

UMAYYAD SURVIVALS AND MAMLUK REVIVALS: QALAWUNID ARCHITECTURE AND THE GREAT MOSQUE OF DAMASCUS

In his seminal paper on the theme of copying in medieval Christian architecture, published over fifty years ago, Richard Krautheimer demonstrated how tenuous the visual links between an archetypal building and its copies might be.¹ Often a single element or even a name was sufficient to evoke a connection with the prototype, a connection not always readily apparent to the eye of the modern art historian. A similar comprehensive study does not exist for the medieval Islamic world. While the phenomenon of copying undoubtedly exists, it has received scant attention.² The influence of certain powerful prototypes on later architecture has occasionally been noted in passing,³ but seldom explored in any detail.

Recently, however, attention has been drawn to the phenomenon of copying in the architecture of the medieval mosque, and to the enduring influence of the Umayyad mosque of Damascus in particular. From Umayyad Spain to Seljuq Iran, it seems that the architectural forms associated with the Great Mosque of Damascus were replicated and, through their incorporation into regional idioms, profoundly influenced the formal evolution of the mosque.⁴ In what follows I would like to supplement this observation by demonstrating that what applies to the architectural form of the Damascus mosque also holds good for its scheme of decoration. In particular, the forms and materials used in the decoration of the mosque provided the prototype for certain types of ornament which appear in Bahri Mamluk architecture.

The Great Mosque of Damascus was built by order of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid I on the site of the former church of St. John, and was completed by 715.⁵ That the form of this mosque, with its three parallel aisles, axial nave and gabled façade, determined the course of much of the subsequent history of the mosque in southern Syria and beyond is not in doubt.⁶ What is seldom recognized, however, is the profound impact which the building had on the development of architectural decoration in Egypt and the Levant for a little less than a century after 1250, when the region came under Mamluk suzerainty. The failure to acknowledge the Mamluk debt to

Damascene prototypes may be attributed perhaps to the fact that much of the mosque, and almost all of its interior decoration, was destroyed by fire in 1893. The destruction of the early Islamic decoration of the mosque has rendered it difficult to discern the impact which it may have had on later religious architecture, obscuring the relationship between archetype and copy. One consequence of this is that the role of the Umayyad mosque in the generation of Bahri Mamluk architecture has been generally overlooked, or at least understated.

A study of a particular feature of the Umayyad mosque — a vine frieze formerly in the prayer-hall — complements the architectural evidence for the impact which al-Walid's mosque continued to have on the religious architecture, not just of Syria, but of the eastern Mediterranean in general, for several centuries after its completion. The appearance of copies of this frieze in a series of imperial Mamluk tombs of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century may be seen as part of a revival of forms of decoration associated with the Umayyad monuments of Syria, and with the Great Mosque of Damascus in particular, during the reign of Sultan al-Mansur Sayf al-Din Qalawun and his son, al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun. In support of this suggestion of a Qalawunid revival of archaic decorative forms, two further elements in this revival — mihrabs with miniature arcades and glass mosaic decoration — will be discussed briefly.

In their accounts of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus medieval authors single out two elements in the decoration of the mosque as particularly worthy of praise: the *fusayfusa* (mosaics) and the *karma* (vine). While the mosaics — large areas of which survive in the courtyard of the mosque — have been the focus of several studies,⁷ the vine has merited at best a passing mention as a curiosity. No trace of the vine survives in the mosque today, but two kinds of sources may be used in attempting to determine its appearance and location: medieval literary descriptions, and the visual record left by artists and photographers who recorded the interior of the mosque before the fire of 1893.

Three pieces of information can be gleaned from the literary sources: first, the amount spent on the vine was enormous; second, the vine had a golden appearance; and, third, it was located between the marble dado and the mosaics which covered the upper part of the southern (qibla) wall. The earliest account of the *karma* appears in the *Ta'rikh Madīna Dimashq* of Ibn 'Asakir (d. 1176). Quoting two earlier traditions, it informs us that a total of 70,000 dinars was spent on the vine.⁸ Computing from the figure for the total cost of construction and decoration cited in the same work, the sum spent on the *karma* amounts to one-eightieth of the total cost of the mosque. The accuracy of this figure is, for our purposes, irrelevant. The important point is that by the twelfth century the fame of the *karma* was such that a figure of this magnitude might seem plausible.

