall. Al-Nāṣir once ordered his great amirs to sleep there when a crisis threatened his authority early in his third rule in 1311 so he could police their movements.⁵⁴ Later on, after he built the Qaṣr al-Ablaq in 1313 for his private throne hall, the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya was relegated to lesser uses, such as a guest house for visiting dignitaries when they came to court.⁵⁵

After al-Nāṣir died, the *qā'a*'s functions changed again. It became the favorite base for a number of powerful amirs who succeeded each other as the effective rulers of the sultanate while the weak sons and grandsons of al-Nāṣir nominally reigned (1341–82). At least three of these amirs lived there. One was Qawṣūn, who became the *nā'ib* for the child Sultan al-Ashraf Kuchuk, the second son of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who succeeded his father (1342). The second was Aljāybughā, a *khāṣṣakī* amir and a confidant of al-Muzaffar Ḥajjī (r. 1346–47); and finally Sheikhu who was the *amīr kabīr* (grand amir) during the sultanate of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (1347–51, 1354–61).⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8: 169; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 211; 'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 3: 170. Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo: Stage for Mamluk Ceremonial," *Annales Islamologiques* 24 (1988): 55, identifies al-Ashrafiyya as the *qā'a* built by al-Ashraf Sha'bān, on the basis of one reference to it by Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1, 2: 183; the only reference to Sha'bān's having built a *qā'a*. The rest of our Mamluk sources all attribute the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya to al-Ashraf Khalil.

⁵⁴ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 92; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 26.

⁵⁵ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 128, Mūsā ibn Muḥannā, the chieftain of Banī Fadl, stayed there in 1313; Yūsufī, *Nuzha*, 205; Muḥannā, his son, was lodged there in 1334.

⁵⁶ For Qawṣūn's residence in this *qā'a*, see Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 10: 21; Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 369; for Aljāybughā, see Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 10: 166-67; for Sheikhū, see Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 314; Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 398.

By the end of the Bahrī period, the *qā'a* had become the de facto quarters for the *amīr kabīr*, replacing the Dār al-Niyāba in the northern enclosure where vicegerency audiences were formerly held. *Amīr kabīr* had become the favorite title of those strong amirs who controlled the sultan, regardless of the title they officially bore.⁵⁷ Aljāy al-Yūsufī, who was the stepfather of Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'bān (r. 1363–77) assumed the title *amīr kabīr* and began to hold court at the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya on Mondays and Thursdays (the usual days of the royal *khidma*) after the sultan appointed him his *atābek al-ʿasākīr* (1373–74).⁵⁸ Barqūq, who lived in the stables when he was the master of the royal stables (*amīr ākhūr*),⁵⁹ began holding his biweekly audiences in the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya after he had become the *atābek al-ʿasākīr* in 1377 under Sultan Maṣṣūr ʿAlī II.⁶⁰ The Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya's association with these powerful amirs who manipulated the Qalawunid epigones of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was so enduring that a later Burjī chronicler, al-Khaṭīb al-Jawharī al-Ṣayrafī, erroneously claims that it was the official residence of the regents in the "old days" (by which he probably means the last days of the Qalawunid dynasty).⁶¹ They probably took up residence in the *qā'a* to be close to the royal palaces, a reasonable precaution, especially at night, when the Bāb al-Qulla that separated the two enclosures would be closed. Had they remained in the Dār al-Niyāba in the northern enclosure like their less ambitious predecessors, they would have been cut off from the palatial complex after sunset, and would have had no control over the royal mamluks locked in their *ṭibāqs* inside the southern enclosure. Later on, the status of the *qā'a* as a royal structure appears to have dwindled, for it was first used as a prison for lesser amirs and eventually as a *ṭibāq* for the *khāṣṣakiyya*.

Location. The location and general characteristics of the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya can be reconstructed by collating evidence from several texts. It was raised above a basement (*qabū*) that either was the royal buttery (*sharābkhāna*) or was adjacent to it.⁶² It faced the place across al-Rumayla where the madrasa of Sultan Ḥasan would later

⁵⁷ See David Ayalon, "Amīr Kabīr," *EI*², 1: 444.

⁵⁸ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3: 212; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1, 2: 111, 117.

⁵⁹ See Ayalon, "Amīr Akhūr," *EI*², 1: 442.

⁶⁰ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3: 324; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 1, 2: 220.

⁶¹ Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 2:10.

⁶² Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9, 1: 169; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3: 682

(between 1356 and 1361) be built, and its roof was as high as its minaret, as we can infer from eyewitness reports about a tightrope walker who walked between them on his rope.⁶³ The Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya was connected via a set of stairs to a *bāb al-sirr* that opened into the royal stables below the southern enclosure.⁶⁴ Its window overlooked the maydan, the royal stables, and the palace of Qawṣūn, which was known in the Burjī period as the palace of the *amīr kabīr*. The remains of a great *qā'a* and stables belonging to it are still standing today across from the maydan.⁶⁵ Though it definitely was a royal hall, the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya clearly did not belong to the sultan's private quarters, since it was accessible to amirs and other dignitaries.

The *qā'a* must have been situated somewhere along the western wall of the southern enclosure, for this is the only side of the Citadel that overlooks the maydan where a rope could possibly have been stretched between the minaret of Sultan Ḥasan and the roof of a structure standing there (see fig. 14). This wall extends between the Burj al-Zāwiya (no. 86, identified on the *Description de l'Égypte*'s map as Burj al-Shakḥ) and the protruding Burj al-Rafraf (no. 84, labeled on the map as the Maison de Joseph, a name presumably designating some palatial structure that the French cartographers thought was built by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf along the wall). Edme François Jomard, the savant who wrote the entry on Cairo in the *Description de l'Égypte* and the editor of the final published work, provides a brief description of this structure in his essay. He mentions monumental well-hewn stone walls, decorated from the inside with various ornaments, mosaics, and gilded paintings, and a number of vaults ruined beyond repair. He adds that there was another room in the same palace with twelve granite columns that supported a dome inscribed with gilded writing.⁶⁶ It is very difficult from this short account to

⁶³ Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3:73–74, and Zāhiri, *Zubda*, 31–32, report the story of a “Frank” who came to Egypt in 1424, converted to Islam, and showed his skill as a tightrope walker by walking across a rope strung between the minaret of Sultan Ḥasan and the roof of the Ṭabaqa al-Ashrafiyya (by the fifteenth century the *qā'a* had become a *ṭabaqa*).

⁶⁴ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9, 1: 190; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3: 696–97; and Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 477, all mention the gate when it was blocked by Amir Mīntāsh when he led a short-lived rebellion against Sultan Barqūq in 1390, that managed to hold the Citadel for a few weeks.

⁶⁵ Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāsir*, 184, and Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 589, report a conversation between two of Qawṣūn's mamluks as they looked at their master's palace from the *qā'a*'s window.

⁶⁶ Jomard, “Description du Kaire,” 352; Sayyed, *Wasf al-Qāhira*, 231–32.

determine the boundaries of the structure Jomard refers to as “*le palais*,” and to know how many other *qā‘as* it contained. He himself admits that the confusing debris of many structures in the same location precludes a detailed description of the appearance and features of any of them. The second *qā‘a* he mentions with its twelve columns brings to mind the *qubba* Baybars built, but it was demolished by Qalāwūn long before Jomard’s time. The only other structure we know from the sources to have columns is the pre-Mamluk Qā‘at al-‘Awāmīd, so Jomard may in fact be describing the elusive *qā‘a* attributed to either al-Kāmil or al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb. Incidentally, accepting this inference corroborates the location proposed earlier for the Qā‘at al-‘Awāmīd, on the edge of the wall of the original and smaller southern enclosure.

Modern scholars have identified the “Maison de Joseph” mentioned in the *Description de l’Égypte* as the Qaṣr al-Ablaq of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, basing their opinion on reports by several European visitors—Maillet (1692–1708), Thompson (1734), Niebuhr (1761), Jomard (1801), Mayer (1801), and Viscount Valentia (1809)—who they thought all refer to the same palace, although in fact that was not the case.⁶⁷ With the exception of Jomard, these visitors had no information about the topography of the area in the Mamluk period, or the names and descriptions of the palaces there. They only described what they briefly saw during their visits to the Citadel—the majestic ruins as they stood after a few centuries of total neglect—without even knowing their original or contemporary names. Maillet, Niebuhr, and Mayer are clearly describing a *qā‘a* in the Qaṣr al-Ablaq; Jomard some other *qā‘a*, as we know because of one telling omission in his account. Pre-nineteenth-century Egyptian chroniclers tell us that during the Ottoman period al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s Qaṣr al-Ablaq was the workshop where the cloth cover (*kiswa*) for the Ka‘ba was woven. Maillet, Niebuhr, and Pococke note this in their reports and comment on the fabric and the embroidery at length, but Jomard does not speak of it, suggesting that he is describing another structure altogether. The building where the *kiswa* was made may be the one labeled the Bayt al-Ṭarazī (House of the Embroiderer, no. 75) on the map of the *Description de l’Égypte*, amid what is described as “palatial ruins” on the western edge of the southern enclosure. Perhaps the

⁶⁷ Casanova, “Histoire,” 635–41; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 261–63.

name was a way of suggesting the place where the *kiswa* was woven and by inference the original Qaşr al-Ablaq.

The structure a little to the south of the Bayt al-Ṭarazī on the map is labeled the “stairs of the Sab‘ Ḥadarāt”; they led from the palace level to the stables. This monumental staircase corresponds to the one described in a thirteenth-century account of the Qaşr al-Ablaq by Ibn Faḍl Allah al-‘Umārī, and makes it plausible to propose that the site of the Qaşr al-Ablaq was near the Bayt al-Ṭarazī and the Sab‘ Ḥadarāt and further south of the “Maison de Joseph.”

The French “Maison de Joseph,” further identified by Jomard as “the house of Yūsuf Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn” was therefore not the ruined Qaşr al-Ablaq, but most probably the Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya, for this is the only Mamluk palatial structure other than the Qaşr al-Ablaq reported to have been located on this side of the southern enclosure. It was confused with the Qaşr al-Ablaq in later accounts, perhaps because the latter’s fame had eclipsed it, but we know that the Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya remained functional until at least the middle of the fifteenth century, and probably later.⁶⁸ There are no reports of it as being demolished, and no compelling reasons to reject the possibility that European visitors were describing it rather than the Qaşr al-Ablaq, since both must have been equally neglected and disfigured beyond easy recognition. The *qā‘a* probably remained standing, if in a ruined state, until Muḥammad ‘Alī in the 1820s and 1830s razed all existing structures to build his terrace behind his mosque overlooking the city.

The proposed site for the Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya adjoins the Burj al-Rafrāf, whose crowning *rafrāf* is ascribed to al-Ashraf Khalil as well.⁶⁹ The Burj al-Rafrāf presents a series of problems in its dating and its history, although its location is fairly well established. The annals of Baraka Khān’s rule refer to it as the place from where he addressed the amirs who encircled the Citadel and say that it overlooked the stables, but do not credit him with its construction.⁷⁰ In

⁶⁸ Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3: 6; before he became sultan, Barsbāy lived there in 1422.

⁶⁹ *Rafrāf* here seems to mean a light-roofed structure, something like a pergola, see Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 55; Ghālib, *Mawsū‘at*, 204; Zakarya, *Deux palais*, 144.

⁷⁰ Casanova, “Histoire,” 612 and 616–17; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7: 145, and Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 654, say that Baraka Khān talked to the amirs from the top of the Burj al-Rafrāf.

fact, as argued earlier, its core could have been part of the original enclosure of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's Citadel. Its orientation and location both seem to have been deliberately chosen to dominate the approach from the Khaṭṭ al-Ṣaliba al-Kubrā (Great Crossing), a major thoroughfare dating at least from the Fatimid period and connecting the mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn to the Sūq al-Khayl, which by Mamluk times formed the administrative boundary between al-Qāhira and al-Fuṣṭāṭ.⁷¹ A *raḫraf* could have been built atop that tower from early on to take advantage of the view, thus giving it the name Burj al-Raḫraf. Al-Ashraf Khalil may merely have replaced the old *raḫraf* with a new one that appeared to be monumental and therefore attracted the chroniclers' attention and made it worth recording among Khalil's works.⁷²

According to Maqrīzī, al-Nāṣir Muḫammad demolished his brother's *raḫraf* and built a new tower next to it in 1312.⁷³ This new tower, which overlooked the stables, housed a group of mamluks, presumably from the *khāṣṣakiyya*, for it was located inside the southern enclosure. Ibn Taghrī-Birdī agrees that al-Nāṣir Muḫammad destroyed the tower built by his brother, but he says that he built his Qaṣr al-Ablaq in its place.⁷⁴ He then built another *raḫraf* above "it"—whether "it" refers to the palace or the tower is unclear—and another tower nearby, to which he transferred the mamluks.

Casanova discovered an inscription put on the tower after al-Nāṣir's first pilgrimage in 1313, which confirms Maqrīzī's date of 1312.⁷⁵ The plan of the tower's upper story (the only one accessible today) clarifies the divergent reports by Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrī-Birdī on the relationship between the tower of Khalil and that built by al-Nāṣir Muḫammad (see fig. 6). A complete vertical break in the walls goes all the way to the ground level and shows that the protruding section in the plan is a later addition. This suggests that the texts meant that al-Nāṣir demolished only the *raḫraf* built by his brother, and not the whole tower, and then built an addition to that tower, not a separate one.

⁷¹ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 1: 360, says it was named al-Ṣaliba al-Kubrā because it intersected with the north-south al-Shāri' al-A'zam (Grand Street). It was also called al-Shāri' al-A'zam, as it formed the main east-west street coming from the Nile; see Salmon, *Études sur la topographie du Caire*, 106-7.

⁷² 'Aynī, *Iqd*, 3: 79-80, ascribes the earlier *raḫraf* to Baybars, but, like Maqrīzī, he may have been mixing up the *raḫraf* with the iwan.

⁷³ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 212-13; idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 118.

⁷⁴ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 179.

⁷⁵ Casanova, "Histoire," 628; Max van Berchem, *C. I. A., Égypte*, 1: 88.

Since the *raḫraf* of Khalīl and the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya were apparently connected, they may well have formed parts of a larger complex, with the *raḫraf* either adjacent to or on top of the *qā'a*. This was the semipublic palace of the sultan, which constituted the transitional unit between the harem, or the private quarters, located to the south of the *raḫraf*, and the Iwān al-Ashrafī, or the public audience hall, directly to the east. Two references, in addition to Jomard's assertion that the *qā'a* he saw was part of a larger palace, support this proposition. First when Baybars al-Jāshankīr usurped the throne in 1308, he is reported to have ridden his horse from the Bāb al-Qulla to the royal palaces, and then sat on the throne in the palace above the Burj al-Ṭarīma (Tower of the Baldachin).⁷⁶ Like the pergola and baldachin, *raḫraf* and *ṭarīma* are used synonymously, so both could refer to the same light-weight wooden structure—that is, the Burj al-Ṭarīma and the Burj al-Raḫraf were the same thing, and the hall in which Baybars al-Jāshankīr sat was in the Burj al-Raḫraf. The second reference is from al-Nāṣir Muḫammad's second reign (1298-1308). In 1307, Maqrīzī describes how the sultan was sitting by the *shubbāk* (window) of the royal *raḫraf* which overlooked the stables to watch a fight that had erupted in the maydan, when an arrow shot by an amir landed on the window sill next to him.⁷⁷ This royal *raḫraf*, Nūwayrī explains, was the place where the sultan sat regularly for private audiences, so it must be the one built by Khalīl, which al-Nāṣir demolished a few years later.

The Mamluk *qā'a* discovered during the excavations undertaken in the Sāḫat al-ʿAlam (Place of the Flag) by the Egyptian Antiquities Organization in 1985 stands within the shaded boundaries of the "Maison de Joseph" on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte*, a short distance to the north of the Burj al-Raḫraf and almost parallel to its long side (see fig. 12). Following the identification of the "Maison de Joseph" with the Qaṣr al-Ablaq by both Casanova and Creswell, the EAO decided that this *qā'a* was the Qaṣr al-Ablaq of al-Nāṣir Muḫammad. But, given the available textual and archaeological evidence, it is almost certainly the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya. This attribution is further supported by the four granite shafts lined up next to each other on the eastern side of the *qā'a* unearthed during the 1985 exca-

⁷⁶ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhīr*, 158.

⁷⁷ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 34, 35. Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 43; ʿAynī, *ʿIqd*, 4: 427, speak only of the *shubbāk*.

vation. They are inscribed with a continuous exaltation that reads, “Glory to our master the sultan—the greatest al-Malik al-Ashraf—sultan of Islam and Muslims—may God bestow glory on his supporters.”⁷⁸ The excavation report states that the columns were not deeply buried and suggests that they belonged to the Iwān al-Kabīr of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, which had thirty-two columns supporting its roof.

Had the columns belonged to the Iwān al-Kabīr, however, we would expect them to be inscribed with his honorific *al-nāṣir*, or perhaps with the honorific *al-ṣāliḥ* of al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, who built the Rawḍa Citadel, from which, Maqrīzī tells us, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad took the columns for his Iwān al-Kabīr.⁷⁹ Instead, only the honorific *al-ashraf* is used, which tells us that the patron of the structure to which these shafts belonged held that title. This does not imply that the patron in question was necessarily al-Ashraf Khalīl; many later Mamluk sultans also styled themselves *al-ashraf*, and at least one of them, al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy, is known to have carried out extensive works in the palatial complex, including the refurbishing of the Iwān al-Kabīr.⁸⁰

The style and method of the exaltation furnish further clues for deciding between al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy and al-Ashraf Khalīl. Praising the sultan by the formula that starts with the phrase “Glory to our master the sultan” (*‘izz li-mawlānā al-sultān*) was made standard in Mamluk titlature by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, but was occasionally used by earlier sultans, including al-Ashraf Khalīl.⁸¹ The superlative “the greatest” (*al-a‘zam*) was rarely used by Mamluks, but was widespread in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Anatolian titlature. The word *anṣāruhu* (his supporters) seems to have been a precedent for the word *naṣruhu* (his victory) which was standard for all the titular formulas of Mamluk sultans from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad on. It appears on many inscriptions belonging to al-Ashraf Khalīl and to his amirs.⁸² Had the exaltation belonged to a late Baḥrī or a Burjī sultan,

⁷⁸ Ḥadīdī and ‘Abd al-‘Alīm, “‘A‘māl Tarmīm al-Qaṣr al-Ablaq,” 10.

⁷⁹ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 184.

⁸⁰ Jawḥarī, *Inbā’ al-Ḥaṣr*, 294, 327, 339; Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 3: 60–61, 329.

⁸¹ Max van Berchem, *C. I. A., Égypte*, 1: 457, discusses the development of this formula in his analysis of the cartouche on the portal of the palace of Qawṣūn.

⁸² The title appears in the waqf document of al-Ashraf Khalīl; see Axel Moberg, “Zwei Ägyptische Waqf-Urkunden aus dem Jahre 691/1292,” *Le Monde Oriental* 12 (1918): 22; it appears also in the inscription on the gate to the Citadel of Aleppo dated to 1292, see Ernest Herzfeld, *C. I. A., Syrie du Nord, deuxième partie* (Cairo, 1955), 1, 1: 89–90.

the word used would most likely have been *naṣruhu*. Thus, the combination of the title *al-ashraf* with the occurrence of *al-a'zam* and *anṣāruhu* suggests that this inscription belongs to al-Ashraf Khalil, and consequently the columns on which it appears belonged to one of his structures, most probably the adjacent Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya.

The inscription indicates that the four columns were a complete set in themselves, rather than part of a larger group, such as a colonnade. They may have been removed from their original position and dragged to the place where they were discovered in 1985 by Muḥammad 'Alī's workers while they were collecting available debris to use as fill for the terrace they were building in the 1830s. They must originally have been arranged in a square or lined up so that the text could be read consecutively. This means that they constituted the supports for either an arcade, a portico, or possibly a *maq'ad*, or for the four sides of a *durqā'a*. They could have belonged inside the *durqā'a* of the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya, although there is no trace of columns bases on its floor today. A drawing by Henri Salt accompanying the description of the *qā'a* by Viscount Valentia shows four granite columns in the *durqā'a* carrying four *ablaq* arches, which probably supported a wooden dome that had disappeared long before the drawing was made around 1806. It clearly illustrates the four columns standing on square stone slabs which rested directly on the floor of the *durqā'a*, and which could have been taken away after the columns had been removed.⁸³

Architecture. Like many *qā'as* of that period, the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya is composed of two iwans with a rectangular *dūrqā'a* in the middle measuring 14.25 by 12.7 meters (see fig. 13). The span of the larger, northwestern iwan is 10.5 meters; the smaller, southeastern iwan is 9.65 m. The floor of the *dūrqā'a* is 10.5 meters lower than the actual ground level of the southern enclosure. The floor of both iwans is 30 cm. above the floor of the *durqā'a*. The riser of the single step on either end is adorned with alternating black, red, ochre, and white stripes of marble. The floor of the *qā'a* was once also paved with marble in geometric patterns, traces of which still exist. How deep the northwestern iwan was and whether there were any windows or doors

⁸³ George, Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt in the Years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806* (London, 1809), 3: 376; reproduced in Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 262, and Behrens-Abouseif, "Citadel of Cairo," 47, fig. 8.

on its back wall could not be determined because the digging had to be stopped for fear of cracking the walls of the Citadel proper (pl. 17). The far end of the smaller iwan is also buried under rubble, making it impossible to tell whether or not it opened onto some other structure behind it. In the center of the *durqā'a* an octagonal marble fountain was found almost intact; on either side is a door bordering the beginning of the large iwan. The northern door opens onto a small vestibule on its eastern side which leads to a passageway to the north, now blocked by rubble. The western side of the small vestibule is occupied by a spiral stone staircase in a circular shaft that presumably went all the way to the roof of the *qā'a*. The southern door opens onto another passageway that runs east-west, parallel to the side of the *qā'a*, whose level is four steps lower than that of the *qā'a*. Obviously these passages connected the *qā'a* with other structures or perhaps courtyards on either side, but it is impossible at this stage of the excavation to say what these connections were. As it stands today, the *qā'a* suggests that there may be other remains of the Mamluk palatial complex in this area. Again the belief that Muḥammad 'Alī had totally razed all extant structures when he built his mosque seems exaggerated.

In addition to its significance in reconstructing the topography of the palatial complex at the Citadel, the *qā'a* is the only example remaining of a royal structure in Cairo from the Bahṛī Mamluk period. It furnishes many clues about the relationship between the architecture of royal halls and that of *qā'as* still standing in houses of princes or rich individuals in the city from that architecturally productive period which left us precious little in the way of actual remains. With numerous fragments of ornamentation still *in situ*, the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya also provides an almost complete representation of the decorative program of a royal *qā'a*, which is otherwise known only from the extravagant and inadequate descriptions in contemporary sources.

Although the upper parts of its walls have disappeared, and with them the section that most probably would have had the inscription band (*tirāz*) encircling the walls with the name of the patron and date of building, the lower parts that remain provide plentiful evidence that it was richly decorated. The walls are built of large stone blocks cut to various heights (but averaging almost five meters), with baked brick above. The interior walls were covered with a layer of plaster, upon which a marble dado was fixed from the floor level to the top

of the stone construction. Judging by the few bits remaining, the dado seems not to have been uniformly articulated around the *qā'a*. It was arranged in rectangular panels of varying widths, framed by narrow bands of contrasting colors. This was a very common treatment in Mamluk decoration, though usually confined to a place of honor in a structure, such as the qibli wall in a mosque.⁸⁴ In some places, the dado had intricately ornamented white slabs, with reliefs of vegetal interlacing patterns. But in other places it had plain, colored marble slabs, arranged in geometric patterns of varying complexity with the same black, red, ochre, and white colors dominating.

Above the dado, a continuous frieze, made of small trilobed niches, ran around the walls, even above the doors. The little arches were supported on marble colonnettes with gilded capitals. The niches were filled with panels of marble mosaics in hexagonal and octagonal geometric patterns outlined in mother-of-pearl. The spandrels of the arches were covered with marble reliefs of vegetal scrolls similar to the ones found in the dado. Above this frieze, another large frieze made of panels of glass mosaics ran around the walls. Judging from the two remaining fragments, one on the southern wall of the small iwan and the other on that of the *durqā'a*, the scenes were crude representations of kiosks, gardens, trees with mother-of-pearl fruits, and rivers reminiscent of those in the Umayyad Mosque and the more recent Qubba al-Zāhiriyya, both in Damascus. The walls above the glass mosaics are stripped down to the brick with no trace of decoration remaining, but the existence of longitudinal slits repeated at regular intervals suggests that the walls were covered with decorative wooden panels, fixed by nails into wooden wedges pushed inside the slits (pl. 18).

Architecturally, the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya has no unusual features or unexpected arrangements of its components. With its two iwans and *durqā'a* with two *ṣuffas* on its sides, it belongs to the type that had become dominant in the beginning of the fourteenth century in Cairene religious and secular architecture, and that took the place of the *majlis/iwan* combination in the *qā'a* arrangement.⁸⁵ The *qā'a* at the Citadel, in spite of its huge dimensions, is simpler in plan than

⁸⁴ Michael Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qala'un in Kairo: Untersuchungen zur Genese der Mamlukischen Architekturdekoration," *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo, Mitteilungen* 27 (1971), 47-80.

⁸⁵ Development of *qā'as* traced in Sayed, "Cairene Qā'a," 44; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 264; Lézine, "Les salles nobles des palais mamelouks," 149-205.

any of its contemporaneous Bahri Mamluk amirial *qā'as*, and approaches in its simplicity the plans of the much smaller *qā'as* of upper-class administrators and religious men.⁸⁶ But its similarity with the *qā'as* in the city proper is limited to the general arrangement of its plan. In the composition and profusion of its surface articulation, the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya is truly exceptional. It is the only known Bahri *qā'a* whose surface seems to have been entirely covered with various forms of intricate decoration. This singular extravagance is not shared by any of the Mamluk amirial *qā'as* known in Cairo; it probably reflected royal splendor. None of the surface treatments, however, is unique to this *qā'a*: they can all be found alone or in combination in other examples of Bahri architecture both in Cairo and in the Syrian cities with significant Mamluk architectural heritage, especially in the qibli walls of mosques.

Mosaic Decoration. The only distinctive feature of the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya's decoration are the glass mosaic panels with architectural representations for which we have textual references to precedents in Cairo, but actual Mamluk antecedents only in the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya (mausoleum of al-Zāhir Baybars) in Damascus.⁸⁷ The scenes in Damascus and in the Citadel are related to a series of mosaic examples which appeared in mosques, palaces, and *qubbas* in a number of important Mamluk cities in the late thirteenth and the early fourteenth century.

Unlike their Umayyad predecessors, Mamluk mosaics from Syria and Egypt have not received the attention they deserve. Thirteen examples have been recorded in Damascus, Tripoli, Jerusalem, Hebron, and Cairo, but they have never been analyzed, perhaps because they are small, of poor quality, and of minor relevance to the development of Mamluk art.⁸⁸ Most of them are found in conchs of

⁸⁶ Revault, "L'architecture domestique du Caire à l'époque mamelouke," 49-74, for the princely *qā'as*; 75-90, for the upper-class *qā'as*.

⁸⁷ Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie*, 1: 94 (reproduced in Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 261), makes explicit reference to the architectural scenes in the Mamluk palaces at the Citadel, which precisely correspond to the scenes in the fragments.

⁸⁸ Partial lists are in Louis Hautecoeur and Gaston Wiet, *Les mosquées du Caire*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1932), 1: 116; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 138, 226, and pl. 81 for Lājin's mihrab; Meinecke, "Mamlukischen Architekturdekoration," 62, no. 91; Miriam Rosen-Ayalon, "A Neglected Group of Mihrabs in Palestine," in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization in Honor of Professor David Ayalon*, ed. M. Sharon (Jerusalem, 1986), 553-63; Caroline Williams, "The Mosque of Sitt Ḥadaq," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 61-62.

mihirabs and spandrels of arched windows and are plainly ornamental; they consist primarily of vegetal and floriated motifs modeled after the Umayyad prototypes found in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Great Mosque of Damascus. Some may even have been made with tesserae collected from pieces that fell off the walls of Umayyad buildings.⁸⁹

The exception is the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya in Damascus begun by order of Baraka Khān in 1277 and completed in 1281 by Qalāwūn after Baraka Khān's death.⁹⁰ Its mosaics are distinguished both by their relatively large size and their architectural scenes which fill three sides of a frieze that runs around the four walls of the domed chamber; the fourth side and the tympana and soffits of the doors and windows have natural and stylized vegetal motifs and leafy scrolls.⁹¹ The architectural scenes depict urban and rural idealized structures in fanciful settings similar, but not identical, to those in the nearby Umayyad Mosque, and of somewhat lower quality. They lack the finesse of the Umayyad compositions and rely instead on thick outlines and large elements to fill their fields. The scene on the south wall has in its center two superimposed arcades surmounted by a group of elongated and domed structures around a central tower flanked by naturalistic representations and framed in a guilloche pattern. The western wall also has in its center two superimposed arcades and a group of structures in the rear symmetrically organized around a central tower and flanked by two huge bowls with simplistic flower arrangements (pl. 19). The two ends of the field are taken up with identical architectural groups made of two long, gabled structures and a domed tower. The northern wall above the entrance has a huge tree in its center flanked by identical groups of buildings with domed towers surrounded by long, gabled buildings (pl. 20).

These architectural scenes have never been explained, perhaps because they seemed to be either aberrations among Mamluk mosaics, or were a single attempt to adopt the old Umayyad models outside of their own context, which was deemed a failure by the patrons and not

⁸⁹ As noted by Ibn Faḍl-Allah al-'Umārī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār*, vol. 1, ed. Aḥmad Zakī Pasha (Cairo, 1924), 193; 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rihāwī, "Fusayfusā' al-Jāmi' al-Amwī," *Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes* 10 (1960): 37–47.

⁹⁰ Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 14: 443–44; Muḥammad A. Duhmān, "al-Madrasa al-Zāhiriyya," in *Fī Rihāb Dimashq* (Damascus, 1982), 112–29.

⁹¹ Meinecke, "Mamlukischen Architekturdekoration," 64–66.



Fig. 23: Representation of the mosaic fragment on the southern wall of the *durqā'a*

tried again. But the two mosaic fragments in the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya prove that the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya's scenes were not an isolated experiment and provide new clues to the uses and range of mosaic-decoration themes under the Mamluks.

The fragment on the southern wall of the iwan is too faded to gain any notion of its content, except that it undoubtedly depicted some structure in its left corner. The other fragment, on the southern wall of the *durqā'a*, shows a building flanked by trees reminiscent of the scenes at the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya, except that this one makes no effort to create a sense of depth (fig. 23). It is solely a frontal depiction of the structure, almost a conventional façade. The workmanship is different from that of the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya, and the tesserae are much larger, but the representation is nonetheless expressive.

The trees are boldly depicted with round fruits and conventionally rendered flowers. The structure in the middle appears to be a fine, tripartite, domed garden pavilion with wide openings. Its first level consists of an arcaded porch, made of what appears to be a double-arched opening in the middle, flanked by closed bays, and another set of horseshoe-arched openings on the sides, which are almost tre-

foiled. The arches and their frames, rendered in dark brown tesserae, possibly to represent wood, resemble the bays of wooden screens still found in Cairene commemorative structures today. The closed bays, rendered in white, have in their centers green roundels, probably to suggest the *rank* of the patron, a custom in Mamluk times when patrons put their *rank* on their objects and buildings, even their tents and temporary structures.⁹²

The second level of the representation is more damaged than the first, but enough of it remains to permit a general description. In the center is a two-story structure surmounted by a pear-shaped lantern whose base is embellished by round mother-of-pearl tesserae. The lower story has a wide, grilled window in its center; the upper story appears to be a colonnaded balcony, but its surface is too tarnished to make any conclusion definite. This central structure is flanked by two structures whose tops have unfortunately disappeared, but they must have been domed lanterns, because the ubiquitous pointed representations of drums, suggestive of a dome on top, are still intact, and because there is a virtually identical scene at the Umayyad Mosque, attributed to the restoration of 1330, which has two ribbed domes above similarly pointed drums.⁹³

Unlike the scenes of the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya which were still steeped in the Umayyad mosaic tradition, the image in the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya seems to have been related to an altogether different mode of representation, which probably had very little to do with the mosaic conventions. It appears to be a rendering in mosaic of similar tripartite and domed pleasure structures with arched openings depicted as façades in a number of almost contemporary Mamluk and Jaziran manuscripts.⁹⁴ The closest of these examples to the *qā'a*, a miniature in a manuscript of the book *Kashf al-Asrār*, is from either

⁹² Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 62; Rabbat, "Rank," *EI*², 7: 431–33.

⁹³ Eustache De Lorey, *Les mosaïques de la mosquée des Omayyades à Damas* (Paris, 1931), 23, and fig. 13.

⁹⁴ Manuscripts attributed to the "School of Baghdad" are characterized by realistic architectural representations in their illustrations, for example the *Maqāmāt al-Harīrī*, Leningrad MS S 23, *maqāma* 42 (1230), and *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*, MS Essad Effendi 3638, Topkapi Saray (1287); see Marianne Barrucand, "Les représentations d'architectures dans la miniature islamique en Orient du début du XIIIe au début du XVe siècle," *Cahiers archéologiques* 34 (1986): 123–25, no. 24; Duncan Haldane, *Mamluk Painting* (Warminster, Eng., 1978), 6, 15.

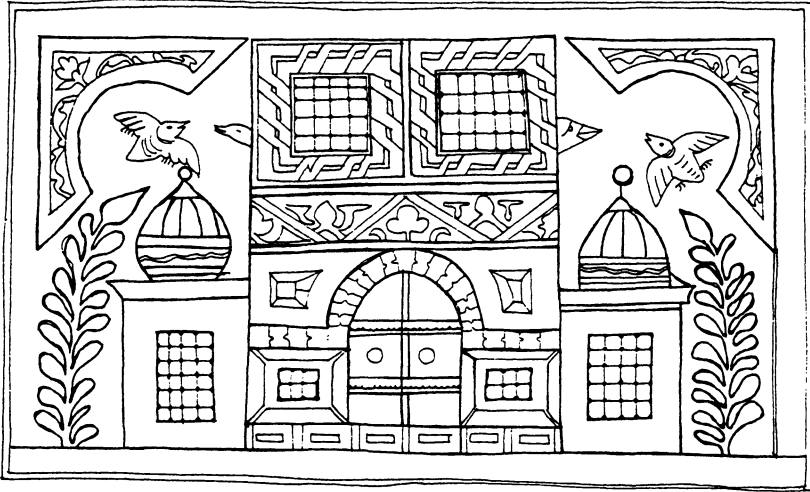


Fig. 24: Representation of a structure in a manuscript of the book *Kashf al-Asrār*

Syria or Egypt and is dated to the mid fourteenth century.⁹⁵ It is composed of a central structure flanked by two smaller rooms topped with ribbed, slightly bulbous domes (fig. 24). The impression this miniature gives is of a structure built of light-weight material and open to the outside through numerous large, gridded windows.

The domed structure with large arched openings in both the miniature and the mosaic scene recalls in its general character the type of structures named *rafrāf* or *manzara* in Mamluk sources, which, because of their light-weight construction material such as wood and reed, have all disappeared. A *manzara* was primarily a pavilion in a pleasure garden with numerous openings. The word is derived from the verb *naẓara*, “to look, to watch,” which refers to the structure’s basic function as a place from where one looks out, perhaps the equivalent of a belvedere.⁹⁶ A *rafrāf* was like a *manzara* in the sense that it too was a simple light-weight structure, which was sometimes domed and commanded a view, though in this case the derivation of

⁹⁵ *Kashf al-Asrār*, MS Lālā Ismā‘īl 565, fol. 6v, Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul, in Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*, 52–53.

⁹⁶ Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 117; Ghālib, *Mawsū‘at*, 408–12; Goitein, *Daily Life*, 76; Saleh Lamei Mostafa, *Moschee des Farag ibn Barquq in Kairo* (Glückstadt, 1972), glossary, p. 59.

the word, from the verb *raḫraf* “to flutter,” implies that the structure had to be situated on a high place, like the *raḫraf* of al-Ashraf Khalil built on top of the Burj al-Raḫraf, which was covered by a dome, and was opened by windows on all sides to provide a panoramic view of the city.⁹⁷

These architectural representations, however, were doubtless meant to convey a message, or messages, above and beyond their architectural iconography. The available primary sources are silent on the meaning of both the scenes of the Damascene mausoleum and the Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya; they do not even mention their existence. But a single reference in a Mamluk text indicates the type of message assigned to architectural representations in palatial structures. Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir says that the walls of the *riwaqs* in the Qubba al-Manṣūriyya at the Citadel had depicted on them (*ṣuwwirat*) the likeness (*ṣifat*) of each of Qalāwūn’s castles (*ḥuṣūn*, pl. of *ḥuṣn*) and citadels (*qilā‘*, pl. of *qal‘a*) surrounded by mountains, valleys, rivers, and seas.⁹⁸ He does not say in what medium they were rendered, but his description recalls the scenes in the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya and, to a lesser extent, those in the Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya. Since both were mosaics, and since we do not know of any other medium that was used at that period to reproduce architectural views on walls, it is plausible to suggest that those in Qalāwūn’s hall were mosaics as well. This inference may be further corroborated by noting that Qalāwūn was responsible for the completion of the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya in Damascus, and that he may have brought Syrian craftsmen to Cairo to execute the decoration in his *bimāristān* complex, which was built shortly afterward (1284), and which has a mosaic conch in the madrasa’s mihrab.⁹⁹ The Syrian mosaicists responsible for executing the scenes at the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya in Damascus may also have done the representations of Qalāwūn’s castles and fortresses in his new audience hall at the Citadel.

The revival of mosaic techniques introduced into the Mamluk artistic repertoire not only a medium and its iconography that had long been forgotten, but also the interpretations that had developed over time to explain the Umayyad precedents in the Great Mosque. Mamluk sultans such as Baybars and Qalāwūn seem to have had

⁹⁷ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 212–13; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 179.

⁹⁸ Ibn-‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrif*, 139. Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8: 38, and Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 212, give similar reports with no reference to images.

⁹⁹ Meinecke, “Mamlukischen Architekturdécoration,” 64.

ample opportunity to admire the mosaic scenes in the Umayyad Mosque; they must also have perceived the capacity of these scenes to carry messages of a connotative nature.¹⁰⁰ The repairs they ordered of them had also produced an acceptable degree of expertise for the use of the same techniques in new structures.

The Umayyad scenes, as they stand today and as they most probably stood in Mamluk times, are devoid of inscriptions, and no Umayyad source explains their meaning. An early Muslim geographer, al-Muqqadasi (fl. 966–1000), says in passing that they depict trees, cities, and writing, without further elaboration.¹⁰¹ But by the thirteenth century, cosmographical and anagogical interpretations began to appear in the writing of geographers and historians. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (1179–1229) reports that the porticoes of the mosque contain the representations of every city and every kind of tree in the world; he praises the intricate depictions of plants and trees, but does not elaborate on the cities.¹⁰² The famous cosmographer Zakariyya al-Qazwīnī (1203–83) repeats al-Muqqadasi almost verbatim and does not add anything of his own.¹⁰³ Another cosmographer, Sheikh al-Rabwa al-Dimashqī, who was Damascene by birth and a contemporary of Qazwīnī (1256–1327), widens the scope by adding castles and seas to Muqqadasi's list and gives it an Islamic stamp of approval by remarking that the scenes contain no representation of forbidden subjects (i.e., human figures).¹⁰⁴ Another Damascene, the biographer Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 1362), pushes the Islamic cosmographical interpretation to its logical conclusion by saying that the

¹⁰⁰ Both Baybars and Qalāwūn spent long stretches of time in Damascus and both repaired the Umayyad Mosque and other charitable institutions around it, such as the *bimāristān* of Nūr al-Dīn which was renovated by Qalāwūn in 1281; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 406, 408. Abū Shāma, *Dhayl*, 236–37, for the work of Baybars at the Umayyad Mosque.

¹⁰¹ Muqqadasi, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rīfat al-Aqālīm*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, vol. 3) (Leiden, 1906), 157; English text in Marguerite van Berchem, "Mosaics of the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem and of the Great Mosque in Damascus," in K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 1: 163.

¹⁰² Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam al-Buldān* (Beirut, 1964), 8: 465, attributes this report to the famous essayist al-Jāhīz, and only adds praise for the tree representations.

¹⁰³ Zakariyya al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb Athār al-Bilād wa-Akḥbār al-'Ibād*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1848), 137.

¹⁰⁴ Shaykh al-Rabwa al-Dimashqī, *Nukḥbat al-Dahr fī 'Ajā'ib al-Barr wa-l-Baḥr*, ed. M. A. F. Mehren (Leipzig, 1923), 193.

mosaics “depict the Ka‘ba’s likeness (*ṣifat*), set above the mihrab, and the images of cities and villages, each represented with all that it produced of trees remarkable for their fruits or their flowers or other objects.”¹⁰⁵

But the Mamluk sultans were interested in political messages about their own status and power. When they considered the mosaic architectural scenes, the range of possible meanings they could confer on them was clearly limited by the subjects depicted: buildings and their natural surroundings, and settlements, large and small. From this, the idea of seeing the stylized architectural scenes as representing various citadels, as Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir did, and reading into them messages about the geographic extent of the sultan’s dominion probably developed. Moreover, simplifying the arrangements and borrowing the standards of architectural representation from manuscript illustrations, as was the case with the mosaics of the Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya, came in part from the popularity of illustrated manuscripts at the time and partly from the mosaicists’ limited capacity to invent new compositions, but were also to a certain degree intentional and aimed at making the message clearer to contemporary viewers. Verisimilitude, as we understand it today, between the architectural representations and actual cities or castles was not very important. What counted was that people recognize these scenes as representing real castles and cities.¹⁰⁶ Slight differences in conception and composition between the various scenes, like those in Baybars’s mausoleum, would have been sufficient for contemporary viewers to identify the different representations with different locations or struc-

¹⁰⁵ Ibn Shākir al-Kutubi, *‘Uyūn al-Tawārikh*, trans. Henri Sauvaire, “La Description de Damas,” *Journal Asiatique* 3, 7 (1896): 369–72; English translation in van Berchem, “Mosaics,” in K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 1: 161, no. 9.

¹⁰⁶ Reducing the representation of cities to single buildings is an old iconographic device. One of its most celebrated examples was in the Domus Aurea built by the Roman emperor Nero around the year 64 and described by Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars*, ed. and trans. J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 2: 135–37, “There was a pond, too, like a sea, surrounded with buildings to represent cities, besides tracts of country, varied by tilled fields, vineyards, pastures and woods, with great number of wild and domestic animals.” See Grabar, “From Dome of Heaven,” 15–16; William L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire: An Introductory Study* (New Haven, 1982), 31–32, and no. 24 for discussions of this important passage. Mosaic examples from the Byzantine period (4th to 6th century) in Jordan and Syria provide clear precedents for what is proposed here; see, for example, Michele Piccirillo, *I mosaici di giordania* (Rome, 1986), 172–74, for three illustrations of cities from a church in Gerasa; 175–76, for two from Khirbet al-Samrā; 178–80, for five city representations from Ma‘in.

tures. The patron need only supply the intended messages, most probably verbally, as Qalāwūn must have done, and the pictorial vehicle that broadly engenders them to be accepted by his audience.¹⁰⁷

At the Citadel, the major objective of every sultan must have been to celebrate his conquests and the expansion of his territories, and through them to assert his sovereignty and to exalt his own person in clear and lasting ways and in prominent places—for example, in his throne hall. Architectural representations on the walls provided a direct and intelligible medium to convey such messages; there was no other medium of pictorial representation in a single space that was current at the time.

The Iwān al-Ashrafī and the Figural Motif

Al-Ashraf Khalīl rebuilt, or perhaps only renovated, his father's audience hall under the supervision of Amir 'Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujā'ī in 1293.¹⁰⁸ The extent of his work is not very clear, but from the meager details that can be gleaned from the references, it seems that no major changes were made to the structure. It remained essentially as Qalāwūn had built it. The Iwān al-Ashrafī did not survive long after Khalīl's death. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's first work in the Citadel, after his return to the throne for the third and last time in 1310, was to demolish his brother's iwan and build a new one in 1311.¹⁰⁹

In at least one respect, however, Khalīl's iwan differed radically from his father's, and that was in its decoration. Qalāwūn's iwan had scenes of citadels and castles, probably executed in mosaic on its

¹⁰⁷ A modern positivist sensibility could never accept such an interpretation, and, in fact, van Berchem, "Mosaics," in K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 1: 163, rejects the medieval commentators who claim that they can distinguish between the images in the mosaics of the Umayyad Mosque and see in them the depictions of different locales. The notion of exactness between original and copy in Western architecture in the medieval period is discussed in Richard Krautheimer, "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Medieval Architecture,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1–33; reprinted in *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval and Renaissance Art* (London and New York, 1969), 115–50; esp. 126–28.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durra al-Zakiyya*, 345; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 206; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'*, 1, 1: 378.

¹⁰⁹ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 66; Baybars *Tuḥfa*, 232; Baktāsh al-Fakhri, *Beiträge*, 156; Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 113; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhīr*, 238; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 149; Ibn Taghrī-Birdi, *Nujūm*, 9: 51.

walls; Khalil's iwan, Ibn al-Dawādārī reports, had representations of his amirs, each with his own *rank* inscribed above his head.¹¹⁰ Both Maqrīzī and ‘Aynī, however, ascribe these representations to another structure. They say that Khalil had his amirs and courtiers represented on the walls of the *raḫraf*, which he had enlarged, painted, and decorated, and to which he added a dome erected over columns.¹¹¹

These two reports were clearly copied from the same source since they use identical expressions. Taken at face value, they suggest that Khalil adopted the same pattern of representation for both the iwan and the *raḫraf*. But closer examination reveals that they are conflating the two structures, and describing the Iwān al-Ashrafī under the heading “*raḫraf*.” This is not unusual for Maqrīzī, who in many instances in his *Khīṭaṭ* mixed up data or recorded contradictory information, as Casanova had noted.¹¹² The confusion in this case is evident because both chroniclers say that the *raḫraf* was high, had a decorated dome raised over columns, had representations of amirs, and was the favorite audience hall of the sultans until it was demolished and rebuilt by al-Nāṣir Muḫammad. All these remarks apply to the iwan more aptly than to the *raḫraf*, which was a light-weight, wooden structure. A dome is what distinguished the *qubbās* of both Baybars and Qalāwūn, and the later iwan of al-Nāṣir Muḫammad, so a dome can be expected in the iwan of al-Ashraf Khalil as well. The contemporary historian Ibn al-Dawādārī says that the amirs' representations were in the iwan, not in a *raḫraf*. Finally, the strongest evidence is furnished by the concurrence of dates of building and demolition: Ibn al-Dawādārī, Baybars al-Manṣūrī, Shujā‘ī, and Nūwayrī—all contemporary chroniclers—report the demolition of the Iwān al-Ashrafī in 1311; Maqrīzī, writing a century later, is the only chronicler who records the structure razed by al-Nāṣir Muḫammad as the *raḫraf* and pushes the date of its destruction to 1312.¹¹³

The decoration of al-Ashraf Khalil's iwan raises the fascinating and puzzling question of figural motifs and their iconography in Mamluk architecture. Although the only information on this subject is textual, it is still possible to suggest themes and techniques, con-

¹¹⁰ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durra al-Zakiyya*, 345.

¹¹¹ ‘Aynī, *Iqd*, 3: 79–80; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 213.

¹¹² Casanova, “Histoire,” 552–54, 571.

¹¹³ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 118, mistakenly pushes the date of the iwan's demolition to 1315. In this he is followed by Ibn Taghri-Birdī, who, however, does not mention the *raḫraf*.

nections and influences, and, more important, causes and meanings for the few examples mentioned. The representation of amirs there recalls the similar treatment in the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya at the Citadel where Baybars and his amirs and retinue were reportedly depicted in full regalia as if riding in a procession (*mawkib*). These two sets of images could be grouped in one category—the figural motif—which seems to have alternated in the early Bahrī royal iconography with the other standard representation in which the sultan’s cities, castles, and citadels were set in natural surroundings. But unlike the architectural scenes which had been inspired by the Umayyad mosaics, figural representations in Mamluk palaces could not have been connected to the same Syrian prototypes and their medium of representation could not have been glass mosaic, because the Umayyads had no representations of amirs and warriors in their repertoire.

References in the sources to figural representation in the palaces of Muslim rulers in those regions that were later incorporated into the Mamluk sultanate are numerous, and so are archaeological remains, so we have a fair idea of the media and methods used.¹¹⁴ Maqrīzī reports that Khumārawayh (r. 884–96), the son of Ibn Ṭulūn, had the walls of a *majlis* in his palace covered with larger-than-life-size painted wooden reliefs depicting him and his favorite concubines and singers. The hall was called the Bayt al-Dhahab (House of Gold) because of the jewelry and golden crowns that were affixed to the wooden representations to make them look realistic.¹¹⁵ In the Fatimid period, at least two media were used in the decoration of the caliphal palaces for figural representation. The first is wood carving, as evidenced in the famous panels with themes of the princely cycle from the Fatimid Qaṣr al-Gharbī (Western Palace), which were recovered from the *bimāristān* of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn.¹¹⁶ The second is mural

¹¹⁴ Aḥmad Taymūr Pasha, *al-Taṣwīr ‘ind al-‘Arab*, ed. Zakī Ḥasan (Cairo, 1942), 2–11, presents a fair number of poetry examples and historical references; Katharina Otto-Dorn, “Figural Stone Reliefs on Seljuq Sacred Architecture in Anatolia,” *Kunst des Orients* 12, 1/2 (1978–79): 103–46, for a survey of the different types in an adjacent region.

¹¹⁵ Maqrīzī, *Khitāṭ*, 1: 316–17.

¹¹⁶ Panels in the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo were studied by Edmond Pauty, *Catalogue du Musée Arabe: les bois sculptés jusqu’à l’époque ayyoubide* (Cairo, 1931), 48–50, figs. 46–58. They were recently analyzed along with further Fatimid panels on the ceiling of what appears to have been an iwan of a larger *qā’a* of the Western Palace by Sabīḥa Khmeir in her Ph.D. dissertation at SOAS, which was not available to me.

painting. Though we have no indisputable Fatimid examples, a fair number of accounts refer to scenes with figural representation in the palaces of the caliphs and viziers, such as the poets painted on the walls of the *manzara* of Birkat al-Ḥabash, built by the caliph al-Āmir Bi-Aḥkām Allah (r. 1101-31), the dancers painted by two competing masters for al-Mustansir's vizier al-Yazūri (r. 1049-58), and the portrait of the patriarch Joseph in a mansion of a certain al-Nu'mān in the Qarāfa.¹¹⁷

For the Ayyubid period, the evidence is scantier. We have one historical and one poetic reference to figural representations in a palace in the citadel of Aleppo. The palace, built by the Ayyubid sultan al-Zāhir Ghāzī, the son of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, in 1193 has long since disappeared. It was first built by Nūr al-Dīn ibn Zangī who called it the Dār al-Dhahab (House of Gold); it was then rebuilt twice by al-Zāhir Ghāzī who changed its name to Dār al-Shukhūṣ (House of Figures) because of the numerous representations of people in it. The images described in a poem recited on the occasion of its inauguration pertain to the usual repertoire of courtly scenes: hunts, horsemen, entertainment, drinking, and the like. Unfortunately, we are not told in what medium these images were executed.¹¹⁸

Both the Ayyubid and the Fatimid scenes can be considered as being among the thematic prototypes for the images reportedly depicted on the walls of Baybars's *qubba* at the Citadel, although the *qubba* had a more restricted range of topics. According to Ibn Shaddād and Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, there were no images of drinking and entertainment, only hunting and royal processions. This stricture was intentional; Baybars was a very austere ruler whose favorite pastimes were not drinking parties but hunting and *furussiyya* exercises. For that same reason, the absence of pleasure scenes on the basin known as the Baptistère de Saint Louis was recently adduced as evidence for attributing it to Baybars.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1: 486-87, 2: 318-19. See also Richard Ettinghausen, "Painting in the Fatimid Period: A Reconstruction," *Ars Islamica* 9 (1942): 112-13. Laila 'Alī Ibrahim and 'Adil Yasin, "A Ṭūlūnid Ḥammām in Old Cairo," *Islamic Archaeological Studies: Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo* 3 (1988): 35-78, discuss a surviving example which is possibly Fatimid.

