

The Mamluks | The Wider World: Diplomatic Contacts and International Trade

‘Stimulated by Mamluk patronage, the decorative arts reached new heights of craftsmanship and design.’

The Mamluk cities of Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem had numerous purpose-built markets or trading centres (caravanserais; known variously as suqs, khans and wikalas). Their purpose was to receive commercial caravans and accommodate securely the exotic goods of the merchants and tradesmen who came to them from far and wide. The international diversity of the products available in the wikalas, pottery and textiles among the goods, inspired local artisans. Stimulated by Mamluk patronage, and practised in royal ateliers as well as urban bazaars throughout Egypt and Syria, the decorative arts reached new heights of craftsmanship and design.



Name:

Suq al-Qattanin (Market of the Cotton Merchants)

Dynasty:

Hegira 737 / AD 1336–7 Mamluk

Details:

Jerusalem

Justification:

The covered Suq al-Qattanin Complex in Jerusalem was commissioned by Sultan Qalawun.



Name:

Weighing scales pan

Dynasty:

Hegira 9th century / AD 15th century Mamluk

Details:

National Museums of Scotland (NMS)
Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

Justification:

Scale-pans were essential tools in the suqs and khans of Mamluk cities.



Name:

Wikala (caravanserai) of al-Ghuri

Dynasty:

Hegira 909–10 / AD 1503–5 Mamluk

Details:

Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

The wikala built by Sultan al-Ghuri to replace Khan al-Khalili in Cairo combined shops, secure stores and lodgings for merchants.