Later writers repeat this information, with occasional variations and additional details. Various fourteenth- and fifteenth-century sources tell us that the vine was golden. Ibn Kathir, for example, refers to the great gold-

en vine (*karma azīmat min dhahab*) on the qibla wall.⁹ The most detailed account is found in Ibn Sasra's chronicle, written in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. He puts the cost of the vine at 50,000 dinars, approximately one-twentieth of the figure given for the construction of the mosque as a whole,¹⁰ and mentions that it was studded with sapphires, carnelians, pearls, and other gems. It is not clear to what extent one should trust the report of jewels being used, but since earlier authors mention the use of jewels to decorate the mihrab of the mosque, Ibn Sasra's account cannot be dismissed out of hand.¹¹

On the basis of these medieval accounts, scholars writing in the present century have suggested that the *karma* was either a vine motif executed in gilded marble, a gold mosaic in the spandrels of the mihrab or, alternatively, a mosaic frieze running along the qibla wall.¹² However, in one of the very rare photographs which show the interior of the mosque before the disastrous fire, a band of vegetal ornament about 60 centimeters wide is visible,

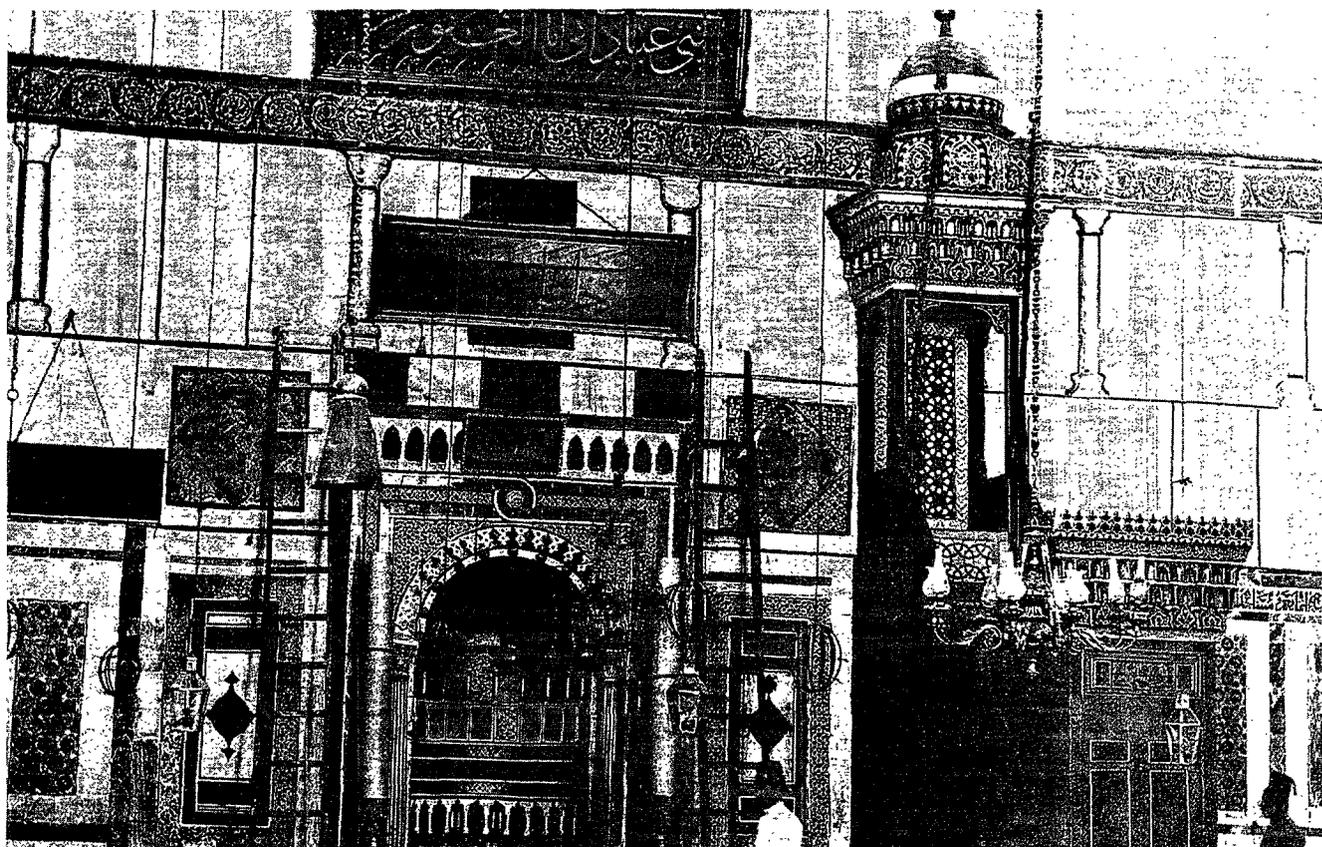


Fig. 1. Damascus. Great Mosque. Qibla wall before 1893. Creswell Archive, no. 715, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