¹¹⁸ 'Izz al-Dīn ibn Shaddād, *al-'A'lāq al-Khaṭīra fī Zikr Umarā' al-Shām wa-l-Jazīra*, ed. Dominique Sourdel (Damascus, 1953), 1, 1: 25-26; Ibn al-Shuḥna, *al-Durr al-Muntakhab fī Tārīkh Mamlakat Ḥalab*, ed. J. E. Sarkis (Beirut, 1909), 52-53; Kāmil al-Ghazzī, *Nahr al-Dhahab fī Tārīkh Ḥalab* (Aleppo, 1920), 2: 26.

¹¹⁹ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Baptistère de Saint Louis: A Reinterpretation," *Islamic Art* 3 (1988-89): 3-13.



Fig. 25: Representation of a figure in the stone niche from the Gu' Kummet at Sinjar

The images in Khalil's iwan were even further removed from earlier prototypes. They differed in composition and possibly in meaning, although they, too, represented amirs and *khāṣṣakiyya*. The one sentence that describes them says that the figures were not in composite settings; rather each figure stood alone, representing an amir with his *rank* inscribed above his head, probably as a means of identification. This arrangement suggests another convention of figural representation altogether.

Similar designs can be found in the Jazira, and these may have provided the models for Khalil's figures. They too do not include composite scenes, but rather single standing figures, which differed from each other only in the attribute of their office: one figure with a sword signifying the *silāhdār*, another with a bow and arrow for the *bunduqdār*, another with a napkin and a beaker for the *sāqī*, and so on. Two examples—a stone bridge over the Tigris river built by the Artuqid ruler of Hisn Kayfa Qarā Arslān (1148–67), and a stone niche from the Gu' Kummet at Sinjar, dated around 1240 (fig. 25)—

have recently been analyzed. In both examples, each figure is carved in relief, standing by itself in its own frame. On the bridge the frames are raised, rectangular stone slabs, and in the niche they are trilobed arched panels. The figures have been interpreted as representations of the *khāṣṣakiyya* of the ruler of these two principalities and the whole composition as a symbol of sovereignty. The rulers are not shown, but their royal status is implied by the presence of their attendants and courtiers, and, in the case of the Sinjar niche, a baldachin is carved at the pinnacle of the composition, probably symbolizing the absent ruler who would normally have sat there.¹²⁰

Two other Jaziran examples, which have not received the attention they deserve, also belong to the list of compositions with isolated and framed figures and add to our understanding of the themes and the techniques pertaining to this tradition. The first example—now badly damaged—belongs to al-Malik al-Raḥīm Badr al-Dīn Lū'lū', the *atābek* of the last Zangid princes who ruled Mosul independently between 1233 and 1258. It is in fact in his own palace in Mosul, now called the Qarā Sarāy, of which only the remains of two *qā'as* were still standing when it was documented by Sarre and Herzfeld in the second decade of this century. On the walls of one of these *qā'as* once ran an inscription band with the name and titles of Badr al-Dīn Lū'lū', and under it a series of seated figures inscribed in relief within circles, 20 cm in diameter.¹²¹ There were as many as a hundred, and they were said all to have been identical as if pressed into the stucco from one mold, although that observation can be questioned since it was made long after the figures had started to erode.¹²² They may originally have had the same general appearance but with differences in small details, like the figures of Hisn Kayfa. It is very difficult to see them only as a decorative pattern; they must surely have had an iconographic role. The most readily available meaning, and the one found in Mosuli metalwork and manuscript illumination from

¹²⁰ Whelan, "Representations of *Khāṣṣakiyyah*," 221–25.

¹²¹ Friedrich Sarre and Ernst Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet*, 4 vols. (Berlin, 1911–20), 2: 239–49, fig. 246. Reported in Niqūla Siyūfi, *Notes historiques et explications sur les inscriptions de la ville de Mossoul*, ed. S. Dewachī (Baghdad, 1956), nos. 541–42; reproduced in Max van Berchem, "Monuments et inscriptions de l'Atābek Lū'lū' de Mossoul," *Opera Minora* (Geneva, 1978), 2: 659–72.

¹²² Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie*, 2: 292.

that period, is that these figures represented the attendants of Lū'lū' in what appears to have been his audience hall in his palace. Again the figural reliefs were attributes of sovereignty.

The second example is a door in the court of the monastery of Mār Bahnām (St. Behnam) outside Mosul. It has a frame of trilobed arched niches linked by knotted loops, similar to those of the Sinjar niche.¹²³ The little arched frames in Sinjar were alternately filled with figures of ceremonial officeholders and stylized arabesques. The ones in the monastery have identical figures of standing monks, their heads covered with capuche-like hoods, alternating with similar, rigid arabesques. The door is framed by an inscription band in Syriac, which contains only undated biblical invocations. The interlacing frame that forms the little arches ends in the central arch with a protruding feline head. It is very difficult to date the door frame, but the building should fall between 1164, the date inscribed on the altar, and 1295, the date commemorating the coming of the Mongol Khan Bidou to the monastery, which is affixed on the wall opposite the door.

The styles of representation and signification in the four examples with carved single figures in separate frames suggest that the Jaziran convention was neither technically nor stylistically limited to the Mosuli pattern of stone framed doors with trilobed niches. The appearance of monks on the door of the Mār Bahnām monastery, which most probably belongs to the time of Badr al-Dīn Lū'lū' as well, may have been a case of Christian borrowing of a regional Muslim secular theme rather than the other way around. All the other examples represent court members and may have signified amirial status. Whether they specifically depicted *khāṣṣakiyya*, as Estelle Whelan suggests, is debatable, unless the term is redefined to mean any attendant holding ceremonial office in medieval Islamic courts from the Ghaznavids to the Mamluks. Otherwise, the application of the word *khāṣṣakiyya* to attendants in Jaziran courts is anachronistic, because the word was coined by the Mamluks of Egypt to denote the sultan's favorite young mamluks who lived in his palace and who were usually prepared to rise to higher amirial ranks.

The amirs of Khalīl were represented in his iwan in a manner that may have been similar to those of the Jaziran examples and probably

¹²³ Sarre and Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, 2: 246, fig. 247; Sulaymān al-Sāyigh, *Tārīkh al-Mawsil*, vol. 3, *Nafā'is al-Āthār* (Juniyeh, Lebanon, 1956), 108–18.

closest to the images found in the hall of Lū'pū'. They could have been either paintings or reliefs on stucco; they could not have been stone carving because for that the chroniclers would have used a verb other than *ṣawwar* to describe them. Whatever the medium, Khalil's figures belonged to a convention that coexisted with, but differed from, the one to which the scenes in Baybars's *qubba* belonged, though the two probably conveyed more or less the same message.

The custom of arranging figures in painted or carved scenes of courtly activities is pan-Islamic, and had its roots in classical, Byzantine, and Sasanian imagery. The convention of solitary figures set in individual frames appeared after the coming of the Seljuq Turks and the ensuing Atabek dynasties in twelfth-to-thirteenth-century Anatolia, Jazira, and Syria. In fact, the use of solitary figures in interior decoration, whether in carved stone or stucco, is recorded only in the northern Jaziran region—Mosul, Diyarbakir and their surroundings—and in the Rum Seljuq domain in central Anatolia. There are no known equivalents to the figures of the Sinjar niche or the Qarā Sarāy *qā'a* anywhere else in the Islamic world up to that time, except for the important fragments of horsemen, winged angels, and other mythical creatures associated with the Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad (r. 1219–37) and found on the walls of his capital at Konya and among the ruins of Kubadabad, the summer palace he built on the shores of Lake Beyşehir.¹²⁴ They seem to have been either a local development of the wider Islamic school of figural motifs, or directly derived from the figural heritage of the area, which shows a mixture of Byzantine and Sasanian models and motifs. The northern Jaziran region—Mosul and its surroundings—seems to have had a resurgence of figural representations in every medium, from coins, to manuscript frontispiece illumination, to inlaid metalwork, and finally to architecture, especially during the reign of Badr al-Dīn Lū'pū' who appears to have exceeded all of his predecessors and contemporaries in patronizing works of art and architecture.¹²⁵ It is very plau-

¹²⁴ For a discussion of the known Rum Seljuq examples, see Scott Redford, "Thirteenth-Century Rum Seljuq Palaces and Palace Imagery," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 221–23.

¹²⁵ D. S. Rice, "The Brasses of Badr al-Dīn Lū'pū'," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13, 3 (1950): 627–34; idem, "The Aghani Miniatures and Religious Painting in Islam," *Burlington Magazine* 95 (1953): 128–34; Whelan, "Representations of *Khāṣṣakīyah*," 221–24, 232; Priscilla Soucek, "Ethnicity in the Islamic Figural Tradition: The Case of the 'Turk'," *Tārīḥ* 2 (1992): 73–103, esp. 93–

sible—and in fact at this point it is the only possibility—that the school of Mosul offered the models, and perhaps the craftsmen, for solitary figural motifs in architectural decoration in later Mamluk applications such as Khalil's iwan.

The architectural connection between Mosul and Cairo cannot be directly demonstrated, but links in metalwork and miniature illumination have been established, and they strengthen its plausibility.¹²⁶ Some of the richly decorated metal objects, replete with figural representations, which belong to the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods were produced by Mosuli craftsmen, who left their signatures on them. The topics depicted on these objects varied, but the majority were courtly scenes either of pleasure settings, hunting, or horsemanship. Some also had solitary princely figures inscribed in framed medallions either repeated or alternating with the composite scenes.¹²⁷ Both the themes and the techniques are believed to have originated in the Iranian world and to have been brought west to Anatolia and Jazira by the Seljuqs. Their import into Egypt via Syria followed the establishment of the Atabek states in Syria and Mesopotamia. Mosuli metalworkers, who constitute the majority of the metal artists known to us, had worked for several Zangid, Artuqid, and Ayyubid princes in Jazira, Syria, and even Egypt. After 1261, when Mosul was stormed and destroyed by the Mongols, more Mosuli metalworkers had immigrated to Syrian and Egyptian cities where they could find patrons among the wealthy and powerful Mamluk amirs. Thus the Mosuli style was directly introduced to the Mamluk realm, where it was adapted to the new requirements and incorporated the features specific to the Mamluk heraldic system.¹²⁸

102. On themes and figures in Jaziran coinage, see Helen Mitchell Brown, "Some Reflections on the Figured Coinage of the Artuqids and Zengids," in Dickran Kouymjian ed., *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles* (Beirut, 1974), 353–58; Nicholas Lowick, "The Religious, the Royal and the Popular in the Figural Coinage of the Jazira," in *The Art of Syria and the Jazira 1100–1250*, ed. Julian Raby (Oxford, 1985), 159–74.

¹²⁶ Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Geneva, 1977), 143–52; Esin Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, D.C., 1981), 50–53.

¹²⁷ See, for example, a bowl by the Mosuli Ibn al-Zayn in the Louvre, no. MAO 331, or the Baptistère de St. Louis, Louvre no. LP 16, or the basin in the Victoria and Albert Museum, no. 740–1898; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 68–79, for photos, descriptions, and references.

¹²⁸ D. S. Rice, "Inlaid Brasses from the Workshop of Aḥmad al-Dhaki al-Mawsili," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 283–326, discusses the Mosuli style in Mamluk metalwork.

We can finally say that the early Baḥrī sultans Baybars, Qalāwūn, and Khalīl appropriated all the available techniques of representation from the repertoires of Egypt, Syria, and Jazira. They put them all to use in their palatial architecture at the Citadel, each choosing his own favorite theme and mode of representation. Thus we have the figural representations in Baybars's *qubba*, which were most probably painted, and which belonged to the secular, classical repertoire of the princely cycle. We have the architectural scenes in Qalāwūn's *qubba* and in the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya at the Citadel, and in Baybars's mausoleum in Damascus, which were influenced by Umayyad mosaic techniques and imagery and by the contemporary miniature illustration from the School of Baghdad. We also have the amirial figures in Khalīl's iwan which may have belonged to the imported Mosuli tradition and may have been executed in stucco. The decision to use any particular technique or medium may have been made by the sultan to suit his preference, or as a result of availability of, or acquaintance with, extant examples, but the choice of depicting horsemanship, processions, hunts, and representations of amirs or of territorial possessions and conquests must have been the sultan's. The use of these themes was a royal prerogative, as is evident from the absence of figural or architectural representations in amirial structures.

The iconography of these images in the royal palaces was a reflection, and a condition, of the political and military situation of the Mamluk state at that time.¹²⁹ The three sultans—Baybars, Qalāwūn, and Khalīl—were primarily leaders of armies who expanded their sultanate through war and conquest and distinguished themselves in jihad. They were intensely engaged in the counter-crusades against the Franks and the Armenians, and they also had to repel many Mongol forays into Bilād al-Shām. On the internal front, they were laying down the rules and establishing the structural hierarchy of the newly imposed Mamluk system in Egypt and Syria. They functioned within the confines of a concept of rule which relied on the acquisition of a personal army of mamluks to maintain supremacy over other great amirs in the sultanate who also had their personal retinue of mamluks.

The images in their structures visualized, publicized, and empha-

¹²⁹ See Redford, "Thirteenth-Century Rum Seljuq Palaces," 219-23, for his analysis of a parallel, albeit different, process in the dissolution of distinction between private palatial and public domains in Seljuq Anatolia.

sized their military conquests and their Mamluk environment, in which their *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs played an important role in the still clan-like structure of the Mamluk state. Their use of various imported and revived modes and techniques to decorate their structures indicates that they had no strong and binding cultural tradition of their own, and this allowed them to choose from several that were available. Similarly, they borrowed from other organizational, political, judicial, and ceremonial systems to construct their own institutions. They inherited most of their structures from the Ayyubids, but they adopted some rules and customs from the Fatimids, others from the Abbasids, and still others from the Mongols (especially Baybars was said to have been an admirer of the Mongol codes of behavior and punishment).

The practice of decorating palace walls with figural representations was abandoned by the time al-Nāṣir Muḥammad acceded to the throne for the third time in 1310, and was replaced by decorative, emblematic, and iconographic inscriptions. Al-Nāṣir's third reign proved to be a turning point in Mamluk history and in the character of the Mamluk state. The Crusaders were routed and the Ilkhanid Mongol menace had been repeatedly thwarted; the Mamluk sultanate had finally achieved political maturity and regional supremacy. Al-Nāṣir was more of a diplomat and master bargainer than a fighter and army leader. He preferred alliances and clientage bonds, and rarely relied on military power. The sultan's predisposition to use subtle methods to achieve his political goals, however, would explain the exclusion of war scenes from the princely cycle but not the wholesale disappearance of figural representations. The shift to epigraphic surface articulation and the elimination of representational decoration should be viewed as a symptom of the weakening of the military function of the state and its ruling elite, and the gradual acculturation of the mamluk Turks to the more conservative, literate, and iconoclastic tastes of upper-class Egyptians and Syrians.¹³⁰

All the palatial structures mentioned thus far were located within

¹³⁰ This change of mentality is not well charted, but a passage in Maqrizī, *Khīṭat*, 2: 213-14, bewails the Mamluk character during the Qalawunid period and outlines the changes that took place with the advent of the Burji age; Krawulsky's introduction to 'Umārī, *Masālik*, 36-37, gives a similar interpretation in her review of the changes in the literary production after the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad; see also Nasser Rabbat, "The Ideological Significance of the Dār al-'Adl in the Medieval Islamic Orient," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 27, 1 (Feb. 1995): 3-28.

the confines of the original Ayyubid southern enclosure. Up to the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the sultans restricted themselves to improving the Citadel within its ramparts and providing it with the structures needed to turn it into a functioning center for the sultanate. Baybars, Qalāwūn, and Khalil endowed the complex with a few monumental and sumptuous units: the Dār al-Dhahab, the series of *qubbas* and iwans, and the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya. None of the new structures was situated in the harem, which must have remained as it was planned by al-Kāmil when the whole palatial structure was called *al-dār al-sultāniyya* or *dār al-saltana* without any apparent distinction between the public and the private domains.

The three Mamluk sultans, however, may have intended to make the separation between the two domains clearer and firmer, functionally and architecturally, with their construction of the new reception halls. The term Bāb al-Sitāra (Gate of the Curtain) is used for the first time at the end of Baybars's rule; it signified the threshold of the sultan's private quarters where his harem were lodged and symbolically veiled behind the curtain (*sitāra*), which may or may not have existed literally.¹³¹ The real gate located in that area was called the Bāb al-Sā'āt (Gate of the Hours), but the significance of this second name is not easy to decipher.¹³² The whole private area and the rest of the Citadel as well were eventually reorganized and rebuilt by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who added a number of *qā'as* to the harem and extended its outer borders beyond the limits of al-Kāmil's palatial complex. Khalil may have initiated this large-scale refurbishing project, but he could not finish it. His life was cut short by assassination in 1293.

¹³¹ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durra al-Zakiyya*, 676; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 14: 453.

¹³² Ibid., 14: 580, says that Bāb al-Sitāra was from inside Bāb al-Sā'āt; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 11: 72, speaks of an event that makes it clear that the gate's name was Bāb al-Sā'āt; see also Casanova, "Histoire," 624–25.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CITADEL IN AL-NĀṢIR MUḤAMMAD'S REIGN: FIRST CONSTRUCTION PERIOD (1310-25)

In the last quarter of the thirteenth century the Mamluks won a series of extraordinary military victories against the Crusader principalities in Bilād al-Shām and the invading Ilkhanid Mongols which expanded their territory and helped establish their state as the most powerful in the region. But between 1293 and 1310, they suffered from a long stretch of turmoil and internal instability caused by continuous internecine struggles among the great amirs and a rapid turnover of sultans. After the death of Khalīl in 1293, his brother al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was installed as sultan for a little more than a year before he was removed. He came back to the throne twice, the first time in 1298 and the second in 1310, with three of his father's Manṣūrī amirs usurping it in the intervals. Clearly, this could not have been a time of urban or architectural expansion, which requires at least a modicum of stability and prosperity.

Al-Ashraf Khalīl was slain outside Cairo by a group of dissatisfied amirs led by his vicegerent Badr al-Dīn Baydāra. Baydāra declared himself sultan reputedly with the ominous title *al-qāhir* (the conqueror), but his reign lasted only for a few days; he and most of his supporters were soon killed by another group of amirs loyal to Qalāwūn's family. Undecided about whom among them to promote to the sultanate, the victors compromised by choosing Muḥammad, Qalāwūn's eight-year-old second son, and maneuvered to control him rather than working out their differences in the open. Muḥammad was declared sultan in December 1293 and was given the regnal title *al-nāṣir* (the helper in victory). Two of the most prominent amirs among his sponsors, 'Alam al-Dīn al-Shujā'ī and Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā, became vizier and vicegerent respectively, and each plotted against the other to dominate the sultan, and ultimately to usurp the sultanate. The clash was not long in coming; al-Shujā'ī lost the struggle and paid with his life.¹

¹ The historical background of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign is based on Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, vols. 30-31; Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*; Baybars, *Tuḥfa*; Ibn al-Da-

Soon afterward, Kitbughā used the old excuse—the need for a mature ruler to manage the troubled affairs of the state—to depose al-Nāṣir and send him back to live with his mother in the harem at the Citadel. Kitbughā, a Mongol captive who began his career as a Manṣūrī amir, installed himself as sultan with the regnal title *al-‘ādil*. He was sustained in his endeavor by Ḥussam al-Dīn Lājīn, an adventurous amir who, as one of the main conspirators against al-Ashraf Khalīl, had had to go into hiding for some time after the sultan’s assassination before Kitbughā interceded with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to have him pardoned. Lājīn represented a faction of amirs whose support Kitbughā needed, and so he was appointed vicegerent.

In 1296, Lājīn wrested the sultanate from Kitbughā, and declared himself sultan under the title *al-mansūr*, perhaps in honor of his former master al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn. Chroniclers of the period noticed Lājīn’s unusual behavior when it came to dealing with the ex-sultan, who had been his benefactor and *khushdāsh*. Instead of summarily executing him, as would have been expected, he sent him into a respectable exile as the governor of Salkhad and then Hama in Syria. He also sent the adolescent al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to the citadel of Kerak in Jordan, probably to diminish the possibility of a coup led or inspired by him.

Two years later, Lājīn himself was assassinated at the Citadel, probably while sitting in the Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya.² The amirs who killed him were minor officers who had taken advantage of the absence of the great amirs to commit their crime. Two of them, Ṭaghjī and Ṭafjī, aspired to become the next sultan-vicegerent team, but they were soon defeated and eliminated by the troops of the great amirs who had in the meantime returned from a campaign in north-

wādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhir*; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, vol. 1, pt. 3; vol. 2, pts. 1 and 2; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, vols. 8, 9, 10. An insightful chronicle, albeit incomplete in its present published form (it covers only five years of al-Nāṣir’s reign), is al-Yūsufī’s *Nuzhat al-Nāṣir fī Sirat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*; see Donald Little, “The Recovery of a Lost Source for Bahrī Mamluk History: al-Yūsufī’s *Nuzhat al-Nāṣir fī Sirat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*,” *Journal of African and Oriental Studies* 94 (1974): 42-54. A concise summary is in Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, chaps. 5, 6, 7.

² No chronicler speaks specifically of the Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya when reporting the killing of Lājīn. Some refer to it simply as the Qaṣr al-Kabīr (Grand Palace) (e.g., Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i‘*, 1, 1: 398); others call it the Qaṣr al-Juwwānī (Inner Palace) (e.g., Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 8: 100). Both names were applied to the Qaṣr al-Ablaq, which was not built until fourteen years after this event. The Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya was the only palace that would have fulfilled a function similar to the Qaṣr al-Ablaq and was close to the harem, thus the suggestion.

ern Syria to find out that their sultan had been assassinated. A junta of six amirs of a hundred took over the day-to-day governing of the state. As usual there were contenders for the sultanate among them, but no one could muster enough support to overcome his opponents. The junta tried to solve the impasse by recalling al-Nāṣir Muḥammad from Kerak and installing him as sultan a second time in 1298; by then he was thirteen years old.

The two strongest amirs who emerged at the beginning of al-Nāṣir's second reign were Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Jāshankīr. The first became the vicegerent for al-Nāṣir; the second was appointed *atābek al-ʿasākīr*, that is, the head of the army. The expected confrontation between them was soon to follow, but Salār was a wiser man than his predecessors, and he let Baybars have the upper hand to avoid risking his position, and possibly his life, in a showdown.

In 1303, midway into the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, a powerful earthquake struck the Mamluk territories, destroying many large structures in Cairo and cracking many minarets, including those of al-Azhar, al-Ḥākīm, al-Fākahānī, al-Šālīḥ, ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, and the Qubba al-Manšūriyya in Bayn al-Qaṣrayn. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his amirs divided up the damaged mosques, and took it upon themselves to rebuild them, with al-Nāṣir reserving for himself the reconstruction of his father's building complex and minaret.³ This was the first test of the willingness of the rulers to assume responsibility for major construction projects. The precedent was to be followed in the third reign of al-Nāṣir, when the sultan and his amirs would not only respond to emergencies but would also themselves initiate large urban projects.

On the external front, al-Nāṣir's second reign faced a renewed Ilkhanid Mongol threat. The Mamluk army had to defend itself twice, in 1299 and 1301, against the Ilkhanids under Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān (r. 1295–1307) who had converted to Islam at the beginning of his reign and asserted his independence from the authority of the great Mongol khan. The first invasion was successful; the Mamluks were defeated and Syria fell under Mongol rule. This occupation

³ Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 20: 89; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 944. Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1, 1: 416–17, says that al-Nāṣir ordered each of the amirs to restore the mosque of which he was the supervisor (*nāẓir*). This is not corroborated by earlier reports, and it is very difficult to imagine how amirs could have been the supervisors of major congregational mosques such as al-Azhar.

turned out to be short-lived, however; the Mamluks, without a fight and by a mixture of luck and attrition, were able to recapture Syria less than a year later. The second attempt against the Mamluk realm was disastrous for the Mongols. Their army was routed in a battle fought not far from Damascus against the Mamluk forces led by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself. The next year, Ghāzān died, and the Mongol threat was much diminished and eventually eliminated for the rest of the fourteenth century.

By that time, the control Baybars al-Jāshankir and Salār exercised over the sultanate and the sultan, including the handling of his personal affairs, had become unbearable to the ambitious but still powerless al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. He abdicated and fled to the citadel of Kerak in 1308 with his family and mamluks. Baybars immediately took advantage of the situation and seized the throne, adopting the title *al-muẓaffar* (the divinely aided). Salār managed to remain vicegerent in the power transition. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad did not sit by idly at Kerak, however; he sent envoys to the Maṣṣūrī amirs who governed the Syrian provinces to solicit their help. Eventually, he recovered his popularity among his father's amirs, who in 1310 joined him with their troops in his march on Damascus and then Cairo where he succeeded in regaining his throne. This could be explained partly by al-Muẓaffar's inability as sultan to act decisively, which tarnished his image among the amirs and the people, partly by the popularity of the Qalawunid house among the Cairenes, and partly by bad luck, as both economic and climatic conditions during his tenure were unfavorable. His one-year reign was bogged down by the plague and by a slow and intermittent rise of the Nile, which translated into a bad harvest and the possibility of famine.⁴ After a halfhearted attempt at resistance, Baybars al-Jāshankir acceded to pressure and fled the Citadel, but was soon captured and put to death. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad returned as sultan for the third time. Now a mature man of twenty-five and experienced in politics, he was to remain sultan for the next thirty-one years. This third reign, stable and prosperous, proved to be the golden age of the Mamluk state.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad maintained this stability through a mixture of diplomacy, cunning, and ruthlessness. He preferred alliances and clientage bonds, and at times relied on the Ismā'īlī *fidāwiyya* to elim-

⁴ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 55-56; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 8: 242-44, Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'*, 1, 1: 424-25.

inate his political opponents.⁵ He used military force only on the rare occasions when he needed it to assert his supremacy among the rulers of his time. He had his name pronounced in the Friday khutba, and sometimes struck on coins in various regions of North Africa, Nubia, and Anatolia (both acts were considered signs of asserting sovereignty) without sending in his troops.⁶

On the home front, he inaugurated his third reign with the systematic elimination of the old and powerful amirs, mainly the Maṣṣūrīs of his father and the Burjī *khushdashs* of Kitbughā, regardless of their loyalty.⁷ At the same time, he set about appointing a new circle of great amirs who were his former mamluks. In 1311, twenty-five of them were promoted to the rank of amir in an elaborate public ceremony in Cairo. As time went on, he strengthened the bonds that tied them to him by routinely marrying them off to his concubines and, later on, to his daughters. At the slightest sign of disobedience, however, he would confiscate their property and, in many instances, imprison them for a long time or even execute them. Consequently, al-Nāṣir became known for the awe, and even fear, he inspired among his amirs and mamluks, which he induced with his authoritarian, unforgiving, and vengeful nature.⁸ His reputation surpassed those of all his predecessors in Mamluk Egypt, all of whom had themselves been extremely despotic and harshly exacting rulers.

From the beginning of his third reign, al-Nāṣir strove to accumulate wealth and to undermine the financial independence of his amirs. In 1314–15, he ordered a new survey (*rawk*) of *iqtā'* land in Egypt, only sixteen years after Sultan Ḥusam al-Dīn Lājīn had completed one, the Rawk al-Ḥusāmī, in 1298.⁹ Realizing that many of the Burjī

⁵ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 390, gives the most glaring example when al-Nāṣir sent more than 120 *fidāwiyyas* over more than fifteen years to assassinate Qarāsunqur al-Manṣūrī, a great amir who fled to the court of Oljeitu in Tabriz, and who nonetheless survived them all.

⁶ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 536–37; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 176.

⁷ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 306; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 210–11.

⁸ Yūsufī, who was one of his mamluks, is vituperative about his master's treacherous and deceitful behavior. His chronicle is replete with instances of despicable machinations, which are not reported in the same tone by the other sources; see, for instance, *Nuzha*, 158, 164, 322; Little, "Recovery of a Lost Source," 53–54.

⁹ For the Rawk al-Nāṣirī, see Ḥassanein Rabie, "Size and Value of the *Iqtā'* in Egypt 564–741 A.H., 1169–1341 A.D.," in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East*, ed. Michael A. Cook (London, 1970), 129–38; idem, *The Financial System of Egypt A.H. 564–741 A.D. 1169–1341* (London, 1972), 53–56; David Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," part 2, pp. 452–53.

amirs who had been promoted by his deposed enemies Baybars al-Jāshankīr and Salār still retained large *iqṭāʿ*, al-Nāṣir ordered the *rawk* in part to reduce their holdings by redistributing the land without taking back their *iqṭāʿ* outright, which would have stirred up hostility.¹⁰ In the process he could also assign a considerably larger portion of the *iqṭāʿ* to the *khāṣṣ* (privy purse) than Lājīn had done. When the *Rawk al-Nāṣiri* was completed, almost a half (5/12, or “ten twenty-fourths,” according to the terminology of the proportioning system used then) of Egypt’s arable land had become the sultan’s property as opposed to a sixth (“four twenty-fourths”) in the past.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, however, did not see himself as the founder of a new dynasty, but as the heir and consolidator of an already established one. Many of his public acts, even after he had secured his rule following his second comeback, attest to this. Early on in his third reign, he instituted the convention of sending the mamluks who were to be elevated to amir’s rank to swear allegiance in front of Qalāwūn’s tomb inside his *qubba* in Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, evidently as a proof of loyalty to the Qalawunid house and its actual head al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The size and positioning of his madrasa next to his father’s *qubba* in Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, which he had appropriated from its former owner al-ʿAdil Kitbughā and completed in 1303, also convey the idea of continuity and an aura of reverence. This continuity is emphasized more expressively in his titlature where his name is always followed by the phrase “*ibn al-sultan Qalāwūn*.” Qalāwūn’s name is accorded the full regalia of a living sultan, in addition to the two titles, *al-saʿīd* (the one of good omen) and *al-shahīd* (the martyred), used as honorifics for sultans who had died while serving the cause of Islam. Qalāwūn had died in his encampment outside Cairo when he was preparing to conquer Acre, the last Crusader stronghold in Palestine. Thus he was entitled to be called a martyr according to Islamic doctrine.

Al-Nāṣir’s most tangible architectural legacy can be found in the Citadel and the area to the west of it. The majority of the monuments attributed to him—and there are more than for any other Mamluk sultan, with the possible exception of al-Ashraf Qāytbāy—were inside the Citadel’s palatial complex. He was responsible for replanning, monumentalizing, and expanding it. His involvement encompassed

¹⁰ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 146-47; idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1: 87-88.

more than just ordering and financing projects; he was reported in many instances to have himself supervised the work on the building sites.

His work at the Citadel can be divided into two periods: the first lasted from the early years of his third reign to the time when he was firmly established in his position (1310–25), the second covered the last eight years of his rule (1333–41) when he had become a paragon of absolutism. The programs of both periods show differences in the scope and in the opulence, style, and monumentality of the constructions. At the very beginning, some of the projects, whether involving necessary repairs or mainly impulsive whims, seem to have been introduced independently of an overall development plan. Soon, however, al-Nāṣir developed a rational long-term program of additions, modifications, and monumentalization that would turn the Citadel into a royal city and accommodate the Mamluk administration and its army, which he concurrently reorganized. By around 1325 he was apparently satisfied with the results and turned his attention to other projects. But, in 1333, he launched a new plan of a different magnitude, which was probably still incomplete when he died in 1341.

Although he certainly had an objective for this new plan, which resulted mainly in aggrandizing structures he had built only a decade earlier, he seems to have been the only one who knew what that objective was. Such secrecy is not surprising in a sovereign whose suspicious and calculating nature had become more pronounced with age and was accompanied by a growing taste for extraordinary luxury coupled with a greed that led him to extract money from every possible source. These heavily influenced the scope and quality of the new projects, many of which reflect the seasoned statesman and the megalomaniacal absolute ruler that al-Nāṣir had become. A few seem to be primarily propagandistic, proclaiming his majesty, his piety, and his justice. Others seem to have been directly related to the growth of his retinue, harem, and dependents, and still others may be traced to his interest in securing his regime and generating profits in whatever way he could.

Less than a year after he acceded to the throne for the third time in 1310, al-Nāṣir MuḤammad demolished the iwan of his brother Khalil and built a smaller one. Then he mounted waterwheels on the intake tower built by Amir Aybak al-Afram in the reign of Khalil, and repaired and cleaned the aqueduct to increase the fresh water supply

at the Citadel. At the same time he enlarged the maydan underneath the Citadel and surrounded it with walls to mark the new boundaries of the royal domain. In 1312–13, he went to Syria and then to the Hijaz to perform the hajj. When he returned, he launched an ambitious program to expand the palatial complex and monumentalize its structures. He first razed his brother's *rafrāf* and possibly the adjacent Burj al-Rafrāf as well, and added a new tower which dominated the approach from the Ṣalība of Ibn Ṭūlūn, visually the most crucial spot in the Citadel. He immediately followed with his Qaṣr al-Ablaq, which also overlooked the maydan and the city beyond, and which was inaugurated in 1314. Then the flurry of construction slowed down a bit; the next major project was not undertaken until 1318 when he ordered the old Ayyubid mosque at the Citadel demolished, and incorporated several structures around it to build a new larger and more opulent mosque, the Nāṣirī Mosque. Two years later, in 1320, he rebuilt the court leading to the Bāb al-Qulla and added a new door inside that gate. In 1322, he remodeled Baybars's old palace of justice under the Citadel, and turned it into a bandstand for the royal *ṭablakhāna* where the royal military band would perform at least twice a day. It was at that point that he seemed content with his work and, in 1325, turned his attention to a major complex he established in the village of Siryāqūs, north of Cairo, that included villas, religious structures, and a maydan.

A decade later, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad began again to build in and around the Citadel. In 1333, he ordered the iwan he had rebuilt in 1311 demolished, and several structures around it razed. He reconstructed the whole anew, this time with a more monumental iwan. He refurbished the harem's *qā'as*, including the Qā'at al-ʿAwāmīd, and added a series of *qā'as* to the south of the original harem that came to be known as the Qā'at al-Sabʿa (Seven Qā'as), although there may have been fewer than seven. He built small palaces in the southern enclosure for the nine *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs he had married off to his daughters. Some of these palaces were new constructions; others were adapted old ones. Next came the rebuilding and enlargement of the mosque in 1335, for which al-Nāṣir also razed a few structures, among them the old kitchen and its dependencies, which he had rebuilt in stone vaults, reportedly as a fire-prevention measure. His next project, a new enclosure (*ḥawsh*) for farm animals south of his palatial complex, was a direct result of his newly developed interest

in animal husbandry. He stocked his *ḥawsh* with cows, sheep, and poultry.

The last project at the Citadel in which al-Nāṣir was involved suggests that he was, until late in his reign, planning another expansion, or possibly only refurbishing, of the palace area. In 1341, to increase the fresh water supply, he planned to dig a new canal from the Nile and to construct a new aqueduct and a series of deep wells, which would have elevated the water to the hill of al-Raṣād, not far from the Citadel, from which it would have been directed to the Citadel and its surroundings. He died before the project was completed, and it languished, though some of the wells that were dug remained in use until the fifteenth century. To these last few years of his reign also date most of the palaces he had built for his favorite amirs outside the Citadel: in the horse market area, in Ḥadarāt al-Baqār, around the Birkat al-Fil, and in the Kabsh, a little spur overlooking the Birkat al-Fil.¹¹

Not surprisingly, the only building of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to have survived to this day almost unchanged is his mosque. All his other major structures slowly decayed over the five centuries after the end of the Bahrī regime until they were razed by Muḥammad 'Alī in the early nineteenth century to make room for his new additions. The general assumption has been that Muḥammad 'Alī so thoroughly destroyed the old structures that no traces of them could be excavated today, an assertion without any textual evidence. The accumulation of dirt and debris, which caused the rise in ground level over time also buried, and thus preserved, some of the structures even before Muḥammad 'Alī's time.

Excavations in 1985 and 1988 in the modern Sāḥat al-'Alam, conducted by the EAO, turned up, in addition to the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya with its wealth of surface decoration discovered almost by chance, a section of wall that most probably belonged to the back of the Iwān al-Kabir of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, as verified by the map of the *Description de l'Égypte* of the site of the *divan* or Palais de Joseph (no. 82). Aside from the four monolithic granite columns from the site of the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya, other recent findings include shafts and capitals scattered around the terrace to the northeast of Muḥammad 'Alī's mosque.

¹¹ The works of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad are conveniently summarized in Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 540-45; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 179-90.

But the excavations have thus far been limited to the western section of the southern enclosure. Much more may still be found in the southern section, where the old harem was, and in the central part behind the walls of the mosque and next to the Bi'r Yūsuf. In some spots one need not even dig in order to reach a Mamluk stratum. The original ground levels or basements of some Mamluk structures are still accessible through the few surviving stairs. In some places, Muḥammad 'Alī apparently used the old foundations for his own structures, and saved the stairs for access. This can be seen on Colonel Green's map of 1896 which shows that the small terrace to the southwest of the mosque of Muḥammad 'Alī is supported on a series of underground vaults, marked "ruined vaults," which are reached by spiral stairs located right next to the mosque's wall (see fig. 15). Not one, but two, and possibly three huge, superimposed vaulted halls span the distance between the western wall of the court of the mosque of Muḥammad 'Alī and the outer wall of the reception quarter (*salamlık*) of the Bijou Palace, which burned down in 1972. In fact, the whole length of the harem's exterior may still retain some remains of the initial lower levels of the Mamluk palaces, which all reportedly looked to the maydan and the Southern Qarāfa below.

Two other sections of the southern enclosure contain underground ruins that provide information on the layout of the Mamluk palatial complex and the links between its various components. The first is the area marked "ruined" on Colonel Green's map and the Egyptian cadastral maps of the 1930s, south of the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, where the dilapidated tower of the Bi'r al-Sab' Sawāqī (Well of the Seven Fountains), the terminus of the aqueduct that brought the Nile water to the Citadel, still stands. The second is the area under the Police Museum on the northern tip of the southern enclosure, around the upper level of the Burj al-Zāwiya. All these new data, which still need to be studied, may be helpful in reconstructing the topography of the Mamluk Citadel. Though they do not furnish us with more than meager clues to the architecture of the period, because the buried structures are in such an advanced state of decay, they clarify and substantiate the information gathered from textual sources.

The First Rebuilding of the Iwān al-Kabir

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's new iwan, built after he had demolished that of his brother al-Ashraf Khalīl, was a hastily executed work that does not appear to have been a part of his plan to restructure the Citadel.¹² Nūwayrī and Baktāsh al-Fakhri, both eyewitnesses, say that the new iwan was smaller than the old one, so the project was not undertaken to enlarge this major audience hall.¹³ Several reasons may be suggested for the rebuilding. Baybars al-Manṣūrī says that al-Nāṣir ordered it because he disliked the gloom (*ghils*) of the old iwan's interior and the awkward, additional supports (*arkān*) erected after the earthquake of 1303. He goes on to say that al-Nāṣir "enlarged the square in front of the iwan and brought more light to its court" (*wassa'a sāḥatuhu wa nawwara bāḥatuhu*) to make the structure seem wider.¹⁴ It is conceivable that the supports may have been strengthened in a rush after the earthquake which spoiled the appearance of the Iwān al-Ashrafī, though no other source says so. The supports may have needed replacing for structural reasons, which would be a reasonable, though not a complete, explanation.

Baybars al-Manṣūrī provides a hint of yet another reason when he says that al-Nāṣir "hated the iwan built by al-Shujā'ī for his brother."¹⁵ Al-Nāṣir may have wanted to demolish it because it reminded him of the two earlier and humiliating periods of his reign, when he held the title of sultan but not the real power.¹⁶ The memories induced by the iwan may also have been more personal and painful. Al-Ashraf Khalīl had left his mark on the iwan by adorning it with the representations of his amirs, many of whom must have been accomplices in his assassination. By 1311, most of them were either dead or

¹² For the rebuilding of the iwan, see Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 66; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhir*, 238; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 107; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 51. Baktāsh al-Fakhri, *Beiträge*, 156, specifies that the reconstruction took five months and eight days.

¹³ *Ibid.* Nūwayrī *Nihāya*, 31, fol. 95, and Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 189, say that the debris used in 1329 to fill up the underground prison (*al-jubb*) at the Citadel were the remains of the iwan after it had been rebuilt on a smaller scale, but it is very difficult to understand how the debris could have remained in place for eighteen years.

¹⁴ Baybars, *Tuḥfa*, 232–33.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ It is important here to remember that *sultān*, which means power or authority or hegemony, was used to denote the supreme military ruler of the various medieval Islamic states, including both the Ayyubids and the Mamluks; see C. E. Bosworth, "Laḳab," *EI*², 5: 618–31; J. H. Kramers, "Sultan," *EI*¹, 7: 543–45.

in disfavor with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, though a few, including Qarāsunqur al-Manṣūrī, had fled the Mamluk realm and taken refuge at the rival Ilkhanid court. Effacing their images would have been at least one good reason for tearing the Iwān al-Ashrafī down.

After his repeated dethronements and exiles, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad returned in 1310 as a mature, but mistrustful and vindictive man. He had become very clever at switching alliances and orchestrating counterplots to ensure his throne. He pitted the strong amirs against each other and eventually eliminated most of them, replacing them with his own mamluks, and systematically weakened the authority of many top-ranking officers by assuming some of their duties himself. Consequently, he not only controlled the internal affairs of the sultanate, he effectively became the sole power in it.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the redefinition of the duties of his vicegerent. At the end of 1310, al-Nāṣir discovered a plot against his life, masterminded by some of his great amirs and headed by his vicegerent Baktimur al-Jukandār (the polo master). He swiftly rounded up the suspects, including his own nephew Amir Mūsā ibn ʿAlī, and in 1311 managed to trap and imprison his strong and menacing vicegerent and install in his place the harmless Baybars al-Manṣūrī.¹⁷ At the same time, al-Nāṣir started regularly holding the sessions of *al-naẓar fī al-maẓālim*, also called the *dār al-ʿadl*, in the Iwān al-Ashrafī. Shortly afterward, he rebuilt the structure and elevated the *maẓālim* service to a formal ceremony where all the important amirs of the realm had to be seated around him in strict hierarchical order.¹⁸ He was undoubtedly clipping the vicegerent's authority when he decided to preside over the *dār al-ʿadl* sessions himself, for this has been an important aspect of the vicegerent's duties during the time of Qalāwūn and Khalīl and his own first two reigns.¹⁹

¹⁷ Baybars, *Tuḥfa*, 215, himself reports a story about how he was thought to be a weak and obedient amir. When he was dispatched to Sarkhad to bring Salār back to what turned out to be his death, Salār accused him of being like the "old horse which leads the sheep to be slaughtered and comes back safe." His blind obedience did not save him from the wrath of al-Nāṣir; he was imprisoned between 1312 and 1317 in the citadel of Kerak.

¹⁸ Ibid., 231, 233–34, gives an elaborate description of the event and lists the names of the amirs required to sit around the sultan. Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 66, and Baktāsh al-Fakhri, *Beiträge*, 158, report another activity, the review of the troops, that was also instituted in the Iwān al-Kabir.

¹⁹ ʿUmārī, *Masālik*, 116–17. Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 215, and Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 16–17, both copied ʿUmārī, with a few additions.

In his struggle to maintain his throne during his first two reigns, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad enjoyed great support among the populace (*al-‘amma*, or the commoners, and *al-ḥarāfīsh*, or the vagabonds) of Cairo and Damascus, who were generally believed to be indifferent to changes in rulers.²⁰ The chroniclers offer many examples as evidence for their support.²¹ The *‘amma* attacked the mamluks of Salār and Baybars al-Jāshankīr when they besieged al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in his palace at the Citadel in 1307.²² They cheered him when he rode in Damascus and later in Cairo before he was restored to his throne in 1310.²³ They pelted and stoned his opponent Baybars al-Jāshankīr when he fled from the Citadel.²⁴ Appearing as a ruler concerned with the fair application of justice helped al-Nāṣir to maintain this popular sentiment toward him, although his rule, and the whole structure of the Mamluk state, depended almost exclusively on a foreign-born military class.²⁵ It is from within these two sets of considerations—dominating the Mamluk hierarchy and pleasing the populace—that his decision to rebuild the iwan and to hold *mazālim* sessions in it as tangible signs of his political consolidation should be seen. Another reason, which also stems from the changes he introduced, was functional: since he was engaged in redesigning the court ceremonies, the old iwan may have been inadequate for the *dār al-‘adl* and other processions as he planned them.²⁶

²⁰ For *‘amma*, see M. A. J. Beg, “al-Khaṣṣa wa l-‘Āmma,” *EI²*, 4:1098-1100; for *ḥarāfīsh*, see W. M. Brinner, “Ḥarfūsh,” *EI²*, 3: 206;

²¹ For an analysis of the popular support of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge, 1993), 52-55.

²² Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 34–35.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2, 1: 68; Baybars, *Tuhfa*, 204.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 199; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 71; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 8: 244.

²⁵ Ḥayāt al-Ḥajjī, *The Internal Affairs in Egypt during the Third Reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn* (Kuwait, 1978), 78–79, noted the political importance of al-Nāṣir’s decision to attend *mazālim* sessions, but went on to advance an improbable and historically unverified reaction of the amirs to this decision. Although this is one of the rare English publications specifically dealing with the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, it should, unfortunately, as Irwin says, “be used with caution.”

²⁶ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 180, noted the elaborate rituals introduced by al-Nāṣir in the iwan and noticed that their most important function was to inspire awe in the envoys of foreign rulers, who were more common in al-Nāṣir’s court than that of any sultan before him.

Rebuilding the Maydan and Reactivating the Aqueduct

In 1312, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered the maydan under the Citadel rebuilt and enclosed, a project that introduced the general restructuring of the Citadel, for it involved creating a clearly defined buffer zone between the palatial complex and the city to the west and separating the royal stables and the hippodrome from the horse market to the north.²⁷ Both were achieved by building a stone wall around the maydan on the south, west, and north. Some of the western parts with their crenellations still exist.²⁸

The new maydan was planned slightly to the south of the old one so that the Bāb al-Iṣṭabl (Gate of the Stable), which originally opened onto the maydan, now became its northern limit. Since the dimensions of a maydan were more or less fixed by the requirements of an *akra* (polo) track, moving it to the south meant having to include the old Bāb al-Qarāfa (which should not be confused with the southern gate of the Citadel also called the Bāb al-Qarāfa because it overlooked the Southern Qarāfa) into the new maydan and removing a number of tombs along the edge of the Qarāfa al-Kubrā (Great or Southern Qarāfa). A new gate with the same name was constructed further south as the new entrance to the Qarāfa. Another gate, the Bāb Shādiyya, or perhaps Sāriyya, to the east of the Bāb al-Qarāfa in the old walls of the city built by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, was also demolished and replaced.²⁹ The stables that Baybars had built in that area were obviously razed in the process.

The location of the maydan is given on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte*; the Bāb al-Qarāfa is marked (no. 15), though the gate itself was rebuilt by al-Ashraf Qāyṭbāy in 1484 who put his *rank* and titles on it.³⁰ This gate was demolished in the 1970s for a new highway, and then unprofessionally and inaccurately rebuilt in 1987. The Bāb Shādiyya of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad may have been the one marked

²⁷ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 80; Baktāsh al-Fakhri, *Beiträge*, 159, Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhir*; 245; Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 20: 221; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 123; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 51; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ*, 1, 1: 441–42.

²⁸ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 10: 31–32, no. 3, Ramzī explains that the area behind the western wall of the maydan is called *taht al-sūr* (under the walls) because of the maydan's walls, which still can be seen behind the low structures today.

²⁹ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 80; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhir*, 282, reports the demolition of the Bāb Shādiyya as an afterthought to the rebuilding of the maydan; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 229, just reports the destruction of the gate.

³⁰ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʿiʿ*, 3: 330.

on the map as Bāb 'Arab Yasār (Gate of 'Arab Yasār, no. 22), after the squatter settlement of the same name that grew up haphazardly to the south of the Citadel in later times.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad took great care to ensure the usability of the new maydan all year round and to protect its grass from the scorching heat of Cairo in the summer. He had palm and fruit trees planted in it, presumably along the edges, and a number of wells dug and equipped with waterwheels (*sawāqī*) for its irrigation. He had it filled in with a special kind of rich black soil, named *al-iblīz*, and, to expedite the building process, he requisitioned the camels of his amirs to carry the soil from the banks of the Nile. This is perhaps the origin of the name Qarāmaydan (Turkish for Black Maydan) encountered in later sources and on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte*. This was a name borne, interchangeably with other names, by at least two Mamluk maydans, probably because the use of *iblīz* to fill in their ground gave them a distinctive black color.³¹

This project marked the boundaries between the city and the royal domain, but it also led to the development of the areas to the west of it, where eventually the stables and palaces for the favorite *khāṣ-ṣakiyya* amirs of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad were constructed. The first palace was a rebuilding of an existing structure, the house of oxen (*dār al-baqār*), once a stable for the oxen that turned the royal waterwheels in the maydan.³² Shortly after the maydan was completed in 1313, al-Nāṣir rebuilt the stable as a palace for Taqtimur al-Dimashqī, who had been among the first of his mamluks to be promoted to the rank of amir in 1311. This palace, which was soon given to and named after another of al-Nāṣir's favorite amirs, Ṭashtimur Ḥumuṣ-Akhdār (the nickname means green chickpeas, for this amir was fond of this popular delicacy), appears to have become the nucleus of a group of monumental palaces that al-Nāṣir had built for his favorite amirs during the final ten years of his reign along the north-south line running west of the maydan.

Concurrently with the rebuilding of the maydan, the water intake tower on the Nile and the aqueduct carrying the water to the Citadel, which had been neglected for some time, were repaired and put back

³¹ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 145, 386, 463 calls the maydan of al-Zāhir, which was later incorporated into the Northern Qarāfa, the Maydān al-Aswad (the Black Maydan).

³² Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 68; idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 130–31; the structure's location, as discussed in chapter 2, was southwest of the mosque of Sultan Ḥasan, see 'Ali Mubārak, *al-Khiṭaṭ al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2: 43–44.

into use.³³ Casanova, Creswell, and Su‘ād Māhir, using Maqrīzī as their source, attribute the water intake tower to al Nāṣir Muḥammad.³⁴ He, however, should not be given all the credit for it. Two reliable fourteenth-century chroniclers, Nūwayrī and Shujā‘ī, say that the tower was built by Amir Aybak al-Afram for al-Ashraf Khalil near the Bāb al-Qanṭara (Gate of the Bridge) north of Fustāt, suggesting that Khalil intended to enlarge the Citadel but was killed before he had a chance to put the plan into effect.³⁵

Al-Nāṣir ordered four *sāqiyas* mounted on the tower that emptied the water into the four channels running along the top of the aqueduct. The water was then collected in another well tower on the way to the Citadel and then raised again to aqueduct level by three *sāqiyas* which emptied into three channels. The last water tower at the end of the aqueduct was near the Citadel; it may be the tower that still stands outside the walls to the south of the harem. There the water was raised once more and brought inside the Citadel to the reservoir of the Bi‘r al-Sab‘ Sawāqī (Well of the Seven Waterwheels), to the southwest of the Bi‘r Yūsuf, to be distributed via a system of underground channels to the various fountains in the palatial complex and the mosque inside the southern enclosure. These two towers—the one outside the Citadel on the aqueduct path and the Bi‘r al-Sab‘ Sawāqī inside it—are to be credited to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.³⁶

But the aqueduct that brought water from the Nile to the Citadel, a distance of approximately four kilometers, cannot be indisputably attributed to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, nor can it be conclusively reconstructed. This aqueduct was used until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī built a new one and a new intake tower on the Nile shore with six *sāqiyas*. Parts of al-Nāṣir’s

³³ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 229–30; idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 124.

³⁴ Casanova, “Histoire,” 659; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 258; Su‘ād Māhir, “Majrā Miyāh Fum al-Khalij,” *Egyptian Historical Review* 7 (1958): 134–57, summarizes the history of the aqueduct but adds no information to that provided by Creswell for our period.

