

The Mamluks | The Sultan and his Court

‘Mamluk sultans initiated the building of splendid mosques and religious institutions.’

With the caliphate based in Cairo, Muslim rulers from all over the Islamic world looked to Egypt for legitimisation of their reign. Throughout the empire, energetic Mamluk sultans like Baybars I, Qalawun, Nasr al-Din Muhammad ibn Qalawun, Hassan and Qaytbay, initiated the building of splendid mosques and religious institutions, and commissioned magnificent Qur’an manuscripts and mosque furnishings to grace their interiors.



Name:

Minbar

Dynasty:

Around hegira 872–901 / AD 1468–96 Mamluk

Details:

Victoria and Albert Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:

Mamluk mosques were furnished with elaborate minbars (pulpits) which were commissioned for sermons and announcements.



Name:

Mosque lamp

Dynasty:

Hegira first half of the 8th century / AD first half of the 14th century Mamluk

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:

Mamluk mosques were decorated with glass lamps that had enamelled religious verses painted on them and which shone, recalling the spiritual light of Allah.



Name:

Madrasa al-Zahiriyya

Dynasty:

Hegira 676 / AD 1277 Mamluk

Details:

Damascus, Syria

Justification:

Sultan Baybars I was the first to express Mamluk ideology in ambitious buildings.



Name:

Madrasa and Mosque of Sultan Qaytbay

Dynasty:

Hegira 879 / AD 1474 Mamluk

Details:

Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

In the 9th / 15th century, Sultan Qaytbay proved himself to be a particularly prolific patron of architecture; this complex is his greatest achievement.