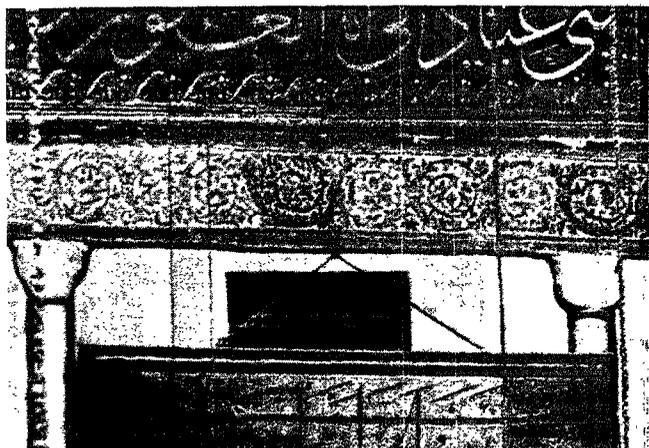


Fig. 2. Damascus. Great Mosque. Vine frieze above mihrab. Detail of fig. 1.

running above the marble paneling of the qibla wall (figs. 1–3).¹³ From Henri Saladin, who visited the mosque before the fire, we learn that the frieze was carved from marble.¹⁴ It was K.A.C. Creswell who first suggested that this marble frieze should be identified as the famous *karma* of Damascus.¹⁵ Both the location of the frieze between the marble dado and the zone of mosaic decoration which formerly covered the upper wall surface and its subject matter clearly support such an identification. The popular perception of the vine as golden evidently derives from the fact that the frieze was heavily gilded; the gilding is clearly visible in a painting of the prayer niche and its environs by Frederick, Lord Leighton, executed between 1873 and 1875 (fig. 4).¹⁶

While most medieval writers state that the vine ran along the southern (qibla) wall of the mosque, none states that it was restricted to that wall. In fact proof that the frieze continued along the adjoining walls is provided by two more photographs which show a narrow band of ornament running along the eastern and western walls of the mosque.¹⁷ It seems probable that the frieze was continued around the northern wall of the prayer hall to form a vine which encircled the interior space.¹⁸

Although the term *karma* usually denotes a vine, if



Fig. 3. Damascus. Great Mosque. Detail of vine frieze from a digital enhancement of fig. 1.

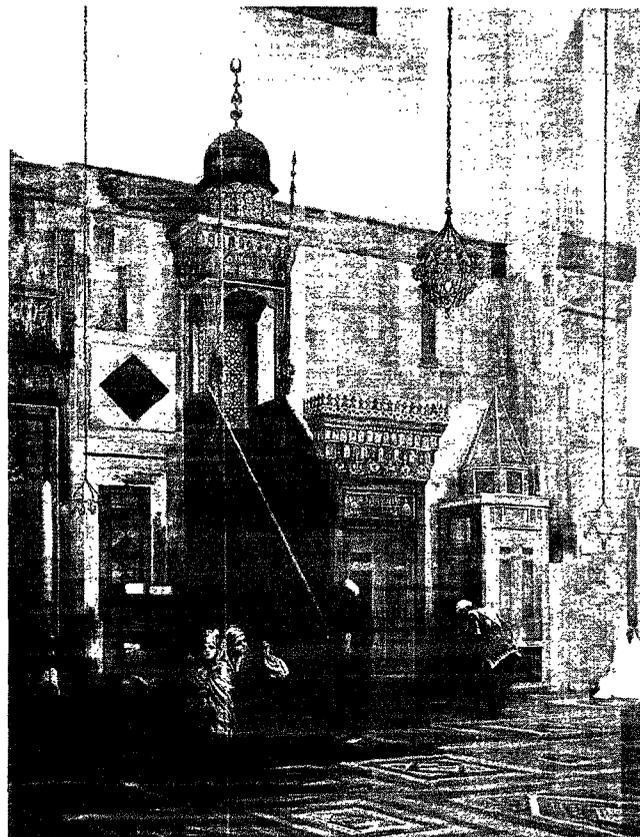


Fig. 4. Frederick, Lord Leighton. Interior of the Great Mosque of Damascus. (Photo: reproduced by kind permission of the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, England)

one examines the Damascus frieze carefully it is clear that to describe the *karma* as a vine is not strictly accurate. What appears instead is a composite creation consisting of an acanthus scroll in which bunches of grapes alternate with single vine leaves or pomegranates at the center of each scroll (fig. 3). Whatever the conceptual antecedents of this form of decoration, the Umayyad *karma* was executed in a Syro-Palestinian idiom; parallels for both the composite iconography and two-dimensional style of the frieze are not difficult to find in the late-antique art of the Levant.¹⁹