³⁵ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 80, is very clear in attributing the intake to al-Ashraf Khalil; Shujā‘ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 95, does not mention al-Ashraf Khalil, but says that the original intake had the *rank* of al-Afram on it, which al-Nāṣir removed as it was his habit to efface the names of other patrons from their buildings. Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 159, notes that the water tower was built in a piece of land that was leased by al-Afram himself, which would have increased the value of the land. Such an act provides another example for proving the difficulty of distinguishing between personal interests and state affairs.

³⁶ Creswell, “Researches,” 158, pl. 30; idem., *M. A. E.*, 2: 257–58, and pl. 95a.

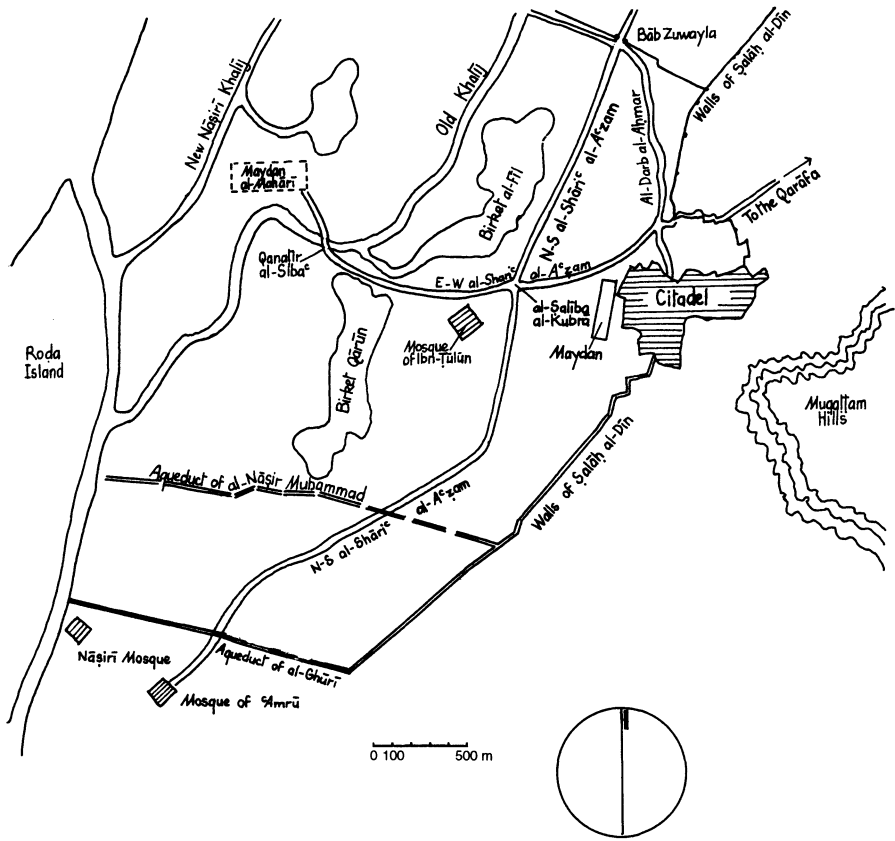


Fig. 26: Aqueducts of al-Nāsīr Muḡammad and of al-Ghūrī

aqueduct were incorporated into the new one built by al-Ghūrī, but the intake tower and more than half the arcade of the old aqueduct have disappeared. Today, the aqueduct runs due west from al-Ghūrī's intake tower for a distance of two kilometers to a point less than one kilometer to the southwest of the Citadel where it veers at a right angle northward towards the Citadel, but the last stretch from the Bāb al-Qarāfa south of the maydan to the Citadel was destroyed in the twentieth century (fig. 26). Creswell argues on the basis of varying stone rustication and course height that almost half of the arches running due west from al-Ghūrī's intake tower to the bend belong to the old aqueduct. This is corroborated by Ibn Iyās, who twice mentions the aqueduct in his chronicle, the first time when "at the end of 912

A.H. (1506–7), al-Ghūrī abolished the old aqueduct in Miṣr al-‘Atīqa [Fuṣṭāṭ], and began to construct of a new one. He built a new intake tower and an aqueduct on an arcade that runs all the way to Bāb al-Zughla, and from there it connects to the maydan and the Citadel,” and the second when “he finished the new aqueduct in 914 A.H. (1508), and water began to run to the maydan.”³⁷ The unknown Bāb al-Zughla must have disappeared at an unknown date. It may have stood in one of the six gaps in the aqueduct caused by modern development and recorded by Creswell.

The last part of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s aqueduct, which was incorporated into al-Ghūrī’s aqueduct, followed the same route used by the Ayyubids to bring water to the Citadel, the eastern wall of the city of Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ, known as the wall of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and built by Qarāqūsh after 1176. ‘Alī Bahgat, who excavated Fuṣṭāṭ between 1912 and 1924 and cleared the area around the wall, found that from the point where it meets the aqueduct, which is exactly where the aqueduct bends to the north, the wall runs under, and serves as a support for, the arches of the aqueduct.³⁸ This clarifies the meaning of both the reports of Nūwayrī and Shujā‘ī, who say that “the *majrā* (aqueduct) was built on top of the *sūr* (walls),”³⁹ and Maqrīzī who says that the aqueduct of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad brought water from the Nile to the wall, and from the wall to the Citadel, thus distinguishing between the newly built part and the one constructed over the wall of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.⁴⁰ Creswell also found that the same stretch of wall had a pipeline inside it, which was probably the water conduit constructed by al-Kāmil when he moved to the Citadel.⁴¹

While the aqueduct was refurbished and extended, the tank—or the well, depending on the source one consults—attributed to al-Ẓāhir Baybars near the *zāwiya* of Taqī al-Dīn Rajab al-Buṣṭāmī, was renovated and a watercourse (*naqqāla*) added to it that carried the water to the Bi’r al-Iṣṭabl (Stable Well).⁴² The location of the well tower

³⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’*, 4: 110, 137; Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 258, gives a somewhat distorted translation of the two references.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 55–56, 258–59; ‘Alī Bahgat and Albert Gabriel, *Fouilles d’al-Foustat* (Cairo and Paris, 1921), 118–21, pl. 14.

³⁹ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 80; Shujā‘ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 95 and 113.

⁴⁰ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 229–30.

⁴¹ Creswell, *M. A. E.* 2: 56, 259; Casanova, “Histoire,” 663.

⁴² Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 230, calls it the tank (*maṣna’*) of Baybars; idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 124, calls it a well (*bi’r*). The confusion is due not only to the conflicting reports

can be fixed in reference to the *zāwiya* of the Persian sufi Rajab al-Buṣṭāmī which still stands on the hill (*ṣuwwa*) opposite the road and the steps that ascended to the Citadel's main gate, the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad seems to have replanned the entire area around that time, for he built the *zāwiya* for the Persian sufi shortly before he ordered the construction of the watercourse.⁴³ In doing this, al-Nāṣir used the strategy al-Zāhir Baybars had adopted a half-century earlier, when he increased the water supply for the stables before he enlarged them and added new structures. When all the water projects were finished, al-Nāṣir was able to launch his grander projects, which would require large quantities of water for their occupants and for the extensive gardens he established around them.

The Qaṣr al-Ablaq

The Qaṣr al-Ablaq, perhaps the most famous of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's buildings, was constructed between 1313 and 1314.⁴⁴ Its name derives from the alternate courses of black and ochreous stone used for its walls, an arrangement called *ablaq* in Arabic.⁴⁵ Thus the name Striped Palace encountered in some Western sources is a descriptive rather than a literal translation. It was, we are told, modeled on the

that Maqrizī seems to have copied without checking, but is also a result of the similarity in function between a *maṣnaʿ* and a *biʿr*, both used to store water, although in a *biʿr* water is drawn and stored in a shaft that is normally dug in the ground, while a *maṣnaʿ* is a tank built above ground in which water brought on the backs of camels is stored; see Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 24, 108.

⁴³ Maqrizī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 432, says in the same sentence that the *zāwiya* was built by al-Nāṣir to lodge Taqī al-Dīn Rajab al-Buṣṭāmī after 1320, when he had died in 1314.

⁴⁴ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 82; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhīr*, 266; Baktāsh al-Fakhrī, *Beiträge*, 161; Maqrizī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 209; idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 129; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 36–37.

⁴⁵ Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 2: 73–74, and Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 8–9, report a story which shows that the arrangement of black and white stripes is generally called *ablaq*, regardless of the medium. Upon regaining his throne for the third time, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad reprimanded all those who supported Salār and Baybars al-Jāshankīr. When he cursed ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, an administrator and a protégé of amir Salār, by calling him, “black faced,” the administrator said “O sultan, *ablaq* is better than black.” To this al-Nāṣir angrily replied, “Damn you, even now you want to evoke his *rank*.” Amir Salār's *rank* was made of two fesses, one black and one white, thus it was *ablaq*.

Qaṣr al-Ablaq in Damascus, constructed by al-Zāhir Baybars in 1264.⁴⁶ Al-Nāṣir may have been impressed by Baybars's palace, where he stayed whenever he visited Damascus—for example, in 1312–13, when he took his army to Syria following rumors of an imminent new Mongol invasion.⁴⁷ After the Mamluk army arrived in Damascus, the Mongols retreated without invading Syria, but al-Nāṣir stayed on for a month, then went on the hajj, and returned to Damascus before going back to Cairo. Soon after he ordered the building of his own Qaṣr al-Ablaq in the Citadel and hired workers from both Damascus and Cairo for the purpose.

Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il says that the workers al-Nāṣir brought from Damascus were Christian marble cutters. They were probably responsible for laying down the courses of *ablaq*, which suggests that this method of articulating walls, so ubiquitous in later Mamluk and Ottoman monuments in Cairo, was introduced into Cairo from Damascus by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁴⁸ Mufaḍḍal goes on to tell us that the Citadel palace was built like the one in Damascus (*naẓīr*) and followed the same arrangement (*tartīb*), but it had two things the Damascus model did not have. The first was a *shādirwān* (slanted wall fountain) fixed to the wall of one of the palace iwans.⁴⁹ The second was the unusually thick *shādirwān* wall; it was three cubits (approximately 1.5 meters) thick, presumably to accommodate the pipes bringing water to the *shādirwān*, with two huge doors, each eight cubits (4 meters) high, probably flanking the *shādirwān* on the back wall of the iwan. This information, not mentioned in other contemporary descriptions of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq, suggests that the Citadel palace was not an exact copy of its Damascene prototype and that it incorporated some elements from other architectural repertoires.

The Qaṣr al-Ablaq was reserved for daily receptions and private

⁴⁶ Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 20: 236–37; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 129; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 94; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 36–37.

⁴⁷ References to the Qaṣr al-Ablaq in Damascus are gathered in 'Abd al-Qādir al-Riḥāwī, "Quṣūr al-Ḥukkām fī Dimashq," *Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes* 22 (1972): 42–48.

⁴⁸ Terry Allen, "The Concept of Regional Style," in his *Five Essays in Islamic Architecture*, 101, says that *ablaq* was a Damascene specialty and identifies the dome of Nūr al-Dīn, constructed in 1172, as the earliest example of post-Umayyad *ablaq*.

⁴⁹ On *shādirwān*, see Yasser Tabbaa, "Towards an Interpretation of the Use of Water in Islamic Courtyards and Courtyard Gardens," *Journal of Garden History* 7, 2 (July-Sept. 1987): 198–212; Amin and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 68–69; Nasser Rabbat, "Shādirwān, *EJ*², 8: 89.

audiences, replacing the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya, which, according to the fifteenth-century historian Ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhirī, in turn had supplanted the Qā'a al-Ṣālihiyya when it was built.⁵⁰ Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad sat there for the audience (*khidma*) in the mornings and for the review of state affairs in the afternoon, except for Mondays and Thursdays when he sat in the Iwān al-Kabīr for *dār al-ʿadl* sessions. He had a throne (*takht al-mulk*) set in the center of the principal iwan overlooking the stables, but we are told that, when the audience was an informal one, he sometimes sat on a cushion next to that throne, while the amirs remained standing. Only the *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs and a limited number of the office-holding great amirs were admitted to the morning audience.

At midday, the sultan left the assembly to go to his inner palaces (*al-quṣūr al-juwwāniyya*), then to the houses of his harem (*dūr al-ḥarīm*). In the afternoon, he came back to his inner palaces for another working session, and the high-ranking administrators would attend him there to review the affairs of the city and the sultanate. *Barrānī* amirs (amirs of the outside) were not present at either session. Two sets of banquets (*asmiṭa*, sg. *simāt*) were served daily for those in attendance. In the morning, three banquets were set one after the other; the sultan partook of the last one called *al-ṭārī*. At the end of the day, two more banquets were offered, one after the other.⁵¹ Holding the *simāt* was among the most visible and essential prerogatives of the sultan or his vicegerent; attendance at these banquets was a sign of loyalty.⁵² The restricted number and high rank of amirs and

⁵⁰ Zāhirī, *Zubda*, 86.

⁵¹ For general reviews of Mamluk court ceremonials, see Karl Stowasser, "Manners and Customs at the Mamluk Court," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 13-20; an Arabic equivalent, though less accurate, is 'Abd al-Mun'im Mājid, *Nuzum Dawlat Salāṭin al-Mamālik*, 2: 149-65. A survey of Mamluk ceremonials at the Citadel is in Behrens-Abouseif, "Citadel of Cairo." These scholars depended on Qalqashandī and Maqrīzī, with very little textual criticism. The two chroniclers had copied the text concerning the daily court sessions from 'Umari, *Masālik*, 102, and failed to account for the changes that must have occurred in the period between 'Umari's recording (ca. 1330) and the end of the Baḥrī period (1382), although their texts show that they were aware of the radical changes introduced in the early Burjī period. This may be taken to suggest that they considered Mamluk ceremonial to have reached its height in pomp and in organization in al-Nāṣir's time, and deemed the later alterations unworthy of reporting.

⁵² The importance of partaking in the *simāt* is illustrated in the story of Baysari's son, who was a *khāṣṣaki* of al-Nāṣir and who used to skip eating in the *simāt* for pious reasons. When his piety was discovered to be false, he was arrested because of the disrespect his refusal to eat implied; see Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 232.

officials allowed to attend all these functions at the Qaşr al-Ablağ indicate its semiprivate quality, as opposed to the functions held at the Iwān al-Kabir which were official, ceremonial, and open to the public.

Ibn Faḍl-Allah al-‘Umari’s description of the palace is the earliest and probably the most accurate of a number of accounts. Maqrīzī and Qalqashandī copied it almost verbatim. ‘Umari writes:

On the side of the Iwān al-Kabir is a passageway to the door of the Qaşr al-Ablağ followed by a small court where the amirs intimate with the sultan sit before they enter the *qaşr* for the court service.

From the door of the *qaşr* one passes through corridors to a monumental *qaşr* of splendid construction with two iwans, the larger being the northern [northwest], which overlooks the stables of the sultan, and from which one can see the horse market, Cairo and its suburbs as far as the Nile, and beyond to Giza and its villages. The second or qibli [southeast] iwan has a special door [Qalqashandī calls it the *bab al-sirr*, secret door] for the departure of the sultan and his courtiers to the Iwān al-Kabir on ceremonial days. From this *qaşr* one can enter three inner *quşūr* (*al-quşūr al-juwwāniyya*), of which one is on the same level as the first *qaşr*, and the other two are reached by a staircase. All these *quşūr* have windows with iron grilles, whence the view is the same as from the principal palace. In all these palaces are channels for the water brought from the Nile by *sāqiyas* turned by oxen from one point to another until the water reaches the Citadel. From there it goes into the palaces of the sultan, and the houses of the great *khawwāş* amirs which are close to the sultan’s palaces. It is used in their houses and their hamams.

The *quşūr al-juwwāniyya* communicate with the inner part (*ḥaram*) of the harem, and the *abwāb al-sutūr* (gates of the veils).⁵³ The façades of all these *quşūr* are built of black and yellow stones, and within are dadoes of marble and gold and floriated mosaics, heightened with mother of pearl and colored paste and various colors. The ceilings are all gilded and painted with lapis lazuli. The light comes through windows filled with colored glass from Cyprus resembling necklaces of precious stones. All the floors are paved with marble of incomparable quality transported from all the countries of the world.

Then we will report the rest of what relates to the sultan’s *quşūr*: one can descend from the side of the iwan of the *qaşr* to the stables of the sultan, then to a maydan covered with grass, which is so spacious that the eye travels over it. This maydan lies between the stables and horse market to its west [northwest]. The sultan mounts his horse from a stair-

⁵³ *Sutūr*, which means veils, should be understood here as referring to the wives of the sultan, not to curtains or veils put on the door.

case next to his inner *qaṣr*, and he descends to his private stable, then to the maydan with the great amirs in his service to watch the horses in the days of parades or to accept new horses brought as a gift or to buy them. In this maydan, the sultan performs the prayer of the two holidays with his retinue, and on these occasions the sultan descends to the maydan and returns from it through another door in the corridor of the *qaṣr*,⁵⁴ not through the door mentioned earlier. The sultan has many secret gates to the Qarāfa and to other areas, which we need not mention here.⁵⁵

Although this is the most elaborate description we have of any Mamluk palace, it still leaves out much that is necessary both to determine the location of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq and to reconstruct its architectural plan. It does, however, fix the sequence of royal palaces from the Iwān al-Kabīr to the harem, provide some information about their connections and layout, and present a number of clues to clarify the meaning of *qaṣr*, one of the most important terms of the Baḥrī palatial architecture that still elude precise definition. The description also establishes that the Qaṣr al-Ablaq was the name both of the principal *qaṣr* in a group of interconnected *quṣūr* built by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the general name for all the palaces together. The three other *quṣūr* were collectively called the inner *quṣūr*, but they may also have had individual names.⁵⁶

The main component of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq was the throne hall; it had a *qā'a* plan with two unequal iwans and a domed *dūr qā'a* in the middle. The large northwestern iwan overlooked the city; the south-eastern one opened onto the passage that led to the Iwān al-Kabīr. (The existence of this door in the back wall of the iwan is one of the

⁵⁴ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārikh*, 9, 1: 169, mentions the same itinerary.

⁵⁵ 'Umārī, *Masālik*, 142–44; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 209–10, 229–30; Qalqashandī, *Subh*, 3: 369–72; part of the translation in Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 260. Two later chroniclers, Ibn Iyās and Zāhirī, complicate matters concerning the morphology of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq. Zāhirī, *Zubda*, 27, says in passing that the Qaṣr al-Ablaq comprised three palaces. Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1, 1: 445 asserts that it was composed of three interconnected palaces, with five *qā'as* and three *marqad*, which could mean a sleeping space as an alcove or a *ṣuffa*. Both descriptions should be rejected: they are both late and seem to be anachronistic, or they may have neglected to take notice of later additions to the original Qaṣr al-Ablaq.

⁵⁶ Casanova, "Histoire," 645, reports the names of two *qā'as*, the Qā'at al-Fiḍḍa (of silver) and the Qā'at al-Nuḥās (of copper), but does not ascribe them to the inner *quṣūr*; the name Qā'at al-Fiḍḍa is corroborated from Mamluk sources; one even implies that it was in the *qaṣr*, that is the Qaṣr al-Ablaq, Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārikh*, 9, 1: 105, 129.

differences between the Qaşr al-Ablaq of Damascus and the Citadel listed by Mufađđal, for otherwise contemporary *qā'as*, such as the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya, had their entrances in the *durqā'a*). All the other units, which had *qā'a* plans with two opposite iwans as well, had a similar disposition so they could benefit from the same view of the city. The whole palace was connected at one end with the Iwān al-Kabīr, and on the other with the private apartments of the sultan's palaces (*al-addur al-sultāniyya*), where the wives, concubines, and children lived. Al-'Umarī says that the stairs that descended to the private stables of the sultan were located next to his inner palace (*qaşrahu al-juwwānī*) which may be taken to mean the last of the series of three inner palaces. The sultan used a different set of stairs to reach the maydan on the two major holidays, the 'Īd al-Fiṭr (Fast-Breaking Day) and the 'Īd al-Ađḥā (Sacrifice Day), than he did on other occasions. The door to these special stairs was in the *dihliz* (passageway) of the palace, probably the same corridor that connected the palace to the Iwān al-Kabīr (fig. 27).

Despite the several descriptions of al-Nāşir Muḥammad's Qaşr al-Ablaq, ranging from the contemporary account of al-'Umarī to a brief early-nineteenth-century note by Viscount Valentia, its location has not been conclusively established. Casanova proposed a site on the map of the *Description de l'Egypte* south of the Maison de Joseph

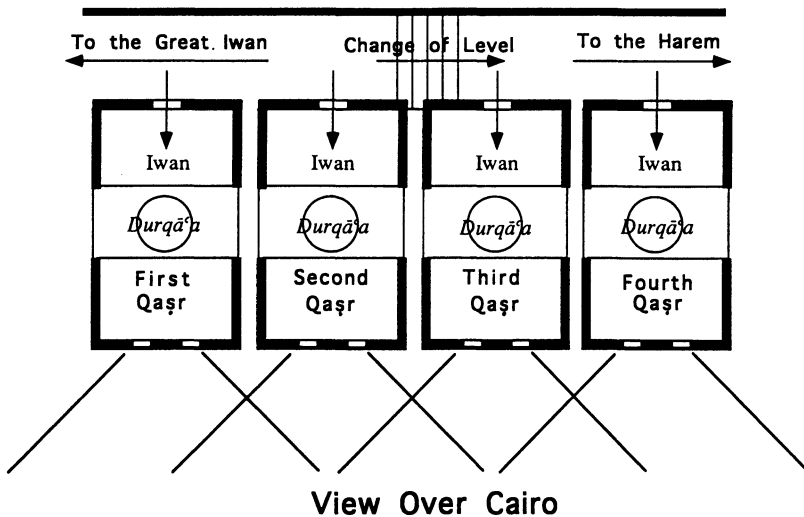


Fig. 27: Schematic plan of the four units of the Qaşr al-Ablaq

(no. 84) towards the Sab' Ḥadarāt (no. 72), but did not attempt to be more precise.⁵⁷ Creswell, having meticulously gathered all the available textual references, surveyed the site and made accurate measurements, suggested that the space below the northwestern portico of Muḥammad 'Alī's mosque, whose floor is at the same level as the ground of the old stables (the modern army workshops), and which extends between the walls under the portico and the monumental corbels in the foreground, was where the Qaşr al-Ablaq stood (see pl. 2).⁵⁸ Finally, the EOA advanced the newly discovered *qā'a*, identified here as the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya, as the main structure of the Qaşr al-Ablaq. These ascriptions, however, overlooked details that make them improbable.

The main reason for refuting the identification of the new *qā'a* with the Qaşr al-Ablaq is topographic. All the chroniclers who described the Qaşr al-Ablaq agree that the four halls, or the four *quşūr*, that formed the structure were situated next to each other. They all faced the same direction, were entered from the same corridor, and their northwestern façades overlooked the city, which means that they were lined up in a row. Thus, any proposed site would have to be at least large enough to accommodate the width of four halls together. The excavated *qā'a*, which stands north of the Burj al-Rafraf, is too close to its outer edge for three more halls to fit into the remaining space (see fig. 12). The southern wall of the Burj al-Rafraf forms the edge of the southern enclosure at that point. It then extends to the southeast with a few slight bends until it reaches the wall upon which the northwestern portico of the mosque of Muḥammad 'Alī was built. There the wall breaks at an almost right angle to enclose a surface for a balcony whose level is considerably lower than that of the mosque. This balcony opens into the great vaulted hall labeled "ruined vaults" on Colonel Green's map of 1896, whose outer wall runs straight south. The area below this whole section of the wall belongs to the stables of the Citadel and was outside the palatial complex proper.

Creswell's proposed site, framed by these walls, is thus totally outside the southern enclosure, whereas according to all accounts the Qaşr al-Ablaq was inside it. Basing his conclusion on Maillet's reference to a hall protruding from the walls whose arcades rested on

⁵⁷ Casanova, "Histoire," 641.

⁵⁸ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 262–63.

pillars, Creswell identifies the tunnel vaults and corbels as Maillet's huge pillars and assumes that the units of the palace had been built on top of the roof supported by these vaults. He thus implies that the Qaşr al-Ablaq may have been high enough to have been reached from the platform of the palatial complex above it. Such an arrangement would have included it within the southern enclosure, but it would also mean that the ground level of the palace would have to be more than 20 meters above the roof of the vaults. This would have required more than two superimposed halls underneath the palace to fill the height to the southern enclosure level, but when I examined the roof in the summer of 1988 there was no sign of any remains of what should have been massive walls indeed. The argument that Muḥammad 'Alī may have razed everything that existed there before building his mosque is disproved by the early-eighteenth-century print published by Arthur Rhoné, in which the corbels are visible in the foreground, with heaps of rubble on the roof, but without a trace of an earlier structure that would have reached the level of the palaces above (see pl. 4).

There remains the massive double-cross hall, unnoticed by Creswell, which fills the space between the end of the tunnel vaults and the wall of the southern enclosure behind it. There are many arguments in favor of identifying this hall with one of the structures cited in the sources as belonging in the stable area, but no hard evidence. The most probable candidate is a *qā'a* that was built by Amir Yalbughā al-Nāşirī some time in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, perhaps the same *qā'a* as the one occasionally referred to in the sources as the Ḥarrāqa in the stable, which was the official residence of the grand amir of the royal stables (*amīr ākhūr*) from at least the late Qalawunid period.⁵⁹ The earliest mention of the Ḥarrāqa appears in connection with Barqūq, when he was still the commander of the armies (*atābek al-ʿasākir*) under the last Qalawunid sultan before he became the first Circassian (or Burji) sultan in 1382.⁶⁰ The sources, however, do not ascribe its construction to him. Furthermore, no source locates it precisely or describes it architecturally.⁶¹ *Ḥarrāqa* is

⁵⁹ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9, 1: 168.

⁶⁰ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 10: 32; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3: 365, 383.

⁶¹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'iʿ*, 1, 2: 266, and Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9, 1: 190, locate it near the Bāb al-Işṭabl; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 243, says that it is situated near the Bāb al-Silsila, which may mean that the two, Bāb al-Işṭabl and Bāb al-Silsila, were alternate

a term usually used for the largest type of Mamluk warship. Attaching it to a structure must have been meant to connote massiveness and invincibility.⁶²

Casanova locates the Qaşr al-Ablaq on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte* between the Bayt Yūsuf Şalāḥ al-Dīn (Maison de Joseph, no. 84) and the Sab' Ḥadarāt (no. 72) which led from the southern enclosure level to the maydan, passing through the stables. The location of the stairs on the map corresponds to the location of the stairs that used to be attached to the Qaşr al-Ablaq according to Mamluk descriptions. Casanova did not go beyond this in his suggestion, but architectural remains in the area proposed as the palace's site confirm his deduction. The site is the platform adjacent to the outer courtyard (*şaḥn*) of the mosque of Muḥammad 'Alī, which extends along the walls of the southern enclosure to the southwest to where the *salamlīk* (men's quarter) of the Bijou Palace stood until it burned down in 1972. Ten steps, built at the same time as the mosque (they run parallel to its wall), lead down to the 34-meter-long terrace from the present ground level of the southern enclosure (fig. 28). There, a door in the wall of the mosque opens onto a spiral stone staircase made up of twenty-one triangular steps.

Below is a little passage, parallel to the wall of the mosque. Seven more steps below that, the passage opens to the south onto the huge hall marked "ruined vaults" on Colonel Green's map, just underneath the platform, and to three long barrel-vaulted halls to the north (see fig. 10). The first two of these vaulted corridors are connected by a narrow passage. Creswell measured their width, which averages 5 meters, and noted that they run behind a 7-meter-deep wall under the mosque of Muḥammad 'Alī. This thick wall constitutes the lower foundation of the external northwestern wall of the mosque's *şaḥn*. It is pierced by nine rectangular windows which light the long halls.⁶³ The third northern hall, which escaped Creswell's notice, is also par-

names for the same gate; Muḥibb al-Dīn Ibn al-Shīḥna, *al-Badr al-Zāhir fī Nuşrat al-Malik al-Nāşir*, 66, 82, and 84 locates it next to the *ṭablakhāna* inside the Bāb al-Silsila. Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3: 4, speaks of a staircase (*sullum*) of the Ḥarrāqa; William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans*, 15: 23, sums up its features as they appear in Ibn Taghri-Birdi's *Nujūm* as being a loggia (*maq'ad*), sleeping quarters (*mabīṭ*), and a flight of stairs.

⁶² For the range of possible origins for the use of this term, see Behrens-Abouseif, "Citadel of Cairo," 61.

⁶³ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 262.

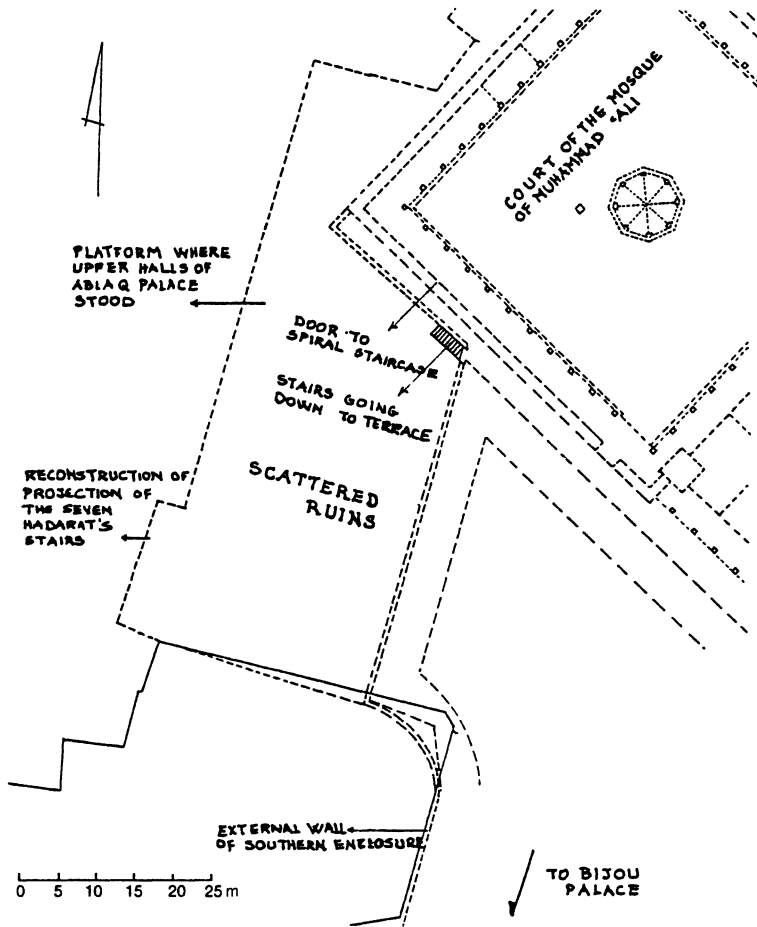


Fig. 28: The Platform adjacent to the *ṣahn* of the mosque of Muḥammad ‘Alī

allel to the external wall of Muḥammad ‘Alī’s mosque, and is joined to the first hall by another vaulted passage. The function of these halls is very difficult to discern, but they could have been used as depots. Their disposition, under and parallel to the wall of the mosque, makes it almost certain that they were built, or at least rearranged, at the same time as the mosque.

The huge trapezoidal hall under the platform is composed of eight rows of square stone pillars on its long side—each pillar measuring around 1.75 meters to the side—and six rows on its short side. It is

covered with forty vaults, most of which are squares of a little more than 5 meters to the side, except for the row next to the tilted side of the trapezoid whose vaults vary in size depending on where they are located. Thirty-six of these vaults remain standing. The rest are in various stages of ruin, a condition that presents a glimpse of their construction material (burned brick) and method. The two front rows are all groin vaults; the back ones are barrel vaults (pl. 21). The hall's external 65-meter-long façade opens onto the maydan with eight arched windows (the first six original, the last two rebuilt). The first two windows from the northern end are framed by two huge projecting arches of stone that run down along the Citadel wall to the ground level some 20 meters below. This badly damaged hall is different in construction from, and earlier in date than, the northern halls.

The floor under the first two vaults on the third lateral row slopes down, but the slope is covered with rubble and debris which makes it impossible to verify whether there is a ramp or steps underneath leading to a ruined lower level. At the end of the slope is a door on the south which opens into a lower hall underneath the upper hall (pl. 22). Another door on the north probably opened into another space, but it is blocked with masonry. The two doors on the two sides of the slope indicate that the descent was planned from the beginning. The lower hall in the south, measuring approximately 50 by 30 meters, is made up of eleven vaults, each measuring 5 by 5 meters on average (see fig. 11). Nine of them are groin vaults, and two are barrel vaults (pl. 23). The lower hall is not as wide as the upper one, but it runs the entire distance from the slope to a point below the end of the upper hall. The lower hall has six windows (four original and two restored) corresponding to the upper hall's windows and opening onto the maydan below, but they are rectangular rather than arched and somewhat smaller.

The recently rebuilt southern area at the end of the lower hall, whose pillars continue to the level of the upper hall's ceiling, stands where the *Description's* Sab' Ḥadarāt once stood. When the EAO rebuilt the outer wall of the hall, it followed the alignment of the extant pillars and blocked off the section of the façade overlooking the maydan by constructing a solid masonry wall pierced with windows. This reconstruction was not based on the original layout of the area, which is known through representations from the end of the eighteenth century. The French map shows the Sab' Ḥadarāt as a staircase in the shape of a reversed S inscribed in a square at the

upper level. From the side of the square facing the outside, another stairs runs in a straight line down to the maydan. This means that the façade of the Sab' Ḥadarāt was open to the outside. In fact, the mid-nineteenth-century print published by Ebers shows the façade at that point to have been composed of a high arched opening inscribed in a rectangular frame that projects from the rest of the wall.

The Sab' Ḥadarāt must have been the staircase al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had built next to the inner palaces to reach the stables and the maydan from the Qaṣr al-Ablaq since no one after him is reported to have demolished it, but there is no trace of it today, and no source records its destruction. It must have been torn down sometime between the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the French map was drawn, and the middle of the century, when early photographs (the first known dates to the 1850s), show the area in ruins. Muḥammad 'Alī must have razed the Sab' Ḥadarāt when he fortified that part of the Citadel, and tried to isolate it from the ground, or stable, level, to which the staircase originally led. He seems not to have had any plans for reconstructing the area once access from it was blocked, for all the old photographs, from J. A. Lorent's picture taken before 1860 to photographs taken as recently as the 1940s, show the debris of the Sab' Ḥadarāt left untouched amid the new buildings of Muḥammad 'Alī—the Bijou Palace, the mosque, and the two terraces flanking it—rising along the western façade of the Citadel.

It is clear from architectural details that parts of the upper vaulted hall were rebuilt, and possibly replanned, by Muḥammad 'Alī. The whole northern section under his mosque, which includes the three large barrel-vaulted halls, is contemporary to the mosque because the halls are aligned with its exterior walls. The steps that lead down from the bottom of the spiral stone staircase to the upper hall level date from Muḥammad 'Alī's time as well; so do the corridor adjacent to the steps and the wall that forms the acute angle of the trapezoidal plan, as evidenced by the alignment of the whole vestibule with Muḥammad 'Alī's mosque and by the rococo profile of the wall moldings. Many vaults were crudely enclosed at some later time by building walls of rough limestone and cement mortar (both modern materials) between their supports so they could function as separate rooms. This may have been the work of the British Occupation forces stationed at the Citadel in the early twentieth century.

The halls themselves, however, belong to an earlier period. As suggested earlier, they are probably the two lower levels of the Qaṣr al-

Ablaq of al-Nāṣir MuḤammad as their vaulting methods and the sizes of stone used are characteristically Mamluk. Textual support for this assertion comes mainly from Maillet, who speaks of a vaulted hall with massive square pillars that supported another hall with many windows overlooking the city.⁶⁴ Other European travelers who saw the palace, known to them as the Maison de Joseph, all comment on the commanding view from its windows and its majestic and monumental appearance. They all also report that the palace was used during the Ottoman period as the place where the *kiswa* for the Ka'ba was woven. This remark offers another clue to support the proposed location of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq, since Egyptian Ottoman sources also tell us that the palace had become the workshop for the *kiswa*.

Mamluk texts mention a number of palaces in the Citadel as having *qā'as* built above vaulted halls; they served various functions. The house of al-Malik al-Sa'id, the son of Baybars, in the northern enclosure was erected on sixteen vaults (*'uqūd*) to fill in a large depression (*jūra*). The vaults constituted the basement of the house which was used as a cistern.⁶⁵ The Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya was raised above a basement (*qabū*), though our sources do not specify whether it was vaulted or not. This basement communicated with the royal stables through a secret gate.⁶⁶ A short, vaulted passage on the northern side of the Ḥarrāqa penetrates into the mass of the Burj al-Rafrāf, but is blocked by debris. It may have been the gate to the staircase that descended from the basement of the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya to the stables. Its direction and location correspond to the site proposed for the *qā'a*.

Similarly, the *qā'as*, (or *quṣūr* as they are called in all Mamluk sources) of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq may have been arranged on top of the upper vaulted hall in the way described by 'Umarī and Maqrīzī. The vaulted hall is large enough to have accommodated four *qā'as* lined up side by side parallel to the wall of the Citadel. The mosque of MuḤammad 'Alī must have been built on top of part of the original

⁶⁴ Quoted in *ibid.*, 2: 260–61.

⁶⁵ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 341; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 190, does not specify what the basement was used for, although his report seems to have been copied from Ibn Shaddād.

⁶⁶ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9, 1: 169, 190, and Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 477, report a story that shows that the basement of al-Ashrafiyya opened into the stables; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1, 2: 424–25, reports the same story but does not use the word *qabū* to designate the lower level under the *qā'a*.

hall, because the whole section of the trapezoidal plan adjacent to the mosque appears to be of a later construction and because the spiral stone staircase, which is now inserted in the outer wall of the mosque's *ṣaḥn*, stylistically belongs to the Mamluk period. The terrace, or triangular balcony north of the upper hall, is probably the truncated remnant of the *maq'ad* (the word is usually translated as loggia, but in the Mamluk context it is a particular type of loggia with an arcaded opening), according to one historian, or the *kharjā* according to another, built by Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'bān (1363–77), the grandson of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁶⁷ Casanova argues that *kharjā* signifies here a projection or balcony (rather than a vestibule, its usual meaning), which would reconcile the various reports.⁶⁸ This interpretation of the structure's form fits Ibn Iyas's account that the *kharjā*, which overlooks Rumayla Square is the place where the *saḥāba* (lit. cloud, but it here appears to have been the name of a special tent) was usually pitched for processions at night.⁶⁹

The orientation of the halls and consequently the reconstructed *quṣūr* on top of them fit the chroniclers' remarks that the view from each *qaṣr* in the palace encompassed the whole city and extended toward the Nile and Pyramids beyond it. This is clear from a sixteenth-century Ottoman map of Cairo, reproduced in Piri Reis's *Kitāb-i Bahriye* which he presented to Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent in 1526.⁷⁰ It depicts the Citadel of Cairo as divided into two enclosures: a high one with towers, which is undoubtedly the northern enclosure, and a low southern one. The wall of the southern enclosure overlooking the city has a single structure on its right corner labeled *Yūsuf Kushk*, shown as being above the wall with its three windows corresponding to the three windows of the enclosure's wall below (fig. 29). This is certainly a representation of the *quṣūr* of the *Qaṣr al-Ablaq* above the lower hall. The *Qaṣr al-Ablaq* became

⁶⁷ Qalqashandi, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 370, calls it a *maq'ad*; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1, 2: 183, calls it a *kharjā*.

⁶⁸ Casanova, "Histoire," 677.

⁶⁹ Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 1, 2: 183.

⁷⁰ The map is reproduced differently in the various manuscripts of Piri Reis's *Kitāb-i Bahriye*. Two manuscripts have what seems to be the original depiction which has the Citadel with its two enclosures. The first is in the Istanbul University Library, T. 6605, fol. 202a, dated to the year 962 A.H. (1554). The second is in the Walter Art Gallery, W. 658, fol. 305 a, entitled *Portulan-i Kebir-i Seyyid 'Alī Kapudan*. I am grateful to my colleague Iffet Orbay for drawing my attention to the *Kitāb-i Bahriye* and for providing me with copies of the map.

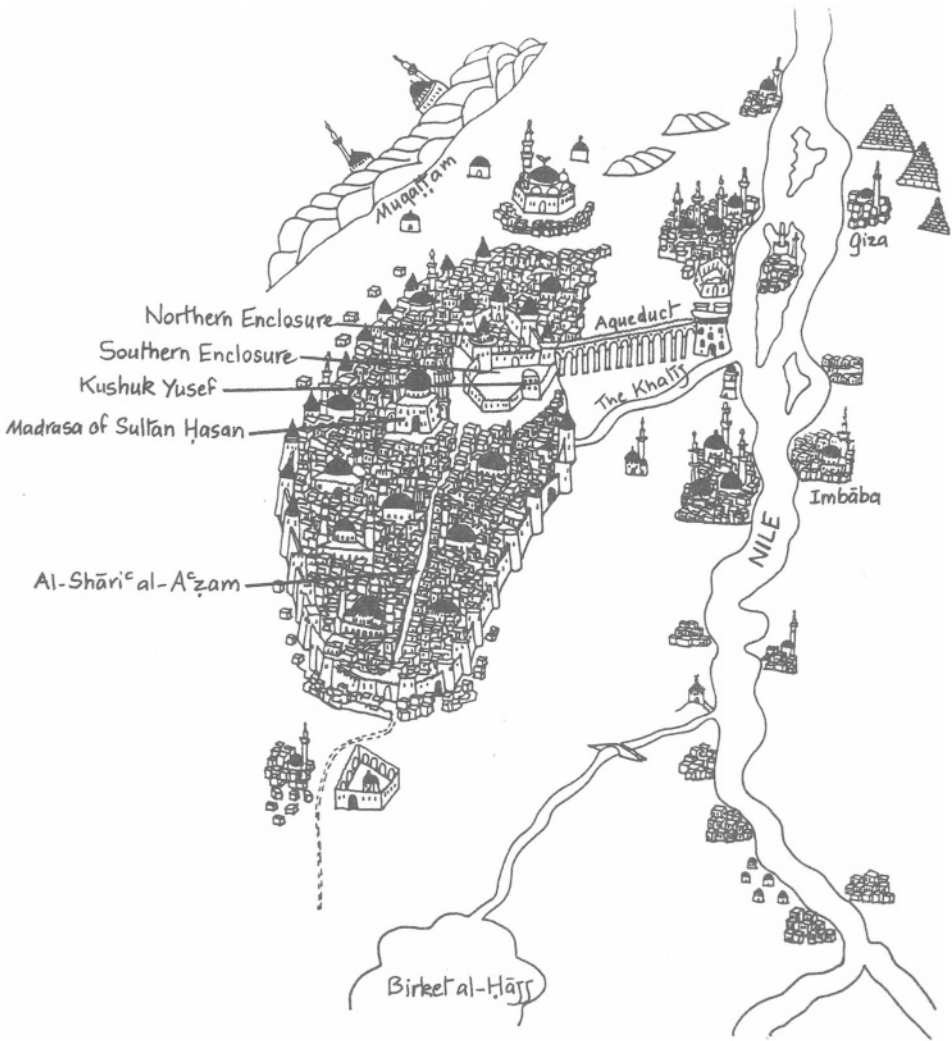


Fig. 29: The Map of Cairo of Piri Reis's *Kitāb-i Bahriye*

known as the Kushuk Yūsuf (the Arabic version of Yūsuf Kushk) in Ottoman Egyptian texts.⁷¹ This is probably the origin of the name *Maison de Joseph*, given by the French savants to the same structure.

⁷¹ Muḥtafā Ibrāhīm, *Waqā'i' Miṣr al-Qāhira Bayn 1100 wa 1150*, 122; Aḥmad Chalabī al-Ḥanafī al-Miṣrī, *Awḍāḥ al-Ishārāt fī man Tawalā Miṣr al-Qāhira min-l-Wuzarā' wa-l-Bāshāt*, 213. *Kushk* is the Persian equivalent of the Arabic *qaṣr* and was applied to the *Qaṣr al-Ablaq* in the Ottoman period; see Howard Crane, *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early Seventeenth Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture* (Leiden, 1987), 86.

The Concept of Qaşr in the Bahri Period

Further evidence to support this reconstruction of the Qaşr al-Ablağ can be assembled from reviewing other Bahri Mamluk palaces in the city of Cairo. Four—the palaces of Ālin Āq (1293), Bashtāk (1334–39), Qawşūn (1337), and Ṭāz (1352)—still stand, though in various stages of decay.⁷² The names refer to their original owners, all Bahri amirs, but the palaces were occupied by a succession of amirs throughout the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. They were all also renovated and added to several times but their cores are for the most part original and exhibit the same arrangement: vaulted halls on the ground floor and corresponding ones on the first floor above. The palace of Qawşūn has a four-iwan *qāʿa*; Ālin Āq’s and Bashtāk’s have two-iwan *qāʿa*; Ṭāz’s no longer exists, but the plan of the ground-floor hall suggests a two-iwan *qāʿa* above.

On the plans of all four palaces (published in *Palais et maisons du Caire* and in the articles by Garcin and Revault in the same volume), the vaulted halls on the ground level are labeled *iştabl* and on the upper-level *qaşr*.⁷³ Both scholars use *iştabl* with caution to designate the lower halls.⁷⁴ *Qaşr* is distinctly used in Maqrizi’s *Khiṭaṭ* to designate an important hall in three of the four remaining palaces, but both scholars note that in other Mamluk palaces it is usually called *qāʿa*.⁷⁵ Jean-Claude Garcin suggests that the difference between a *qāʿa* and a *qaşr* might be that *qāʿa* is a generic term for hall; *qaşr* is

⁷² Laila Ibrāhīm, “Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo,” 55 and no. 40. A fifth Bahri palace, that of Manjak al-Yūsufi (d. 1375), was still standing until the beginning of the twentieth century; it appears in a photograph taken in the second decade of the twentieth century and published by Gaston Migeon, *Le Caire, le Nil et Memphis* (Paris, 1928), pl. 13. The entrance to the stables of the palace and a beautiful flat dome above it with Manjak’s titles inscribed around it still stand there today.

⁷³ Jacques Revault et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire, l’époque mamelouke* (Paris, 1982), 49–74, 180–87, pls. 4–5 (Qawşūn), pls. 12–13 (Ālin Āq), pls. 17–19 (Bashtāk), pl. 58 (Ṭāz).

⁷⁴ All plans are labeled “*iştabl*” with a question mark. Garcin, “Habitat,” 185, identifies the lower hall in the palace of Bashtāk as either an *iştabl* or a hall for guards. He also notes (p. 182) that the notion that *iştabl* sometimes designates both the stables in an amir’s palace and the total structure, as in the case of the palace of Qawşūn, is incorrect. It is specific to that palace because the stables existed before the palace and gave their name to the complex.

⁷⁵ Maqrizi, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 70 (Qaşr Bashtāk), 72 (İştabl Qawşūn), 73 (Dār Ṭāz).

the most important hall on the second level of the palace reserved for the amir and his retinue.⁷⁶ He sees the choice of this particular term to designate the halls of the amirs as an intentional reference to the royal paradigm in the Citadel, the Qaşr al-Ablaq. He does not say, however, why the word does not appear among the terms used for amirial palaces constructed in the Burjī period.⁷⁷

Of the four palaces, that of Ālīn Āq is the best documented. It is described in three waqf documents dating from various times in the Mamluk and Ottoman period which offer us the possibility of determining the actual Mamluk names for the spaces in a Baḥrī palace and tracing the changes in that terminology over time. The three waqfs were drafted on the three occasions when the palace was incorporated in an endowed architectural complex. The first one is in the collection of waqfs of Sultan Barsbāy dated between 827 and 841 A.H. (1423–37).⁷⁸ In it, the palace is referred to as a *qaşr*, and the first-floor hall as a *qaşr* and a *manzara* connected to a set of dependencies that include sleeping units (*takhāyin*) and drain pipes (*ma'āzil*).⁷⁹ The ground-level hall is not named but we are told that it contains services (*marāfiq*) and storehouses (*ma'āzil* and *buyūtāt*).⁸⁰

The second waqf, that of Amir Khāyir Bak, is dated 927 A.H. (1521). It describes the palace after it had been joined to the new madrasa and mausoleum built by Khāyir Bak around the same time. In it, the whole structure is called a *qaşr*, the lower-level space a vaulted *qā'a* (*qā'a musaqqafa 'aqdān*) and the upper-level space again a *qaşr*. The waqf identifies the *qaşr* as an old construction, and

⁷⁶ Garcin, "Habitat," 183, basing himself on Maqrīzī, *Khiṭat*, 2: 72, who uses *qaşr* for the amir's private hall in the Işṭabl Qawşūn, which was apparently the highest part of the complex. Zakarya, *Palais*, 143, gives a similar definition of *qaşr* based on two fifteenth-century waqfs.

⁷⁷ Garcin, "Habitat," 205, only records the use of the phrase "the place known in the past as *qaşr*" in the waqf of Barsbāy.

⁷⁸ Waqf of Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbāy, 106–7, lines 2–6; see also MuḤammad Ḥussām al-Dīn Ismā'il 'Abd-al-Fattāh, "Arba' Buyūt Mamlūkiyya min al-Wathā'iḳ al-'Uthmāniyya," *Annales Islamologiques* 24 (1988): 78–79.

⁷⁹ A *manzara* is an upper-floor *qā'a* with a view to the outside; Goitein, *Daily Life*, 76; Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 117; for *takhāyin*, *ibid.*, 25, for *ma'āzil*, 110.

⁸⁰ *Buyūtāt* is a generic term for household stores, which include the *ṭishtakhāna* (washbasin room), the *ḥawā'ijkhāna* (pantry), and the *firāshkhāna* (tent room), Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 10–11; *marāfiq* are the dependencies such as the toilet and the bathroom; *ma'āzil* are the pipes, see Amīn and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 103 and 110.

describes it as having a *durqā'a* and two iwans: a large one with two sleeping spaces (*mabītāt*) and a small one with one sleeping space (*mabīt*), and dependencies (*khizāna*, or closet, and the more usual *manāfi'* and *marāfiq*).⁸¹ By the time of the last waqf, that of the Amir Ibrāhīm Aghā Mustahfizān, dated 1062 A.H. (1652), the palace had become ascribed to Khāyir Bak, and the lower-level hall is called a "sitting *qā'a*" (*qā'at julūs*). The whole structure is still called a *qaṣr*, and the upper-level hall also a *qaṣr*, with no further elaboration.⁸²

In none of the three waqfs is the word *iṣṭabl* used to identify the lower-level hall. In the first two waqfs, those of Barsbāy and Khāyir Bak, the *iṣṭabl* of the palace is separate from the *qaṣr*; the space under the *qaṣr*, referred to as an *iṣṭabl* in studies of other Mamluk palaces which have similar arrangements, is a hall that included a set of services. The word *qaṣr* is repeatedly used in all three documents to designate both the upper-level hall and the whole palace. But *qaṣr* was not the word generally used to indicate a residence in the Mamluk period; the more common term was *dār*. Of the fifty-seven important residences in Cairo listed by Maqrīzī, only five belonging to the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad—the palaces of Baktimur, Bashtāk, Yalbughā, Alṭunbughā, and Tatar al-Ḥijāziyya, a daughter of al-Nāṣir—are referred to as *qaṣr*; fifty-one are called *dār*.⁸³

Maqrīzī's report provides further important data. Although he was writing in the early fifteenth century, or the middle of the Burjī period, his data are mainly relevant to the study of Baḥrī palaces and do not apply to residences of his own time. Of the fifty-seven residences listed, six are Fatimid, one is Ayyubid, forty-three are Baḥrī Mamluk, and only seven are ascribed to people who lived in the Burjī period. Of these seven residences, only four are explicitly said to have been built after 1382, the beginning of the Burjī period. Only seven out of forty-three residences attributed to the Baḥrī period were owned by high administrators in the state; thirty-six were owned by amirs and members of the royal Qalawunid family. The same is not true for the smaller sample of Burjī residences: six were owned by high adminis-

⁸¹ Awqāf 292/44, waqf of Amir Khāyir Bak, dated 8 Muharram 927 (1521), 9–10; 'Abd-al-Fattāh, "Arba' Buyūt Mamlūkiyya," 82–83.

