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.