Although it is not my intention to deal here with the origins of the vine frieze or to discuss the factors which may have led to its prominence in the cathedral mosque of the Umayyad capital, it should be pointed out that it was not unique. Based on literary sources, Sauvaget's reconstruction of the qibla wall of the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina, rebuilt by al-Walid in 706–10, shows an arrangement which is almost identical to that employed at Damascus (fig. 5).²⁰ Between the marble dado

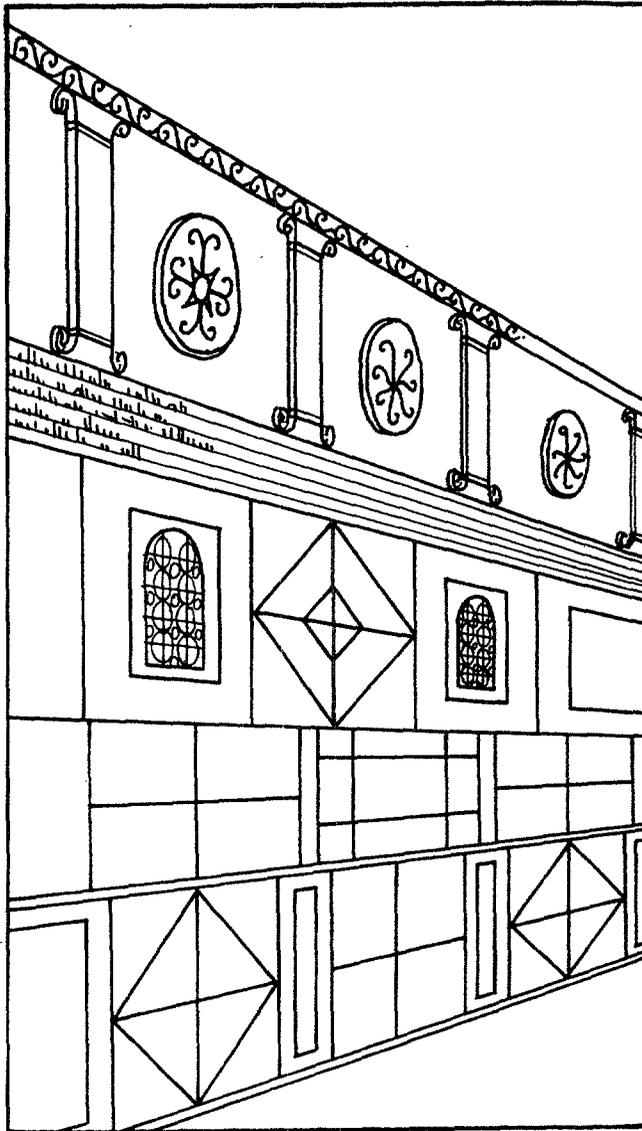


Fig. 5. Medina, Great Mosque. Reconstruction of the qibla wall. (Drawing: after Jean Sauvaget, *La mosquée omeyyade de Médine* [Paris, 1947], fig. 3).

and an upper zone of mosaics is a gilded marble vegetal frieze carried on colonnettes.²¹ Further details are lacking, but the similarities in the decoration suggest an attempt to impose a coherent imperial style, of which the *karma* was part.²² Ultimately, it was the fame of the Damascus vine rather than that of Medina which left the most enduring mark on both the historical and art-historical record. Despite the numerous laudatory references to the *karma* in descriptions of the Damascus mosque, the *karma* of Medina appears to have escaped the attention of medieval observers; apart from a pass-

ing mention which may have been influenced by the literary reputation of its Damascene counterpart,²³ it fails to make any impression on the literary record.

From the foregoing remarks, the available information on the *karma* of Damascus may be summarized as follows. The *karma* was a narrow marble frieze which enclosed the interior walls of the *sahn* in the Umayyad mosque. Not strictly a vine, the frieze was carved with scrolling acanthus within which single vine leaves or fruits such as grapes and pomegranates appeared at intervals. The surface of the relief was gilded, which gave the *karma* its golden appearance. Although it may have been repaired at various points,²⁴ the vine frieze survived until the end of the last century. The fame of the vine derived from the prominent role which it played in the decoration of the early-eighth-century mosque, and was perpetuated in literary accounts of the mosque and its decoration from the twelfth century onwards.