⁸² Awqāf 952, waqf of Amir Ibrāhīm Aghā Mustahfizān, dated 10 Safar 1062 (1652), 117–118; 'Abd-al-Fattāh, "Arba' Buyūt Mamlūkiyya," 86–87.

⁸³ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 68–72; Laila Ibrāhīm, "Mamluk Monuments of Cairo," *Quaderni dell' Istituto Italiano di Cultura per la R. A. E.* (Cairo, 1976): 9–29, mentions only four.

trators, and only one was owned by an amir from the early Burjī period, Bahādur al-Muqaddam. Maqrīzī's sample then mainly represents Bahri amirial and royal residences.⁸⁴

The exact meaning of *qaṣr* as it is used in Mamluk sources is yet to be determined; in fact, the whole question of Mamluk terminology for palatial and residential architecture has still to be comprehensively analyzed.⁸⁵ Laila Ibrāhīm, after reviewing the etymology of *qaṣr* in Islamic Egypt up to the Mamluk period, suggests that it may have been a descriptive term signifying "a high rectangular construction."⁸⁶ S. D. Goitein, who depends on examples belonging to the Ayyubid and very early Mamluk period, identifies *qaṣr* by its salient feature, which "seems to have been its total or partial isolation which required walls stronger than those common to regular rooms."⁸⁷ In their dictionary of Mamluk terms, Laila Ibrāhīm and Muḥammad Muḥammad Amin offer a definition similar to Goitein's, but add that a *qaṣr* is a *qā'a* with its own entrance which may be reserved for the harem of the amir or for the amir himself; the same definition is given by Mona Zakarya.⁸⁸ A few additional suggestions can be made based on the term *qaṣr* as it appears in the primary sources and in waqfs that can help elucidate the concept of a Bahri palace, including the royal Qaṣr al-Ablaq.

The waqf of Sultan Barsbāy provides what may be the most extensive range of applications of *qaṣr* available in any single document.⁸⁹ In its list of amirial palaces in Cairo that Barsbāy had managed to appropriate and to include in his endowment, five halls in five different residences, aside from the *qaṣr* of Ālīn Āq, are called *qaṣr* and their features described. In the palace of Amir Salār, the *qaṣr* is a large *riwāq* (i.e., a generic living unit in the upper-level of a resi-

⁸⁴ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 74.

⁸⁵ Studies such as Revault et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire*; Zakarya, *Palais*; Amin and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*; 'Abd al-Laṭīf Ibrāhīm, "al-Wathā'iq fī Khidmat al-Āthār," in *al-Mū'tamar al-Thānī li-l-Āthār fī al-Bilād al-'Arabiyya* (Cairo, 1958), 205–88; Shemuel Tamari, *Kaah: iyun leksiko-arkhitektoni* (Tel-Aviv, 1980 or 1981), have greatly improved our knowledge of Mamluk architectural terminology and corrected many anachronistic definitions.

⁸⁶ Laila Ibrāhīm, "Mamluk Monuments of Cairo," 18–19.

⁸⁷ Goitein, *Daily Life*, 76, and no. 163.

⁸⁸ Amin and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 90; Zakarya, *Palais*, 143.

⁸⁹ The abbreviated text of the waqf has been published and annotated; Aḥmad Darrag, *L'acte de waqf de Barsbāy* (Cairo, 1963), but the one used here is the complete text of awqāf 880.

dence)⁹⁰ composed of two opposing iwans and a *durqā'a* in the middle with its services.⁹¹ *Qaşr* is also a *riwāq* in the palace of Amir Baysarī, but no description of its plan is given other than that it has *ma'āzil* and *manāfi'* (probably the requirements of a living space).⁹² In the residence of Amir Mughulaṭāy, the *qaşr* is also a *riwāq* with *takhāyin* and *ma'āzil* and a *ṭibāq* in addition to a kitchen and other dependencies.⁹³ In the palace of Amir Sūdūn Ba'jad, who is otherwise unknown, the *qaşr* is a raised *qā'a* (*qā'a mu'allaqa*) that has four iwans arranged in a cross plan with four columns to support the *durqā'a*'s roof, and a list of unspecified dependencies.⁹⁴

It is evident from these uses of the term in the waqf of Barsbāy that *qaşr* did not denote a specific architectural structure, but a place that had a few common characteristics. First, most descriptions use it to designate a component in a structure, not the structure itself; those of Ālīn Āq and Salār use it for both. Second, it appears to have fallen out of use in the Burjī Mamluk period: many descriptions in Barsbāy's waqf refer to "the place known in the past as a *qaşr*" (*yu'rafu qadīmān bi-l-qaşr*). In all the descriptions, *qaşr* is equated with either a *riwāq* or a raised *qā'a*, so that readers of the period would know what it meant since the word itself was apparently no longer used. The locations of all the *quşūr*, combined with their explanation in terms of *riwāq* and raised *qā'a*, show that they were always placed on an upper level. Third, and most important, all the halls named *qaşr* belonged in the palaces of Baḥrī amirs.

Of these amirs, Ālīn Āq was a *khāşşakī* of al-Ashraf Khalīl. He was involved in the assassination of his master and is listed among those executed in 1293.⁹⁵ Baysarī was a great amir and a *khushdāsh* of al-Zāhir Baybars. He died in prison during the reign of al-Manşūr

⁹⁰ *Riwaq*, like *qaşr*, acquired a specific meaning in the Mamluk period; see Ibrāhīm 'Alī, "Wathīqat Qarāqujā," 231–32, no. 41; Zakarya, *Palais*, 146; Amin and Ibrāhīm, *Terms*, 57–58; A. Dessus-Lamare, "Étude sur *Rawq*, *Riwaq*, et *Ruwaq* et leurs équivalents termes de construction," *Journal Asiatique* 238 (1950): 335–60; Nasser Rabbat, "Riwāk," *EP*, 7: 544–45.

⁹¹ Waqf of Sultan Barsbāy, 62, l. 9–10.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 77, l. 8–9.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 113, l. 7–8.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 122, l. 7–8. A raised *qā'a* (*qā'a mu'allaqa*) is a *qā'a* on the second floor. A raised *qā'a* and a *riwāq* denote basically the same space in terms of location: both are halls built above some ground-floor space.

⁹⁵ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 112–13, lists him among the *khāşşakiyya* of Khalīl. The name is written A'nāq al-Ḥusāmī, which is obviously a corruption of the name Ālīn Āq. For his execution, see Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 29, fol. 77; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 795.

Lājīn in 1298.⁹⁶ Salār was the vicegerent during the second reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and died in prison in 1310.⁹⁷ Mughulaṭāy was briefly the vizier of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad at the beginning of his third reign, and had a long career that lasted well after the death of al-Nāṣir in 1341.⁹⁸ Sūdūn Ba'jad is the only unknown amir mentioned in the waqf. Other palaces listed in the same waqf which belonged to high-ranking administrators from the Baḥrī period (such as the *dār* of al-'Imādī ibn al-Mushrif) or those that definitely belong to the Burjī period (such as the huge residence near Suwayqat Mun'im) did not have a *qaṣr*.

In the Baḥrī period, then, a *qaṣr* was an upper-level unit in an amir's palace, which rested on a hall below it whose plan it reflected and which was in most cases vaulted. This is a specific and period-bound use of the term, however. Before and after the Baḥrī period, the word *qaṣr* always denoted a fortified palace of a king or a governor, a meaning that remained in use during the whole Mamluk period.⁹⁹ The Qaṣr al-Ablaq, Maqrīzī's four palaces, and the palaces of Salār and Ālīn Āq were all *quṣūr*. The new meaning was derived from the old, generic one, but applied to a particular context.

The confusion between this new restricted meaning of the word *qaṣr* in Baḥrī Mamluk Egypt and the old common one caused problems in the documents of the period. Using *qaṣr* in its general meaning to designate a whole structure seems to have been arbitrary; Maqrīzī in his *Khiṭaṭ* alternates between *dār* and *qaṣr* when he speaks about several structures,¹⁰⁰ and other chronicles call some of the same palaces that Maqrīzī calls *qaṣr* either *bayt* (house) or *dār*.¹⁰¹ The only exceptions to this imprecise usage are, of course, references to the Qaṣr al-Ablaq itself, which is always called *qaṣr*, and whose units are invariably referred to as *quṣūr* as well.

In the Burjī period, it appears that the narrow Baḥrī usage was

⁹⁶ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 290; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 69–70.

⁹⁷ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 88–89.

⁹⁸ Idem, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 392–93.

⁹⁹ Laila Ibrāhīm, "Mamluk Monuments of Cairo," 18–19; Ghālib, *Mawsū'at*, 315–16.

¹⁰⁰ Namely the *iṣṭabl* of Qawṣūn, the *dār* of Tāz, and the *dār* of Ṣarḡatmish, see Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 72, 73, 74. Maqrīzī's use of the word *qaṣr* is coupled with *iṣṭabl*, as if he implies that the *dār* of an amir has two separate units: a *qaṣr* and an *iṣṭabl*.

¹⁰¹ Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 25, calls Yalbughā's residence *bayt* and *iṣṭabl*; 68, he calls Bashtāk's residence *dār*; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 188, calls the *dār* of Ṭashtimur *qaṣr*.

dropped, but the word retained its more general palatial connotation. The upper-level hall in a Burjī amir's palace lost the semantic distinction that an amirial Baḥrī equivalent had. Like non-amirial residences throughout the Mamluk period and after, it was called either a raised *qā'a* or a *riwāq*.¹⁰² The word *qaṣr* was used in its restricted meaning only to refer to amirial Baḥrī halls that were still functioning in the Burjī period.¹⁰³ The lack of distinction between amirial and non-amirial structures of the Burjī period, as opposed to those of the Baḥrī period, was noted by contemporaries and even scorned by observers. The Ottoman Sultan Selim I was said to have reacted to the Mamluk structures he saw with the remark that the mosque of Sultan Ḥasan was a magnificent fortress (*ḥisār*), and the madrasa of Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī (1509) was a merchant's *qā'a* (*qā'at tājir*), lacking in majesty.¹⁰⁴

A *qaṣr* as an architectural unit in a Baḥrī palace did not have a fixed number of iwans around its *durqā'a* (there are examples of *quṣūr* with two iwans or four). Each iwan could have a number of sleeping spaces (*mabītāt*, also called *khazā'in nawmiyya*) in alcoves or recesses along its sides. The lower-level space under the *qaṣr* is usually a *qā'a* (Ālīn Āq, Baysarī, Mughulaṭāy), sometimes a vaulted *qā'a* (Ālīn Āq in Khāyir Bak's waqf), and sometimes undefined (Salār, Sūdūn Ba'jad).

The definition of a *qaṣr* from the Baḥrī period as an amirial hall that rises above a lower level perfectly fits the Qaṣr al-Ablaq. The four halls of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq are *quṣūr* par excellence: they are

¹⁰² Awqāf 887q, waqf of Sultan Qāyṭbāy, several dates, first 5 Rabi II 877 and last 15 Dhu'l-Hijja 895 (1490), 47–48, and 260–61. The upper-level halls are called *riwāq* in two residences attributed to him; the latter is in fact said to have been built by him and called the Dār al-Kubrā (Grand House). Other examples from the Burjī period are collected in Ibrāhīm 'Alī, "Wathīqat Qarāqujā," 231–32, no. 41.

¹⁰³ Zakarya, *Palais*, 49–81, describes the palace of Jānim al-Sharīfī mentioned in a waqf of Sultan Qāyṭbāy dated 1481. A space in its upper-level is called *qaṣr*, which has a *durqā'a* of the type called Iraqī and two *mabītāt*, one large and one small. This may be an exception to the use of *qaṣr*. On pp. 80–81, Zakarya notes, however, that the palace has been renovated many times, and that it was ascribed to a certain Baybars al-Ṭawīl, who lived in it in the past (*qadīman*). She does not identify Baybars, and I could not identify him from the sources available to me. The initial palace could have been built in the Baḥrī period since the area in which it is located, Suwayqat al-'Izzī, was first zoned by 'Izz al-Dīn Aybak al-'Izzī who was one of the amirs of al-Ashraf Khalīl (Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 107).

¹⁰⁴ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'ṭī al-Ishāqī al-Munūfī, *Akhbār al-Uwal fī man Taṣarraf fī Miṣr min Arbāb al-Duwal* (Cairo, 1890), 140.

more than amirial structures, they are royal ones, and they rise not only above one lower level but above two (and perhaps three if the blocked lower windows on the façade have another hall behind them). These lower halls were not part of the royal stables, for it is clearly stated in the sources that the Qaşr al-Ablaq's *quşūr* "overlook" (*tatīlu 'alā*) the royal stables, which means that they had to be separate and at some distance.¹⁰⁵ The lower halls were most probably billets for the royal mamluks in service and royal storehouses (*al-buyūt al-sultāniyya*) just like the lower halls in amirial palaces described in waqfs. Several references in the sources indicate that the buttery (*sharābkhāna*) and the saddlery (*rikābkhāna*) were near the stables and overlooked the gate that led from the maydan to the palaces, which would place them in these lower halls.¹⁰⁶

This understanding of the word *qaşr* clarifies the terminology used by Mamluk chroniclers for the southern enclosure's palaces and shows that they expressed a precise distinction between the various components of the royal complex by their choice of terms. The main palace unit and the inner halls of the Qaşr al-Ablaq are invariably called *quşūr* in the sources; the halls of the harem which were connected to them are called *adurr* (a rarely used plural of *dār*), and their units are *qā'as*, probably because they were not built above lower halls. This also explains why other halls built in the Citadel during the Ayyubid and Baĥrī Mamluk periods before the word *qaşr* fell into disuse were consistently called *qā'as*. The Qā'at al-'Awāmid (probably Ayyubid), the Qā'at al-Şāliĥiyya (of al-Şāliĥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, built in 1245), the Qā'at al-Duhaysha (ascribed to al-Şāliĥ Ismā'il the son of al-Nāşir, built in 1345), and the Qā'at al-Baysariyya (built by Sultan Ḥasan the son of al-Nāşir in 1370) were all royal halls with a *qā'a* plan, like the *quşūr* of the Qaşr al-Ablaq. They do not appear to have been built on top of lower halls, and thus they were never identified as *quşūr*. The only exception is the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya, which Maqrīzī calls a *qaşr*, probably because it had a hall underneath, called a basement (*qabū*) in the sources, which opened onto the stables level.

¹⁰⁵ 'Umari, *Masālik*, 142; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 210; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 371.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9, 1: 169, reports an event that shows that the buttery overlooked the gate of the maydan and that the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya and the Qaşr al-Ablaq both opened into the stables underneath; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3: 682, has a short version of the same report. Zāhiri, *Zubda*, 124, says that the saddlery is attached to the royal stables.

Why use *qaṣr*, a word loaded with meaning, rather than a more neutral term, to designate what seems to have been only a variation on a prevalent architectural type: a *riwāq* and its dependencies over one or more lower halls? The most obvious answer, and the one Garcin and Revault allude to, is that the *Qaṣr al-Ablaq* provided the royal model for contemporary and later *Baḥrī* palaces, which copied both the form and the term *qaṣr*. Revault and Garcin did not differentiate in their discussion between the broad and specific denotations of the word *qaṣr*, and thus they did not notice the contradiction inherent in explaining the adoption of a word from a general royal usage to an architecturally particular one. Furthermore, their explanation is based on the conjecture that high culture trickles down to low culture, that is, that influence moves downward from royal paradigms to ordinary urban examples. This assumes that the arrangement used in the *Qaṣr al-Ablaq* was new to Mamluk Cairo, that it was either invented or imported for that purpose, then transmitted to the amirial palaces, and then absorbed into the local architectural repertoire. But the history of residential architecture in Cairo does not support this hypothesis. Upper-level halls with a *qā'a* plan had been common there before the Mamluk period, and *Baḥrī* palaces older than the *Qaṣr al-Ablaq*—the palaces of Ālīn Āq, Baysarī, Salār, and Biktāsh Amir Silāḥ, in addition to the royal *Qā'a/Qaṣr al-Ashrafiyya* at the Citadel—all had *qaṣr* units. These *quṣūr* may have furnished the model for the *Qaṣr al-Ablaq* itself rather than the other way round.

The word *qaṣr* was used precisely to convey an impression of monumentality, both in its memorial and formal connotations.¹⁰⁷ Since a *qaṣr* normally meant the palace of a sultan or an amir, applying the term to the hall of honor in the palace where the sultan or the amir sat was an appropriate concentration of the meaning in a place that lends the entire structure its memorial value. This explains why a *riwāq* in an amirial *Baḥrī* palace can be called a *qaṣr*, but a *riwāq* in the palace of an administrator or a merchant is always just a *riwāq*. That distinction does not, however, fully account for the disappearance of the term from the vocabulary of *Burjī* palatial architecture, when amirial palaces were still being built with an upper *riwāq* and a lower hall.

The second connotation of monumentality, massiveness or magni-

¹⁰⁷ The concept of monumentality as embodying a memorial function and an aesthetic of magnitude is discussed in Françoise Choay, "Alberti, the Invention of Monumentality and Memory," *Harvard Architectural Review* 4 (Spring 1984): 99–105.

tude, is what distinguished amirial Baḥrī halls from Burjī ones and made them deserving of the designation *qaṣr*. Extant amirial Baḥrī halls are larger and higher than later Burjī (of which an even smaller number exist) or Ottoman ones.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, Baḥrī *quṣūr* were not only already loftier (the word Humphreys prefers when describing the monumentality of Mamluk architecture in general),¹⁰⁹ than Burjī ones, but they seem to have been positioned to make them appear loftier yet. The *quṣūr* of Ālīn Āq and Bashtāk overlooked the street so that their mass and their height would impress the passersby.¹¹⁰ The palaces of Qawṣūn and Ṭāz may originally have had the same disposition, but this is difficult to verify today since their plans have since been modified and the street configurations around them have been altered several times.¹¹¹ In some cases, achieving a monumental effect on a street side was apparently the most significant consideration in arranging the layout of a *qaṣr*, even when it resulted in the loss of the view onto some picturesque scenery. Maqrizī says, for example, that when in 1346 Sultan al-Kāmil Shaʿbān, the son of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, ordered a *qaṣr* constructed next to the *dār* that bordered the Birkat al-Fil, he specified that it should overlook the street rather than the pond.¹¹² Clearly, impressing the people in the street was more important to him than having a view of the pond.

The arrangement of architectural elements in amirial palaces appears to have changed in the Burjī period. Closed upper-level halls lost their prominence as the place of honor, and were replaced by the

¹⁰⁸ Laila Ibrāhīm, "Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo," 55; Lézine, "salles nobles des palais mameloukes," 128–30, gives the plan dimensions of the extant Baḥrī *qāʿas*. Many of his remarks have been disproved, but his measurements show that there is a decrease in the average size of a *qāʿa* from the Baḥrī to the Burjī period.

¹⁰⁹ R. Stephen Humphreys, "The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture in Cairo: A Preliminary Essay," *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972): 98.

¹¹⁰ Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 68; Maqrizī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 70, and *Sulūk*, 2: 501, notes that the view from the palace of Bashtāk encompasses the whole city of Cairo. He uses almost the same language to describe the view from the *Qaṣr al-Ablaq*.

¹¹¹ Garcin, "Habitat," 187, notes the fundamental difference between the three Baḥrī palaces and that of Ṭāz in terms of their organization in relation to the open court. In Ṭāz's palace, the courtyard appears to have been the central space onto which the other components of the palace opened, just like the later Burjī palaces. Thus, the palace of Ṭāz, which is later than the three other palaces, might have been a transitional model between the period of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Burjī period.

¹¹² Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 2: 687, the *qaṣr* was bestowed on al-Kāmil Shaʿbān's favorite amir Arghūn al-Kāmili.

maq'ad, or open loggia, with several arches that overlooked the courtyard. This in turn restored the courtyard to its central position, as shown in the plans of the few remaining palaces from the time of Qāytbāy.¹¹³ The palace was given an introverted composition where halls and rooms were arranged around, and opened onto, its courtyard. They could hardly have been seen from the street, and thus they could not have been intended to impress or to overwhelm.

The Qaşr al-Ablaq was conceived with exactly the opposite intention in mind. It was planned to be imposing. Its site dominated the royal stables and the maydan where several events that drew large crowds such as polo matches and holiday prayers took place. It was seen (as its lower halls are seen even today) from the major approaches to the Citadel in the city: Khaṭṭ al-Şalība al-Kubrā (Şalība Street today), Khaṭṭ Ḥadarāt al-Baqār (which the palace of Qawşūn opened onto), and the road between the two palaces of Yalbughā and Alṭunbughā, on the one side, and the hammam of al-Malik al-Sa'īd, on the other, which corresponds to the street between the two mosques of Sultan Ḥasan and al-Rifā'ī today.¹¹⁴

The prominence provided by the site was enhanced by the construction of the Qaşr al-Ablaq *quşūr* above two or three superimposed lower halls, so they would loom high above the structures of the stable area on the ground level, and, more important, higher than the palaces of earlier sultans that lined the western façade of the southern enclosure, especially the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya. Verticality was further emphasized by the great height of the *quşūr* themselves, as can be gathered from 'Umari's description of the major *qaşr* as a "splendid construction, high in the air."¹¹⁵ If the remains of amirial Baḥrī *quşūr* are any indication of the size originally intended, the missing royal ones must truly have been towering.

It appears as if, at every stage of construction, the major concern was to achieve the utmost monumentality for the Qaşr al-Ablaq, certainly to reflect and symbolize the royal function of the structure as the sultan's palace. This effect was not realized by inventing or importing a new design, but by employing a local architectural type, the *qaşr*, that already embodied a quality of loftiness and carried a

¹¹³ Garcin, "Habitat," 211–16.

¹¹⁴ Maqrīzi, *Sulūk*, 2: 438–39, gives the approximate locations of these palaces that disappeared when Sultan Ḥasan built his mosque.

¹¹⁵ 'Umari, *Masālik*, 142.

commemorative dimension and by adapting it to the requirements of the site and the exigencies of the sultan's image. Thus the *quṣūr* of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq did not belong to a new type but to a pre-existing type refitted to reach a perfection suitable for a sultan.

Rebuilding the Mosque

In 1318, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered the old mosque at the Citadel demolished along with several structures around it, including some *buyūtat* and houses of *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs that stood against its qibli (southeastern) wall, to clear a site for a new mosque. An earlier, and presumably considerably smaller, mosque stood opposite the Bāb al-Qulla that separates the two enclosures, but we do not know its name or when it was built. The mosque was probably either already there or built at the same time as the original Citadel because a citadel has to have a congregational mosque. Although there are no direct supporting references, Casanova attributed it to al-Kāmil because he was the Ayyubid sultan who finished the palaces at the Citadel, but, as we have seen, it could also have been the mosque of Sa'd al-Dawla, the most important among the Fatimid mosques on the site, enlarged and refurbished by al-Kāmil to serve the Citadel's inhabitants.¹¹⁶

Rebuilding the mosque involved more than just enlarging its surface area.¹¹⁷ Minarets were added to it (the number is not specified but it could be deduced from the reported number of muezzins chosen for the call to prayer that there was more than one). The *arwiqa* (pl. of *riwāq*, the aisle of the prayer hall) on its qibli side were extended, and the qibli wall was given a marble dado, probably in accordance with the Mamluk style of covering qibli walls with colored marble dadoes as a mark of distinction. Nothing more is said in the sources about the architecture of the mosque. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad demolished it and rebuilt it again in 1335. The mosque he built is the only Baḥrī structure in the Citadel still standing in its entirety today.

Building the Nāṣirī Mosque resulted in a modification of the Bāb al-Qulla area. Our sources do not connect the two, but they record that in 1320 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad built a new door outside the Bāb al-

¹¹⁶ Casanova, "Histoire," 601.

¹¹⁷ 'Umārī, *Masālik*, 141; Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 118; Baktāsh al-Fakhrī, *Beiträge*, 167; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhir*, 293; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 211.

Qulla and enlarged its vestibule (*durkâh*).¹¹⁸ That the two projects were linked can be inferred from Ibn al-Furât, who, in reporting an event of 1291, notes in passing that the entrance to the royal wardrobe (*firâshkhâna*) which used to be inside the second door of the Bâb al-Qulla on the side of the treasury (*khizâna*) had become a door to the mosque of al-Nâsir Muḥammad in his own time (mid fifteenth century).¹¹⁹ Qalqashandî, when speaking of the access from the northern to the southern enclosure in his description of the Citadel, says that the Bâb al-Qulla leads to wide passages, or corridors (*dahâliz*) from which the mosque can be entered by a door on the left side.¹²⁰ Taken together, these passages indicate that al-Nâsir Muḥammad cleared the area between the Bâb al-Qulla and the eastern gate of his mosque (which has lost its dating inscription, but most probably belongs to the first rebuilding) after the reconstruction of 1318.

The first Bâb al-Qulla led into a maze of structures and vestibules that lay between it and the original mosque of the Citadel in the southern enclosure. These had to be removed to make room for the new, larger mosque and open space for pedestrian traffic to and from the palace complex. The Bâb al-Qulla was the only entrance into the palace for both the public and *barrânî* amirs. The new open space inside the gate that can be seen on the map in the *Description de l'Égypte* (no. 56) and that still exists today (though the gate itself was rebuilt by Muḥammad 'Alî) could accommodate the dense traffic that resulted from the restructuring of the ceremonial of daily attendance at the palace and from the relocation of the *dâr al-'adl* sessions to the Iwân al-Kabîr inside the southern enclosure. Al-Nâsir Muḥammad made both decisions.¹²¹ *Barrânî* amirs would gather every morning in the vestibule of the Bâb al-Qulla to proceed in a group led by the vicegerent to the daily service at the palace. The common people would crowd the vestibules inside and outside the Bâb al-Qulla on the days of *dâr al-'adl* (Mondays and Thursdays under al-Nâsir Muḥammad) after the sultan had moved this service into the palatial complex

¹¹⁸ Baktâsh al-Fakhrî, *Beiträge*, 170.

¹¹⁹ Ibn al-Furât, *Târîkh*, 8: 109. The same report, without the remark on the change, is given by Maqrîzî, *Sulûk*, 1: 762.

¹²⁰ Qalqashandî, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 371.

¹²¹ Ibn Taghrî-Birdî, *Nujûm*, 9: 180, describes the ceremonials developed by al-Nâsir for the sessions in the Iwân al-Kabîr as very complicated and taxing for those in attendance.

from either the northern enclosure where the DĀR AL-ʿADL of al-Kāmil stood, or under the Citadel, where the DĀR AL-ʿADL of al-Zāhir Baybars was located.

The sequence of projects carried out at the Citadel between 1310 and 1320 suggests that they followed a clear plan, at least in the mind of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Each new project could not be undertaken before the preceding one was completed, and they all followed one another in logical succession. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad started by repairing the Iwān al-Ashrafī immediately after he resumed the throne in 1310. The next step was to provide water for the maydan and the palaces he intended to build. The walling in of the maydan defined and expanded the boundaries of the royal domain and established the limits for the later construction of amirial palaces opposite the royal palaces in the southern enclosure. The Qaṣr al-Ablaq was sited to take advantage of the view over the green meadow of the maydan. The planning of the pathways connecting the high level of the palace to the low level of the stables through the two sets of stairs flanking the palace's structures preceded its construction. The series of royal palaces that started with the Dār al-Dhahab built by al-Zāhir Baybars at the northern tip of the southern enclosure and followed by the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya was completed so that the viewer coming from the city would be greeted by the sight of the western front of the southern enclosure that overlooked the city and formed the Citadel's majestic façade with its succession of sumptuous royal structures crowned by the four *quṣūr* of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq. The enlargement of the mosque followed the rebuilding of the Iwān al-Kabir on the northeastern end of the main square of the southern enclosure and completed the encircling of this square with major public monuments. The door of the Bāb al-Qulla could not have been rebuilt and its vestibule widened before the mosque remodeling was completed and practical measures implemented to accommodate the increase in traffic in that area when it was opened to the public. The conversion of the DĀR AL-ʿADL of Baybars into a *ṭablahāna* could only have been done after a newer, loftier DĀR AL-ʿADL had been built inside the southern enclosure.

Many projects reflected and were generated by changes in the Mamluk hierarchy and the consolidation of the sultan's role that were being introduced by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad at the same time. These projects tallied with the implementation of these changes as if to embody them and give them a physical manifestation. Refurbishing

the Iwān al-Kabīr and building the imposing Qaṣr al-Ablaq could only enhance the sultan's image in the eyes of his subjects. Both projects, however, seem to have followed the introduction of new ceremonials: the public audience and the *dār al-'adl* sessions held in the Iwān al-Kabīr and the private *khidma* in the main *qaṣr* of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq. The rebuilding of the mosque and the addition of the minarets could also in part have been prompted by an effort to apply to a religious setting the same type of ceremonial centered on the sultan that had already been put into effect in secular public and private settings. The establishment of a special center for the military band, the *ṭablakhāna*, could also have been another result of the ceremonial reorganization, which would reach even higher degrees of elaboration and pomp in al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's second phase of construction at the Citadel.

All of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's projects in this first phase were located in the administrative section of the northern enclosure near the Bāb al-Qulla and in the public and semi-public parts of the southern enclosure and the maydan. Nothing was done to the private quarters of the sultan or to the harem in the southern part of the southern enclosure. That situation would be almost completely reversed in the second phase of construction. The concentration of works in the public and semipublic sections stemmed primarily from al-Nāṣir's efforts to consolidate the executive apparatus in his person. After his success in implementing and maintaining the new political and administrative structures of the sultanate al-Nāṣir shifted his focus in the last decade of his rule and refurbished, enlarged, and monumentalized his private and harem palaces. The ramifications of these transformations were far-reaching and were still felt long after the Qalawunid dynasty was eliminated in 1382.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CITADEL IN AL-NĀṢIR MUḤAMMAD'S REIGN: SECOND CONSTRUCTION PERIOD (1333–41)

Prosperity reigned in Egypt in the long years of political calm achieved by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and enhanced by his sound economic practices. In the 1314–15 *rawk*, he started by redistributing the agricultural lands in what is believed to have been a more productive mode. He involved himself in the repair, improvement, and expansion of irrigation systems and waterways in many provinces, especially in Giza, south of Cairo and in the Delta. He sent envoys to friendly rulers and received embassies at his court to negotiate the exchange of goods. He encouraged trade with the east, and took special measures to ensure the safety of trade routes. Some of his political alliances could be traced to his interest in keeping these routes open. All of these activities resulted in an effective and visible presence of the sultan in every aspect of the economy.¹

In contrast to his predecessors who depended solely on taxes and on the *khāṣṣ* (privy purse) estates for their income, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad took a personal interest in business and tried to augment his revenues to finance his extravagant purchases of mamluks, horses, and slave girls and to support his large construction projects and his fondness for elaborate court ceremonials.² To these ends, he manipulated a few lucrative trades to his own account and involved himself in land reclamation, in textile manufacture, in sugar production, as well as in rearing livestock.³ In 1310, he created the new position of over-

¹ Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 113–21; Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J., 1983), 1–63.

² Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 525–32, and Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 166–71, summarize al-Nāṣir's large expenses and exquisite acquisitions. His profligate spending on buildings and royal bounty was opposed by some of his subjects. Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 135, reports that in 1314 a sheikh criticized him for his dependence on Coptic scribes, who staffed most of his administrative departments, and for his extravagance in construction and gifts.

³ Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 112–17; Hassanein Rabie, *Financial System of Egypt*, 141–44. Rearing livestock had an impact on the topography of the Citadel, which will be discussed in the section on *al-hawsh*.

seer of crown property (*nāzir al-khāṣṣ*) whose antecedent, the agent of the privy purse (*wakīl al-khāṣṣ*), had under earlier sultans been a second-rank administrator responsible for the royal estates. Al-Nāṣir elevated this office and entrusted it with the management of all the royal enterprises.⁴ During his long reign, he appointed a succession of crafty *nazirs* to implement his schemes and promote royal ventures at the expense of the great amirs and wealthy merchants, partly as a means of undermining their independence and partly as a way of generating money. His first *nāzir al-khāṣṣ*, Karīm al-Dīn al-Kabīr (1310–23), swiftly transferred the *matjar* (the state office that controlled large-scale trading in a number of commodities) to the *khāṣṣ* and established a network of royal agents in every town and every port.⁵ As time went on al-Nāṣir became ever more obsessed with money, which led him to try every conceivable means for augmenting his *khāṣṣ* income.⁶ His last *nāzir al-khāṣṣ*, al-Nashū (1332–40), was chosen, promoted, and long kept in office despite the animosity of the great amirs because of his genius for inventing new ways of taxing their enterprises and those of other prominent individuals.⁷ Al-Nashū also forced the great merchants to buy royal goods at arbitrarily set prices, a practice called *ṭarḥ* (a form of gabelle) in the sources.⁸ He was able, thereby, to install the sultan as chief entrepreneur and to collect additional funds for the *khāṣṣ* coffers.

These ventures in manipulating the economy of the sultanate were combined with al-Nāṣir's steady advances in concentrating political power in his hands.⁹ He suspended the position of vizier between 1314 and 1323 and between 1331 and 1341, and transferred many of its functions to the administrators who were directly attached to himself.¹⁰ He formed a new circle of hand-picked great amirs who, con-

⁴ 'Umārī, *Masālik*, 114–15; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 227; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'*, 1, 1: 484.

⁵ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 172; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 76–77. In 1317, Karīm al-Dīn appointed his nephew as superintendent of spice trade and the Kārim (the group of traders specializing in importing spices and other expensive materials from India via Yemen; see Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 32) and of the house of molasses (*dār al-qinnid*), the trading center in sugarcane molasses from which sugar was extracted. This meant transferring these positions from the state administration to the *khāṣṣ*.

⁶ Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 113; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 306.

⁷ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 413.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2: 360–61, 420, 435, 444, 460.

⁹ 'Umārī, *Masālik*, 114–15; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 534; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 174.

¹⁰ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 125; Ahmad 'Abd al-Raziq, "Le vizirat et les vizirs d'Égypte au temps des Mamluks," *Annales Islamologiques* 16 (1980): 198–99.

trary to established procedures, did not all pass through the usual Mamluk hierarchical system, and had therefore no support group in the army independent of him. The two most influential of them in the last decade of his reign, Qawṣūn and Bashtāk, came to Egypt as free men and sold themselves to al-Nāṣir, who raised them to the highest ranks without their having to endure the prerequisite military training.¹¹ His boldest act, however, came in 1326, when he abolished the position of vicegerent (*nāʿib al-salṭana*), an office that had included the administration of *iqṭāʿ*, the major source of income for the entire Mamluk nobility. This too al-Nāṣir assumed himself, aided by the *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ*, who was thus given great authority, and who became one of the most influential officials at the court.¹²

In 1322, the conversion of the DĀR AL-ʿADL of Baybars into a *ṭablakhāna* was completed, and al-Nāṣir seems finally to have been satisfied with his Citadel, for he did not order any further major work done there for more than a decade.¹³ He did not lose interest in construction, however, but simply turned his attention to other places. A cluster of pleasure palaces he built for himself and his amirs in 1323 in a village north of Cairo known as Siryāqūs was the first of these projects (fig. 30). He also constructed new stables there for his horses and camels, a polo ground, and some storehouses. He planted orchards around the palaces and brought Syrian gardeners, famed for their skill with the cultivation of fruit trees, to tend to them.¹⁴ In 1325, he had a congregational mosque constructed nearby with a khanqah that could house a hundred sufis. In 1326, he ordered a new canal, the Khalīj al-Nāṣirī, to be dug from the Nile to join the older Khalīj al-Miṣrī north of Cairo to bring water to Siryāqūs. The new waterway was large enough for ships to sail all the way to Siryāqūs to provision the town. Residential quarters soon grew up around the khanqah and

¹¹ This was a clever tactic because al-Nāṣir effectively prevented the usurpation of the throne from his heir by appointing Qawṣūn and Bashtāk as regents; neither of them had the right to become sultans themselves, because neither of them was a real mamluk or the son of a sultan. Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 10: 19-20, reports a conversation between Qawṣūn and Bashtāk from which it becomes apparent that they knew that they were limited in their scheming to manipulating the sultan.

¹² ʿUmari, *Masālik*, 116–17; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 17.

¹³ Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 2: 237.

¹⁴ The works of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in Siryāqūs and the waqf for his khanqah there are discussed in John Alden Williams, "The Khānqāh of Siryāqūs: A Mamluk Royal Religious Foundation," in *In Quest of an Islamic Humanism: Studies in Memory of Moḥammad el-Nowaiḥī*, ed. Arnold H. Green (Cairo, 1984), 109–19.

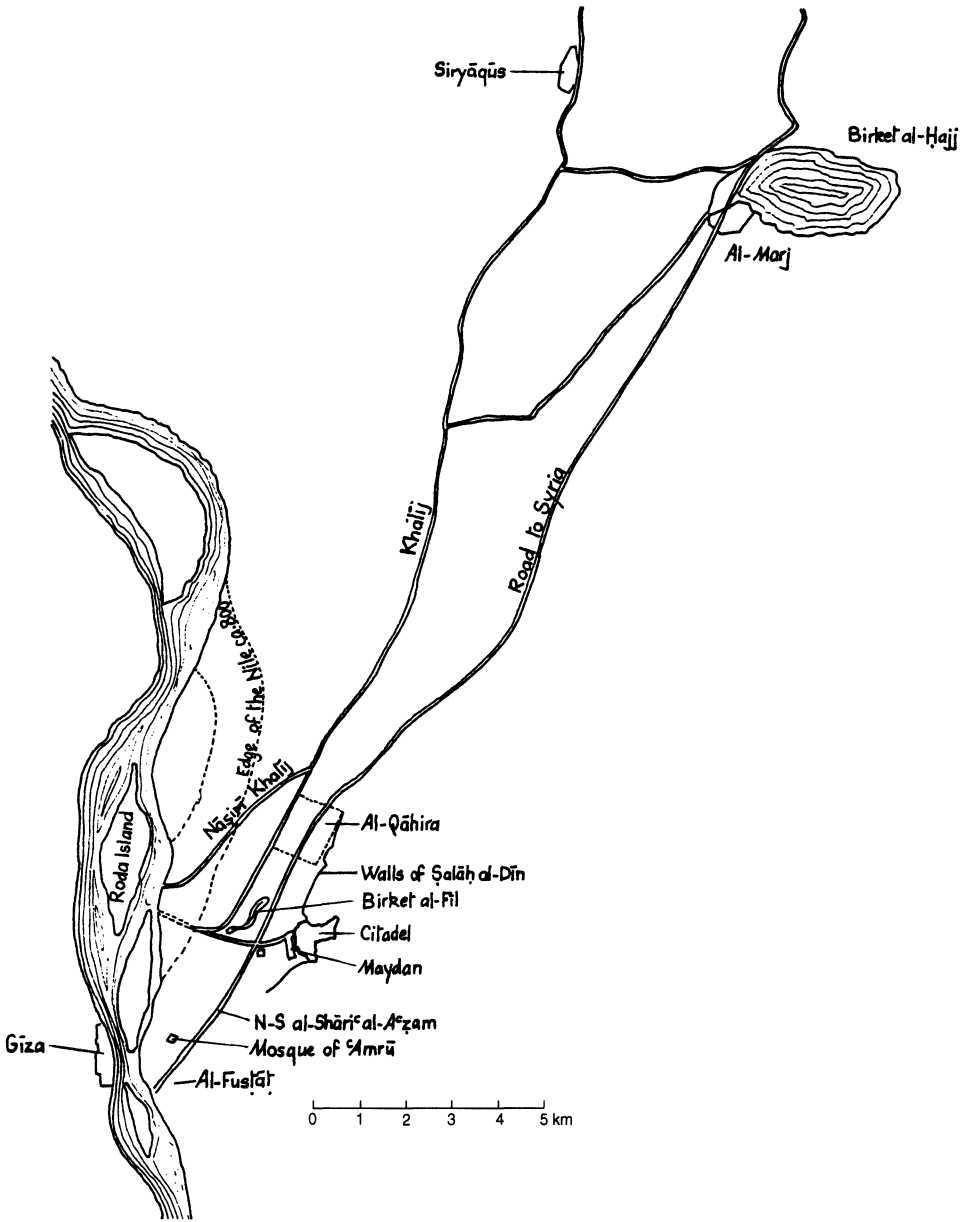


Fig. 30: Map of Cairo and Siryāqūs

along the canal with markets, hammams, and mosques to serve the growing population. Siryāqūs soon developed into a satellite town known as Khānqāh Siryāqūs after its new civic center (the small village there today is still called al-Khānkāh).

The sources offer no explanation for why al-Nāṣir chose this site, but it was probably because he wanted to have his palaces near the Birkat al-Jubb (Pond of the Pit), a favorite spot of the Fatimids for royal outings not very far from Siryāqūs and a hunting ground especially famous for the abundance of cranes (*karākī*) on its shores since the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.¹⁵ Al-Nāṣir MuḤammad was an avid hunter and polo player, and the site at Birkat al-Jubb was ideal for both. Every year he brought his court and all his *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs to the palaces at Siryāqūs for a few days of *sarḥa* (extended royal promenade).¹⁶ There, the sultan would hunt and play polo with his amirs, to whom he would display his royal bounty by bestowing robes of honor (*khilaʿ*) and presiding over elaborate banquets and other festivities.

This yearly retreat to a royal pleasure was a significant development at the Mamluk court because it showed that after fifteen years on the throne al-Nāṣir MuḤammad dared leave the safety of the Citadel for reasons other than to wage war or quell rebellion, the first Mamluk sultan to do so.¹⁷ However, he still did not leave anything to chance. Siryāqūs was only a few miles north of Cairo, and he could speedily return to his Citadel in the event of trouble. Digging a navigable canal to Siryāqūs also made it more accessible to Cairo. When he went there he made certain that the entire court, including all the important amirs and administrators, went with him. No potentially powerful amir was allowed to remain behind to foment trouble. This *sarḥa* to Siryāqūs became a royal custom that was retained, albeit intermittently, under the Qalawunids, until, like many Nāṣirī royal traditions and ceremonials, it was dropped by Barqūq at the beginning of the Burjī period, clearly to signify dynastic change.¹⁸

¹⁵ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 1: 359, 465, 489.

¹⁶ Williams, "Khānqāh of Siryāqūs," 118, no. 4, says that the word may be used to denote both a place and an act. Its use in Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 2: 149, and 199, does not seem to imply a place, only the activity.

¹⁷ The same sense of security is reflected in his three pilgrimages. Unlike his predecessors who did not perform this most prestigious Islamic obligation (except for Baybars who went to Mecca once but almost incognito), al-Nāṣir MuḤammad went on the hajj three times, in 1313, 1320, and 1332. The last two were performed with utmost royal pomp and decorum.

¹⁸ Barqūq altered or abolished many customs when he took over the sultanate in

Whether al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had intended Siryāqūs to be a new city or only a prominent royal resort with a supporting population nearby is unclear, but it is unlikely that he had considered it a new center for the sultanate akin to the royal quarters constructed close to the capital in earlier times, such as Fatimid al-Qāhira itself. He showed no signs of moving the court permanently to Siryāqūs. He never stayed there more than a few days at a time and never conducted state business there. Most of his Egyptian army remained at the Citadel during these annual outings.

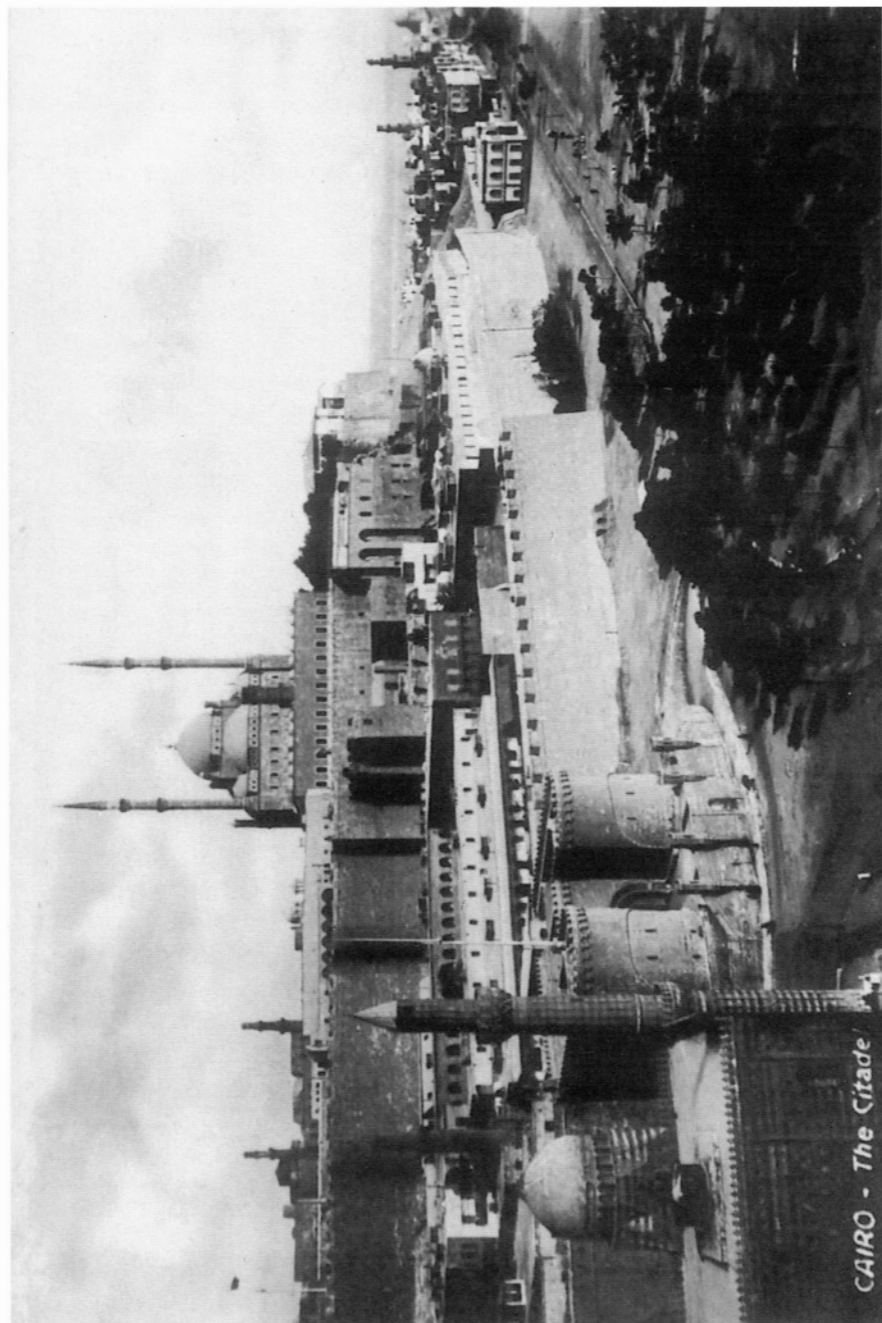
Even if he had contemplated transferring the court to Siryāqūs, he would soon have rejected the notion because the site had drawbacks. Siryāqūs lay in low land and in a relatively isolated spot and was therefore less easily defended than the Citadel. The time and effort al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his predecessors had invested in lodging the Mamluk army at the Citadel, in planning the royal palaces in its southern enclosure, and in distributing the residences of the great amirs around it, with clear demarcations to reflect the Mamluk hierarchical structure, would have been wasted had the court moved. Duplicating the scheme of organization at Siryāqūs would have taken a very long time and would have been prohibitively expensive, even for a builder as ambitious as al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. He appears, however, at least to have planned the town to stand on its own as a regional center. Aside from extending the Khalij to it to link the town to the rest of Egypt, he apparently decreed that no taxes (*mukūs*) should be collected from its market, ostensibly in deference to the sanctity of the khanqah. This encouraged a weekly market on Fridays that attracted people from far away and added to the town's prominence.¹⁹

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad intended the khanqah to be a royal endowment that would in rank and size be among the most prestigious in Cairo. The provisions for its sufi residents in the waqf, drafted in 1325, reveal that he intended to create a center that would attract sufis by offering them more rations and higher salaries than elsewhere. A second waqf, dated 1326, and appended to the first, added income-yielding properties to provide for still more sufis. The sultan's

1382 as part of his reform and as an attempt to mark dynastic change; see Maqrīzī, *Khitat*, 2: 241.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2: 422–23.

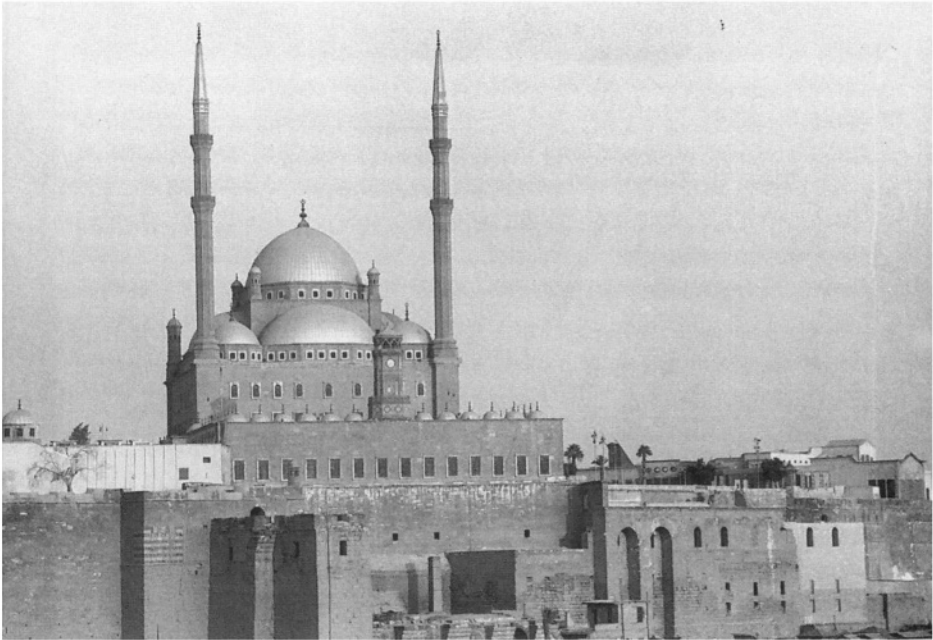
PLATES



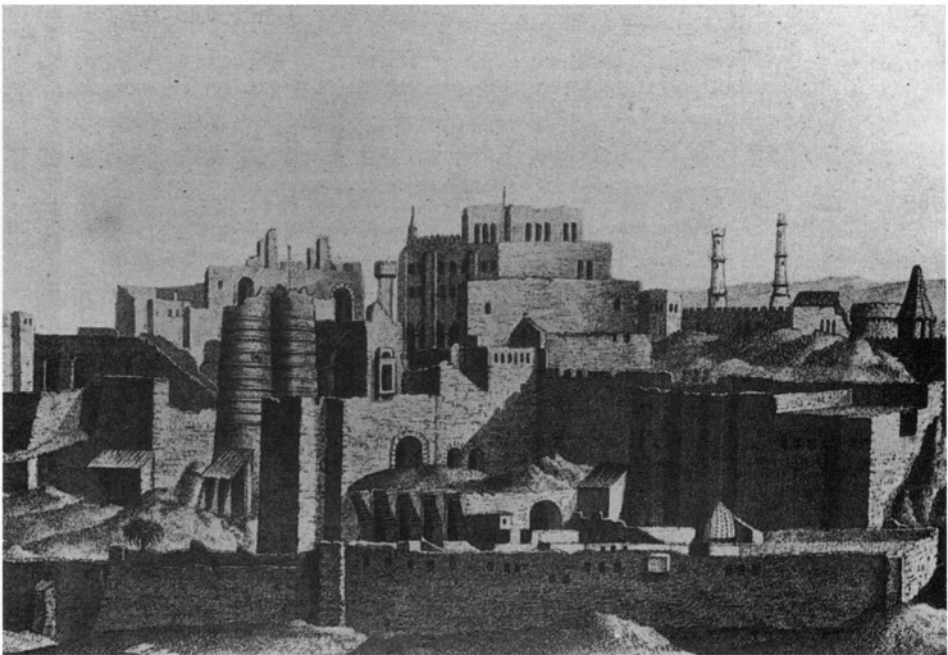
1. A late 1920s postcard showing the Citadel from the northwest with the Báb al-'Azab in the foreground and the mosque of Muhammad 'Ali (center).



