The Mamluks | The Sultan and his Court

‘The Mamluk Sultan was supreme champion of Islam, commander-in-chief, statesman and patron of the arts.’

At the helm of the Mamluk institution was the sultan, himself a Mamluk, whose skills had marked him out for leadership among his peers. Every Mamluk sultan, irrespective of his individual ambitions, activities and interests, had certain overriding responsibilities inherent to his office. Most immediately, he was the supreme champion and defender of Sunni (Orthodox) Islam, protector of the Holy Cities and sites within the empire and guardian of the Islamic Caliphate, which thanks to Mamluk intervention was re-established in Cairo in 659 / 1261, after Baghdad had fallen to the Mongols three years earlier.



Name:
Key for the Ka'ba

Dynasty:
Hegira 765 / AD 1363 Mamluk

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
The Mamluk sultans donated sacred keys to the Ka'ba in Mecca, the holiest shrine in Islam.



Name:
Qur'an

Dynasty:
Hegira 842–57 / AD 1438–53 Mamluk

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
The virtuosity of many Mamluk-produced Qur'ans is a befitting reflection of their devotion to Islam.



Name:
Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary)

Dynasty:
Hegira 15–493 / AD 637–1099; AH 583–1336 / AD 1187–1917 A series of consecutive Islamic periods ranging from the Umayyad to the Ottoman dynasties

Details:
Jerusalem

Justification:
Jerusalem, the third holiest Islamic city, enjoyed extensive Mamluk patronage.



Name:
Sabil of Sultan Qaytbay

Dynasty:

Built in AH 887 / AD 1482, then renovated in AH 1300 / AD 1882–3 The building dates to the Mamluk period and was renovated in the Ottoman period

Details:
Jerusalem

Justification:
Sabil built by the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay.



Name:
Madrasa al-Ashrafiyya

Dynasty:
Hegira 887 / AD 1482 Mamluk

Details:
Jerusalem

Justification:
Madrasa built by Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay.