

Al-Franj: the Crusaders in the Levant | Two Mamluk Sultans against the Franks

‘Sultans Baybars and Qalawun were enthusiastic patrons of luxury objects and architecture.’

Both sultans, Baybars and Qalawun, were enthusiastic patrons of both luxury objects and architecture, which they had built in Syria and in the Holy Land, and not only in the capital Cairo. For example, Baybars restored fortresses in Palestine and Syria, but his interests did not lie solely in military architecture; he also built a large Congregational Mosque in Cairo – the earliest surviving royal Mamluk mosque in the city. He died in Damascus Citadel (d. 676 / 1277) and was buried in a mausoleum (qubba) north of the Umayyad Mosque. The qubba is part of a school that was already dedicated to him, the Madrasa al-Zahiriyya.



Name:
Damascus Citadel

Dynasty:
Hegira 599–610 / AD 1202–14 Ayyubid

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
The Mamluk Sultan Baybars died in the Damascus Citadel built by the Ayyubid king al-'Adil.



Name:
Madrasa al-Zahiriyya

Dynasty:
Hegira 676 / AD 1277 Mamluk

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
Sultan Baybars died in Damascus Citadel. His son (Sultan al-Sa'id Baraka Khan) built him a mausoleum nearby, with decorations inspired by the Great Umayyad Mosque.



Name:
Incense burner

Dynasty:
Hegira 675–7 / AD 1277–9 Mamluk

Details:
The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
A spherical incense burner that bears the name of the confidant (Badr al-Din Baysari) who declared his allegiance to Sultan Baybars' son, Sultan al-Sa'id Baraka Khan.



Name:
Candlestick of Qalawun

Dynasty:
Hegira 693–741 / AD 1294–1340 Mamluk

Details:
Islamic Museum, al-Aqsa Mosque / al-Haram al-Sharif
Jerusalem

Justification:
The candlestick is inscribed with the name of Sultan Qalawun.