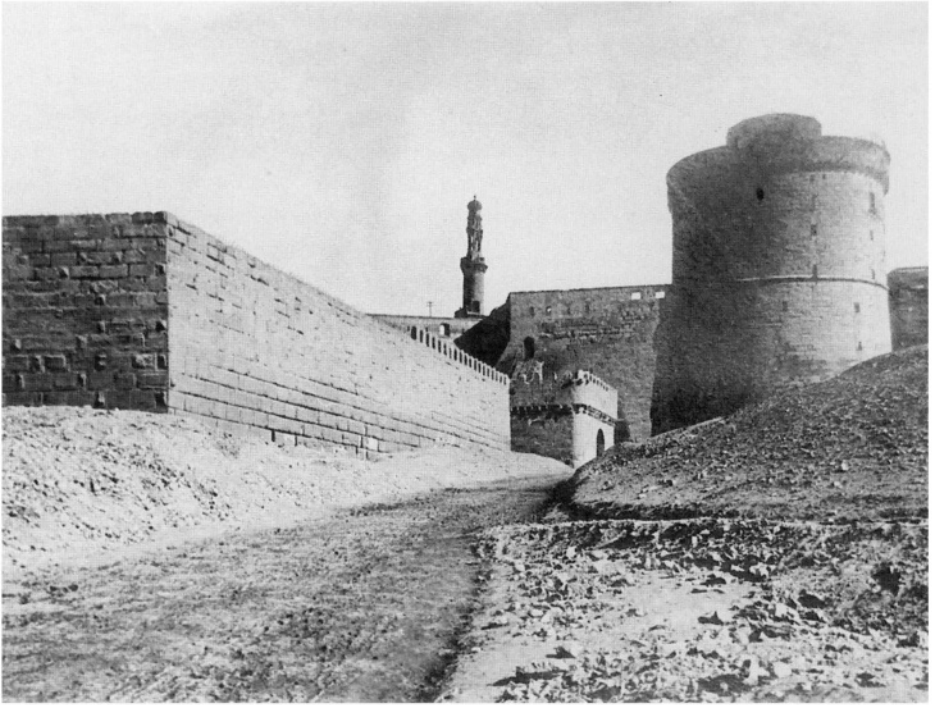
2. The headless double-headed eagle



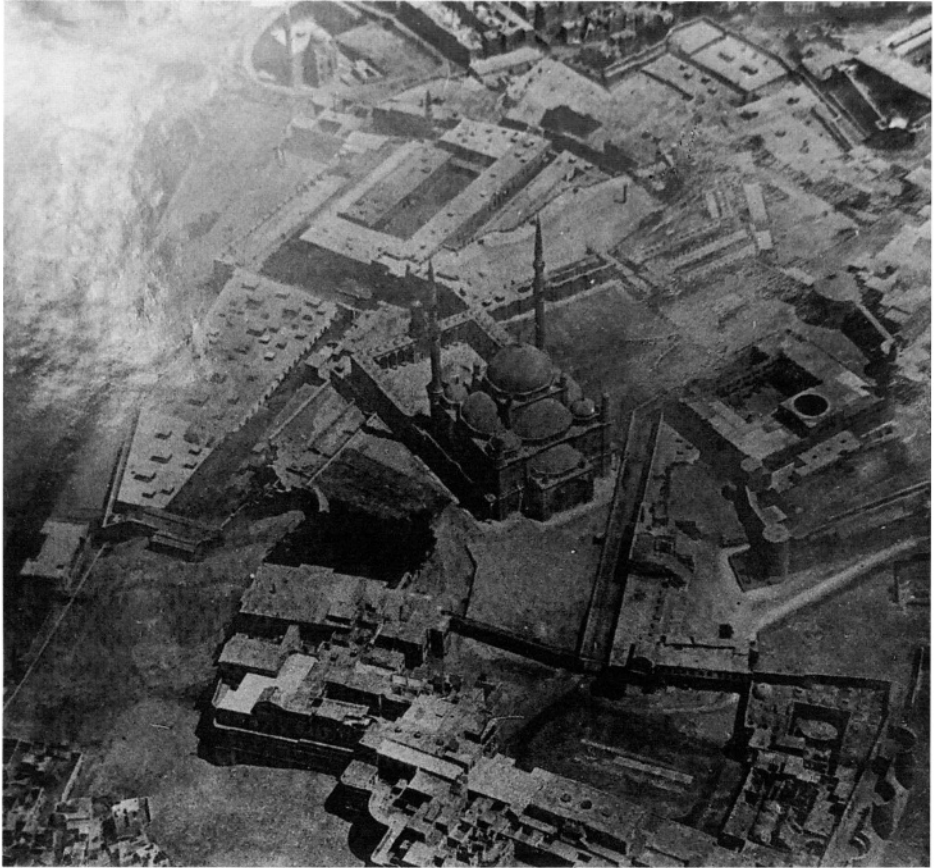
3. Western façade of the Citadel showing the Burj al-Rafraf and the monumental stone corbels under Muḥammad 'Ali's mosque (lower center)



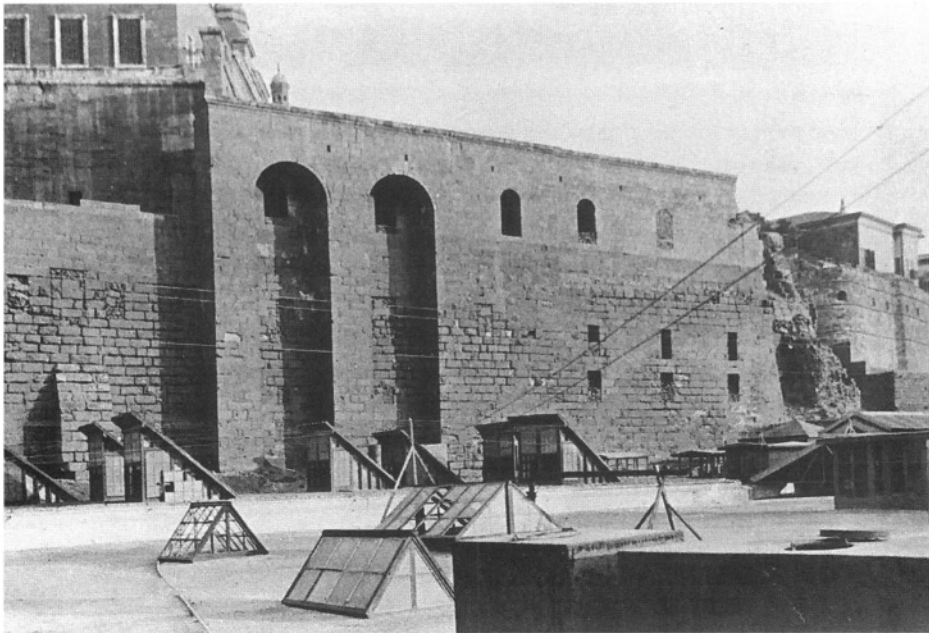
4. An undated print of the western façade of the Citadel (published in Arthur Rhoné, *L'Égypte à petites journées*. Paris, 1910)



5. A late 1920s view of the Báb al-Jabal with the Burj al-Muqattam



6. A late 1920s aerial view of the Citadel with the *hawsh* (bottom center) surrounded by the mint to the right and the Bijou Palace to the left, and the carriageway between the mosque of Muḥammad 'Ali (left) and the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (missing its dome, at right)



7. The exterior façade of the vaulted halls



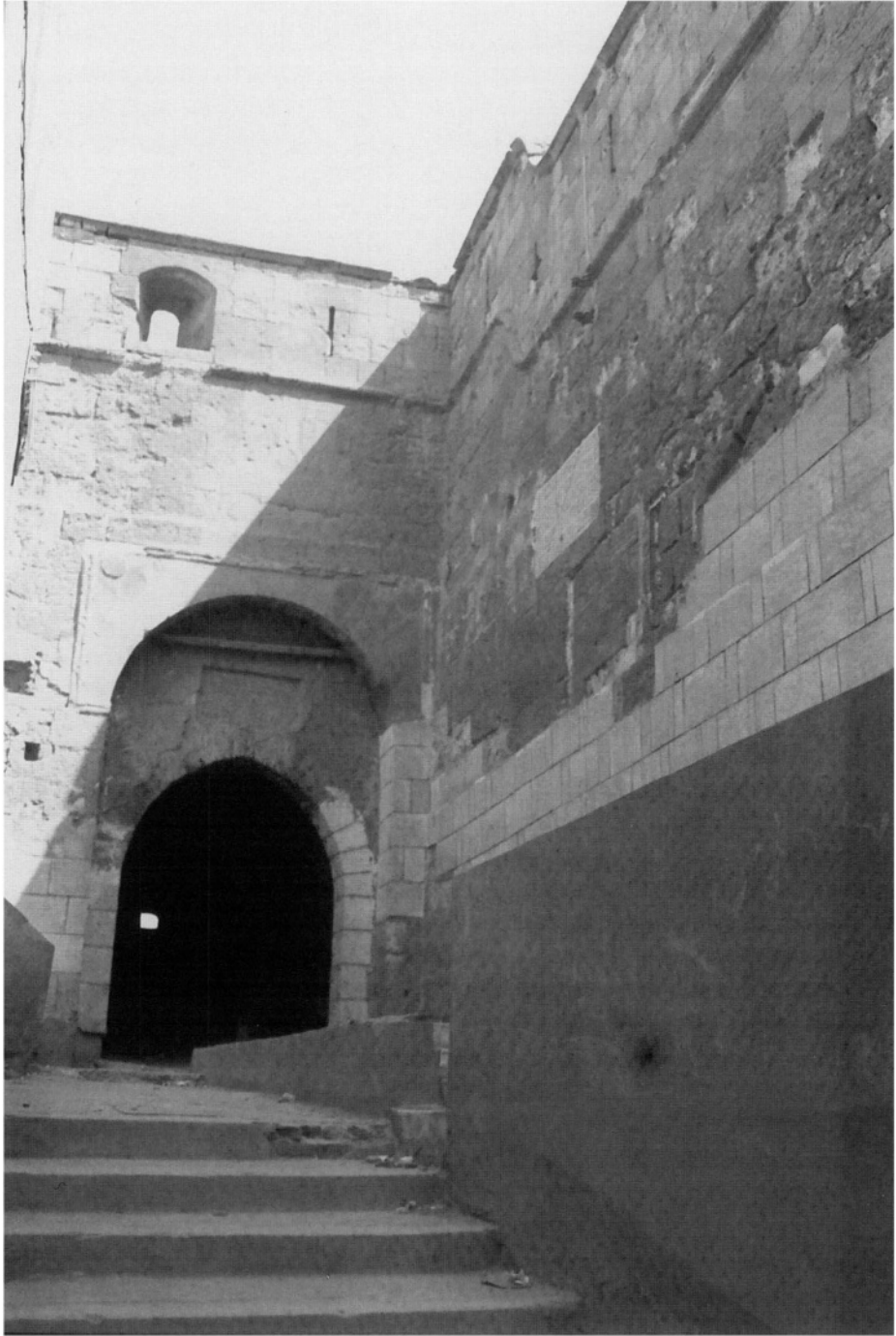
8. The lions of al-Zāhir Baybars



9. The two polygonal towers around the Bi'r Yūsuf and the wall between them



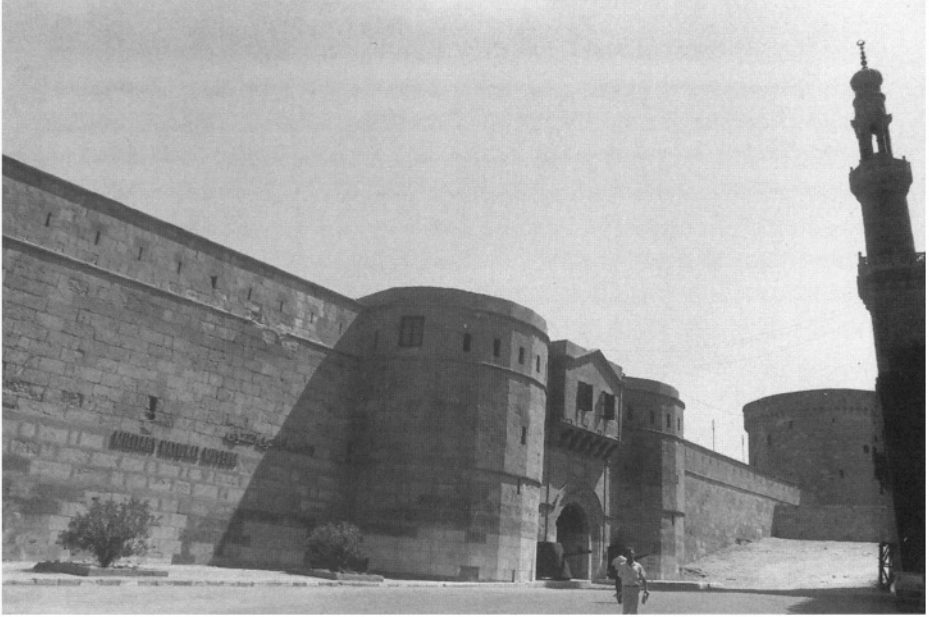
10. Eastern wall of the northern enclosure and the stone escarpment underneath



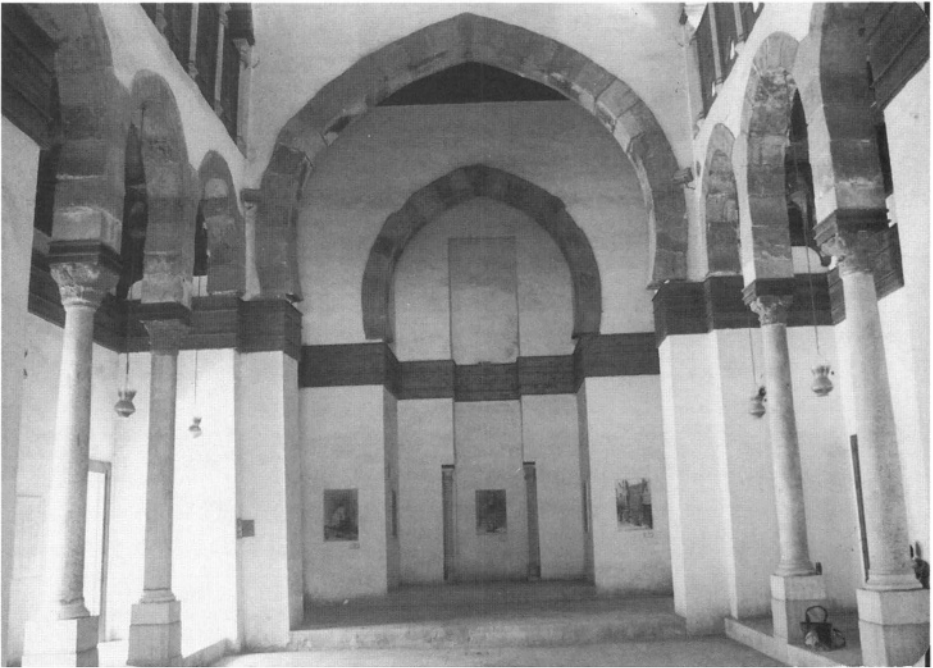
11. The Bāb al-Mudarraġ with the three Mamluk inscriptions on the wall on the right



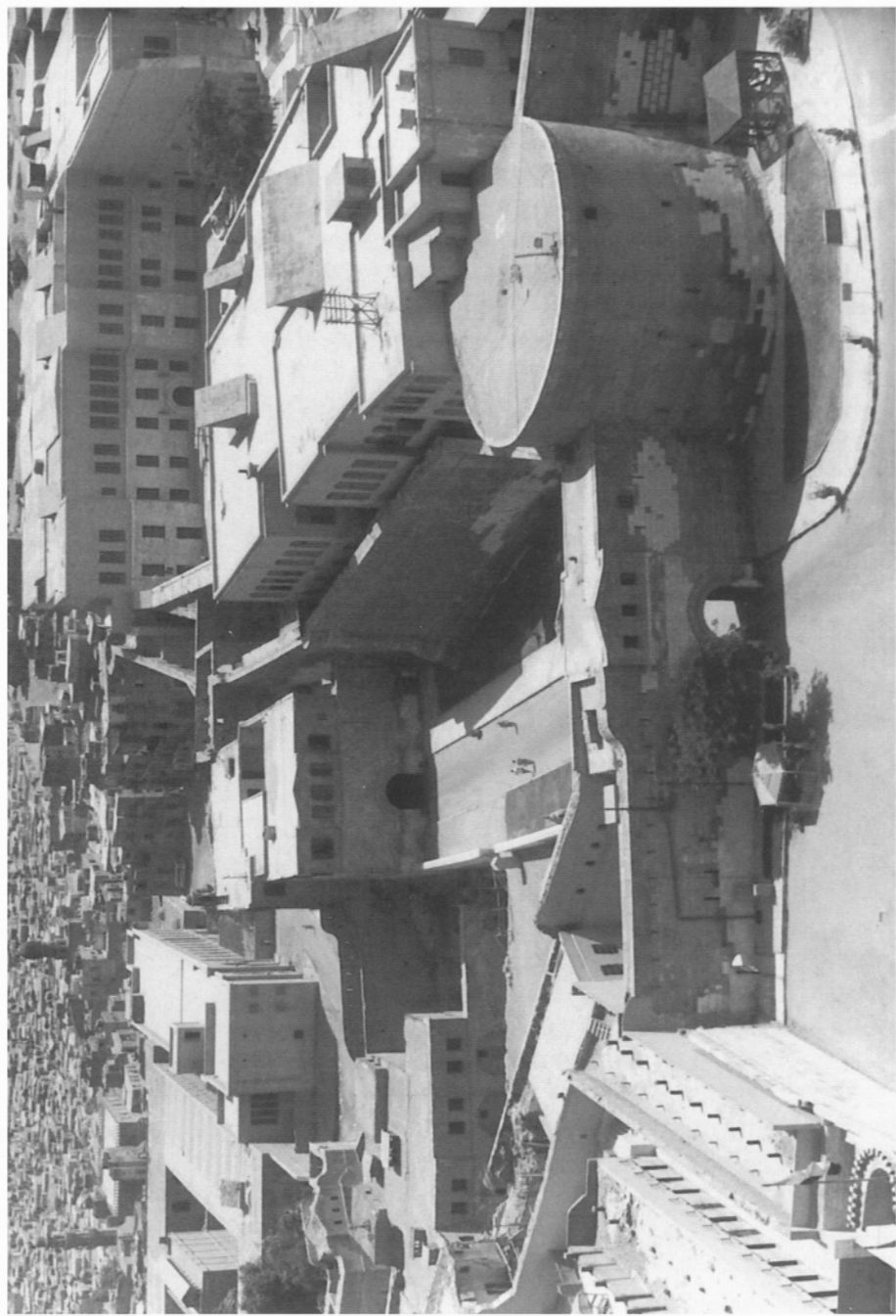
12. The dedicatory inscription of Şalāh al-Dīn above the Bāb al-Mudarraġ



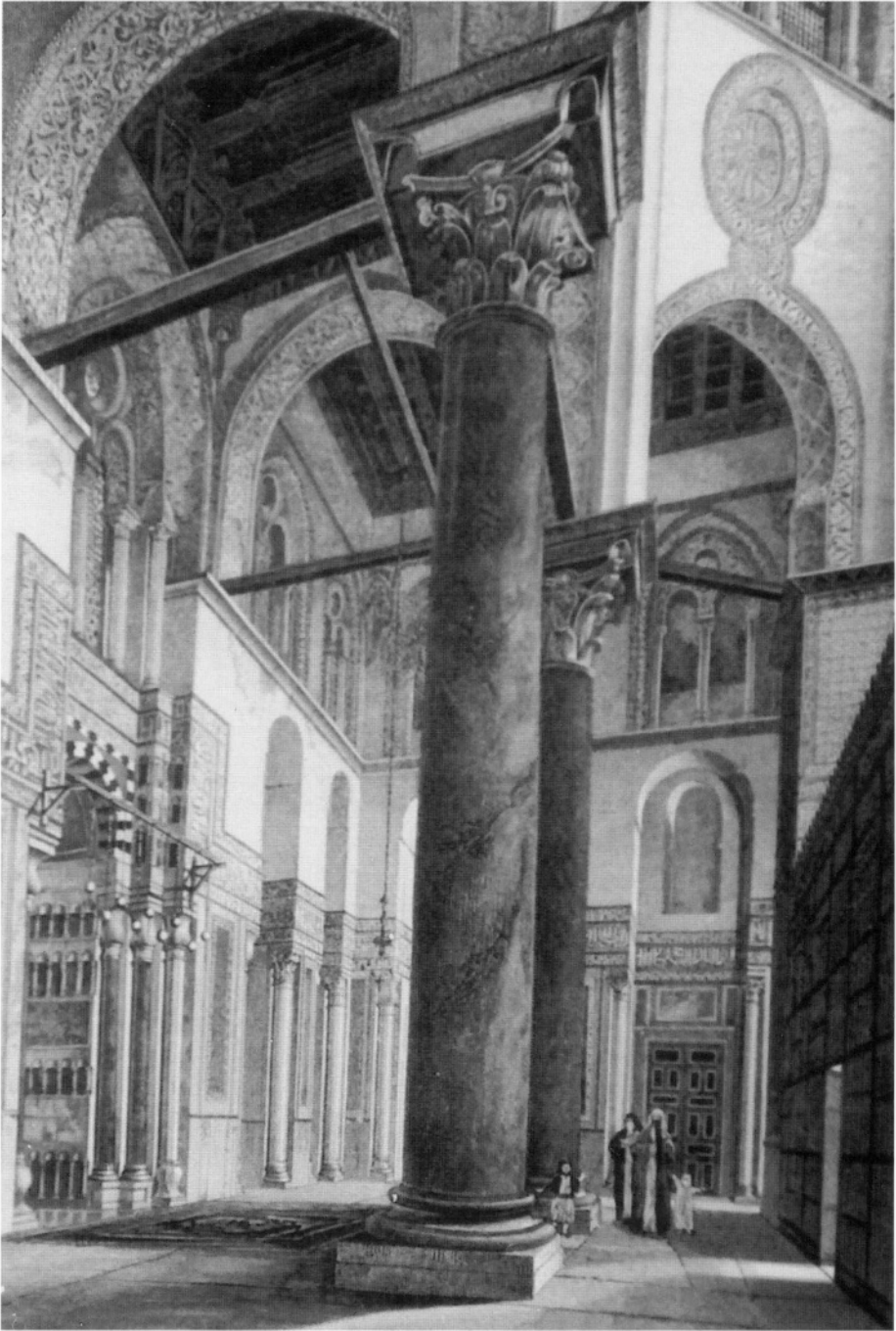
13. The Bāb al-Qulla



14. The *qā'a* in the Palace of Bashtāk



15. The Burj al-Wasfāni and the Bāb al-Wasfāni, in the background the Bāb al-Jadīd



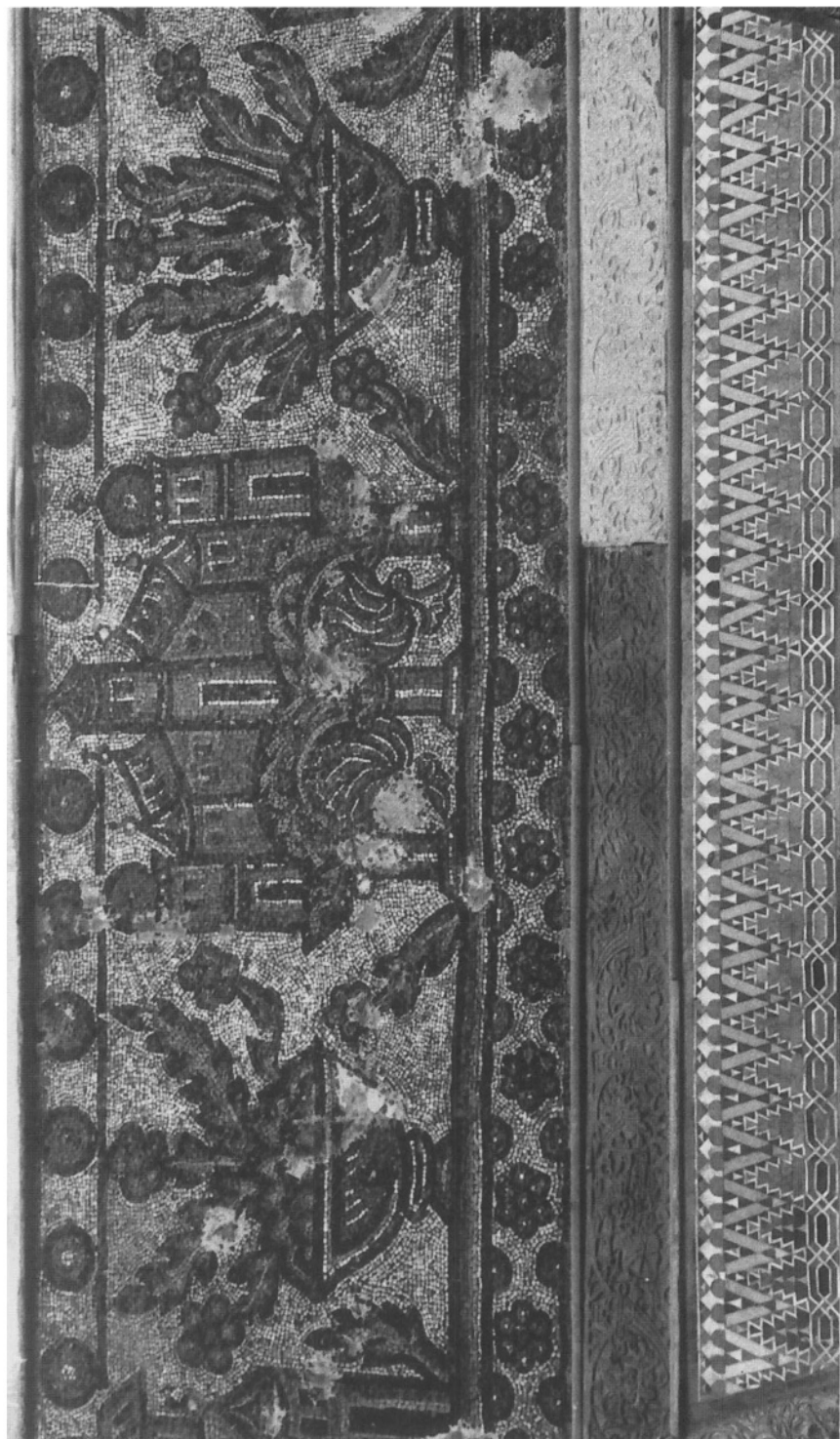
16. Interior view of Qalāwūn's qubba in his complex in Bayn al-Qaṣrayn showing many decorative, engaged columns (print from Georg Moritz Ebers, *Egypt, Descriptive, Historical and Picturesque*)



17. The *dūrqā'a* and part of the northwestern iwan of the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya



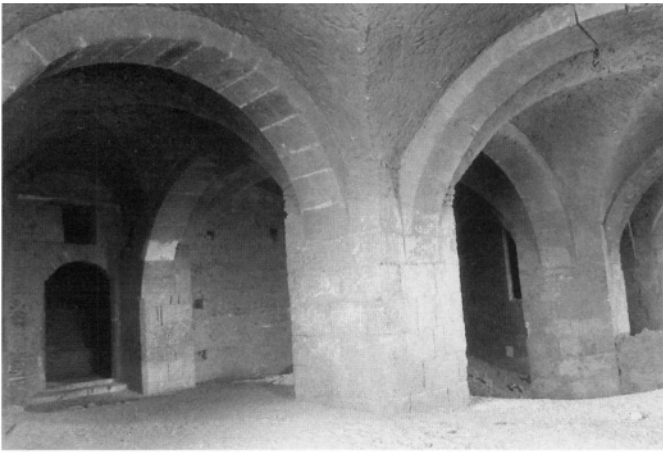
18. The two glass mosaic fragments and the remains of decoration around them in the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya



19. Mosaic panel on the western wall of the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya in Damascus



20. Mosaic panel on the northern wall of the Qubba al-Zāhiriyya in Damascus



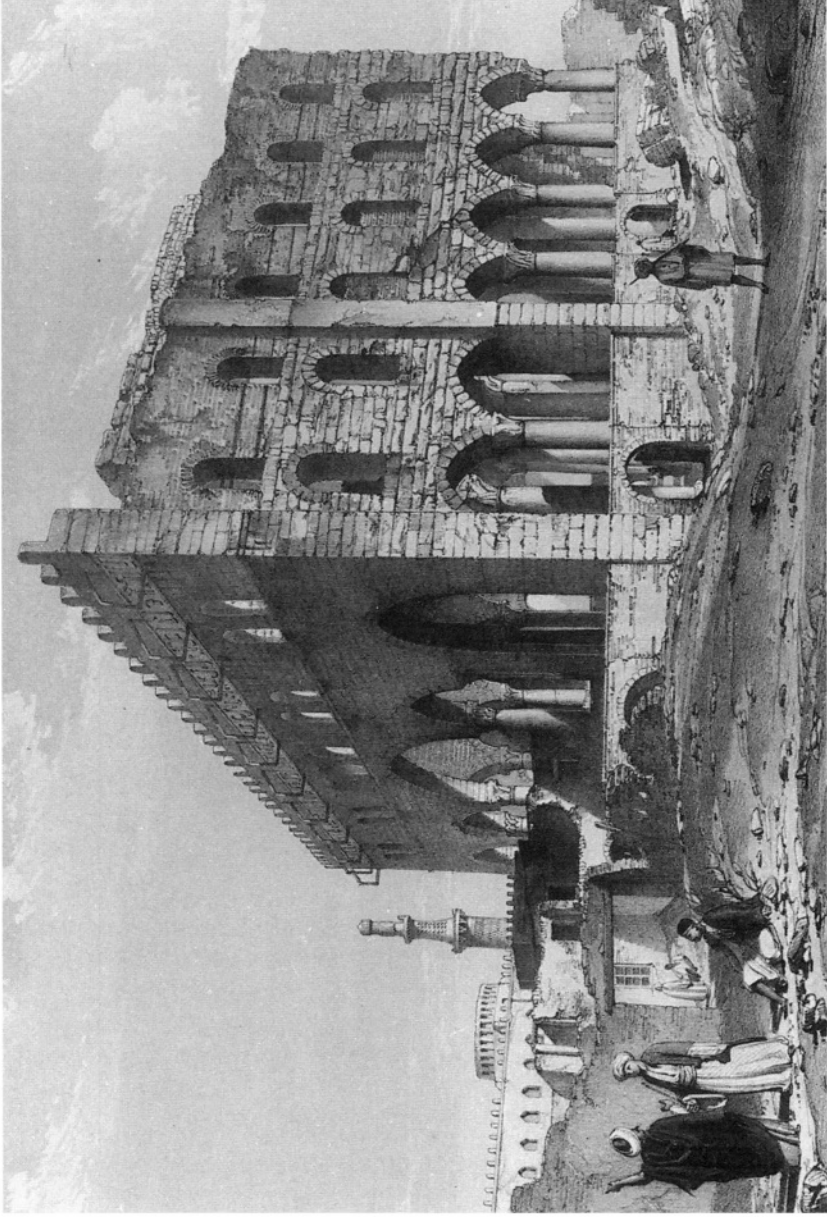
21. Vaults of the upper hall under the site of the Qaşr al-Ablaq



22. Door opening into the lower hall under the site of the Qaşr al-Ablaq



23. Groin vault in the lower hall under the site of the Qaşr al-Ablaq



24. Robert Hay's view of the Iwān al-Kabir (from *Illustrations of Cairo*, London, 1840)



25. Base of the Nāširi Mosque's eastern minaret



26. Northeastern and northwestern façades of the Nāširi Mosque



27. Blocked southwestern door of the Nāṣiri Mosque



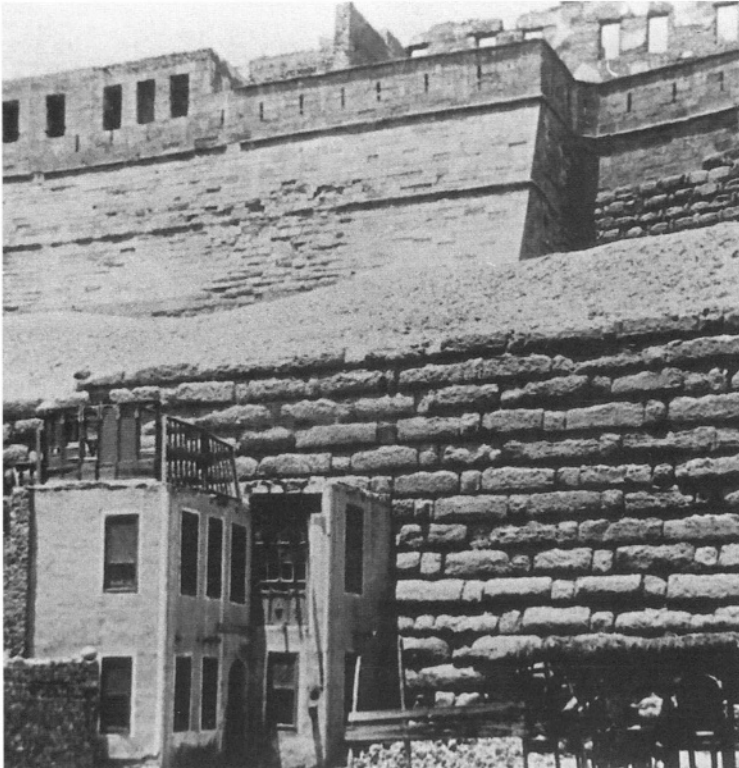
28. Finial of the western minaret of the Nāṣiri Mosque



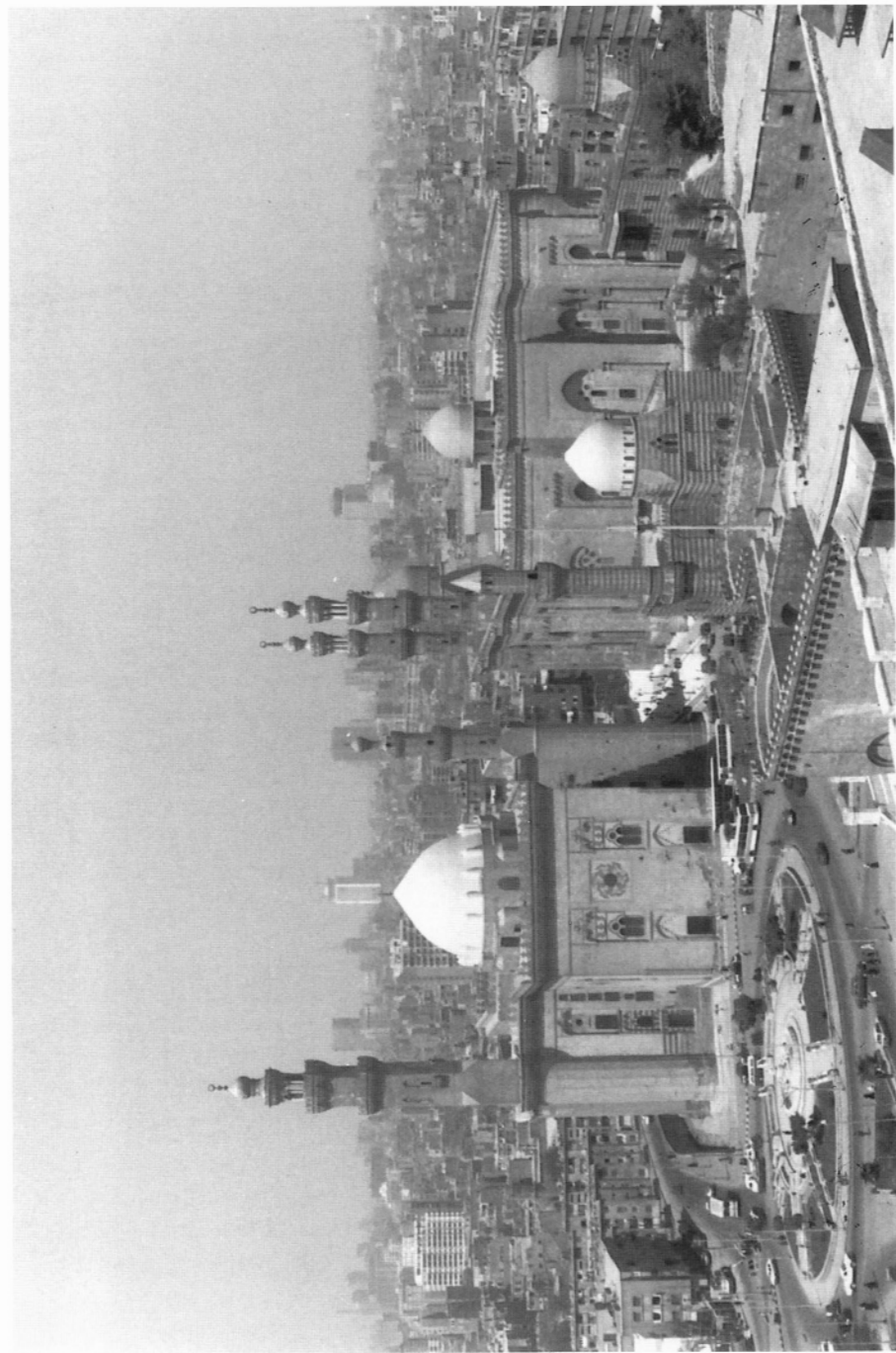
29. Arcades of the Naşiri Mosque



30. The buried small hall and corridor leading to the Naşiri Mosque



31. Southern wall of the southern enclosure



32. View of the mosque of Sultan Ҳасан, the mosque of al-Rifāʿī, and the Rumayla maydan from the site of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq

patronage and the large income put the institution in a class by itself, a status al-Nāṣir Muḥammad confirmed by bestowing the title *shaykh al-shuyūkh* (chief of sheikhs) on its head, a title hitherto reserved for the sheikh of the khanqah of Sa'īd al-Su'adā' in al-Qāhira. He also decreed in his waqf that he himself should be buried in the khanqah of Siryāqūs, rather than in his madrasa on Shāri' Bayn al-Qaṣrayn in al-Qāhira, where most of the royal religious endowments of his predecessors—which contained their tombs as well—were located. When he died, however, his wishes were not observed. He was hastily buried in his father's tomb in the Qubba al-Manṣūriyya, and his son al-Manṣūr Abū Bakr was declared sultan the same day to prevent any possible showdown between the great amirs competing for dominance during the time it took to prepare a proper ceremonial procession bearing his body to Siryāqūs.²⁰

Despite al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's efforts, the town of Siryāqūs never became an important city, though it did remain a flourishing religious center until the Burjī period, as evidenced by the building of the madrasa of the Amir Sūdūn min 'Abd al-Raḥman there in 1422 and of a new royal religious complex in 1433 established by Sultan Barsbāy that comprised a congregational mosque, a *sabīl-kuttāb* (a public fountain surmounted by an open space for teaching the Qur'ān) a cistern, a *maq'ad*, a small palace, and an orchard. These endowments, however, did not suffice to sustain the town's importance after Barqūq deserted the royal palaces nearby in the early fifteenth century. Siryāqūs had gone into a steady decline, even before the Burjī religious endowments were built there, and it lapsed into oblivion after the Mamluk period. The palaces and maydan of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad disappeared without a trace.

The Expansion of Cairo

Perhaps more than anywhere else, prosperity during al-Nāṣir's reign was reflected in the expansion and embellishment of the city of Cairo (fig. 31).²¹ By the time al-Nāṣir died in 1341, it had more than doubled in size and had spread into areas that had until then been farmland, desert, or marshland recovered from the receding Nile. The

²⁰ Ibid., 2: 305; idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 546; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 165.

²¹ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 2: 114–17; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 193–98.

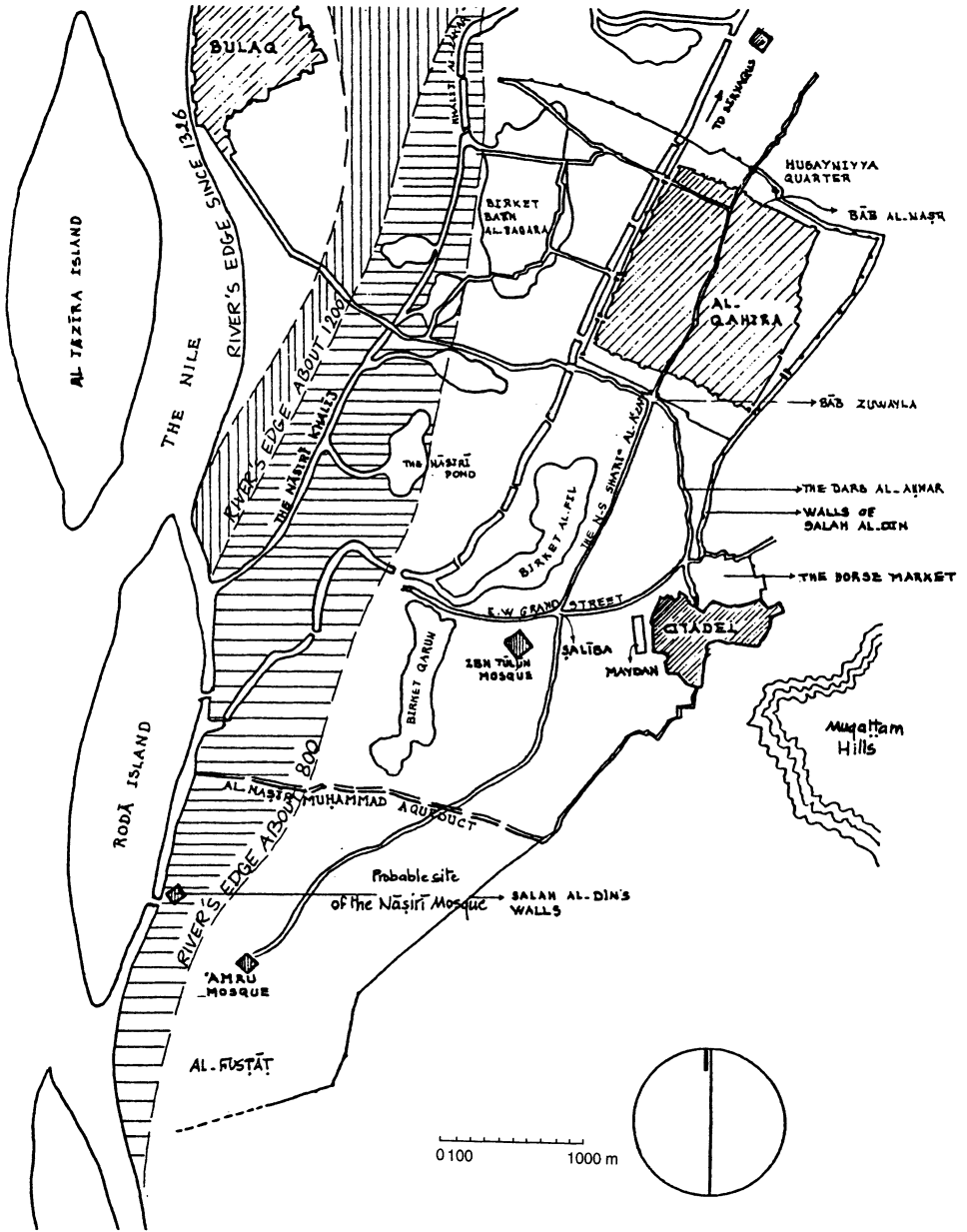


Fig. 31: Expansion of Cairo and recession of the Nile

river had started shifting eastward in the tenth century; its retreat had peaked by the early fourteenth century and then suddenly slowed, leaving large vacant lots close to the water that could be developed once the river had more or less stabilized in its new course. But it also increased the distance between the city and its main source of drinking water.²²

Al-Nāṣir and his amirs responded to both the opportunity to expand and the need for water. The Khalij al-Nāṣirī was dug not just to divert water to the new town of Siryāqūs and link it to the capital, but also to drain the land recovered from the Nile. Embankments (*zarības*) were also constructed along the riverbank from Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ in the south to Būlāq in the north, and the land behind them was opened for development. People rushed to build in these prime areas because they were near the water. The empty tracts that lined the artificial waterways—the old and new *khalījs* and the several ponds—were built up as well. New residential quarters (*khīṭaṭ*) grew up along the canals, on the major thoroughfares, such as the main east-west avenue, the Shāri‘ al-A‘zam (Grand Street), that crossed them and linked them with the city's old quarters and around the ponds west of the Citadel such as the Birkat al-Fil and the Birkat Qārūn (Pond of Qārūn).

Other residential quarters, such as al-Lūq and al-Maqs, sprang up in areas formerly occupied by the maydans of earlier sultans to the north and east of al-Qāhira; in the northern quarter of al-Ḥusayniyya, which was first settled under al-Zāhir Baybars by the Mongol Wāfidiyya; and especially in the areas surrounding the Citadel hill. In the two districts—the Darb al-Aḥmar and the Ṣalība al-Kubrā—south of Fatimid al-Qāhira in the area bound by the new Khalij al-Nāṣirī on the west and the Citadel on the southeast, the many palatial and religious buildings erected during al-Nāṣir's reign left no land vacant. The main thoroughfare in the district of the Darb al-Aḥmar, extending south from the Bāb Zūwayla of the old city in a wide curve to the foot of the hill upon which the Citadel stood, was lined with mosques, palaces, and commercial structures. From 1326 on, the area west of the old Khalij was laid out with mosques, houses, and palaces.²³

²² C. J. R. Haswell, "Cairo, Origin and Development: Some Notes on the Influence of the River Nile and Its Changes," *Bulletin de la Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte* 11 (1922): 171–76.

²³ Janet Abū-Lughod, *Cairo*, 27–36; Meinecke, *Architektur*, 100–3; Viktoria

That the city expanded in these directions was determined by topography and royal decorum. Al-Dārb al-Aḥmar linked the old Fatimid capital al-Qāhira, which had become the center of economic life, to the Citadel and formed the last stretch of the processional route used by the sultan for major ceremonies, such as his coronation day and victory parades. The sultan would ride through al-Qāhira from the north through the Bāb al-Naṣr and come out through the Bāb Zūwayla, advance along the Darb al-Aḥmar to the horse market below the Citadel, and then enter the Citadel from the Bāb al-Silsila and proceed up to the Iwān al-Kabīr, the scene of the ceremony's culmination, the royal banquet (*simāt*).²⁴ The section of the processional route inside al-Qāhira (the Shāri' Bayn al-Qaṣrayn between the Bāb al-Naṣr and the Bāb Zūwayla) seems to have been reserved for royal religious structures; only amirial palaces were permitted along it. In the beginning of the fourteenth century, the madrasas of al-Kāmil Muḥammad (known as the Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Kāmiliyya), of al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, of al-Zāhir Baybars, of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (in the complex comprising his *bimāristān* and *qubba*), and of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad himself (which was started by the usurper Kitbughā but then bought and completed by al-Nāṣir during his third reign)²⁵ lined up along the two sides of the central section of the Shāri' Bayn al-Qaṣrayn. Amirs built their religious monuments on the side streets that led off from Shāri' Bayn al-Qaṣrayn or along the second part of the processional route, the Dārb al-Aḥmar. The amirial religious structures there helped embellish this new and important

Meinecke-Berg, "Quellen zu Topographie und Baugeschichte in Kairo unter Sultan an-Nāṣir b. Qala'un," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, supplement 3 (1977): 539–50; John Alden Williams, "Urbanization and Monument Construction in Mamluk Cairo," *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 33–45.

²⁴ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 443–44, for the *mawkib* of Baybars's coronation in 1260; *ibid.*, 492, for the *mawkib* after his victorious return from Palestine in 1262; *ibid.*, 643, al-Malik al-Sa'īd, upon his coronation, did not ride through al-Qāhira, which was an anomaly; *ibid.*, 664, Qalāwūn rode through al-Qāhira upon his coronation; al-Ashraf Khalīl did not follow the route of the *mawkib*, for fear of an assassination plot; *ibid.*, 823, Lājīn rode through al-Qāhira for his coronation. The most elaborate description of a *mawkib*'s route is that of the victory parade for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1303, *ibid.*, 939–40; see also Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, 74–75. After al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, most of his sons who succeeded each other followed a shorter processional route that took them from the harem at the Citadel to the Iwān al-Kabīr; only a few took the ceremonial route through Cairo.

²⁵ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 382.

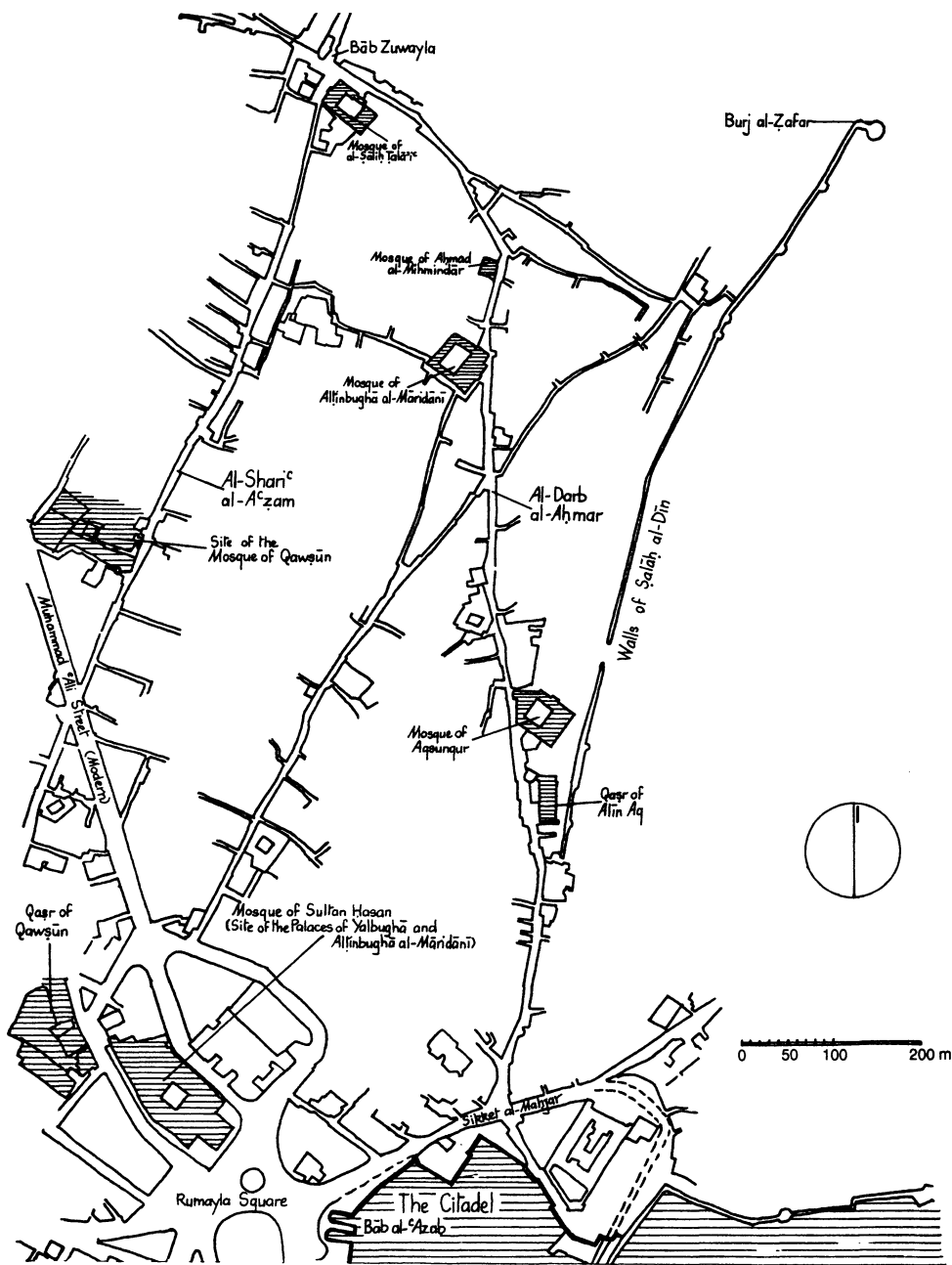


Fig. 32: The district of the Darb al-Ahmar

street. Three of its major buildings, all mosques built by amirs of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad—from north to south, the mosque of Amir Aḥmad al-Mihmandār (1324–25), the mosque of Amir Aḷṭunbughā al-Māridānī (1339–40), and the mosque of Amir Aqsunqur (1346–47)—are still standing (fig. 32).

This expansion, which was not equaled again in Cairo until the mid nineteenth century, was not haphazard. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had a keen interest in controlling and directing it.²⁶ He sponsored several projects aimed at providing new zones for building, new sources for drinking water, and new community structures such as mosques and hammams, so as to create new urban centers around which people would build their residences. Chroniclers of the period point to al-Nāṣir as the first sultan who established a special department for building (*dīwān al-‘amā’ir*) to coordinate the multitude of architectural projects in which he was engaged.²⁷ He also encouraged his amirs to construct their social and religious philanthropic structures in areas he designated, and he even absorbed some of the construction costs. In many cases, he was involved in the whole process of building palaces for his *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs, from choosing the location to furnishing the interiors when they were finished.²⁸

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad set about early in his third reign to protect the new eastern banks of the river from erosion and to drain the wetland. He erected embankments and dug ponds to drain flood water, then funded large civic projects on the land thus reclaimed. In 1311, he had a congregational mosque, the New Nāṣiri Mosque, constructed on the bank of the Nile north of Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ, and opened up the area around it to residential construction. In 1320, he erected the Zarībat al-Sulṭān to protect the borders of a new maydan, the Maydān al-Mahārī, he had made for his horses; it was west of the famous Qanāṭir al-Sibā’ (Lions Bridge) where the major east-west thorough-

²⁶ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 542; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 185.

²⁷ Shujā’ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 113–14; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 178–98; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭāṭ*, 2: 306; idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 130.

²⁸ Numerous are the examples of al-Nāṣir’s involvement in his amirs’ projects. References have been gathered in two unpublished theses, Shāhinda Fahmī Karīm, “Jawāmi‘ wa-Masājid Umarā’ al-Sulṭān al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn-Qalāwūn,” Cairo University, Ph.D. diss. (1987), and ‘Alī Sulaymān al-Milijī, “Amā’ir al-Nāṣir Muḥammad,” Cairo University, Master’s thesis (1975). A discussion of al-Nāṣir’s patronage of his amirs’ projects is in Layla (Laila) Ibrāhīm and J. M. Rogers, “The Great Ḥānqāh of the Emir Qawṣūn in Cairo,” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 30, 1 (1974): 52–55.

fare, the Shāri' al-A'ẓam, crossed the Khalij. The embankment was filled with clay excavated from an adjoining site; the pit that resulted was turned into a new pond, the Birkat al-Nāṣiriyya, and was used to drain the land around it. Al-Nāṣir then formed a new quarter in the area by building two residential blocks (*rab's*) and a large warehouse (*wakāla*).²⁹

But most of the development of the new districts in and around the city was not directly provided by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Instead, he gave his amirs parcels of reclaimed land to develop, or sent them construction materials and assigned corvée laborers to build their projects, or both. He gave his favorite amir Baktimur al-Sāqī one of the two *rab's* he had built around the Birkat al-Nāṣiriyya; Baktimur added two hammams (one for men and one for women) and divided up the rest of the land for sale. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad also sent workers (sometimes identified as *asrā*, or prisoners of war)³⁰ and building materials to Qawṣūn and to Alṭunbughā al-Māridānī when they each built their mosques. Qawṣūn's rose on the north-south Shāri' al-A'ẓam south of the Bāb Zūwayla (1330), and Alṭunbughā's in the Darb al-Aḥmar (1339–40).³¹

In most cases, these newly developed parts of the city were owned by the state treasury (*bayt al-māl*) and given away by the sultan to his favorite amirs or sold to them at a nominal price.³² The amirs would then exploit the land as their private property, a practice called *taḥkīr*.³³ They often augmented the value of the land by constructing

²⁹ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 131–32.

³⁰ Yūsufī, *Nuzha*, 324, 348, speaks of the use of *asrā* in a royal construction site; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 307, and *Sulūk*, 2: 320, says that *asrā* were sent with the superintendent of the royal constructions to build Qawṣūn's mosque. These *asrā* were mostly Armenians who had been captured in one of the several campaigns al-Nāṣir sent against Little Armenia. They were lodged with their families in Khizānat al-Bunūd in al-Qāhira, which was earlier used as a prison for mamluks, or at the Citadel in an unspecified place. Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 640, explicitly says that al-Nāṣir gathered them and used them in the construction of his structures. Other groups who were used in forced labor included captive bedouins from the several raids on bedouin tribes in Upper Egypt or Barqa, or corvée peasants and urban riffraff, who are also called "the chained ones" (*muqayyadin*) in the sources.

³¹ For the mosque of Qawṣūn, see Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2:307; for that of Alṭunbughā, see *ibid.*, 2: 308, and *idem*, *Sulūk*, 2: 385.

³² See, for example, Yūsufī, *Nuzha*, 340, where he reports how Qawṣūn bought a *hīkr* from the state treasury after having obtained al-Nāṣir's permission to do so.

³³ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 114, quoting Ibn Sīda, one of the major medieval lexicographers, says that *taḥkīr* means to claim ownership of the land and to zone it for development.

congregational mosques or khanqahs on it, and subdividing the rest into smaller lots, which they sold off to others who would build their houses there. The sources mention about sixty *hukrs* (land that was zoned or *hukkirat*) that had been developed in the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Included is the *hukr* of the sultan around the Birkat al-Nāṣiriyya, the *hukr* of Qawṣūn, the *hukr* of Tuquzdamur, the *hukr* of Aqbughā, and the two *hukrs* of Sitt Miska (also known as Sitt Ḥadaq), the sultan's *dada* (nursemaid) and *qahramana* (major-domo) of his royal harem. All of them were between the Khaliḡ al-Nāṣiri and the Nile.³⁴

By granting control over vacant land to his amirs and financing their projects, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was in effect privatizing public land in a form of *iqṭāʿ* applied to the city and restricted to members of the sultan's household and amirs related to him through marriage, to provide a chosen few with an additional and exclusive source of revenue. Of the nine amirs who were married to daughters of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, at least five—Bashtāk, Qawṣūn, Altunbughā, Aqsunqur, and Milktumur—are known to have speculated in land and to have built new facilities. Another amir, Aqbughā ʿAbd al-Wāḥid, the superintendent of royal buildings (*shādd al-ʿamāʾir*), made a fortune in land speculation and reclaimed land. He was the brother of the sultan's favorite wife Ṭughāy, and was said to have reached his high position through this connection.³⁵

Like every other aspect of his government, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's patronage of urban and architectural projects was governed by his personal choice and inspired by greed. But since he had almost completely abolished the distinction between his private affairs and those of the sultanate, his involvement should be viewed as representing the general policy of the state. This policy generated an enthusiasm for building all over the sultanate. Not just his amirs in Cairo, but also his governors in the Syrian provinces were involved in large building projects. His favorite viceregent, Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī, the governor (*nāʾib*) of Damascus for most of his sultanate (1312–40), was the most notable example. He inspired an urban and economic

³⁴ Maqrīzī, *Khitaṭ*, 1: 365, 2: 114–17 speaks of the most important *hukrs* of al-Nāṣir's amirs.

³⁵ On the women's relations in the family of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Rāziq, *La femme au temps des Mamlouks en Égypte* (Cairo, 1973), 31, for Ṭughāy the sister of Aqbughā; 269, 280–81, 297, and 300 for the daughters of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.

revival in Damascus such as it had not seen since the time of Nūr al-Dīn ibn Zangī. He introduced new regulations aimed at maintaining civic order, sponsored many new charitable and commercial structures, restored many more, cleared, graded, and widened the main thoroughfares, and organized the expansion *extra-muros* to the north and south of the city.³⁶ The development of medieval Cairo and Damascus owes much to the efforts and vision and probably the personal interests of these two egocentric individuals.³⁷

Monumentalizing the Citadel

The wealth accumulated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the power he managed to wield in his third reign were evident in the opulence and monumentality of his later architectural projects, especially those he built at the Citadel. His rebuilding of the two major structures in the southern enclosure, the Iwān al-Kabīr and the Nāṣirī Mosque, in fact appears to have been to show off his glory and majesty: the replacements were simply larger, costlier, and more lavishly ornamented reproductions of the originals. In the chroniclers' reports superlatives such as "opulent," "splendid," "unparalleled," "monumental," and "great" are used to describe them.

They were rebuilt one right after the other: the Iwān al-Kabīr in 1333–34 and the Nāṣirī Mosque in 1335–36—the projects were too large and too disruptive to daily life at the Citadel to carry out simul-

³⁶ Meinecke, *Architektur*, 65–67, 103–4. Unfortunately, the work of Tankiz in Damascus has never been adequately studied; Muḥammad A. Duhmān, *Wulat Dimashq fi 'Ahd al-Mamālik* (Damascus, 1981), 165–79, provides a list of his projects and estates.

³⁷ David Ayalon, "The Muslim City and the Mamluk Military Aristocracy," 311–29; and idem, "The Expansion and Decline of Cairo under the Mamluks," paper presented at the 29^{ème} Congrès International des Orientalistes, Paris (1973), squarely blames the urban decline of Cairo on the shortsightedness and megalomania of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's expansion program. This view was criticized by Garcin, "Habitat," 163. Ayalon, who focuses primarily on Mamluk documents to the detriment of a broader view of events, tends to explain Mamluk phenomena in terms of Mamluk internal developments; the paucity of data makes these explanations speculative. The decline of Cairo, which was simultaneous with the downfall of the Egyptian economy in the second half of the Mamluk period, cannot be blamed solely on internal political factors; it was more complicated than that and still needs to be thoroughly studied. Janet Abū-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York, 1989), 224–47, presents a new, well-balanced synthesis of Egypt's economic plight in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

taneously. The eyewitness account of Ibn al-Dawādārī suggests that they may have constituted the first two steps in a larger plan to remodel the main court in the southern enclosure where the two buildings stood—the mosque on the southeast and the iwan on the northwest.³⁸ Descriptions indicate that the buildings had many features in common by the time their reconstruction was complete. Both had green-tiled domes supported on gigantic reused granite columns, arched crenellations, and huge inscription bands on their façades, which may have been intended to unify the appearance of the main court.

The Iwān al-Kabīr

The 1333 rebuilding of the Iwān al-Kabīr ushered in a period of frenzied construction at the Citadel that continued for the last eight years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign and was only interrupted by his death. How much of the iwan was rebuilt is not very clear; some sources say the whole structure was leveled, others that only the dome was demolished.³⁹ The construction lasted for a little more than a year (Rabi' I, 733 to Rabi' II, 734), and when it was completed, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad resumed holding the biweekly *dār al-ʿadl* sessions, the *iqṭāʿ* distribution ceremonies, and the receptions of foreign envoys there. After his death, the iwan lost some of its prominence, as the power structure shifted during the undistinguished rules of his twelve powerless epigones who succeeded one another in a frantic turnover between 1341 and 1382 and who were dominated by their vicegerents. The iwan remained the official throne hall where coronation ceremonies and state receptions took place, but the day-to-day reviews of troops, the administration of *iqṭāʿ*, and the biweekly *dār al-ʿadl* sessions were transferred to the Dār al-Niyāba, which was rebuilt in 1343 to become the residence of the powerful vicegerents.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhīr*, 372.

³⁹ Ibn al-Dawādārī says only that the iwan of al-Ashraf was demolished on the third of Shaʿbān 733 (1333), along with other structures; Baktāsh al-Fakhrī, *Beiträge*, 186, says that the dome was the only part destroyed; Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 113, only says that al-Nāṣir demolished the iwan of al-Ashraf twice, presumably on the same dates given by Ibn al-Dawādārī, but unfortunately the part of al-Shujāʿī's chronicle covering the years between 1310 and 1338 is missing. The same vague report is repeated by Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 538; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 180.

⁴⁰ Shujāʿī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 235; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 2: 214–15; Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 10: 32.

With the advent of the Burjī period, the Iwān al-Kabīr regained some of its glory for a short while. After he acceded to the throne, Barqūq (1382–89, 1390–99), the first Burjī sultan, started to sit in the iwan for *dār al-ʿadl* sessions, probably as a sign of kingship and as an attempt to associate himself with established Qalawunid customs. But, in 1387, he decided to move the *dār al-ʿadl* sessions from the Iwān al-Kabīr to an unspecified place in the royal stables (most probably the Ḥarrāqa) and to change the days of the service to Tuesdays and Saturdays.⁴¹ This decision was followed by a series of decrees which signaled his intention to break completely with Qalawunid tradition and to restructure the sultanate. The Iwān al-Kabīr was still occasionally used to receive foreign embassies, undoubtedly because its size and spatial arrangement made it the most impressive structure at the Citadel. Otherwise it had fallen into disuse by the middle of the Burjī period, although a few sultans attempted now and again to revive the biweekly review of mamluks (*khidma*) in it, and at least two, Barsbāy and Qāyrbāy, had it restored.⁴²

The Iwān al-Kabīr and the other palaces at the Citadel were reportedly stripped of their red or green marble (*sumāqī*) columns and marble dadoes by the Ottoman Sultan Selim I after his conquest of Egypt in 1517. He shipped the spoils to Istanbul and used them in his buildings there.⁴³ But even abandoned, dilapidated, and stripped bare, the Iwān al-Kabīr still provoked wonder and awe by its sheer size (pl. 24). Evliya Çelebi, who stayed at the Citadel around 1670, says that the Iwān al-Kabīr was so splendid that one doubted that it was built by men. He calls it the “*dīwān* of Sultan al-Ghūrī,” although this last Mamluk sultan is not recorded to have done any work on it,⁴⁴ and

⁴¹ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 207, 241, and *Sulūk*, 3: 566; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9: 17; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1, 2: 388.

⁴² For Barsbāy's work, see Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 14: 318; Jawharī, *Nuzhat al-Nufūs*, 3: 238–39; For Qāyrbāy's work, see Jawharī, *Inbāʾ al-Ḥaṣr*, 294, 327, 339; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 3: 60–61, 329.

⁴³ Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 5: 179.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 5, 94, does not mention the iwan among the structures al-Ghūrī renovated at the Citadel; Behrens-Abouseif, “Citadel of Cairo,” 59–60, uses this reference and Çelebi's description to suggest that the *dīwān* of al-Ghūrī is another hall in the *hawsh* area. Çelebi's information concerning the topography of the Citadel is very jumbled, but his reporting on the size and number of columns in the *dīwān* al-Ghūrī leaves no doubt that he is speaking of the Iwān al-Kabīr. Other Ottoman chroniclers speak of the *dīwān* of Sultan al-Ghūrī as well (cf. Muṣṭafā Ibrāhīm, *Waqāʾiʿ Miṣr al-Qāhira*, 19) until its name became *Dīwān Yūsuf*, the name that the French cartographers heard from the residents and put on their map.

he recounts a groundless story of its construction that may have been invented in the Ottoman period to justify the reported ban on its use by Sultan Selim.⁴⁵ A more plausible reason for this ban would have been the awesome effect the iwan must have had on Selim and his contemporaries. Casanova quotes Maillet, the French consul in Egypt between about 1692 and 1708, as explaining that Selim forbade the governors of Egypt from holding their audiences there for fear that its grandeur in comparison to the audience halls in Istanbul would instill in them a feeling of eminence and induce them to declare their independence from the Sublime Porte.⁴⁶

Totally abandoned, the Iwān al-Kabīr slowly decayed; its huge dome collapsed in 1521 and was never rebuilt.⁴⁷ When the Citadel was divided up into three semi-independent and competing parts—the Sūr al-Inkishāriyya (Janissaries Enclosure), the Sūr al-‘Azab (‘Azab Enclosure), and the Sarāya al-Bāshā (the Pasha’s Palace)—it was left in a no-man’s land.⁴⁸ A passageway leading to the part of the southern enclosure where the pasha lived was cleared between its columns.⁴⁹ Though ruined and lacking its dome, it was still standing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was documented for the *Description de l’Égypte*, but it was finally razed by Muḥammad ‘Alī in 1825 along with the rest of the palaces and halls that both the Mamluks and the Ottomans had built.⁵⁰

In 1988, portions of the modern paving in the garden in front of the

⁴⁵ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyāhatnāme*, 9–10: 389, says that the Dīwān al-Ghūrī was built in three days and three nights in order to impress an important ambassador of the Safavid shah of Iran whom al-Ghūrī was expecting. The Ottomans had accused the Mamluks, and especially Sultan al-Ghūrī, of planning an alliance with their avowed enemies the Shi‘ite Safavids to justify their attack and subsequent elimination of the Mamluk sultanate. Modern historians tend to believe that this was a baseless allegation, cf. Akram al-‘Ulābi, *Dimashq bayn ‘Aṣr al-Mamālik wa-l-‘Uthmāniyyīn* (Damascus, 1982), 371–408. The association of the Iwān al-Kabīr with the enemies of the Ottomans would have lent a moral dimension to Selim’s ban on its use.

⁴⁶ Casanova, “Histoire,” 708–9.

⁴⁷ Ibn Iyās, *Badā‘i’*, 5: 441; Casanova, “Histoire,” 631.

⁴⁸ The Sūr al-Inkishāriyya was the name given to the northern enclosure which contained the barracks of the Janissaries; the stables and the areas surrounding them, including the maydan and parts of the southern enclosure, became the Sūr al-‘Azab; the governor and his troops occupied the *hawsh* and the area around it in the southern enclosure called Sarāy al-Bāshā; see Casanova, “Histoire,” 710–12.

⁴⁹ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyāhatnāme*, 9–10: 384.

⁵⁰ For a collection of eyewitness reports on the destruction of the Iwān al-Kabīr by Muḥammad-‘Alī, see Gaston Wiet, *Mohammed Ali et les beaux-arts* (Cairo, 1949), 265–88.

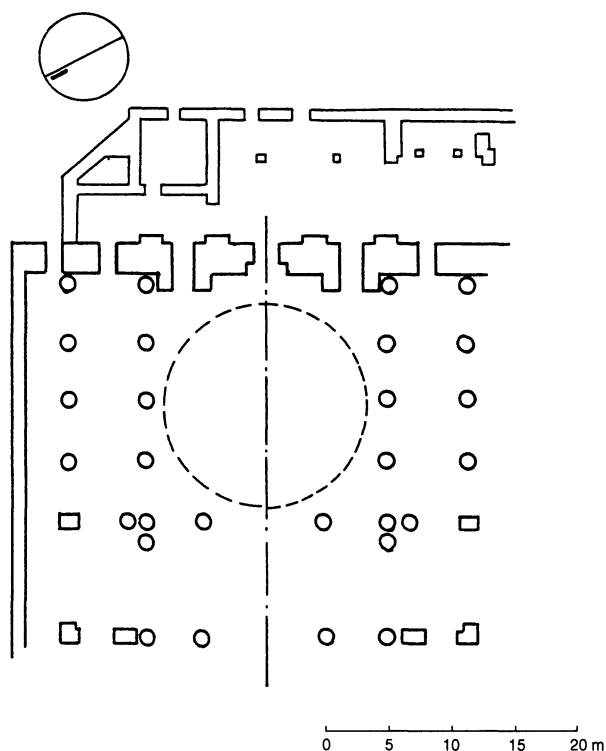


Fig. 33: The *Description de l'Égypte* plan of the Iwān al-Kabir

Police Museum collapsed and uncovered parts of a foundation wall made of large, dark blocks of stone that are believed to have belonged to the Iwān al-Kabir. It was evident from the small section uncovered that the wall was aligned with the Nāṣiri Mosque, an observation corroborated by the plan of the *Description de l'Égypte* which shows the two juxtaposed structures across a court (*rahba*) called the outer suq (*sūq al-barrānī*).⁵¹ Unfortunately the wall was buried again in 1989, and a garden planted on top of it.

Description. The French plan of the Iwān al-Kabir in the *Description de l'Égypte* is probably the most accurate of a series of eighteenth-

⁵¹ 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib al-Āthār fī al-Tarājim wa al-Akhbār* (Beirut, n.d.), 3: 320, uses a similar name, *rahbat sūq al-qa'a* (square of the suq of the Citadel).

and nineteenth-century plans that are available (fig. 33).⁵² It shows the Iwān al-Kabīr to have been a rectangle (measuring 36 by 31 meters without the corridor behind it) and open on three sides: the northeast, which constituted its main façade, the southeast, and the northwest. The fourth side, which faced back toward the rest of the sultan's palaces across from the passageway (called *dihlīz al-‘ubūr*, or the corridor of crossing, in Mamluk sources), was built up with a thick wall pierced with five doors. The central door, according to the eighteenth-century traveler Pococke, “was adorned with that grotesque sort of work, which is common in the Eastern buildings,”⁵³ by which he undoubtedly meant the muqarnas semidome above the door. The interior façade depicted in the *Description de l'Égypte* shows this door as looking like a typical Mamluk outer gate, complete with a recessed arched opening, topped with a muqarnas semidome, and even flanked by the two customary stone benches called *maṣṭabas* or *maksalas* (from *kasal*, laziness, because doormen used to sit on them all day long). Jomard mistook this arched door for a mihrab, and that led him to conclude that the iwan must have been used as a mosque.⁵⁴ The door was probably meant to symbolize the entry into the private domain of the sultan. Behind it, the passageway seen in the plan led to the Qaṣr al-Ablaq and beyond it to the private quarters (*al-dūr al-sultāniyya*).⁵⁵

The Iwān al-Kabīr's layout consisted of three parallel aisles formed by four rows of reused red granite columns and six rectangular pillars. The central aisle was almost three times as wide as the lateral ones. The front third of its length was subdivided into three parts formed by two pairs of columns. The granite columns, numbering thirty-two in all, were taken from pre-Islamic Egyptian temples, but which ones is not established.⁵⁶ Several Mamluk chroniclers repeat

⁵² Other plans are in Richard Pococke, *Description of the East*, 1: 33, pl. 14, drawn before 1743; and in Louis-François Cassas, *Voyage pittoresque de la Syrie et Basse Égypte*, drawn in 1799 (reproduced in Behrens-Abouseif, “Citadel of Cairo,” 62).

⁵³ Pococke, *Description of the East*, 1: 33.

⁵⁴ Jomard, “Description du Kaire,” 354–55; Sayyed, *Wasf al-Qāhira*, 234.

⁵⁵ ‘Umārī, *Masālik*, 141–42; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 210.

⁵⁶ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyāhatnâme*, 9–10: 389, says that the *diwān* of Sultan al-Ghūri had 35 columns. Casanova, “Histoire,” 631, reports that Maillet counted 34 columns, probably adding the two square pillars as columns. Pococke's plan has 44 columns, but it is undoubtedly wrong, as he extends the middle two rows all the way to the end wall, thus adding six columns, even though he himself speaks in his text about the middle rows having been designed to support a dome.

the story first told by Ibn al-Dawādārī that ancient columns from Ashmūnīn in Upper Egypt were brought to rebuild the Citadel's Nāṣirī Mosque in 1335, but none mentions columns being brought for the iwan. Maqrīzī says that they, and the columns for the Jāmi' al-Nāṣirī al-Jadīd (New Nāṣirī Mosque) which al-Nāṣir built in 1311 north of Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ, were taken from the site of the deserted Rawḍa Citadel.⁵⁷ Jomard in the *Description de l'Égypte* and Denon in a report presented at the Institut d'Égypte in 1799, suggest that they initially came from Alexandria or Babylon (the name of the settlement that predated Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ), because they saw similar columns lying on the ground in both places.⁵⁸ The site in Babylon, near the intake tower of the Citadel's aqueduct, corresponds to the location of the New Nāṣirī Mosque which had disappeared by the nineteenth century, so those columns may well have belonged to the mosque. This conclusion corroborates Maqrīzī's assertion that both the mosque's and the iwan's columns were salvaged from the Rawḍa Citadel. This means that the columns Jomard and Denon saw in the Citadel in 1799 were the ones that al-Nāṣir brought for the first rebuilding and kept in the second rebuilding of 1333, suggesting that the second rebuilding was probably limited to the dome (as Bektāsh al-Fakhrī, who was an eyewitness, reports). Pococke says that the name and titles of "the sultan" were engraved on the column shafts, but unfortunately he does not say which sultan.⁵⁹ Inscribing the name of the sultan on the columns was apparently the way by which their appropriation was recorded.

The back section of the central aisle, covering two-thirds of its length, was surmounted by a dome. That dome—which had already collapsed when the drawing was made—had once been the most

⁵⁷ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 184, says that the columns for the Citadel on the Rawḍa Island were brought by al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb from the *barābi* (sg. *barbā*), which is the word used to designate old Egyptian temples.

⁵⁸ Jomard, "Description du Kaire," 354; Sayyed, *Waṣf al-Qāhira*, 234; Vivant Denon, "Rapport au nom d'une commission chargée d'examiner un monument près du grand aqueduc du Caire," *Mémoires sur l'Égypte publiés pendant les campagnes du Général Bonaparte dans les années VI et VII* (Paris, 1801), 129–32.

⁵⁹ Pococke, *Description of the East*, 1: 33. Had the name been given, it would have helped determine the extent of the work done in the iwan by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Had the name inscribed been any other than al-Nāṣir's, it would have meant that al-Nāṣir had kept the columns of an earlier rebuilding. Inscribing the name of the sultan on reused columns was probably a widespread practice as evidenced by the inscriptions on the four columns next to the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya discussed earlier. These columns, it should be stressed again, do not seem to have belonged to the iwan.

striking feature of the iwan.⁶⁰ It was constructed of wood, like most Bahrī Mamluk domes, and covered on the outside with greenish tiles. It was supported by twelve columns which, together with the back wall, formed a square, almost 20 meters to the side. The transition from square to circle was achieved by four wooden muqarnas pendentives, whose units, judging from the perspective of the *Description de l'Égypte*, were huge.

The main façade of the iwan, which commanded a large court called Raḥbat al-Iwan, had five slightly pointed arches: a large one in the middle and two flanking ones (fig. 34). A row of twin-arched windows surmounted the arched openings; the central opening had a triple-arched window. An inscription band more than two meters wide ran across the façade above the windows. The characters of the inscription, which were 1.5 meters high each, were in the Kufic style. The French draftsman copied the inscription so accurately that it is possible to decipher it from the tiny drawing. It is an incomplete Qur'anic verse (14:32), which reads, "God is He Who created the heavens and the earth, and caused water to descend from the sky, thereby producing fruits as food for you." The rest of this verse and the next one of the same sura turn up on the inner side of the dome wall as can be seen in another drawing of the *Description de l'Égypte*. The façade is topped with arched crenellations, typical of

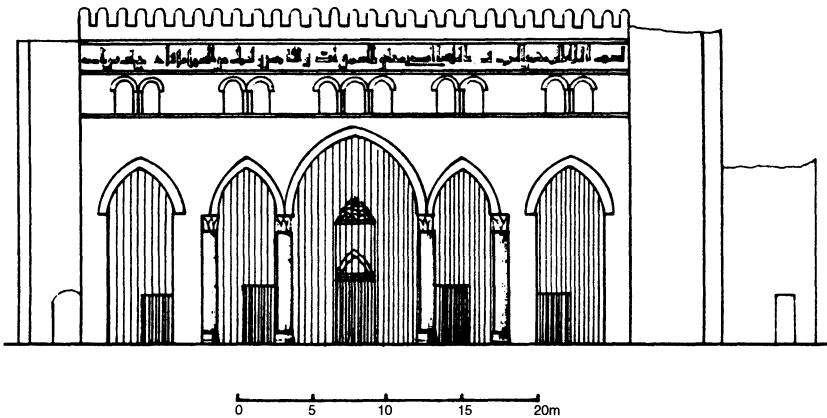


Fig. 34: The main façade of the Iwān al-Kabir

⁶⁰ Maqrizi, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 206; Zāhiri, *Zubda*, 26; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5: 441.

many monuments of the same period that are repeated on the walls of the Nāṣirī Mosque across the court.

Very little information about the interior walls can be extracted from the perspective drawing of the *Description de l'Égypte*. A broad inscription band, very carefully depicted in the drawing with all its missing and misplaced characters and peeling paint, ran around the full perimeter of the inner square under the dome and even followed the curve of the arch in the central aisle. Its characters, made of carved and gilded wood, were written in Mamluk *thuluth*. Its text probably consisted of all Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's titles and the construction date.⁶¹ The text was inscribed inside cartouches that were intercepted by medallions which may have contained the sultan's emblem, as was the case in contemporary Mamluk buildings such as the qubba of Sultan Qalāwūn (1284–85) and the Nāṣirī Mosque at the Citadel. This cannot be verified, however, for their surfaces were already too abraded by the time the French made the drawing.

The space between the inscription band and the springing of the dome had in its center a decorative roundel filled with sinuous lines with sun-like pointed rays jutting from its outer ring. It was probably made of stucco in the style of the period and looked much like the roundels that can still be seen on the drum of the dome of Sanqar al-Sa'dī (1315, known today as the *qubba* of Ḥasan Ṣadaqa, a popular sufi) and in the iwan of the khanqah of Umm-Ānūk, or Tughāy, the favorite wife of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (built before 1349 in the Northern Qarāfa). Above the roundel, a triple-arched window opened onto the outer porticoes of the Iwān al-Kabīr. The outer walls of the porticoes on the two lateral sides were pierced by two rows of windows above the arched openings. Inscription bands ran across the full length of the walls between the arcades and the first row of windows, but they are not legible in the French drawings. Some of the blank spaces between the windows seem to have had stucco ornaments in the familiar Mamluk elliptical shape called *bukhāriyya*. Each of these *bukhāriyyas* is flanked by a pair of columns that were inscribed on the stucco surface. The perspective drawing does not show the upper

⁶¹ Casanova, "Histoire," 634–35, was the first to read the remainder of the inscription correctly, which confirms that the drawing represented al-Nāṣir's iwan. A similar inscription band runs around the drum of the Nāṣirī Mosque's dome. Both inscriptions were possibly done at the same time.

parts of these columns, but they may have ended with an arch that framed the composition. A similar arrangement of stucco arches runs around the walls of the Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya, but with a larger number of units.

This picture is too incomplete to permit any conclusions about the decorative program of the Iwān al-Kabir. Its only notable characteristic is that every element of the surface articulation is much larger than comparable elements are on similar contemporary monuments. Mamluk builders obviously had a sense of proportion when matching decorative elements to the size of structure; they did not use enormous ornamental elements merely for the sake of their size. The Iwān al-Kabir was a unique structure whose royal character was both visually and spatially articulated through its massiveness, height, and the lavishness of its decoration. It was certainly the most public and most ceremonial of the sultan's palaces, and therefore necessarily made to impress and to inspire awe.

A dār al-ʿadl session. Ibn Faḍl-Allah al-ʿUmari (1301–49), who was an important administrator at the court, provides a detailed account of the *dār al-ʿadl* sessions that took place at the iwan during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. His report was copied almost verbatim by both Maqrīzī and Qalqashandī; they only add a little about the changes introduced in the ceremony in their own times.⁶² Unlike his father Qalāwūn and brother al-Ashraf Khalīl, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad regularly presided over these justice sessions in the iwan on Mondays and Thursdays, except during Ramadan. He established a ritual and order of seating for the session, at which all the amirs, *khāṣṣakiyya* and *barrānīs* alike, had to be present.

On *dār al-ʿadl* days, al-Nāṣir would come out of his inner palaces through the vestibule behind the iwan and enter through the central door under the muqarnas semidome (fig. 35). He would sit on a wooden chair (*dast*) covered with a silk cloth and placed next to his marble throne in the center of the iwan's back wall. He only used the marble throne, which resembled the minbar of a mosque, when he received foreign envoys.⁶³ The sultan sat at the head of a group of

⁶² ʿUmari, *Masālik*, 100–2; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 208–9; Qalqashandī, *Subḥ*, 4: 44–45, 4: 62. An English translation of Maqrīzī's report is Holt, *Crusades*, 144–45; also Stowasser, "Manners and Customs at the Mamluk Court," 17.

⁶³ By asserting that the sultan's throne was on a level higher than his officials, Jorgen Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State: Mazalim under the Baḥrī*

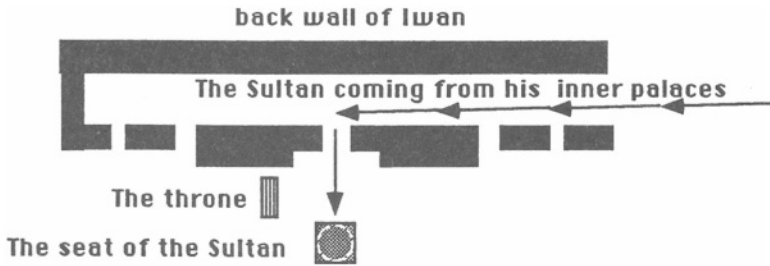


Fig. 35: The Sultan enters the Iwān al-Kabir

dignitaries who surrounded him in hierarchical order. Nearest to him were those officials directly involved in the proceedings. To the right were the four supreme judges (*quḍāt al-quḍāt*) of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence in the order of their importance: the Shafi'ite judge closest to the sultan, followed by the Hanafite, the Malikite, and the Hanbalite. Next to the Hanbalite judge came the treasury controller (*wakīl bayt al-māl*), then the market inspector (*muḥtasib*) of Cairo. To the left of the sultan sat his secretary (*kātib al-sirr*)—who between 1329 and 1332 was Ibn Faḍl-Allah al-'Umari himself⁶⁴—followed by the army supervisor (*nāzir al-jaysh*). The circle would be completed by a group of clerks who sat facing the sultan known as the clerks of the chair (*kuttāb al-dast*), after the royal *dast*. Their job was to record the minutes of the sessions (fig. 36). These functionaries were probably seated under the dome, with the sultan close to the center, some distance from the back wall, as both court protocol and the sultan's safety required sufficient space behind him and the wall for two rows of guards to his right and left, the *silāḥdāriyya*, *jama-dāriyya*, and the *khāṣṣakiyya* mamluks.

The great amirs of a hundred, the highest rank in the Mamluk system, were seated in a row opposite each other on either side of the sultan and some fifteen cubits (approximately 5 meters) from him. They were called amirs of the council (*umarā' al-mashūra*), and they functioned as the sultan's official advisers. There were twenty-four of

Mamluks, 662/1264–789/1387 (Leiden, 1985), 56, missed the point about the symbolic humility implied in the sultan's deliberately abandoning the throne on *dār al-'adl* days in favor of the lower *dast*.

⁶⁴ See the references to 'Umari's tenure as *kātib al-sirr* in *ibid.*, 160.

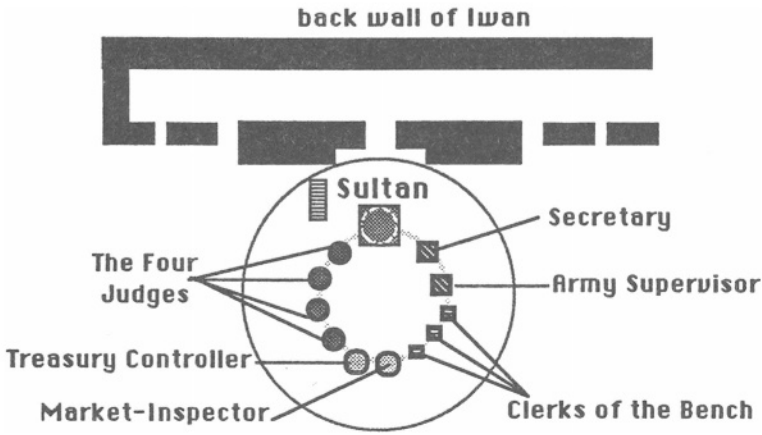


Fig. 36: Seating arrangement of dignitaries around the sultan

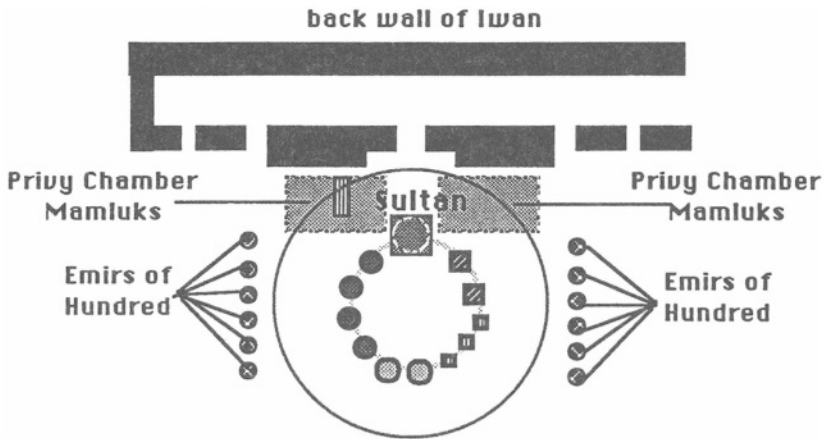


Fig. 37: Seating of *umarā' al-mashūra* around the sultan

them in al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's army, so they probably sat twelve on each side (fig. 37). The less important amirs, the amirs of forty, and other civil servants would be placed further away from these high-ranking amirs, completing the rows toward the entrance to the iwan, but these amirs and administrators had to remain standing. Behind this first row stood several other rows of amirs of ten and of mam-

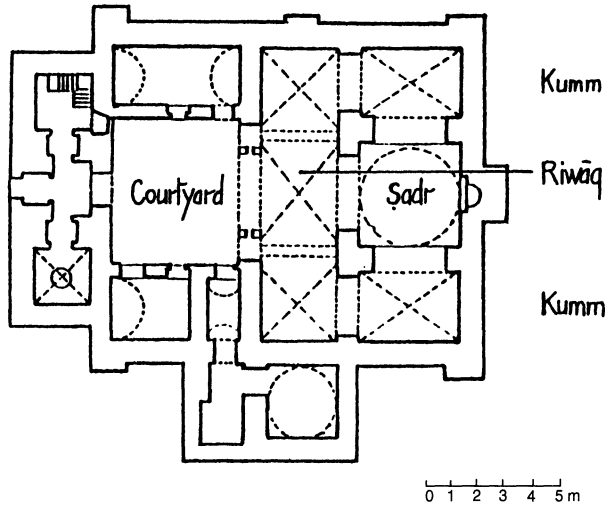


Fig. 39: Plan of the mashhad al-Juyūshī in Cairo

Kāmil, the two *qubbās* of Baybars and Qalāwūn, and the iwan of al-Ashraf Khalīl—but this is impossible to ascertain for we have no idea what they looked like. Analysis of the Iwān al-Kabīr’s architecture, however, suggests that it was designed with other architectural paradigms in mind.

Origin of the Iwān al-Kabīr. The Iwān al-Kabīr was fundamentally different from the two common hall types in Islamic Egypt, the *qā’a* and the *majlis*. This difference has been noted by many scholars, who have proposed a variety of architectural precedents. Doris Behrens-Abouseif has suggested for its model the main hall in several Fatimid shrines, specifically the mashhads of al-Juyūshī (1085) and Sayyida Ruqayya (1133) in Cairo (fig. 39),⁶⁵ but these are really only variations on the *majlis*, the most widespread hall type in Egypt until the thirteenth century. A *majlis* has a T-shaped plan with a large space in the center and two smaller, and sometimes shallower, ones flanking it, a front gallery (*riwāq*), and a set of doors that separate the gallery from the central space, whether an open court or a roofed *durqā’a*.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Behrens-Abouseif, “Citadel of Cairo,” 77–78.

⁶⁶ Sayed, “Cairene Qā’a,” 32–39.

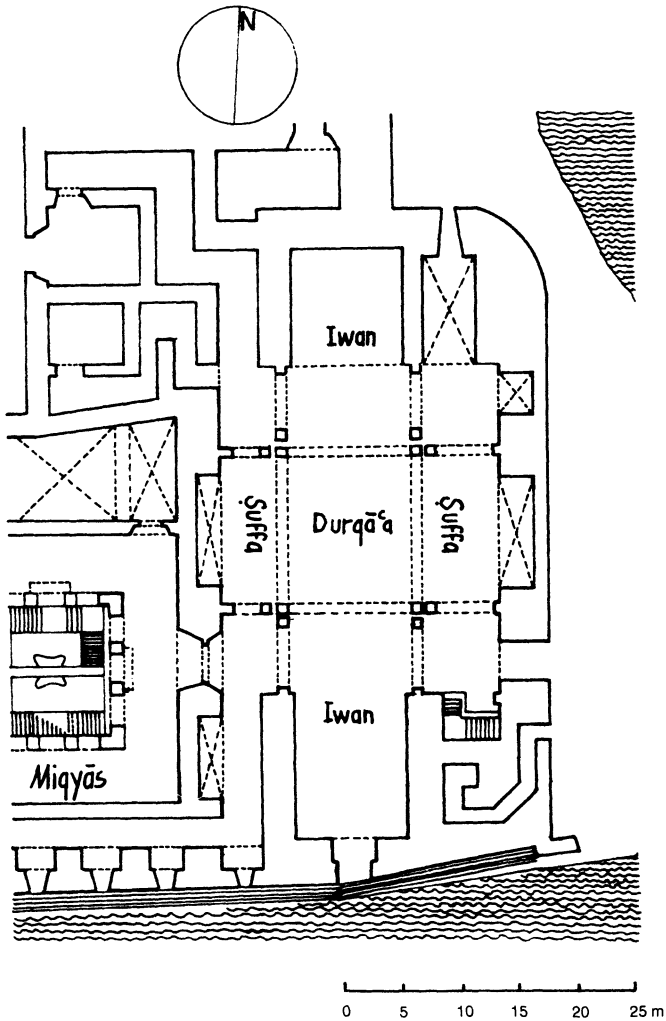


Fig. 40: Plan of the hall of al-Šāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb at the Rawḍa Citadel

The halls of both Fatimid shrines clearly derive from the *majlis* plan, but have in addition a dome above the central back space, probably either to acclaim the sacrosanct persons to whom they were dedicated, or to emphasize the qibli side, an arrangement encountered in several large Fatimid mosques such as the Azhar mosque (970–72) and al-Ḥākīm mosque (990–1013).

Alexandre Lézine proposes as a prototype for the iwan and other royal Mamluk structures the hall of al-Şāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb at the Rawḍa Citadel,⁶⁷ perhaps the hall that Ibn Sa‘īd al-Maghribī, who visited the Rawḍa Citadel shortly after its completion in the 1240s, identified as the iwan that al-Şāliḥ used for his audiences.⁶⁸ The plan of this hall, which was still standing in the early nineteenth century, comprised two iwans facing one another across a huge *durqā‘a* (fig. 40). Four sets of columns, each composed of three columns arranged in a triangle, formed a smaller rectangle inside the *durqā‘a*. They framed the side iwans and the two alcoves (*şuffas*) on the long sides and may have supported a dome, or perhaps a wooden lantern, in the center of a flat roof, similar to those found in later Cairene houses and called *shukhshikha*. Lézine considered this hall to have formed a transitional stage between the hall (which we now know was called the *majlis*) in Fuṣṭāṭ houses and later *qā‘as* of the Baḥrī Mamluk period.

Though al-Şāliḥ Najm al-Dīn’s hall may have presented the model for other Mamluk halls, it could not have been the prototype of the Iwān al-Kabīr. Reduced to its essence, the iwan was a roof supported on pointed arches carried by columns; its façades were open on three of its four sides, while both *majlis* and *qā‘a* plans are by definition enclosed spaces. Only its back wall, which belonged to the structure behind it, the *dihlīz al-‘ubūr*, and functioned as the screen that separated it from the royal palaces, was solid. That openness was in fact one of its essential characteristics, since it functioned both as stage and reviewing stand for the sultan. He could be seen from all sides when he sat to hear the grievances of his subjects on *dār al-‘adl* days or for embassy receptions,⁶⁹ and he could view the parades taking place in the court in front of the iwan on audience days.⁷⁰ The iwan was considered a public, free-standing structure “outside”

⁶⁷ Lézine, “Les salles nobles des palais Mamelouks,” 65, 71.; see also Shemuel Tamari, *Kaah: iyun leksiko-arkhitektontoni*, 62–63, 82–84, for a reconstructed typology of royal *qā‘as*. The plan of al-Şāliḥ’s *qā‘a* is known from its reproduction in the *Déscription de l’Égypte, état moderne*, Plates, vol. 1, pl. 23; redrawn by Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 86.

⁶⁸ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 183–84, quoting from Ibn Sa‘īd al-Maghribī’s *al-Mughrib*.

⁶⁹ A Florentine traveler named Brancacci describes an audience he attended there during the reign of Barsbāy; he says that the sultan was seated on a raised platform inside the iwan and was perfectly visible from all sides; see Behrens-Abouseif, “Citadel of Cairo,” 42–43.

⁷⁰ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 206.

(*ẓāhir*) the royal palaces.⁷¹ The form of the central door at its rear, complete with its recessed arched opening, topped with the muqarnas semidome and flanked by the two customary *maṣṭabas*, gives it the appearance of a typical Mamluk portal leading to the private royal palaces behind and reinforces the impression that the Iwān al-Kabīr belonged outside of these palaces.

Analysis of the medieval sources and the seventeenth- to the nineteenth-century drawings and descriptions suggests that two features of the Iwān al-Kabīr, its green dome and its tripartite plan, were particularly eminent. Both tripartite plan and green dome had been part of the architectural vocabulary of Islamic palaces before the time of al-Nāşir MuĤammad, and both were apparently recognized by people as signs of majesty.⁷² Green domes appear to have been celebrated architectural elements in early Islamic palaces. Textual references to at least three Umayyad palaces—the *dār al-imāra* of Mu'āwiya in Damascus (640–661), that of al-Ĥajjāj in his new capital of Wasit in Iraq (695), and that of Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik in Rusafa (724–43)—and the palace of Abū Ja'far al-Manşūr in his round city of Baghdad (762) call them by the generic name of *qubbat al-khadrā* (green dome).⁷³ The four domes belonged to politico-religious complexes that formed the nucleus of the early Islamic cities. Modern scholars have traced the symbolism of the green dome to the wide range of meaning the domes had in the Byzantine and Sasanian traditions, two important precursors of Islamic architecture.⁷⁴ Arabic sources are silent on the iconography of the Umayyad halls, but they describe the dome of al-Manşūr in Baghdad, which collapsed in 941, as “the emblem of Baghdad and its crown, and the triumph of the Abbasids.”⁷⁵ The memory of the green dome seems to have survived

⁷¹ Zāhiri, *Zubda*, 26.

⁷² The two features are further discussed in Nasser Rabbat, “Mamluk Throne Halls: Qubba or Iwan?,” *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 201–18.

⁷³ References collected in Riĥāwī, “Quşūr al-Ĥukkam,” 22: 34–36; Lassner, *Topography of Baghdad*, 52–53, 134–35, 239–40; Grabar, “al-Mushatta, Baghdad and Wasit,” 105–6. The medieval historians had never seen the domes themselves so that objections have been raised as to just how “green” the domes of these palaces were. For a discussion of the possibilities of colors and meanings attached to the *qubbat al-khadrā*, see Charles Wendell, “Baghdad: Imago Mundi and Other Foundation Lore,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2 (1971): 117–20; Jonathan Bloom, “The Qubbat al-Khadrā and the Iconography of Height in Early Islamic Architecture,” *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 135–41.

⁷⁴ Wendell, “Baghdad,” 118–19; Grabar, “Dome of Heaven,” 15–17.

⁷⁵ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārikh Baghdād*, 14 vols. (Beirut, n.d.), 1: 73;

through the literary and artistic tradition well into the Mamluk period, although actual examples had long gone.⁷⁶

The green dome of the Iwān al-Kabir, whose prominent position is emphasized by all contemporary sources, appears to have been a deliberate reference to the image of the *qubbat al-khaḍrā*, for otherwise green domes were unknown in medieval Egyptian architecture. The only reference we have to a pre-Mamluk audience hall with a dome is that of the Fatimid Iwān al-Kabir in the Eastern Palace of al-Qāhira, which had a gilded, not a green, dome under which the caliph sat on audience days.⁷⁷ Since the *qubbat al-khaḍrā* probably symbolized the caliph's power, the reuse of a green dome by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad may have been a sign of his sovereignty (*sulṭān*) which was recognizable to his subjects. It may also have been one way of forging a link with the Abbasid caliphate, under whose aegis the Mamluks were theoretically ruling, and an attempt to dissociate their ceremonial and official image from that of the Fatimids.⁷⁸

Zakariyya al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb Āthār al-Bilād wa-Akhbār al-'Ibād*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1848), 310; Lassner, *Topography*, 53, for his translation of this description.

⁷⁶ The memory of the Baghdad dome with its horseman on top may have been preserved in the design of an arbiter for a drinking session illustrated in al-Jazarī, *Kitāb fī Ma'rīfat al-Ḥiyāl al-Handasiyya*, trans. Donald Hill (*The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* [Dordrecht, Holland, 1974], 99, fig. 82, and 219, pl. 13). Al-Jazarī composed his work around 1204 for Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the Artuqid ruler of Amid (r. 1200–22). Figure 82 belongs to a manuscript dated to 1486; plate 13 belongs to a manuscript dated to 1354.

⁷⁷ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1: 388.

⁷⁸ I tentatively suggest here that a green dome may have been the symbol of *sulṭān*, which was an attribute of the Umayyad and early Abbasid caliphs. The word's usage evolved from the level of a prerogative of rule to a proper title of a ruler in the early eleventh century. It was used in combination with *al-dawla* (the state), as a title by one of the Buyids, Abū Shujā' ibn Bahā' al-Dawla. The Buyids had stripped the Abbasid caliph of his political authority and installed themselves as the guardians of the caliphate in Baghdad in 945. The title also appears to have been adopted by Maḥmūd the Ghaznavid at the same time, and some reports say that he had obtained it from the caliph; see C. E. Bosworth, "The Titulature of the Early Ghaznavids," *Oriens* 15 (1962): 210–33. The title and the real power passed on to the Turkish Seljuqs after they removed the Buyids and became the new custodians of the caliphate. From there on the title may have been transferred through the Zangids, who had never used it themselves, to the Ayyubids, and later on to the Mamluks; see, J. H. Kramers, "Sultan," in *EI*¹, 7: 543–45. The revival of a weakened and subservient Abbasid caliphate in Cairo after 1261 and the desire to project an image of legitimacy on the part of the Mamluks may have led to the resurrection of the visual signs of *sulṭān*, including the green dome. Clearly, more needs to be said on the subject, but this is not the place for it.

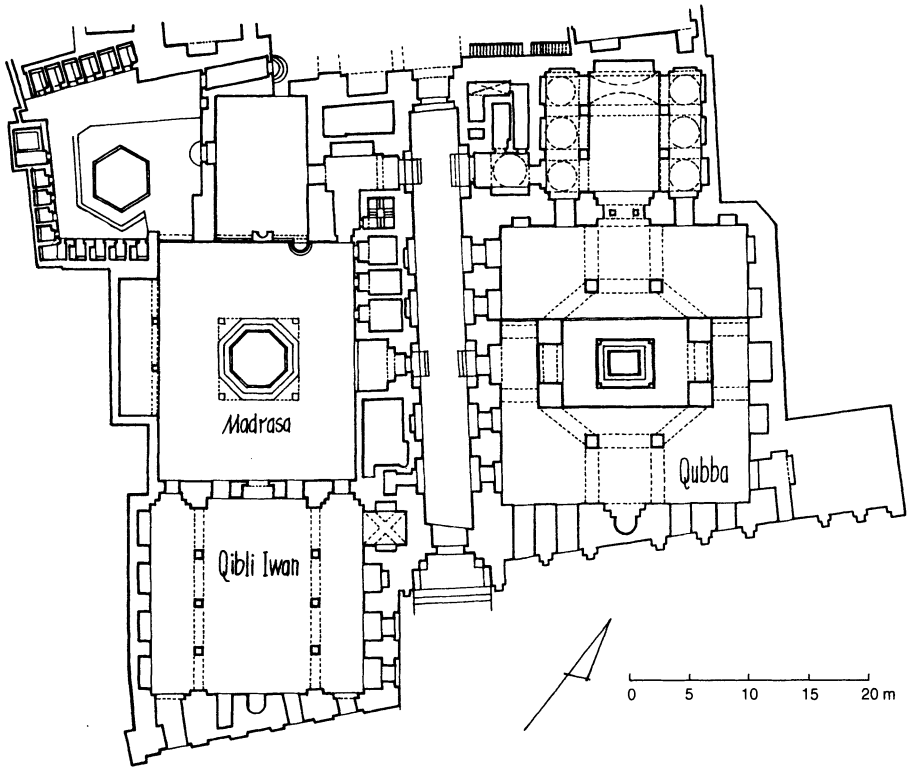


Fig. 41: Plan of the madrasa of Sultan Qalāwūn

The Iwān al-Kabīr's tripartite plan bore a manifest resemblance to a specific type, the basilica, with its central nave and two arcaded side aisles, though basilicas were uncommon in Cairo at the time. Only one other contemporary Cairene structure, the qibli iwan of the madrasa of Sultan Qalāwūn (1284), had used such a plan (fig. 41).⁷⁹ There, however, the three aisles with four arches each that form the tripartite arrangement appear to have been added to the qibli iwan as an afterthought to what was otherwise a madrasa with the usual ubiquitous two-iwan plan. The madrasa may already have been started with its two iwans when an order was given to insert the three aisles in the qibli iwan. They may have been applied to provide the prayer

⁷⁹ Behrens-Abouseif, "Citadel of Cairo," 76, notes this precedent.

space with a different treatment or an impressive façade, or to suggest a royal association. In fact, the entire complex of Qalāwūn may have alluded to palatial symbolism in the original functions of its site, its architectural references, and the lavishness of its decoration. The conversion of an exclusive old Fatimid palace to a public socio-religious complex may have been an intentional gesture aimed at advertising the generosity and charity of the ruler.⁸⁰ It may also have imitated other structures admired by the patron or suggested by his architects.

The context was evidently different for the Iwān al-Kabīr. Its plan seems to have been a well-thought-out variation of a basilica modified by shortening its sides to almost a square and by opening three sides to provide an unobstructed view to the outside and to suggest the accessibility of the sultan sitting within. The basic tripartite division leading to a focal point in the center of the back wall is kept in it, though the apse is replaced with a monumental portal. These alterations, important as they may be, do not conceal the similarity between the Iwān al-Kabīr's plan and the domed basilica type, examples of which abound in eastern Roman, Byzantine, and pre-Islamic Syrian urban and provincial architecture.⁸¹

The Iwān al-Kabīr's formal affinity with the basilical type may have been a consequence of a functional one, for although basilicas are usually connected with Christian churches, the original function as a royal hall for public audiences and the symbolism attached to it and developed for it were never lost or forgotten.⁸² The historical circumstances of the Iwān al-Kabīr's building and the elaborate descriptions of the ceremonies that took place in it point in this direction, but the complete image is still too sketchy and the sources too inadequate to allow for any firm conclusion.⁸³ At this stage of our knowledge,

⁸⁰ Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 29, fols. 28–30, describes the buildings, its waqf, and the social functions of the *bimāristān* and the mausoleum; reproduced in Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 997–1001, and translated in Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 191.

⁸¹ Cyril Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (New York, 1985), 52–88, discusses the domed basilicas from the age of Justinian, including the most famous of them all, the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople.

⁸² Irving Lavin, "The House of the Lord," *Art Bulletin* 44 (1962): 16–17; William MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire*, 53, no. 21.

⁸³ Jean Sauvaget, *La mosquée oméyyade de Médina: Étude sur les origines architecturales de la mosquée et de la basilique* (Paris, 1947), 158–84, argues the persistence of royal signs in the use of the basilica in early Islamic architecture. Many of Sauvaget's ideas on the adaptations and transformations of the basilical plan are still

we can only surmise that the inspiration for the Iwān al-Kabīr may have come from some intermediate Islamic examples, most probably in Syria, where the existence of an Umayyad tradition of audience halls that had adapted the basilica form has been demonstrated, and its extension into or revival in medieval times in Syria postulated.⁸⁴ Like the green dome, the basilical plan of the Iwān al-Kabīr may have been a consciously historicizing choice through which al-Nāṣir MuḤammad wanted not only to reproduce an early Islamic model or its medieval descendants but also to reintroduce a well-established symbol of a caliphal golden age.

The Nāṣiri Mosque

Shortly after the Iwān al-Kabīr was finished in 1335, al-Nāṣir MuḤammad demolished the congregational mosque at the Citadel and started rebuilding it. The sources do not say whether the rebuilding involved any enlargement, but one of them, Ibn al-Dawādārī, says that only the interior of the mosque—that is, the arcades, the mihrab, and the *maqṣūra*—was gutted.⁸⁵ Al-Yūsufī, the other eyewitness, records that the site of the enlarged mosque included the “old house of the washbasin” (*ṭiṣṭakhāna*) and parts of a residential quarter named Ḥarat Mukhtaṣṣ, which was probably where some of the *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs lived.⁸⁶ Maqrīzī, who was a later chronicler and copied al-Yūsufī's text, mentions only that the new mosque covered a larger area than the older one.⁸⁷ The mosque's façades, however,

unchallenged and warrant further research despite recent scholarship that modified, and sometimes disproved, his conclusions on the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina. Lavin, “The House of the Lord,” 16–17, begins to chart the survival of basilicas in Islamic palaces.

⁸⁴ Jean Sauvaget, “Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis,” *Byzantion* 14 (1939): 115–30 (reprinted in *Mémorial Jean Sauvaget* [Damascus, 1954], 147–64); Richard Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran and the Islamic World* (Leiden, 1972), 50, 62–64; Henri Stern, “Notes sur l'architecture des châteaux omeyyades,” *Ars Islamica* 11–12 (1946): 89–92, all discuss pre-Islamic and Umayyad palaces in Syria with basilical plans and see in them a syncretic creation of a new type that synthesized Sasanian models of audience halls with the local, classically inspired basilica. Palatial architecture in Syria until the twelfth century is not very well known. One intriguing example, the Qaṣr al-Banāt in Raqqā, ca. 1168, however, suggests that basilical plans survived; see Tabbaa, “Circles of Power,” 185, no. 50.

⁸⁵ Ibn al-Dawādārī, *al-Durr al-Fākhīr*, 382.

⁸⁶ Yūsufī, *Nuzha*, 240.

⁸⁷ Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 380–81.

suggest quite the opposite. First, walled-up windows, at a lower level than the actual windows on the four façades, are clearly visible. Second, the two minarets rest on bases that are lower than the roof level of the mosque, and the base of the eastern minaret still has some of its original arched crenellations, showing that the roof was about 2 meters higher after the rebuilding (pl. 25). Raising the mosque's roof without enlarging the building resulted in a 1: 4 ratio of height to length in the mosque's façades that is unusual for other congregational mosques in Cairo.⁸⁸

The mosque stood on the eastern side of the Raḥbat al-Iwān facing the Iwān al-Kabīr which stood on the northwestern side. The present-day court, extending from the Bāb al-Jadīd to the walls of Muḥammad 'Alī's mosque, has almost the same circumference as the original one as it appears on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte*. The mosque has three doors, on the northwest, the northeast, and the southwest. The first, used as the main entrance today, is set in a deep recess and surmounted with a muqarnas conch. It opens into the Citadel's court. Above it is an inscription plaque which contains al-Nāṣir's name and the date of the first rebuilding 718 A.H. (1318). The second, the northeastern, entrance is opposite the Bāb al-Qulla which separates the Citadel's two enclosures. It consists of a slightly pointed arched door placed inside a shallow trilobed recess that has an inscription plaque whose date is missing. The entire composition is in the middle of a projecting rectangle that reaches two-thirds the height of the mosque's façade. It is topped with a row of sawtooth crenellations similar to the ones on the walls of the mosque's inner court (*ṣahn*) (pl. 26). The southwestern door is set oddly off-center in another projecting rectangle; the door itself is now blocked with masonry and topped with an arch filled with a sunrise motif made out of alternating green and red masonry (pl. 27). As noted by Behrens-Abouseif, the three doors have no *maṣṭabas*, which is unusual for Mamluk mosques, but this could be because a royal mosque inside the Citadel had no need of doorkeepers.⁸⁹

The façades of the mosque are uncharacteristically plain and fortress-like for the period, with arched crenellations on top. They

⁸⁸ Noted by Martin S. Briggs, *Muhammadan Architecture in Egypt and Palestine* (Oxford, 1924; reprint, 1974), 101.

⁸⁹ Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture of Cairo, An Introduction* (Leiden, 1989), 109.

give the whole structure an austere and dignified aspect unalleviated by the colorful finials of the two minarets. The façades may have made a different impression when the now-buried lower floor of the mosque was still above ground. Although the sources do not mention it, the mosque was raised (*mu'allaq*), as we can tell from the blocked arched windows, whose upper parts show above the present ground level, and from a print of the late eighteenth century.⁹⁰

The two minarets, one on the eastern corner and one above the main door, face the two audiences to whom the call to prayer (*adhān*) would have been directed—the mamluks in the northern enclosure across from the Bāb al-Qulla and the amirs and administrators in the Iwān al-Kabīr area. The minarets do not match, and both are equally unusual in shape and surface articulation, although the eastern minaret is more Mamluk in type than the western one. It has a rectangular base, followed by a cylindrical story surmounted with a hexagonal pavilion. The western minaret has two cylindrical, carved stories, the lower covered with a continuous vertical chevron motif, the upper with a horizontal one (pl. 28). Both minarets have peculiar finials that Behrens-Abouseif described as “garlic-shaped,” set atop tapering, ribbed cylinders, and both are covered with greenish enameled tiles, with bands of white Qur'anic inscription on a blue background surrounding the bases of the finials.

There is nothing else quite like these two minarets in Cairo. They are believed to be the work of a Tabrizi master builder who was brought to Cairo sometime after 1322 by Amir Aytamish, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's envoy to the Ilkhan Abū Sa'id; he was said to have constructed the minarets of the mosque of 'Alī Shāh in Tabriz.⁹¹ No chronicler attributes these minarets to this Tabrizi master, but many mention him in connection with the two minarets that belong to the mosque of Qawṣūn on the north-south Shāri' al-A'zam, built in 1330, and a minaret for the mosque Aytamish had built in his *iqṭā'* village.⁹² We know nothing about this latter minaret, but Evliya Çelebi says that the minarets of Qawṣūn's mosque were covered with faience. Perhaps al-Nāṣir Muḥammad admired the minarets of

⁹⁰ Published in Ludwig Mayer, *Views in Egypt*, 48.

⁹¹ Laila Ibrāhīm and J. M. Rogers, “The Great Ḥānqāh of the Emir Qawṣūn,” 55–56; Michael Meinecke, “Die mamlukischen Faience Dekorationen: Eine Werkstätte aus Tabriz in Kairo (1330–1355),” *Kunst des Orients* 11 (1976–77): 85; Little, “Notes on Aitamiš,” 397–98; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *The Minarets of Cairo* (Cairo, 1985), 78.

⁹² Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 320; Little, “Notes on Aitamiš,” 398.

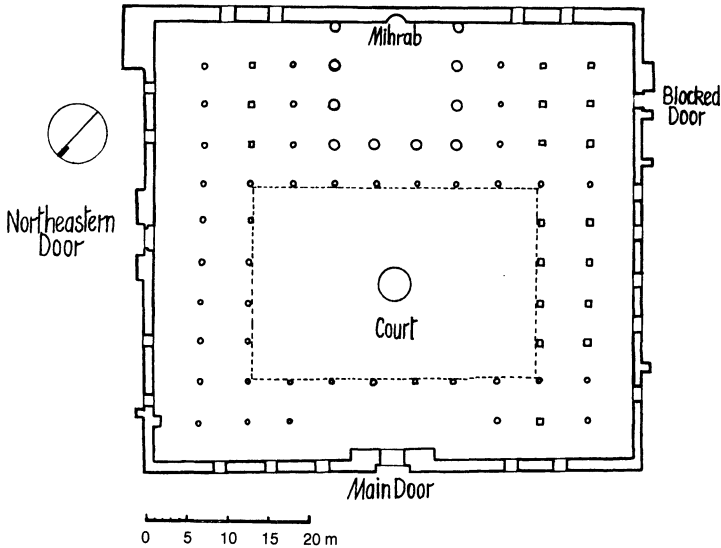


Fig. 42: Plan of the Nāṣiri Mosque

Qawṣūn's mosque and asked the Tabrizi master to apply his skills to his own mosque's minarets. Unfortunately, all the minarets of the Tabrizi master we know of—on the mosques of both Qawṣūn and Aytamish and their Iranian model, the mosque of 'Alī Shāh in Tabriz—have disappeared, so we do not know if they bore any resemblance to the minarets of the Citadel's mosque or not. Michael Meinecke, however, basing his argument on the depiction of the tops of two minarets in a thirteenth-century painting of Tabriz presumably representing the mosque of 'Alī Shāh, claims to find a Tabrizi influence in the Citadel's minarets.⁹³

The almost square plan of the mosque (63 by 57 meters) is of the hypostyle type, with a prayer hall of four arcades and three porticoes each with two arcades (fig. 42). The square, central part of the roof in the prayer hall, supported on ten monolithic granite columns is elevated above the rest of the mosque and surmounted with a green-tiled dome (the one there now was rebuilt in the twentieth century). The transition from square to circle is achieved by four muqarnas pendentives similar to the ones depicted in the French perspective drawing of the Iwān al-Kabīr (fig. 43). The columns are all Pharaonic

⁹³ Meinecke, "Mamlukischen Faience," 89–97; idem, *Architektur*, 1: 83.

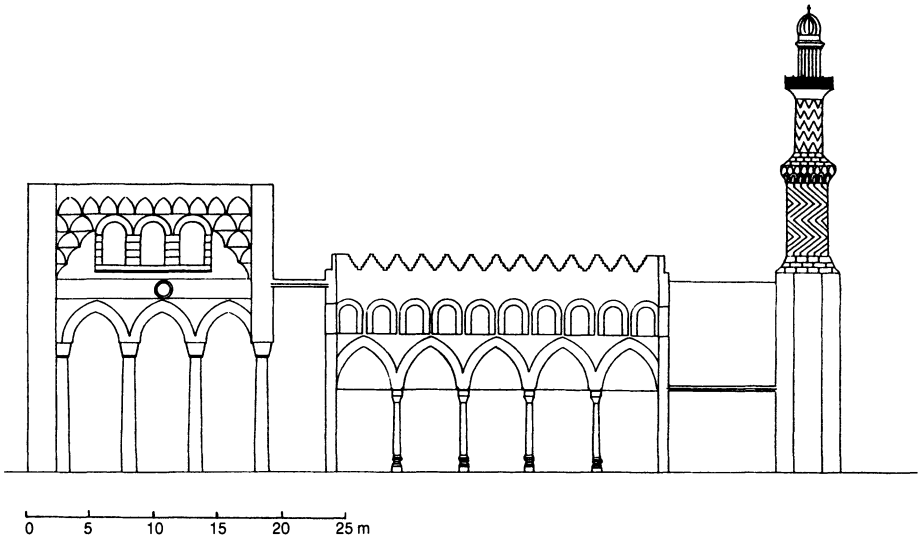


Fig. 43: Section through the Nāṣiri Mosque

or Ptolemaic; they were reportedly brought from Ashmūnīn in Upper Egypt, and have an array of capitals that represent every known style in pre-Islamic Egypt. The arcades carry a second tier of arched windows, two above each arch, that are of the same size as the exterior windows. All the voussoirs of the mosque's arcades and the frames of the windows above them are made of alternate red and black stone, a treatment that combines *ablaq* (alternating black and white) with *mushahhar* (red and white).⁹⁴ This gives the arcades a unified appearance that diminishes the jumbled effect caused by the variety of columns, bases, and capitals used (pl. 29). The ceiling, made of octagonal wooden coffers decorated with vegetal motifs, was painted with bright colors and gilding, of which some traces still exist. On both the northeastern and the southwestern walls are remains of intricate marble mosaic work that must have formed a continuous high dado around the full perimeter of the mosque.⁹⁵

One conclusion to be drawn from this description of the mosque is

⁹⁴ Waqf of Amir Khāyir Bak, 4: 11, defines *mushahhar* as alternating red and white stone.

⁹⁵ In fact, Yūsufī, *Nuzha*, 24, states that the second rebuilding of the mosque included covering the entire length of its walls with marble.

that its outer appearance echoed that of the Iwān al-Kabīr across the Raḥbat al-Iwān, although their functions and their interior spaces were fundamentally different.⁹⁶ This resemblance must have been intentional. The reports on the mosque's rebuilding indicate that it involved measures to unify its appearance with that of the Iwān al-Kabīr, including raising the mosque's arcades to the height of the iwan's, rebuilding the dome and covering it with green faience like that on the iwan's dome, and using arched crenellations on the outside walls very unlike the crenellation of sawtooth triangles on the interior walls around the courtyard and atop the rectangular projection of the northeastern entrance.

Another conclusion to be drawn is that the mosque's forms and structure reflect its position between the private and the public spheres of circulation at the Citadel. Because it was the congregational mosque for the entire Citadel, it was a public building open to worshipers who lived in the northern and southern enclosures and to those who happened to be present in the Citadel, such as the petitioners at the DĀR AL-ʿADL, at prayer times. It was also the royal mosque where the sultan performed Friday prayer that all amirs were required to attend. To those assembled, this prayer fulfilled a political role, for it confirmed the sultan's legitimacy through the invocation of his name in the sermon. The mosque was thus a public space with a royal function.

Because the mosque was inside the southern enclosure, it lay on the edge between the private and public spheres of the sultan's life, just as the Iwān al-Kabīr did. But, unlike the Iwān al-Kabīr, which was separated from the sultan's private quarters by a series of semi-public *quṣūr* that constituted the Qaṣr al-Ablaq, the mosque was adjacent to the harem apartments in the Citadel, which required a careful handling of the connection. It had to be accessible to worshipers, without breaching the privacy and safety of the sultan and his family. This was achieved by providing it with three doors and a private passage that linked it with the sultan's quarters. The northwestern entrance opened onto the central court of the southern enclosure and provided access for the amirs, judges, and mamluks when they would come from the iwan on the days of *khidma*. It was also the ceremonial door whenever a royal *mawkib* required a congregation at the

⁹⁶ Meinecke, *Architektur*, 62.

mosque, such as when the caliph was brought to give the Friday sermon on politically critical occasions,⁹⁷ or whenever a ceremony involved distributing robes of honor to the *muta'amimīn*, or religious men.⁹⁸ This door is higher than the two other doors and has the customary muqarnas semidome above it to mark it as a main gate. It is positioned at the center of the northwestern façade in a rectangular projection that encompasses the full height of the mosque. The western minaret sits above the right side of its portal projection, which is another sign of its prominence.⁹⁹

The northeastern gate was also a public entrance, but not a ceremonial one. It faced the northern enclosure across from the Bāb al-Qulla which opened onto it through the *dihliz* that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had constructed in 1320 after he had rebuilt the mosque for the first time. This door provided access for worshipers from the mamluk barracks and officials who worked in the several administrative halls in the southern section of the northern enclosure. It had no ceremonial function, and thus it was less monumental and less ornate than the northwestern door.

At prayer time, the sultan would enter the mosque through the third (southeastern) door, accompanied by his *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs. He would go directly to his *maqṣūra* which faced the door and was set to the right of the mihrab. The *maqṣūra* screen separated the sultan and his entourage from the rest of the hall while maintaining visual contact. After the prayer, the sultan would return to his private quarters (*al-dūr al-sulṭāniyya*) through the same door; the rest of the worshipers would leave the mosque through one of the other two. The southeastern door thus formed the entrance for the sultan and his close amirs; its size and location clearly demonstrate its private quality.¹⁰⁰ Its opening was small, allowing the entry of only one person at a time. It faced a court—now truncated and filled with debris—which once led to the sultan's private quarters through a passage that is now underground.

⁹⁷ Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 1: 774; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 8: 128, 135; both report that the caliph was released from his house arrest by al-Ashraf Khalīl in 1290 to deliver the sermon at the Citadel's mosque and formally to recognize al-Ashraf as sultan.

⁹⁸ Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 3: 963, qadis were gathered at the mosque in 1399 for the distribution of robes of honor.

⁹⁹ Similarly, the main gate of the Azhar mosque has a minaret above it on the right side, and the mosque of al-Māridānī, built in 1339-40, has one on the left side of the projecting portal.

¹⁰⁰ Maqrizī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 212.

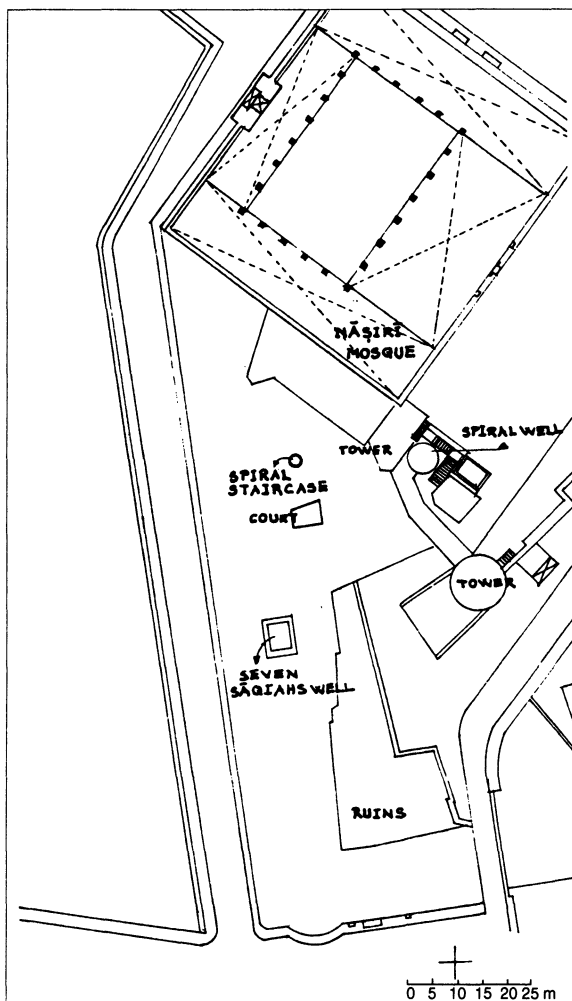


Fig. 44: Areas south and west of the Nāṣiri Mosque

The passage opposite the mosque door is part of a group of buried and ruined structures that occupies a triangular section extending from the mosque's southwestern façade to the court in front of Muḥammad 'Alī's Sarāy al-'Adl (Hall of Justice) (fig. 44). These structures present a composite group of Mamluk and nineteenth-century remains which are very difficult to disentangle. They include the Bi'r al-Sab' Sawāqī (Well of the Seven Waterwheels) into which

the Nāşiri aqueduct emptied Nile water for the Citadel and several connected spaces whose functions are difficult to determine. They may have belonged to the royal kitchen rebuilt by al-Nāşir MuḤammad, because Mamluk sources locate it next to the mosque and because the proximity of the water source supports this inference.¹⁰¹ MuḤammad 'Alī also rebuilt the kitchen in the same location. Some ruined vaulted spaces and the trapezoidal court clearly belong to this rebuilding (marked as such on the plan). Recently, the southern part of the old kitchen was removed to provide space for a series of tourist services along the straight road between the two mosques of al-Nāşir MuḤammad and MuḤammad 'Alī and in front of the Sarāy al-'Adl of MuḤammad 'Alī to the south.

It is impossible to reconstruct the connection between the passage and the rest of the buried structures to the south of it, although they appear linked today. It is clear from the plan that all these structures, Mamluk and nineteenth-century alike (which must have been superimposed on older Mamluk structures), are aligned with the well that formed the terminus of the aqueduct, so the original structures must have been built to follow its orientation, and thus they postdate it. Al-Nāşir MuḤammad is the one who activated the *sāqiyas* on top of the intake tower by the Nile and built the series of wells that collected the water at several intervals along the aqueduct, including the last reservoir well, in 1312.¹⁰² This date therefore represents the *terminus a quo* for any of these structures, and 1335, the date of the mosque's rebuilding, is their *terminus ad quem*.

The passage occupies the northern end of this group of structures and definitely did not belong to the royal kitchen (fig. 45). It is composed of a corridor and a small hall on its western end. The entrance of the corridor faces the mosque's door across the court. It is barely wide enough for the passage of one person. Its other end opens into a larger corridor which is tilted to the north by 60° clockwise (pl. 30). This proves that the first and short section of the corridor was constructed at a date later than either the second section or the mosque door. It was rotated on purpose to face the mosque door. The second, and larger, portion of the corridor runs for 5.35 meters, with an alcove at the end of its southern side, measuring 2.3 by 1.4 meters. The alcove may have served as the guard post commanding access

¹⁰¹ Yūsufī, *Nuzha*, 240; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 381; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 181.

¹⁰² Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 30, fol. 80; Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāşir*, 95.

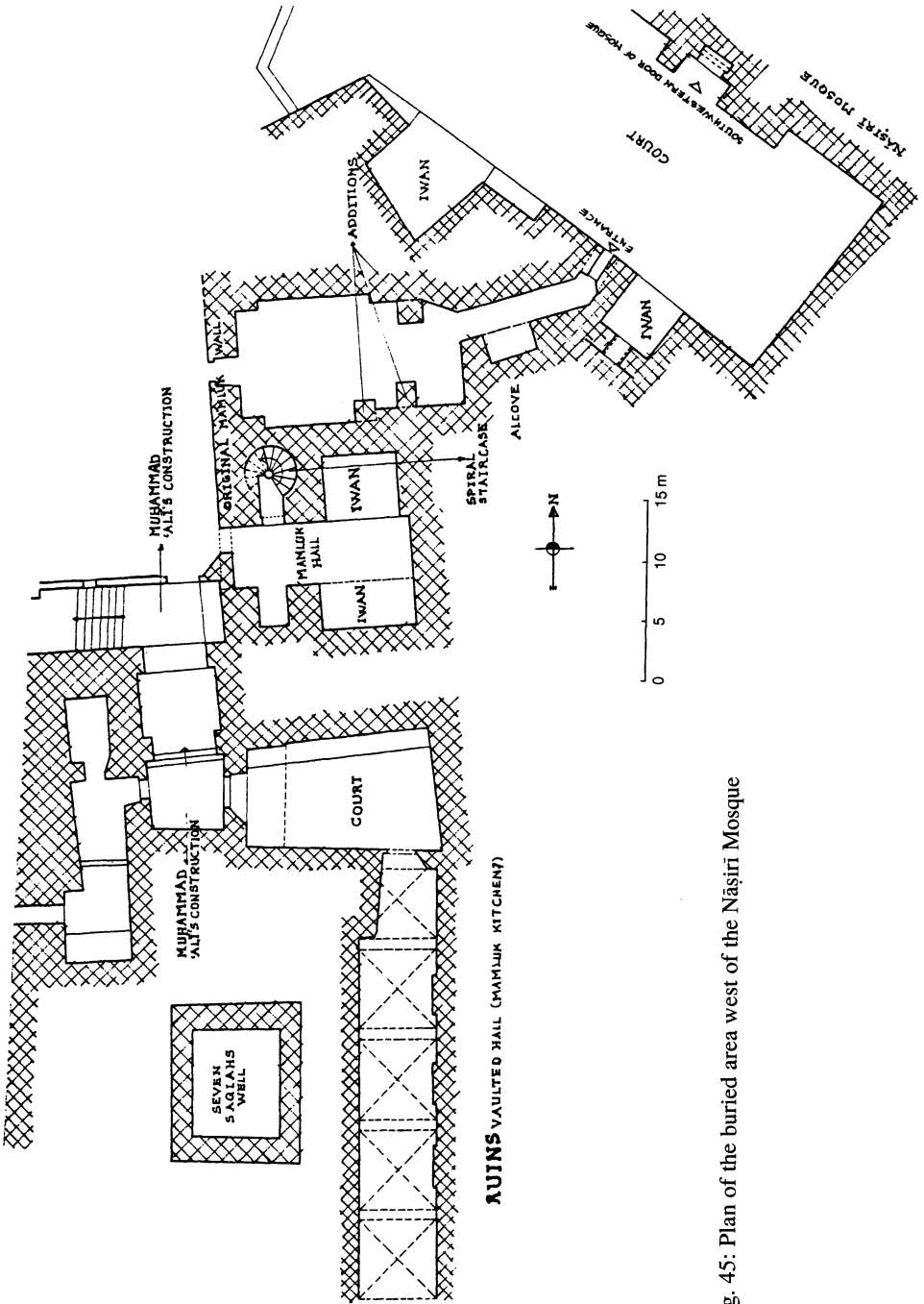


Fig. 45: Plan of the buried area west of the Nāṣiri Mosque

from the mosque side. The corridor opens onto a rectangular hall whose sides were crudely reinforced sometime after it was built. The hall originally had two shallow alcoves (*şuffas*) on its long sides and a door at the far end. The area beyond this door was rebuilt in the nineteenth century and all traces of its original plan have been obliterated. The wall in which the door is cut is an original one, however, and it extended to the south beyond the limit of the hall. Its clean surface and the facing of its stone blocks suggest that it was an outside wall, which means that the door in it originally led into an open space. One can conclude from this that the hall and the corridor constituted an architectural unit whose sole function was to connect two open courts on its two sides: the one in front of the mosque, and the mosque itself, and the open space on the other side with whatever existed beyond it.

The sources speak of a door to the harem, the Bāb al-Sitāra (Gate of the Curtain), which was entered from the mosque and which appears to have become known simply as Bāb al-Ḥarīm (Gate of the Harem) in the Burjī period.¹⁰³ One account repeated in several chronicles indicates that the Bāb al-Sitāra was preceded by a court, the Raḥbat Bāb al-Sitāra, probably the open space that bordered the wall at the end of the passage.¹⁰⁴ The buried passage with its narrowing corridor led originally into Raḥbat Bāb al-Sitāra and formed the transition between the public space and the private sphere beyond the Bāb al-Sitāra. This transition was very carefully designed. First, the two spheres were announced by forecourts, the one in front of the mosque and the Raḥbat Bāb al-Sitāra, which must have functioned as preludes or as buffers before one entered into either the realm of public life or the private domain of the sultan. Second, the corridor was gradually made narrower so that by the time it ended, only one person, namely the sultan, could go out. Third, it was provided with a checkpoint so that no unauthorized person could go through it.

¹⁰³ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 212, and Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 375, say that the mosque door led to the Bāb al-Sitāra. Jawharī, *Inbā' al-Ḥaṣr*, 62, 123, 331, 373, and 499, speaks of Bāb al-Sitāra and Bāb al-Ḥarīm as interchangeable entities. He was writing in the period of Qāyrbāy (late fifteenth century).

¹⁰⁴ The story of Sultan al-Manṣūr 'Alī who was brought from the harem to the Raḥbat Bāb al-Sitāra and enthroned there in 1377 is reported by Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 3: 276; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 11: 72; Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 432. Casanova, "Histoire," 625, cites Ibn Taghri-Birdī but suggests that the door of the mosque is the one named Bāb al-Sitāra.

Fourth, in addition to aligning the exit from the passage with the mosque door, some consideration was given to privacy: the corridor is bent so that no one standing in the court in front of the mosque could see to the other end of the passage.

The Hawsh

The *hawsh* (lit. enclosure) was built in 1338 in the record time of thirty-six days and at a high human cost. It was the last project completed at the Citadel before the death of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The sources say that the *hawsh* was originally a huge crater (*ghūr*) at the Citadel outside the Bāb al-Qarāfa, under the quarters of the sultan and the harem.¹⁰⁵ It is unclear from the wording of the reports whether the site was inside the walls or simply nearby. The hollow had been made a few years earlier from quarrying stone to construct the *qā'as* of the harem, so the *hawsh* must originally have been outside the boundaries of the Citadel proper before al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had incorporated it, since it is unlikely that a sultan would have allowed a huge crater to be dug between his palaces.¹⁰⁶

The *hawsh* was used as an enclosure for sheep and cows, after animal husbandry had become one of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's main interests at the end of his life. When he died, he is reported to have had more than 30,000 animals in the several *hawshs* he had built around Cairo, of which the one adjacent to the Citadel was the last.¹⁰⁷ His enthusiasm had its practical aspects, since raising livestock had its uses in fulfilling his duties toward his mamluks, his amirs, and their mamluks. For the five daily banquets (*simāṭs*) he was expected to give, large numbers of animals had to be slaughtered. On special occasions, the banquets would be more splendid and the quantities of meat consumed correspondingly more enormous.¹⁰⁸ He also stretched the custom, first instituted by al-Zāhir Baybars, to provide the royal mamluks with riding horses, with camels for their baggage transport, and with daily meat rations, in addition to extra meat bonuses on holidays to the mamluks of his great amirs, thus estab-

¹⁰⁵ Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 23; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 433–34; Ibn Taghri-Birdi, *Nujūm*, 9: 119.

¹⁰⁶ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 229.

¹⁰⁷ Idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 531–32; Ibn Taghri-Birdi, *Nujūm*, 9: 170–071.

¹⁰⁸ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 210–11; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 13, 56.

lishing a direct bond with them that bypassed their nominal masters and providers.¹⁰⁹

These practices seem to have been dropped after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's time; at least none of his sons and successors showed any interest in raising animals. The sheep left in his *ḥawsh* were taken by his son al-Nāṣir Aḥmad, along with the royal treasury and stores, to his retreat in Kerak, Jordan, when his short stint as sultan ended abruptly in 1343.¹¹⁰ The *ḥawsh* thus lost its purpose, and left subsequent sultans with an empty enclosure adjacent to their palaces. The first sultan to take advantage of the space was al-Šāliḥ Ismā'īl who in 1345 constructed a new royal palace, the Qā'at al-Duhaysha, and turned part of the *ḥawsh*'s ground into an orchard with a fountain and a *shādirwān*.¹¹¹ Little by little, more *qā'as* and residences were constructed around the *ḥawsh*, so that by the end of the Bahrī period, the original enclosure had become a court surrounded by royal pavilions. The origin of the *ḥawsh* as a hole in the ground seems to have survived in the name of its outer part, which was called the crater (*al-ghūr*), and which was eventually filled with residences for the families of the reigning sultan and earlier sultans.¹¹²

The *ḥawsh*'s functions, and most probably its configuration and boundaries, started slowly to change at the beginning of the Burjī period. Maqrīzī records that, during the reigns of Barqūq and his son Faraj (1399–1412 with one interruption), a great tent would be set up in it to celebrate the Mawlid al-Nabawī (Birth of the Prophet), a custom that persisted right through the Mamluk period and was not abolished until Khāyir Bak was made governor early in Ottoman times (1517–22).¹¹³ By the middle of the fifteenth century, the *ḥawsh* had become the focus of palace life, with the sultan holding his regular audiences in the Qā'at al-Baḥra (Qā'a of the Fountain) there, and playing polo with his mamluks in an enclosure left over from the

¹⁰⁹ Umārī, *Masālik*, 95; copied by Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4: 51; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 216.

¹¹⁰ Idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 618.

¹¹¹ Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 273; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 633.

¹¹² Ibid., 3: 212, says that the *amir kabīr* Aljāy al-Yūsufi lived in the *ghūr* (probably because he was married to Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'bān's mother); Sakhāwī, *Dhayl*, 82, reports the building of a residence for Muḥammad, the son of Sultan Jaqmaq, in 1469 in the *ghūr*.

¹¹³ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 229, and Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i*, 5: 26, 245, lament the abolishing of the festivities and the destruction of the last great tent ordered by Qāyṭbāy.

original one.¹¹⁴ The transformation of the area was so thorough that Ibn Taghrī-Birdī could no longer figure out where or what al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's *ḥawsh* had been and thought it might have been the polo ground.¹¹⁵

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's *ḥawsh* was probably in the southern part of the southern enclosure in the area that later became the residence of the Ottoman pasha and his entourage. Its exact boundaries are difficult to fix. The map of the *Description de l'Égypte* shows a structure marked as the mosque of al-Duhaysha (no. 40) which may have been the metamorphosis of the original Qā'at al-Duhaysha of al-Şāliḥ Ismā'il (see fig. 14). Mamluk sources say that the Qā'at al-Duhaysha stood on the northwestern corner of the original *ḥawsh*. Its northeastern corner may have been at the other end of the east-west line of structures near no. 43 on the map, identified as the *dār al-ḍarb* (mint). This suggestion is supported by an Ottoman report on the transfer of the mint in 1711 by a royal decree (*firmān*) to the Ḥawsh of the Dīwān.¹¹⁶ The *ḥawsh*'s open space may have survived in the form of the two courts on the French map marked Ouasa't al-Bāshā (Court of the Pasha) and Ouasa't al-Iṣṭabl (Court of the Stables). They preserve the subdivision of the enclosure after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's time, and together they constitute the original *ḥawsh*.

Whether the southern wall of the southern enclosure behind the Ouasa't al-Iṣṭabl constituted the boundary of the *ḥawsh* is very difficult to determine (pl. 31). The wall must have been renovated and refaced by Muḥammad 'Alī when he built his own palaces in the southern enclosure, for the surface of its stone and the moldings running along its top are definitely the work of Muḥammad 'Alī's time. Its plan and outline, however, seem to predate the nineteenth century, for they correspond to the south wall on the French map. The question what the original boundaries of the *ḥawsh* were was rendered more complicated by the discovery of a stone wall cropping up behind the houses in the area of 'Arab Yasār. Its method of construction, alternating long and short blocks of rough cut stone, is Mamluk. It may have constituted the southern wall of the *ḥawsh* before it was integrated into the royal palaces.

¹¹⁴ This appears to have started at the time of Barsbāy; see Behrens-Abouseif, "Citadel of Cairo," 51–54, and references.

¹¹⁵ Ibn Taghrī-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 121.

¹¹⁶ Muṣṭafā Ibrāhīm, *Waqā'i' Miṣr al-Qāhira*, 163.

The Last Projects

In 1338, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad constructed palaces for two of his favorite *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs, Yalbughā al-Yaḥyāwī and Aḷṭunbughā al-Māridānī, opposite the Citadel across from the Rumayla. He also ordered Amir Qawṣūn, who was an older and more independent *khāṣṣakī* amir than the other two, to expand the stables he already owned in the Rumayla by incorporating several structures that belonged to other amirs and by building the whole into a large palace. The entire enterprise seems to have been paid for by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and supervised by his superintendent of construction (*shādd al-‘amā’ir*) Aqbughā ‘Abd al-Wāḥid.¹¹⁷

The two palaces of Yalbughā and Aḷṭunbughā are reported to have stood where the mosque of Sultan Ḥasan stands today. Each had a *qaṣr* and stables that opened, by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's express command, onto the street across from the hammam of al-Malik al-Sa‘īd Baraka Khān (where the mosque of al-Rifā‘ī is today). Qawṣūn's palace was closer to the Citadel. Its ruins today, including the *qaṣr*, are bound by Shāri‘ al-Muḍaffar (Muzaffar Street) behind the mosque of Sultan Ḥasan and Shāri‘ Qarāqūl al-Manshiyya (Precinct of Manshiyya Street) further west (pl. 32). The streets converge in the Rumayla maydan at the foot of the Citadel, but the palace may once have extended further to the southeast, closer to the Citadel, for Maqrīzī says that one of the doors of the new palace, after its 1338 expansion, opened onto the Rumayla opposite the Bāb al-Silsila that led to the royal stables under the Qaṣr al-Ablaq. The second door opened into the Ḥadarāt al-Baqār (Shāri‘ al-Muḍaffar today) (fig. 46).¹¹⁸

Contemporary sources explain that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad wanted to have his favorite amirs close to him so that he could see their residences from his palace, no doubt to control the movements of those who held the highest positions at court. This caution betrays his mounting suspicion toward the end of his life of their intentions,

¹¹⁷ Shujā‘ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 25; Baktāsh al-Fakhri, *Beiträge*, 216, mentions only the palace of Yalbughā. Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 438–39, 453, says that al-Nāṣir planned the palaces of Qawṣūn, Yalbughā, and Aḷṭunbughā in front of the Citadel; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9: 121, produces the same report, but adds that the palace of Qawṣūn has become the residence of the *atābek al-‘asākir* in his time.

¹¹⁸ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 71–72.

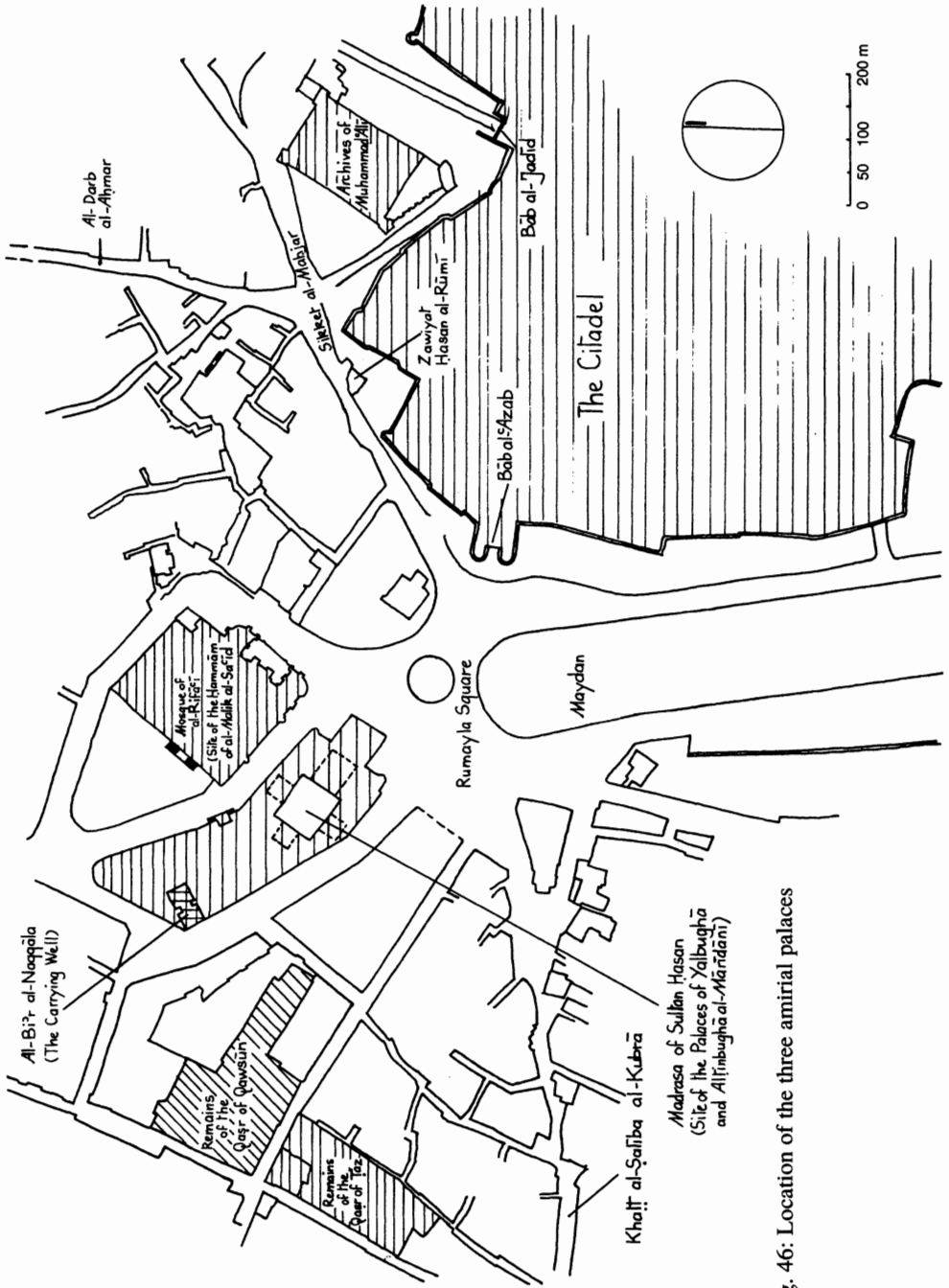


Fig. 46: Location of the three amiral palaces

undoubtedly heightened by his concern over securing the succession for his son.¹¹⁹ Maqrizī's remark on the location of the doors of the three palaces also underlines the closeness of Qawṣūn to the sultan; otherwise, Qawṣūn would not have been permitted direct access to the Rumayla, which functioned, together with the maydan south of it, as a buffer zone in front of the royal stables.¹²⁰ Soon after the completion of the palace, the sultan in fact designated Qawṣūn as one of the two regents (Bashtāk was the other) for his son and successor Abū Bakr.

The three palaces of Qawṣūn, Yalbughā, and Alṭunbughā should be considered royal projects, not only because al-Nāṣir Muḥammad planned, sponsored, and supervised their construction, but also because as structures they formed part of the network of amirial palaces to the north and west of the Citadel that he had created as a symbolic ring around the royal residence. Their role was more important than that of other structures planned by the sultan and executed for his amirs because of their central location. They commanded the approach from the city of al-Qāhira through the north-south Shāri' al-A'zam south of the Bāb Zūwayla. Strategically, these palaces controlled access to the Sūq al-Khayl (Rumayla Square), and defended the royal domain behind it. Aesthetically, they anticipated the royal splendor that would fully unfold as one entered the open square.

In 1341, the year of his death, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad augmented the water supply to his Citadel with two projects. One simply increased the aqueduct's capacity by adding another intake tower next to the old one, the second was a more complex undertaking, involving a new canal between the Nile and a rocky hill south of Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ called the Raṣad (the Observatory, after an observatory erected there in the eleventh century by the Fatimid vizier al-Afḍal).¹²¹ A new aqueduct to join the old one east of Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ was started, despite

¹¹⁹ This suspicion led him to eliminate his greatest amir Tankiz, the governor of Damascus, who had become too independent to accept the transition of power in Egypt. Tankiz was arrested in 1340, and executed shortly afterward, only a few months before the death of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad; Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 121. See a contemporary explanation of Tankiz's fall in Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 2: 495–512.

¹²⁰ This closeness, and the ensuing importance, of Qawṣūn's palace was manifested in its use on royal occasions. Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 2: 379, says that Abū Bakr, the son and first successor of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who was granted the amirial rank in 1335, rode from Qawṣūn's stables to the royal palace to receive his promotion and then returned to preside over a banquet that Qawṣūn gave in his honor.

¹²¹ Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Nāṣir*, 95; Maqrizī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 230; idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 514; for the Raṣad, see Maqrizī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 1: 125.

the opposition of landowners along its way, but was abandoned after the sultan's death.¹²² Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's needed more water for his livestock and to irrigate the orchards in and around the Citadel. Had he lived longer, he may have expanded the *ḥawsh* as more water became available, and turned it into a more permanent part of the Citadel's landscape.

The Extension of the Citadel

The Citadel is larger today than it was when al-ʿImād al-Iṣfahānī reported its circumference in the time of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, but that extension is all in the southern enclosure, for, as Creswell demonstrated, the northern enclosure remains as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn built it, except for a short stretch of its north wall behind the Qaṣr al-Ḥarīm of Muḥammad ʿAlī (the present-day Military Museum).¹²³ The southern enclosure must have been enlarged before Muḥammad ʿAlī refurbished it at the beginning of the nineteenth century, for a comparison of its outline on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte* (1801) with the outline of the same area on the Egyptian cadastral map of 1951 shows no change. In the Ottoman period no major works in the southern enclosure were reported, and it is very difficult to imagine that any of the multitude of pashas that succeeded one another for short periods in the governorship of the country had either the time or a reason to embark on an expansion project. The extension of the southern enclosure should therefore be dated to the Mamluk period, yet no Mamluk chronicler mentions it.

As was shown earlier, the northern part of the southern enclosure, bounded by the Burj al-Zāwiya from the north and the Burj al-Raḥraf from the west, which may originally have been joined with a wall extending south from the Burj al-Muqaṭṭam, probably belonged to the original plan of the Citadel. The royal structures built by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's immediate Mamluk predecessors, Baybars, Qalāwūn, and al-Ashraf Khalīl, were all situated within the proposed initial enceinte, which may mean that none of them considered expanding the southern enclosure. Only the additions of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad seem to have been located to the south of the Burj al-Raḥraf in the southern half of the present southern enclosure, and thus outside the

¹²² The first phase of the project, digging the new canal to the Raṣād, was completed; see Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 20: 162–63; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 230.

¹²³ Creswell, *M. A. E.*, 2: 31–33.

original enclosure. This area may have been slowly absorbed into the Citadel as royal buildings were extended southward, a process started, and perhaps even completed, by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during his third reign. Several textual and architectural indices suggest that the structures of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad formed the boundaries of the enceinte when they were built. By fixing the location of these structures on a map of the present Citadel, it is possible to demonstrate that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was the one responsible for the southern enclosure's southerly expansion.

The earliest clue comes from al-ʿUmari's account on the Citadel's walls, written shortly after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had built his Qaṣr al-Ablaq. Al-ʿUmari, whose account was copied almost verbatim by later chroniclers, states that the exterior walls of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq and those of the quarters of the sultan (*dūr al-mulk*) formed the exterior walls of the Citadel. Both the Qaṣr al-Ablaq and the harem were built by al-Nāṣir on the edge of the Citadel proper to take advantage of the views to the west and south. Mamluk chroniclers all say that the *qāʿas* of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq dominated the maydan and the city beyond it, and the *qāʿas* of the harem overlooked the Southern Qarāfa. Therefore, the former must have been on the southern enclosure's western fringe and the latter on its southern fringe.

European observers give better descriptions. They say that the Maison de Joseph, or Qaṣr al-Ablaq, was built on the edge of the escarpment on the western side of the southern enclosure. Maillet, the French consul in Cairo in the late seventeenth century, speaks of a high wall contiguous to the hillside, which is broken midway by a protruding hall supported on square pillars, perhaps the same as the hall found today under the terrace to the south of Muḥammad ʿAlī's mosque, which has been identified as the lower level of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq's *quṣūr*. The Dutchman Niebuhr, who visited the Citadel in the middle of the eighteenth century, says that the series of halls that constituted the Maison de Joseph are propped up by a huge wall built against the rock upon which the Citadel is situated.¹²⁴ Jomard, in his commentaries on the map of the *Description de l'Égypte*, says only that there are subterranean halls to the north of the Palais de Joseph (Iwān al-Kabīr) which are made of huge vaults, and were dilapidated beyond description.¹²⁵ Thus, the foundations of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq

¹²⁴ Both accounts are cited in *ibid.*, 260.

¹²⁵ Jomard, "Description du Kaire," 360; Sayyed, *Wasf al-Qāhira*, 239.

constituted the boundary of the southern enclosure from the west. They started on ground level, that is, the level of the stables and the maydan. The *qā'as* of the palace were raised upon the two (or perhaps three) superimposed halls to reach the level of the Citadel proper above the hill.

Creswell remarks that the spur upon which the Citadel was constructed does not underlie its whole area and that some parts of the platform were artificially raised.¹²⁶ The sentence of al-ʿUmarī and the travelers' remarks confirm this by indicating that the palaces of the sultans in the southern enclosure were built on subterranean halls, whose outer walls formed the Citadel's edge. It is demonstrable that the southern edge of the southern enclosure, especially where the private quarters (*ḥaramlik*) of the Bijou Palace stand today, is also made out of subterranean vaulted halls, which most probably belonged to the Mamluk harem. Unfortunately, these halls, unlike the two vaulted halls on the western side, are inaccessible.

That Mamluk palaces formed the boundaries of the Citadel can be deduced from the variations in the exterior walls of the southern enclosure. Although most of them have been rebuilt since the fourteenth century, the last time under Muḥammad ʿAlī in the second decade of the nineteenth century, the ones corresponding to the locations of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq and the Mamluk harem are different in treatment and size of stone from the walls of the rest of the enceinte.

That al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's semipublic and private palaces constituted the western and southwestern edges of the southern enclosure in the time of al-ʿUmarī, as their ruins do today, means that they were the last extensions of the Citadel. This explanation fits nicely with the information conveyed by the sources, for it permits us to account for the addition of the *ḥawsh* and to locate it at the southern end of the enclosure, just to the southeast of the harem, where all textual references situate it. The *ḥawsh*, which became the center of the palatial complex in the Burjī period and later the residential area for the Ottoman pashas, was the last parcel included in the enceinte. Thus, the southern enclosure reached its limits in al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's long third reign. The Mamluk sultans after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who built new halls and pavilions in the *ḥawsh* limited their work to the interior and edges of his enceinte and may even have cut out one part of the *ḥawsh* and left it outside the southern enclosure (if the wall standing in ʿArab Yaṣār is in fact the wall of the original *ḥawsh*).

¹²⁶ Creswell, "Researches," 98.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CITADEL AND THE MAMLUK SYSTEM

Analysis of building activities beginning with the founding of the Citadel of Cairo under Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and ending with the final expansion of its southern enclosure during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign demonstrates that it shared some characteristics with other citadels constructed in Anatolia, Syria, and the Jazira in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and differed in others. Like other citadels, it was built to be a stronghold to protect a city, or—in this case the two cities of al-Fuṣṭāṭ and al-Qāhira—a refuge against attack, a barrier against the subject population, and a symbol of the ruler's image as the defender of Islam. But in the Cairene case, the entire process of building was articulated within the larger consideration of a centralized, hierarchized state. The Mamluk royal image that had been derived from the Ayyubid one had been modified by the sultans before al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, refined and consecrated by al-Nāṣir himself, and then alternately neglected, revived, or embellished by his successors until the Mamluk sultanate fell. The palatial complex was the architectural manifestation of this image and its transformations. The buildings represented the prosperity and vigor of the state in general. The scope and extent of each sultan's architectural achievements reflected his own power, tastes, and strategies, and the specific circumstances of his reign.

The Mamluks introduced a new and peculiar political system that greatly affected the architectural organization of the Citadel. Several attributes characterized that system and distinguished it from those of other Islamic regimes. The first was the military hierarchy which represented the only path to political power and which was closed to all but those who were brought to the sultanate as mamluks and who had gone through a rigorous training of several years. All mamluks were foreigners; local Egyptians were only admitted to the auxiliary corps, the *ḥalaqa*, which prevented them from attaining any position of consequence in the state. The second was the fortress mentality initially caused by the linguistic and ethnic differences between the Mamluks and the locals and ultimately embedded in a system that stressed

exclusion and segregation as a means of control.¹ The third was almost a corollary of the second, though opposite in effect. It stemmed from the ruling elite's search for acceptance by, and perhaps popularity with, their subjects. To this end, the Mamluks allied themselves with, employed, and patronized the religious class and endowed pious structures to prove their religiosity: madrasas to educate a new class of *fuqahā*, *ribāṭs* and khanqahs to lodge the sufis, and mausolea to commemorate themselves and to glorify their deeds.

As a result, the Citadel developed differently from the medieval citadels elsewhere, including those in the capitals of Mamluk provinces such as Damascus and Aleppo. Its particular features included the division of its interior space into two enclosures separated by a wall and towers; the subdivision of each of these two enclosures into several elaborately delimited domains that reflected the complex hierarchy of the Mamluk army, and the opening up of parts of the sultan's domain to the public on a regular basis for the review of *maẓālim* so as temporarily to remove the barriers that existed between the sultan and his people and to enhance his image as a just and caring ruler.

Al-Zāhir Baybars introduced this division of the Citadel into a palatial complex in the southern enclosure and military and administrative areas in the northern enclosure mainly for security, but perhaps for ceremonial purposes as well. He also built residences for the amirs closest to him between the royal domain and the administrative section of the northern enclosure. These amirs were Baybars's *khushdāshiyya* and were indispensable to him, but at the same time they were strong enough to harbor their own ambitions to seize his throne. One of them, Amir Sunqur al-Ashqar, actually declared himself sultan in Damascus when he heard of Qalāwūn's accession to the throne in Egypt in 1280. This was not prompted by his loyalty to Baybars's house, since, though Qalāwūn had displaced Baybars's son Salāmish, Sunqur did not support Salāmish; he merely asserted what he felt was his right and claimed the throne for himself.² As a measure for avoiding such outbursts of independence, while at the same time keeping them available for support and counsel, Baybars decided to house his amirs near him. To do this, he began to develop

¹ This makes understandable the reports that some amirs, such as Bashtāk al-Nāsirī, refused to speak Arabic (Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 34); and that some sultans, such as Qalāwūn, had a poor command of the language (Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 673 and 756).

² Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 29, fols. 269–70; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 670–76.

areas adjacent to the Citadel, especially on the western and north-western sides, building palaces for other Mamluk amirs, probably as an amirial ring around the royal domain in what had been vacant land until the beginning of the Mamluk period. This arrangement of amirial mansions around the sultan's palace which Baybars devised reached its culmination under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and involved a complicated system of physical barriers and access patterns.

Over thirty years of continuous construction al-Nāṣir Muḥammad redefined the basic division of the Citadel into five concentric spheres intersected by a few channels of circulation. The first sphere contained the army barracks; it was confined to the northern part of the northern enclosure. The second was the public domain in the administrative part of the northern enclosure which was entered through the main gate of the Citadel, the Bāb al-Mudarraǰ, and to which people were admitted on a daily basis. The third was the semi-public domain, which was located in the northern end of the southern enclosure and comprised the Iwān al-Kabīr and the Nāṣiri Mosque. Hours of access to this domain were restricted but it was open to all: to worshipers at prayer time, to petitioners on *dār al-ʿadl* days, and to amirs every day. The mosque was also the place where judicial councils that involved important questions of dogma and canon were held. These were public gatherings, presided over by the four supreme judges (*quḍāt al-quḍāt*), who were final authorities in matters of belief but whose judgments required royal authority in major cases. The mosque represented the perfect middle ground between religious and royal authority, which was why these councils were held there.³ The fourth sphere may be termed the semiprivate domain: it comprised the Qaṣr al-Ablaq and the other royal palaces, such as the Qāʿa al-Ashrafiyya, and access to it was restricted both to specific times and to specific ranks of mamluks and officials. The fifth sphere was the totally private domain; it comprised the harem where the family, concubines, and eunuchs of the sultan resided. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad rearranged its configuration so that it could communicate with the rest of the palaces through a few controlled points, such as the Bāb al-Sitāra and the Bāb al-Nuḥās (Gate of Copper),⁴ which created an

³ Ibid., 2: 18, for a council (*majlis*) in 1305; p. 552, for another in 1341; p. 901, for a third in 1353.

⁴ Maqrīzī, *Khiṭat*, 2: 212, says that this gate was inside the Bāb al-Sitāra, which should be understood as meaning inside the harem.

additional level in the hierarchy of barriers inside the palatial complex. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad articulated the degrees of separation between the five spheres of circulation by establishing a series of connecting passages (*dahāliz*, pl. of *dihlīz*) and gates between the various architectural components (fig. 47).

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad also redefined the relationship of the Citadel to the city. All his urban expansion projects can be explained in terms of his overriding desire to surround the Citadel with built-up areas as a means of defense and as a way visually and spatially to underline its centrality in the city. He ordered, sponsored, and in few instances even planned, palaces for his favorite *khāṣṣakiyya*—Baktimur, Ṭash-timur Ḥummuṣ-Akhdār, Qawṣūn, Yalbughā, and Alṭunbughā—to the west of the Citadel as a buffer zone between it and the city.⁵ He began

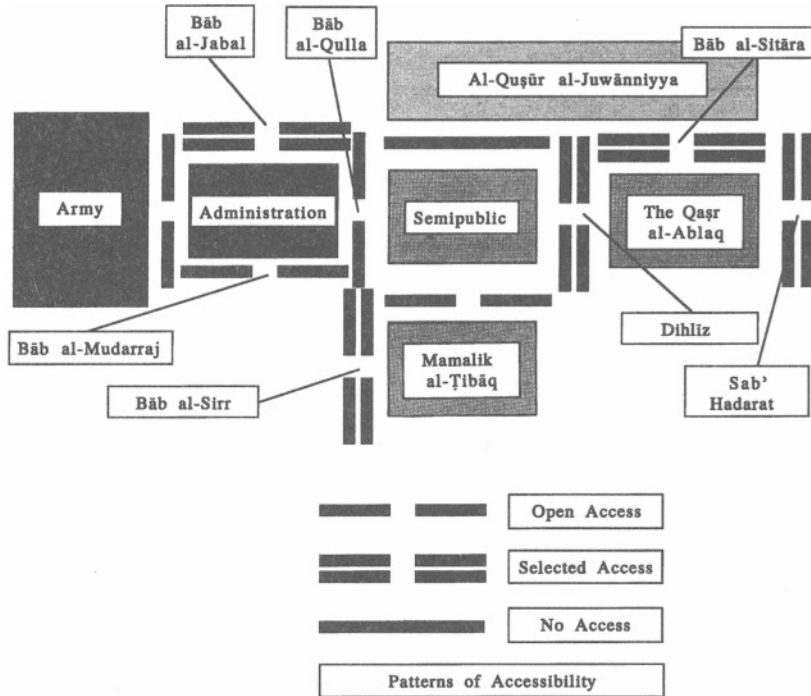


Fig. 47: Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's five spheres of circulation at the Citadel

⁵ Idem, *Sulūk*, 2: 438–39, says that al-Nāṣir planned the palaces of Qawṣūn, Yalbughā, and Alṭunbughā that were built in front of the Citadel; Ibn Taghri-Birdi, *Nujūm*, 9, 188–90, repeats the same report.

the development of the two areas around the Citadel that had heretofore been empty, the Qarāfa al-Kubrā to the north and east and the Qarāfa al-Sughrā to the south. In them were built pious projects with social functions, such as mausolea with madrasas and *sabils* attached, endowed by his *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs, probably with his encouragement and direct involvement.⁶ These institutions needed people to run them, and they built houses around them which in time developed into residential quarters that attracted further settlers.

The Citadel and the Structure of the Mamluk Army

The nature of the Mamluk system, being as it was rigidly stratified and practically closed to non-mamluks, resulted in the *khāṣṣakiyya*'s being more closely identified with the sultan and his place of residence than the *khāṣṣa* had been in earlier times. Young *khāṣṣakiyya*, awaiting promotion to the rank of amir and assignment of *iqṭā'* revenue, were quartered in the *ṭibāqs* or in special *qā'as* in the southern enclosure, which were given fancy names—the Dhahabiyya (Golden Qā'a) and the Zumurrudiyya (Emerald Qā'a)—possibly as a reflection of their status.⁷ This would explain why Baybars built two *ṭibāqs* in the Court of the Citadel between the mosque and the iwan, and a third one near the Burj al-Zāwiya and renovated several *ṭibāqs* near his Dār al-Dhahab.⁸ He intended them to house the *khāṣṣakiyya*, as opposed to the *qā'as* he built in front of the Bāb al-Qarāfa and next to the house of al-Malik al-Sa'īd Baraka Khān in the northern enclosure, which lodged non-*khāṣṣakiyya* corps such as old *jamadāriyya* who were no longer fit for active duty as part of the sultan's entourage, the *silāḥdāriyya*, the *jumaqdāriyya* (of *jumaqdār*, ax-bearer) in addition to ex-*khāṣṣakiyya*. Those of the great amirs who were also *khāṣṣakiyya* had separate residences or small palaces allocated

⁶ In the Qarāfa al-Kubrā, the first mausoleum was erected by Amir Qarāsunqur, who died in Maragha in Ilkhanid Persia in 1328. In the Qarāfa al-Sughrā, al-Nāṣir built the first *qubba* for his amir Baybughā al-Turkmāni in 1307 (Maqrizi, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 443–45; Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 9:185–89). The word *qarāfa* is still used in Cairo today to mean cemetery, although etymologically it has no such denotation. It is either the name of a clan from Yemen who came with the Arab conquerors in the seventh century and settled in two areas around Fustāt, or the name of a woman. See the discussion in Wladyslaw Kubiak, *al-Fustāt: Its Foundation and Early Urban Development* (Cairo, 1987), 108–9.

⁷ Maqrizi, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 214.

⁸ Ibn Shaddād, *Tārīkh al-Zāhir*, 341.

to them inside the southern enclosure. The palaces built by Baybars for Sunqur al-Ashqar and Baysarī al-Shamsī, for example, may be considered palaces for *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs, although the term *khāṣṣakiyya* was not applied to amirs until the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Many of those amirs also had their own residences in the city. Baysarī, for instance, owned one of the most splendid palaces in Cairo on Shāri‘ Bayn al-Qaṣrayn.⁹ By the fourteenth century, dual residences for *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs had become the norm.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad refined and articulated the plan begun by Baybars so that by the end of his reign the topography and urban setting of the Citadel had become the reflection of the hierarchical framework of the Mamluk government. It was during his reign that the terms *juwwānī* and *barrānī* attached to the titles of amirs made their first appearance in the chronicles. Ibn Faḍl-Allah al-‘Umarī says that mamluks who were removed from the *khāṣṣakiyya* had to move from the southern to the northern enclosure where they became *barrānī* (i. e., those who lived outside [the palace]).¹⁰ Qalqashandī, in his encyclopedic *Ṣubḥ al-A‘sha*, explains that the word *barrānī* was the equivalent of *khurjiyya* (from *khārij*, the outside) in designating mamluks, and that this was the opposite of *khāṣṣakiyya*, who were also called *juwwānī* (i. e., those of the inside, the antonym of *barrānī*) mamluks.¹¹ *Khāṣṣakiyya* amirs, who had residences assigned to them in the southern enclosure around the royal palaces, would also be banished to the northern enclosure or sent out of the Citadel altogether if they lost their status as *khāṣṣakiyya*.¹²

The development of specific words for amirial ranks that reflect

⁹ Yūsufi *Nuzha*, 164-65; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 2: 69-70; ‘Aynī, *‘Iqd*, 3: 484-85.

¹⁰ ‘Umarī, *Masālik*, 143; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 373; Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, 2: 205, copied the sentence but dropped the reference to the *khāṣṣakiyya* and added a sentence which shows that by his time the residential division at the Citadel as instituted by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had broken down.

¹¹ Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3: 376, and 4: 56; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 686, no. 3, explanation by M. Ziyāda, the editor of Maqrīzī’s text; William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans*, 15: 85, for the *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs, and 88 for the *khāṣṣakiyya* mamluks.

¹² Nūwayrī, *Nihāya*, 31, fol. 75, gives the example of Ṭashtimur Ḥummuṣ-Akhḍar who was demoted from *khāṣṣakī* to *barrānī* and banished from the southern enclosure to a house adjoining the Dār al-Niyāba in the northern enclosure. Sayf al-Dīn al-Abūbakrī was banished to the city in 1320 and his house demolished and rebuilt as a *ṭibāq* for the *khāṣṣakiyya*; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2: 208. Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7: 207, speaks of the *juwwānī* mamluks and the *barrānī* amirs who conspired against Qalāwūn in 1281.

the places where the amirs lived in terms of their relation to the sultan's private quarters provides a significant clue to the status attached to space inside the Citadel. *Juwwānī* amirs, or the *khāṣṣakiyya*, constituted the sultan's inner circle, lived inside the southern enclosure near his residence, and were destined to ascend to the highest ranks. *Barrānī* amirs, also called *khurjiyya*, lived in the northern enclosure and included minor amirs and those who had fallen from favor and had been removed from the *khāṣṣakiyya* or had grown too old to perform their amirial duties (*ṭirkhān*). Thus the basic stratification of the Mamluk army was evident in its living arrangement, moving from the base in the north to the apex in the south: the soldiers (*jund*), then *barrānī* amirs, *juwwānī* amirs (or *khāṣṣakiyya*), and finally the sultan. This system revolved around the Bāb al-Qulla which separated, both physically and symbolically, the prosperity and power on the one side from obscurity on the other.

The remarks of al-ʿUmārī and Qalqashandī, dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth century respectively, that a *khāṣṣakī* was a soldier (*jundī*), or an amir, who because he belonged to the sultan's immediate entourage lived at the palatial complex in the southern enclosure, probably apply to those mamluks who became Baybars's *khāṣṣakiyya* and eventually formed the entourage of Baraka Khān as well. The word thus conveyed the mamluk's functional and physical closeness to the sultan, which was reflected in his salary as well: a *khāṣṣakī* was always paid more than a *barrānī*.¹³

Khāṣṣakiyya were also distinguished by their ethnic origin, training, and the position they held at the court or in the army after their manumission, but of these criteria only their privileged place of residence appears to have been exclusively theirs. They were usually chosen from among Kipchak Turks and Mongols, the favored ethnic groups in the Bahri period, but many of both groups could be found in other divisions of the army as well. Some, but not all, *khāṣṣakiyya* received special training. Textual evidence suggests that only a handful of them were trained in the sultan's court. Others had their standard training in the barracks and were then handpicked by the sultan after their manumission when their training was over. *Khāṣṣakiyya* were also often assigned specific, both real and ceremonial, functions at court. In the reign of Qalāwūn's son and successor, al-Ashraf Khalīl, many of them were made *suqāt* and *jamadāriyya*.

¹³ Ibn Duqmāq, *Jawhar*, 424.

The *khāṣṣakiyya* ranged in number from 40 to 92 under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to around 1,000 during the reign of al-Ashraf Barsbāy (1422–38), to 1,200 during the reign of Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī (1501–16), though it appears that by that time the word had come to indicate royal mamluks in general.¹⁴ We have no reference to their number before al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's time, but a few passing remarks suggest that between 30 and 50 of them served under al-Ashraf Khalil.¹⁵ Nor do we have a Mamluk definition of the term itself before Ibn Shāhin al-Zāhiri wrote his book in the middle of the fifteenth century. According to him, the *khāṣṣakiyya* were those mamluks who constituted the sultan's immediate entourage in public and private and from whose ranks new amirs were chosen.¹⁶ Their functions included commanding the *maḥmal al-sharīf* (the procession that brought the royal *kiswa* to Mecca), extracting the fines imposed on grandees who had fallen out of favor, and undertaking delicate royal missions such as negotiations with rebellious amirs and tribal chieftains and conveying secret messages to powerful amirs and foreign monarchs.¹⁷

Though the term itself is peculiar to the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, similar institutions may have existed earlier among the Ghaznavids, the Seljuqs and their successors, the Zangids of Mosul and Syria, and the Ayyubids, from whom the Mamluks may have inherited the practice. Scenes of courtly ceremonial with a ruler surrounded by attendants identified by some attribute of the office they held

¹⁴ Zāhiri, *Zubda*, 116, says that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had 40 *khāṣṣakiyya* and that in his own time the *khāṣṣakiyya* numbered in the hundreds, only around forty of whom had ceremonial titles; the rest had no official post. Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 217–19, lists 92 *khāṣṣakiyya* in the various ranks in the Egyptian army during the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. For their number during al-Ghūrī's rule, see Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 5: 6.

¹⁵ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 2: 112–13, 211, and 'Aynī, *Iqd*, 3: 168–69, say that about 50 *khāṣṣakiyya* amirs played *qabaq* in the celebration of the circumcision of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1292, and about 30 of them danced on the same occasion.

¹⁶ This is corroborated by a remark in Jawharī, *Inbā' al-Ḥaṣr*, 193, when he indicates that Qāyṭbāy promised some mamluks who were *ajnad* (soldiers) "to be promoted to *khāṣṣakiyya* and from *khāṣṣakiyya* to amirs."

¹⁷ Zāhiri, *Zubda*, 115–16. My interpretation of the expression (*yata'ayanūn bi kawāmil al-kuffāl*), is that they were assigned to extract the remainder of fines (*kawāmil*) levied from administrators (*kuffāl*) in lieu of imprisonment and torture, which was a widespread practice. The expression is translated by M. Quatremère, *Histoire des sultans mamlouks de l'Égypte*, 1: 158, no. 3, as "*les administrateurs parfaits*." His reading is acceptable linguistically but unlikely syntactically and unproved historically. Modern scholars have based their definitions on al-Zāhiri's text.

are depicted on buildings or on portable art objects from the Mamluk, Ayyubid, Zangid, and Seljuq periods. They have been recently interpreted as representing the *khāṣṣakiyya* or their presumed earlier equivalents, and their inclusion in the scene was consequently taken as a symbol of kingship.¹⁸ In Egypt, a private retinue of mamluks must have existed at least from the time of al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, who depended heavily on his mamluk troops, though they were not yet called *khāṣṣakiyya*. They were called *khawwāṣ* or *baḥriyya* (the term *baḥriyya* may have signified belonging to the sultan's corps of pages), but the name did not reflect the relationship between their quarters and the sultan's palaces. For the name to connote a closeness to the royal palaces, the physical separation between the domain of the sultan and the army barracks had to come first. Thus the use of the term *khāṣṣakiyya* in Baraka Khan's reign may corroborate the ascription to Baybars of the Sūr al-Qulla (Qulla Wall) that divided the Citadel into its northern and southern enclosures. This division prompted the mamluks to be identified with the enclosure in which they lived, inside (*juwwā*) or outside (*barrā*) the sultan's domain, and must have been made not long before Baraka Khān's reign, when the word *khāṣṣakiyya* first appears in the texts.

In the southern enclosure, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad instituted another system of segregation among the young royal mamluks selected to become *khāṣṣakiyya*. They were divided into two groups, the *kuttābiyya* and the *mamālik al-ṭibāq*, and housed in different quarters. The separation was also based on the proximity of their quarters to his residence, which carried connotations of preferential treatment as well. The *kuttābiyya* studied in the *maktab* with the sultan's sons and were prepared for high administrative positions.¹⁹ The *mamālik al-ṭibāq* were lodged in the *ṭibāqs* of the southern enclosure and were training to become the sultan's bodyguards (the *silāhdāriyya* and *jamadāriyya*), a rank definitely inferior to the *kuttābiyya* (fig. 48).

¹⁸ Whelan, "Representations of *Khāṣṣakiyyah*," 220.

¹⁹ Mufaḍḍal, *Nahj*, 14: 300; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 7: 95; 'Aynī, *'Iqd*, 2: 188; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1: 644, specifically say about Kundak al-Sāqī, a *khāṣṣaki* of Baraka Khān and his vicegerent, that he went with him to *al-maktab*, which was a mark of distinction among the *khāṣṣakiyya*.

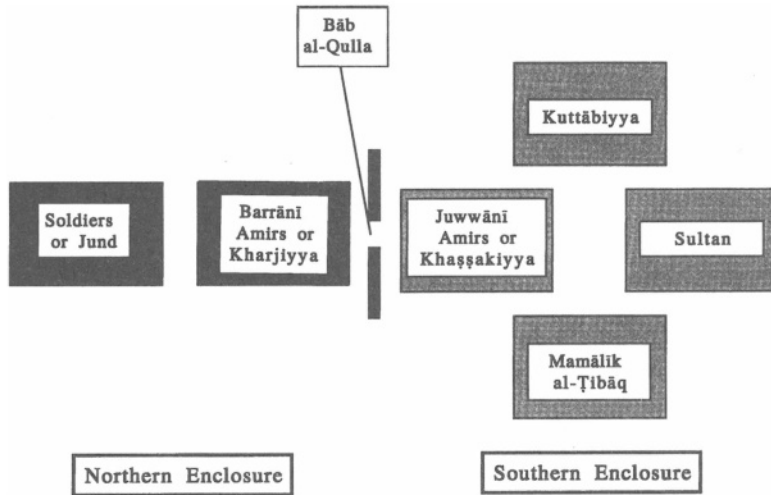


Fig. 48: Order of arrangement of the Mamluk hierarchy at the Citadel

The Citadel and the Military Character of the State

The various structures built by the Mamluk sultans at the Citadel until al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's time show the influence of the militarization of the ruling class on royal architecture. Their exaggerated monumentality reflects the pride generated among the Mamluks by the legitimizing of their rule with the establishment of an Abbasid caliphate in Cairo under al-Zāhir Baybars and by their victories against Crusaders and Mongols.²⁰ The Iwān al-Kabir and the Nāṣirī Mosque displayed austere, fortress-like façades topped with crenellations. Other aspects of the militarization of architecture went beyond the buildings to the surface articulation applied to them. Baybars decorated the Burj al-Zāwiya with stone reliefs depicting lions, his *rank*. The double-headed eagle was put on the most prominent tower commanding the ascent from the stables to the southern enclosure. Baybars and al-Ashraf Khalil had the interiors of their palaces adorned with images of battles, of themselves and their amirs in full military regalia, and of royal hunts and parades. Qalāwūn and Khalil had the

²⁰ Dorothea Krawulsky in her introduction to 'Umari, *Masālik*, 36–37, gives a similar interpretation in reviewing Mamluk literature after al-Nāṣir's reign.

cities they ruled and fortresses they had conquered represented on the walls of their iwans. All of the sultans also had the walls of their palaces and audience halls inscribed with the titles they had elaborated to proclaim their qualities as fighters, their dedication to Islamic causes, and their symbolic links with legendary heroes of the past. Even the amirs adopted the same principles and techniques in the architecture and decoration of their palaces.

The military character of the Mamluk state and the emphasis on the role of its ruling elite as the warriors of Islam started slowly to soften during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign. Both external and internal threats had been removed, and the sultan preferred to rely on negotiation and intrigue rather than warfare in his foreign policy. The first sign of change surfaced in the 1330s when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, contrary to established procedures, promoted a number of individuals—notably Qawṣūn and Bashtāk—to the highest amirial ranks without their having had to endure the prerequisite military training. Other signs of decline were soon to follow, but the effect of this shift on the Mamluk character did not become clear until the Burjī period, for the structure of the army remained more or less intact during the reigns of al-Nāṣir's twelve weak descendants (1341–82). Mamluks were still bought at a young age and lodged in special barracks at the Citadel where they were put through rigorous training and a thorough religious education that inculcated in them a military mentality and respect for Islamic tenets before they were manumitted and enlisted in the army.

Barqūq maintained the same strict program during his first reign, which marked the transition between the Bahrī and Burjī periods, but relaxed it tremendously in his second. From then on, the mamluks were permitted to live in the city and to fraternize with the local population; they married into and did business with the upper classes of the Egyptian society. The system deteriorated even further after Barqūq's time, when new mamluks were brought at a fairly advanced age, after their character had already been formed, and were no longer required to undergo an extensive religious education before their manumission. Consequently, the once fiercely proud and strictly segregated mamluks began slowly to adopt the local urban culture. By the beginning of the fifteenth century their acculturation was so discernible in their attitudes, tastes, and preferences, that Maqrizī, their contemporary, no longer saw them as the deserving leaders they

once had been, “skillfully and thoughtfully managing a great empire and fighting for the cause of Islam.”²¹

At the Citadel, the general plan of organization devised by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad persisted under his Qalawunid successors, with one important modification: some of the royal functions were transferred to the previously private area of the *ḥawsh*. This may have been a result of the seclusion and docility of the Qalawunid princes since many of them were confined by the great amirs to the harem before and after their terms of rule, or it may have been an indication of the rising influence of the eunuchs and concubines and their noticeable interventions in the affairs of state, especially during the reigns of al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʿil (1342–45) and al-Kāmil Shaʿbān (1345–46).²² After Barqūq assumed the throne and rejected the nominal allegiance he had pledged earlier to a Qalawunid scion in 1387, he altered the ceremonies celebrated in the palaces, probably to signal his intention to restructure the sultanate and relocated the major public audiences to the royal stables.²³ This choice was dictated by the general mistrust that dominated this struggle-ridden transitional period between Turks and Circassians, when controlling the stables meant blocking the movement in and out of the palace area. As a consequence, al-Nāṣir’s plan began to fall apart, although his two main structures, the Iwān al-Kabir and the Qaṣr al-Ablaq, were still occasionally used for official functions, undoubtedly because their size and spatial arrangement made them the most impressive structures at the Citadel. Otherwise, the rapid turnover of sultans after Barqūq and constant internal strife did not encourage large building programs, or even building maintenance.²⁴ Seclusion and security were the sole concerns of the sultans, whose office had become the prize that every strong amir

²¹ These are the words of Maqrizī, the bitter critic of his age, who went on to satirize the mamluks of his time as “more lustful than monkeys, more ravenous than rats, and more harmful than wolves,” *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 213–14; see also Ibn Taghri-Birdī, *Nujūm*, 7: 328–29, where he deplors the changes in the Mamluk army structure from the time of Qalāwūn and describes the mamluks of his time as “holding their buttocks in the water and their nose in the sky” (meaning that they were both impotent and arrogant). There is a tendency among the Burjī historians to idealize the Bahārī period, but as David Ayalon (“Ḥarb,” *El*², 3:189) remarks “this tendency is by no means without foundation.”

²² Maqrizī, *Sulūk*, 2: 678, 692, 708, 713; Irwin, *Mamluk Sultanate*, 130–31.

²³ Maqrizī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2: 207, 241, and *Sulūk*, 3: 566; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīkh*, 9: 17; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ*, 1, 2: 388.

²⁴ Brief discussions of the general state of the Citadel during the Burjī period are in Casanova, “Histoire,” 701–7; Behrens-Abouseif, “Citadel of Cairo,” 41, 51–59.

who could muster sufficient forces sought. The magnificent structures of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad were neglected, except for the two long and relatively calm reigns of Qāytbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī, when attempts were made to refurbish them and adapt them to new uses. These two sultans also built new structures to fill new functions and to mark aesthetic changes, but the Citadel never recovered the splendor of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's time.²⁵

²⁵ For Qāytbāy's work, see Jawharī, *Inbā' al-Ḥaṣr*, 294, 327, 339; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3: 60–61, 329; for the work of al-Ghūrī, *ibid.*, 5: 94. For an interesting comparison between the mentalities of the two sultans and the motivations behind their work, see Carl F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamluk Sultans al-Ashraf Qāytbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle, 1993).

GLOSSARY

- ablaq*: alternating black and white
- abrāj al-ḥamām*: dovecotes
- abwāb al-sutūr*: the gates of the veils, a general name given to gates leading to the harem
- adhān*: the call to prayer
- adurr*: a rarely used plural of *dār*, it refers to a house or the halls of a harem
- akra*: the polo game, also *kura*
- ‘amma*: the common people
- amīr ākhūr*: supervisor of the royal stables
- amīr arba‘īn*: amir of forty to seventy horsemen
- amīr ‘ashra*: amir of ten to twenty horsemen
- amīr kabīr*: chief amir or grand amir
- amīr khamsa*: amir of five horsemen, the lowest officer rank in the Mamluk army
- amīr mi’a wa-muqaddam alf*: amir of hundred commander of thousand, the highest rank in the Mamluk army
- atābek al-‘asākir*: the commander of the armies
- atābek* or *atābeg*: the guardian of a Seljuq prince and the regent of his appanage. After the disintegration of the Seljuqid empire, the title was held by the rulers of the successor states to the Seljuqs in Syria, Jazira, and Anatolia
- awlād al-nās*: lit. the sons of the distinguished people, the free-born sons of mamluks who comprised a class separate from that of the ruling Mamluks
- Babylon: the name of the pre-Islamic settlement on the site of Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ
- bāb al-sirr*: lit. “the secret gate,” but in practice it was any private door reserved for the family as opposed to a main door for visitors. The Citadel had many *abwāb al-sirr*; the most prominent stood in front of the Iwān al-Kabīr at the end of the path ascending from the Bāb al-Sitāra
- baḥra*: fountain
- baḥrī*: facing the Baḥr, the Nile, which is the northwest orientation in Cairo

- bahriyya*: regiment of mamluks, mostly of Kipchak Turkish origin, who formed al-Ṣāliḥ's selected guards and were lodged and trained at the Rawḍa Citadel
- barrānī*: the equivalent of *khurjiyya* (from *khārij*, the outside), are mamluks who lived in the northern enclosure, outside the sultan's palace
- bashūrā*: barbican
- bayt*: house
- bayt al-māl*: state treasury
- bīmāristān*: hospital
- bī'r*: well
- bukhāriyya*: a Mamluk stucco panel elliptical in shape
- bunduqḍāriyya*, pl. of *bunduqḍār*: Bowman, a Mamluk ceremonial function
- burj*: tower
- bustān*: garden
- buyūt* or *buyūtāt al-sultāniyya*: the royal storehouses
- daftarkhāne*: archives
- dār al-ʿadl*: the palace of justice, also the session for the dispensation of justice
- dār al-baqār*: the house of oxen, once a stable for the oxen that turned the royal waterwheels in the maydan
- dār al-ḍarb*: the mint
- dār al-ḍiyāfa*: the guest house
- Dār al-Niyāba*: residence of the vicegerent
- dār al-qinnid*: house of molasses, the trading center in sugar-cane molasses
- dār al-wizāra*: the official residence of the Fatimid vizier
- dār*: house
- dast*: a wooden chair covered with a silk cloth
- dawādāriyya*, pl. of *dawādār*: pen-box holder
- Dhahabiyya*: the Golden, usually used to refer to the royal boat
- dihlīz*: a passageway or a vestibule
- dīwān al-ʿamāʿir*: the construction department
- dīwān al-jaysh*: the army department
- dūr al-ḥarīm*: the houses of the harem
- dūr al-mulk*: the quarters of the sultan
- dūr al-sultāniyya*: the private quarters of the sultan
- durkāh*: vestibule

dūrqā'a: the central part of the *qā'a*, which literally means the entry to the *qā'a*

firāshkhāna: the royal wardrobe and tent-room

fūqānī: upper

furūsiyya: equestrian exercises

ghishā': cover or coat

ghūr: crater

halaqa: lit. "ring," auxiliary corps in the Mamluk army

harāfish: vagabonds, riffraff, a guild-like organization of the lowest element in Mamluk society

haramlik: the private quarters in an Ottoman residence

Ḥarrāqa: the name of a structure in the stable enclosure but usually used for the largest type of Mamluk warship

hawā'ijkhāna: pantry

hawsh: enclosure

hiṣār: fortress

hukr: zoned land

ḥuquq: dependencies of a structure or a room

ḥurmiyya: either a part of a *qā'a* or a certain type of *qā'a*

ḥuṣn: castle

iblīz: black soil

iqṭā': land allotted to an amir or an administrator; the revenue from the allotment forms his stipend

Iwān al-Kabīr: the Great Iwan.

Iwān Kisra: the palace of Sasanian kings in ancient Ctesiphon

iwan: a vaulted or roofed structure totally open on one end

jamadāriyya, pl. of *jamadār*: wardrobe master

jāshankīriyya, pl. of *jāshankīr*: taster

jitr (Persian *chatr*): also known as the *Qubba wa-l-Ṭayr* (the Dome and the Bird), a dome-shaped parasol with a golden bird on top of it carried usually above the sultan in processions

jubb: underground prison at the Citadel

jukandāriyya, pl. of *jukandār*: polo master

jumaqdāriyya, pl. of *jumaqdār*: ax-bearer

jundī (pl. *jund*): a Mamluk soldier

jūrā: a large depression

juwwānī: the opposite of *barrānī*, who were also called *khāṣṣakiyya*

Kārim: the group of Mamluk merchants who specialized in importing spices and other expensive goods from India via Yemen

kashf: open

kātib al-sirr: the sultan's secretary

khāfiqī: an Egyptian waterproof mortar

khāṣṣ: privy purse

khāṣṣakiyya: the sultan's close group of mamluks who live in the southern enclosure near his palace

khawwāṣ: a linguistically more accurate variation of *khāṣṣakiyya*

khāzindāriyya, pl. of *khāzindār:* treasurer

khidma: royal audience or the service ceremony

khil'a: robe of honor

khīṭa: a planned urban quarter, which was by extension used to designate medieval topographical/historical books

khizānat al-kutub: library

khushdāshiyya: comrades, mamluks who were members of the same household or owned by the same master before their manumission

kīmān: rubble mounds

kiswa: embroidered cloth cover of the Ka'ba

kitāb al-'ahd: diploma of investiture

Kushk Yūsuf: the Persian equivalent of the Arabic *Qaṣr Yūsuf*, applied to the *Qaṣr al-Ablaq* in the Ottoman period

kuttāb al-dast: the clerks of the chair

kuttābiyya: the privileged among the *khāṣṣakiyya* trained in the sultan's court with his sons

lājūq: small tower-like enclosure

ma'āzil: drain pipes

mabīt: sleeping space, also *khizāna nawmiyya*

mahmal al-sharīf: the procession that brought the royal *kiswa* to Mecca

majlis: a type of a hall with a middle deep space and two flanking smaller spaces, usually separated from the central court of the house by a wall with three doors

majrā: water channel

maksala: (from *kasal*, laziness) a stone bench or *mastaba* so named because doormen used it to sit on all day long

maktab: the classroom for the sultan's sons and a few select mamluks

al-mamālīk al-burjiyya: mamluks of the towers

al-mamālīk al-sultāniyya: the royal mamluks

- manāfiʿ*: requirements of a living space
manzara: belvedere
maqʿad: usually translated as loggia, but in the Mamluk context it is a specific loggia with an arcaded opening
maqšūra: a screened and sometimes raised area inside a mosque for the ruler and his attendants
marāfiq: the dependencies such as the toilet and the bathroom
martaba: dais
mashhad: shrine
maşnaʿ: a tank built above ground
maştaba: a square stand, or a bench
matjar: the state office that controlled large-scale trading in a number of commodities
mawākib al-sultāniyya: royal processions
maydan: hippodrome or polo field
Maydān al-Akhḍār: the Green Maydan
Maydān al-Aswad: the Black Maydan
mudarraġ: stairway
muḥtasib: the market inspector
mukūs: taxes
muqayyadīn: the “chained ones”, corvée workers
mushahhar: alternating red and white
mushtaraf: probably a room with a view over something
mutaʿamimīn: those who wear an *ʿimāma*, or turban, distinguishing them as religious men

nāʿib: deputy, also the title of a provincial governor
nāʿib al-saltāna: the sultan’s vicegerent
nashz: outcrop
al-nazar fī-l-mazālim: lit. to consider or to look into acts of injustice, the practice of sitting in public to dispense justice
nāzir al-buyūt: the supervisor of the palaces
nāzir al-jaysh: the army supervisor
nāzir al-khāṣṣ: the overseer of crown property
niyāba: viceroyship

qāʿa muʿallaqa: a raised *qāʿa*, a hall built above some ground floor space
qāʿa musaqqafa ʿaqdān: a vaulted *qāʿa*
Qāʿat al-Inshāʿ: the chancery hall
Qāʿat al-Şāhib: hall of the vizier

- qā'at julūs*: a *qā'a* for sitting
- qabaq*: a *furūsiyya* game where horsemen shoot a pumpkin-like object hanging on a high pole while riding past it.
- qabū*: basement
- qāḍī al-ʿaskar*: judge of the army
- Qalʿat al-Baḥr: the Citadel of the Nile, or the Rawḍa Citadel
- Qalʿat al-Jabal: the Citadel of the Mountain, or the Citadel of Cairo
- qarāfa*: the cemetery in the Egyptian context, but originally it was the name either of a tribe that came with the Muslim conquerors or of a woman
- Qarāfa al-Kubrā: the Great or Northern Cemetery
- Qarāfa al-Ṣughra: the Little or Southern Cemetery
- Qarāmaydān: the Black Maydan
- Qaṣr al-Ablaq: the Ablaq Palace, sometimes called the Striped Palace
- qaṣṣal*: a watercourse
- qubba*: dome or domed structure that could be a mausoleum or a palace
- Qubbat al-Hawā: Dome of the Winds, a pavilion on the Muqaṭṭam hills
- Qubbat al-Khaḍrā: the Green Dome, the name of a number of Umayyad and early Abbasid palaces
- Qubbat al-Zarqāʿ: the Blue Dome, a palace in the Citadel of Damascus
- quḍāt al-quḍāt*: the four supreme judges of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence
- qulla*: a high area inside a citadel or a keep
- quṣūr al-juwwāniyya*: inner palaces
- rabʿ*: residential block in medieval Egypt
- raḥraf*: the word seems to mean a light roofed structure, something like a pergola
- raḥba*: court
- rank*: the word for color in Persian, but used to mean an emblem in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods
- rawshan*: corbel
- rawk*: land survey
- rijāl al-qalam*: men of the pen, i.e., administrators
- rijāl al-sayf*: men of the sword, i.e., military men
- rikābhāna*: the saddlery
- riwāq*: the word should be understood generically as indicating a liv-

ing unit in the upper level of a residence; it may also mean a gallery or portico

rukn: buttress or support

Sab' Ḥadarāt: Seven Ramps, a structure that linked the palace level at the Citadel to the maydan level.

sabīl-kuttāb: a charitable building type widespread in Cairo that consists of a public fountain surmounted by an open space for teaching the Qur'ān to orphans

saḥāba: lit. cloud, appears to have been the name of a special tent in the Burji period

ṣaḥn: an outer courtyard

salamlīk: reception quarter

sāqī: cupbearer

sāqiya: waterwheel

sarḥa: extended royal promenade

shādd al-ʿamāʿir: superintendent of constructions

shādirwān: a wall fountain made of a slanted marble slab with either geometric pattern in relief or pebbles on its surface to cause the water to ripple on its way down to a channel cut in the ground that leads into another fountain in the center of the space

sharābkhāna: buttery

sharārīf: merlons

shubbāk: window

shukhshīkha: a wooden dome or lantern

silāhdāriyya pl. of *silāhdār*: arms-bearer

simāt: banquet

ṣināʿa: dockyards

sitāra: curtain or awning

ṣuffa: awning, but a *ṣuffa* in a *qāʿa* is a small, shallow alcove

sullum: staircase

sultān: sovereignty or dominion

sumāqī: red or green marble

Sūq al-Khayl: the Horse Market

sūr: walls

ṣuwwa: hill

ṭabaqa (pl. *ṭibāq*): apartment usually situated on the upper level of a building

ṭablakhāna: military music band, also the drummery where the band played

tahkîr: to claim ownership of the land and to zone it for development

takhāyin: sleeping units

takht al-mulk: throne

ṭarḥ: a form of gabelle, whereby the state forces merchants to buy its stock of certain merchandise at preset prices

ṭārī: the last of three daily banquets and the only one in which the sultan partook

ṭārīma: baldachin

ṭayyāra: literally “the one flying over,” usually used to designate a high room

ṭirkhān: a retired Mamluk amir

ṭirāz: inscription band

ṭishtakhāna: house of the washbasin

turba: mausoleum

umarā’ al-mashūra: amirs of the council functioning as the sultan’s official advisory group

‘uqūd: vaults

ushāqiyya: pl. of *ushāqī* or *jift*, stable attendant

ustādār: the master of the household

ustādh: in the Mamluk context the word designates the owner and the master of a mamluk and the head of a military household

Wāfidiyya: Newcomers, Mongol deserters who joined the Mamluk army

wakāla: a warehouse

wakīl al-khāṣṣ: the agent of the privy purse

wakīl bayt al-māl: the treasury controller

wālī: governor

waqf: endowment deed

zarība: embankment

zāwiya: the house of a sufi sheikh which often becomes, after the death of the sheikh, a pilgrimage site and a small mosque

A NOTE ON THE PRIMARY SOURCES

The Ayyubid and Mamluk periods are unusually rich in historical writing. Annals, biographical compendia, manuals for the chancery, geographical treatises (*masālik*), and topographical tracts (*khiṭaṭ*) that deal in one way or another with Cairene history all exist in abundance for the period between the twelfth and the fifteenth century. Most of them have been culled for information on specific monuments or particular moments in Cairo's urban history, but very few have been systematically and consistently used. The pioneering study to propose an architectural reconstruction based on a medieval source—Maqrizī's *khiṭaṭ* in this case—was Paul Ravaisse, *Essai sur l'histoire et la topographie du Caire d'après Maqrizī* (1887-90). Paul Casanova's monograph on the Citadel (1894-96) was the second and in many ways a sequel to Ravaisse's essay. More recently, urban and architectural historians started to turn to the waqf, a little-used type of document in the corpus of Mamluk sources, and to emphasize its significance as a source for the study of medieval architecture and urbanism. Waqfs usually contain descriptions of endowed properties—agricultural land, urban real estate, and buildings—which can be used to complement the evidence of the structure itself, if it still exists, or to reconstruct original plans, or to suggest hypothetical plans for buildings that have disappeared.

Waqfs offer little help for the reconstruction of the Citadel's buildings, for the only early Mamluk structure there that had a waqf is the congregational mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, and even that one is missing. There are only three waqfs, to my knowledge, that deal with structures at the Citadel, and they all pertain to foundations built after al-Nāṣir's time. The first is that of Sultan Faraj ibn Barqūq which describes the mosque that he constructed in the *ḥawsh* in the southern enclosure in 1409, and which has since disappeared; the pertinent part of the waqf and a reconstruction of the mosque were published by Ṣāliḥ Lam'ī Muṣṭafā in his *al-Wathā'iḳ wa-l-'Imāra, Dirāsa fī al-'Imāra al-Islāmiyya fī al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī al-Jarkasī: al-Jāmi' al-Abyaḍ bi-l-Hawsh al-Sultānī bi-Qal'at al-Qāhira*. The second is the waqf of Sultan al-Mū'ayyad Shaykh (Awqāf 938q, dated 12 Rajab 823 [1420]) which mentions (p. 19, l. 8-17 and p. 43, l. 11-17) a cis-

tern and a *sabīl-kuttāb* which he built near the Bāb al-Mudarraġ, and which no longer exist. And finally the waqf of Sulaymān Pasha al-Khādīm (Awqāf 1074, dated 935 [1528]) from the early Ottoman period, which describes the renovation and enlargement of the mosque of Sidī Sārya in the northern enclosure (p.7, l. 5 to p. 14, l. 7). This mosque still stands today as the mosque of Sulaymān Pasha. All these structures were not directly connected with the palatial complex and their waqf descriptions do not add any new information on its architecture or topography in the early Mamluk period.

Waqf evidence, however, can still be useful in three ways. First, terms used in waqfs can help clarify the architectural terminology of the period. Second, a number of waqfs provide some topographic information on structures around the Citadel, particularly the water-courses and water channels in the area west and south of it, which were related to the palatial complex inside the southern enclosure. Third, in the reconstruction of the model for the Baġrī Mamluk palace, a number of descriptions contained in later Mamluk waqfs elucidate the changes that the conception of an amirial palace underwent in the Mamluk period.

Of the historical genres, the *khīṭaṭ* is the most relevant for this study and is almost unique to Egypt. It developed out of earlier literary types that had cities and regions as the focus of their interest, including books of *faḍā'il* (merits) and extensive biographical compendia of the distinguished residents of certain cities, such as al-Khaṭīb al-Baġhdādī's *Tārīkh Baġhdad* and Ibn 'Asākir's *Tārīkh Dimashq*. But unlike the non-Egyptian examples, the *khīṭaṭ* shifted the focus from the people of the city to its monuments, neighborhoods, and streets—in short its topography and architecture. This shift is linked to a particularist tendency and a strong sense of territorial unity detected in the writing of many Egyptian historians from the early Islamic period, but, for a number of historical and geopolitical reasons having to do with the establishment of the Fatimid caliphate as an Islamic center that challenged the supremacy of Baġhdad, a sense of Egyptian identity intensified in medieval times. It led to a boom in *khīṭaṭ* books in which these feelings found expression through careful and meticulous descriptions of everything that pertained to Egypt, and principally to Cairo as Egypt's major city. The term *khīṭaṭ*, the name for a planned urban quarter, was by extension used to designate books in this new genre which we could call topographical/historical studies. Ibn Zūlāq (919-97), is the first to

have written such a book—*Khiṭaṭ Miṣr*—with the word *khiṭaṭ* in its title. Several other historians followed, such as Muḥammad ibn As‘ad al-Jawwānī (d. 1192) with his *Kitāb al-Nuqat bi-‘Ajma‘ ma-Istashkala min al-Khiṭaṭ*, and Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir with *al-Rawḍa al-Bahiyya fī Khiṭaṭ al-Qāhira al-Mu‘izziyya*, written in 1249. Both are lost, though we know them through long excerpts that appear in later *khiṭaṭ* books and manuals for the chancery.

Only one complete Mamluk book survives; that is Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī, *al Mawā‘iz wa-l-I‘tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-l-Athār* (Exhortations and Reflection on the History of Settlements and Monuments). Composed between 1415 and 1424, this encyclopedic work presents the most complete corpus of data on medieval Cairo’s topography and toponymy. It records with loving care each and every street and important structure in Cairo and, to a lesser degree, other Egyptian cities and produces their description and the history of everything connected with them. Another fifteenth-century *khiṭaṭ* book survives in a much truncated form. That is Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Intiṣār li-Wāsiṭat ‘Iqd al-Amṣār*; the part we have deals with Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ. Most modern histories of Cairo relied heavily on Maqrīzī’s data and many, especially those written by Egyptians, even adopt his methods and reflect his idiosyncrasies. ‘Alī Pasha Mubārak, intentionally modeled his massive compendium, *al-Khiṭaṭ al-Tawfiqiyya al-Jadīda*, on it, and even named it after Maqrīzī’s *Khiṭaṭ*. He also updated Maqrīzī’s material and added sections on the development of Cairo between the fifteenth and the nineteenth century.

Maqrīzī and others preserved in their books the information they copied from earlier *khiṭaṭs* now lost to us, but in at least one case we have the original from which Maqrīzī borrowed without admitting it. This is Shihāb al-Dīn al-‘Umari’s *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār*, of which part six includes the description of the Citadel and the ceremonials that regularly took place there in the fourteenth century. This part was recently edited and published by two different authors: Ayman Fū‘ād Sayyed, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār, Mamlakat Miṣr wa-l-Shām wa-l-Hijāz wa-l-Yaman* (Cairo, 1985), and Dorothea Krawulsky, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār, Dawlat al-Mamālik al-Uwla* (Beirut, 1986). The second is favored over the first because of its comparative methodology; it is the one used throughout this study. ‘Umari’s text is the prime source we have, for he was an eyewitness to what he is recounting and, as a secretary (*kātib al-sirr*) to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad between 1329 and

1332, was probably involved in the design of some of the royal protocols he describes. His text is clearer than Maqrīzī's, and a comparison between the two texts shows that some of the latter's sentences are distorted versions of the original. This means that information based on Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ* should be treated with skepticism. In some cases we have other sources to compare to Maqrīzī, but in others we have to rely on a critical reading of his reports (see the criticism of Maqrīzī's method of copying and adopting in Ulrich Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit*, 192-93).

ʿUmārī's *Masālik al-Aḅṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār* belongs to the genre of geographical writing, which flourished in the tenth and eleventh century and was revived by ʿUmārī and turned into a hybrid of political and geographical texts in the Mamluk period. Khalīl ibn Shāhīn al-Zāhīrī's *Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik wa Bayān al-Ṭuruq wal-Masālik*, composed around the middle of the fifteenth century, is of the same kind. In addition to geographical topics, the subjects covered in these works include topographic descriptions of important places, such as the Citadel, essays on the status, prerogatives, and duties of the various orders of rulers, and listings of the functions and duties of officials in the ruling class in the countries described.

Manuals for the chancery usually covered traditions, customs, and protocols. However, in the Mamluk period, they were extended to give elaborate descriptions of a wider range of topics, such as court ceremonials, the titles and honorifics of state functionaries, and codes of dress and behavior followed by these functionaries in royal processions and festivals. The expanded chancery manuals are important for understanding the functioning of the Cairo Citadel because most processions and ceremonials took place there. Two manuals have come down to us: ʿUmārī's *al-Taʿrīf bi-l-Muṣṭalaḥ al-Sharīf*, and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qalqashandī's *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿsha fī Ṣināʿat al-Inshā*. ʿUmārī wrote his book in the 1320s, and Qalqashandī composed his after 1397. The latter supplants the former for our purpose because he incorporates all the information given by ʿUmārī in his book. The cautionary remark about the anachronistic nature of most of Qalqashandī's data—he was writing at the end of the fourteenth century while the information he produces belongs to its beginning—is not very important for our purpose since his data date from the period we are concerned with.

As for the last group of primary sources—the annals and biographical compendia—a huge number of them exist. Some are arranged

chronologically by year, other are grouped under the reigns of sultans, and still others under caliphs. There are those that follow the movements of the sultans and those that focus on the life of a city. The total number is staggering. For the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, for instance, there are more than thirty known chronicles and biographical dictionaries, some published, some still only in manuscript, that were written during his reign; at least ten more were composed later but deal extensively with his rule. Two criteria for selection produced an order of relevance that justified reducing their sum to a manageable number. The first was date: late chronicles, such as Ibn Iyās and Ibn Shāhīn al-Malṭī who lived in the sixteenth century, are almost useless for assessing constructions of the early Mamluk sultans. The second was interdependence, and sometimes outright copying. This eliminated texts that were heavily based on others or that took the information they copied out of chronological order. On these grounds most biographical compendia compiled by authors who also wrote chronicles could be ignored, for the information is repeated in many cases without any new additions. The same applies to those annals that cover prolonged periods starting long before the birth of the chronicler, and for which he therefore had to rely on other, earlier sources that are known to us.

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