Just as the fame of the mosque ensured that its impact was felt for several centuries in the formal arrangement of the mosques erected in Syria, Anatolia, and even further afield, so the renown of its decoration rendered it an appropriate model for the religious architecture of subsequent generations. To prove the point one has only to turn to the structures situated in the vicinity of the mosque, for it is in some of the earliest surviving Mamluk monuments in Damascus that the impact of the Umayyad mosque and its decoration is most keenly felt. The first example of the phenomenon is in the tomb of the Mamluk sultan Baybars I, who died in the city in 1277. Although this tomb has never been studied in detail,²⁵ it has long been recognized that the mosaics decorating its walls were inspired by the eighth-century mosaics in the nearby Umayyad mosque. As will be seen shortly, it is likely that the art of glass mosaic was revived following the restoration of the Dome of the Rock (beginning in 1261) and the Great Mosque of Damascus (in 1269). Although the connection between the mosaics in the tomb and those in the Great Mosque has often been noticed *en passant*, the fact that the references to the Umayyad mosque in its decoration are not confined to the use of glass mosaics featuring landscape and architectural scenes has been overlooked.

I would like to draw attention to two narrow parallel gilded friezes which run around the walls of the tomb below the band of mosaic decoration (fig. 6), for these are clearly copies of the *karma* that once existed in the nearby Umayyad mosque. Not only is the juxtaposition of vine frieze and glass mosaic suggestive, but the form



Fig. 6. Damascus. Mausoleum of Baybars. Creswell Archive no. 5570, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford).

of both friezes — a vegetal scroll containing pendant bunches of grapes which alternate with single splayed vine leaves (fig. 7) — and their general location be-

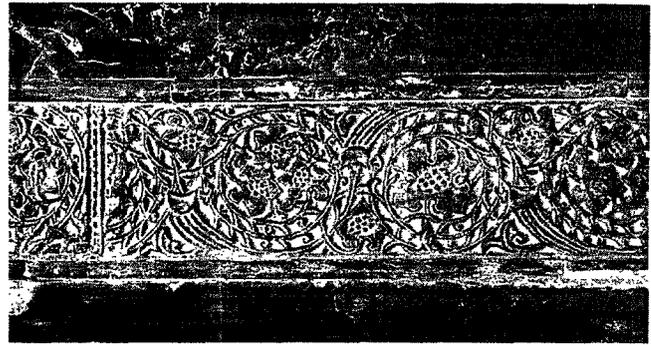


Fig. 7. Damascus. Mausoleum of Baybars. Detail of vine frieze. Creswell Archive no. 5593, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

tween the marble dado and the mosaics which cover the upper walls of the tomb mirror precisely the form and location of the famous prototype in the Umayyad mosque. The connection between the decoration of the two buildings would presumably have been all the more apparent when the vine in the nearby mosque was available for contemporaries to see.

Although Baybars died in 1277, the tomb was not completed until 1281. An inscription above the entrance states that it was completed by his successor, Sultan al-Mansur Sayf al-Din Qalawun,²⁶ and it seems likely that it is to the influence of Qalawun that the presence of a copy of the Umayyad vine in the Mamluk tomb should be attributed. In 1283, two years after the completion of the tomb, Qalawun undertook a restoration of the *māristān* of Nur al-Din in Damascus.²⁷ At that time a vine frieze was added to the walls of the *māristān* (fig. 8).²⁸ The form of this frieze is similar to that in the tomb of Baybars, and it is not difficult to recognize in it another echo of the *karma* formerly in the Umayyad mosque,

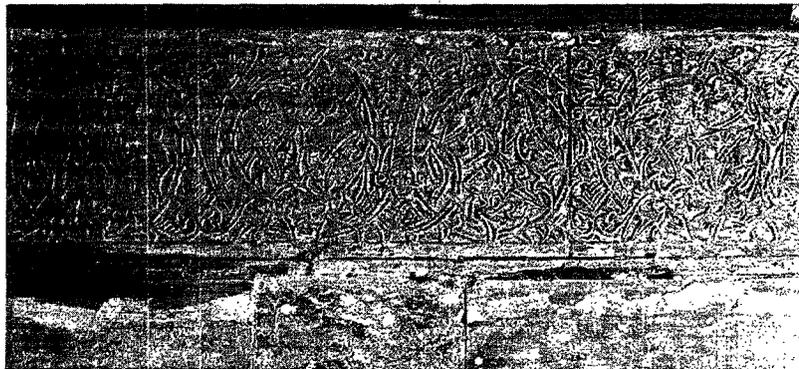


Fig. 8. Damascus. Maristan of Nur al-Din. Detail of vine frieze. Creswell Archive no. 5501, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

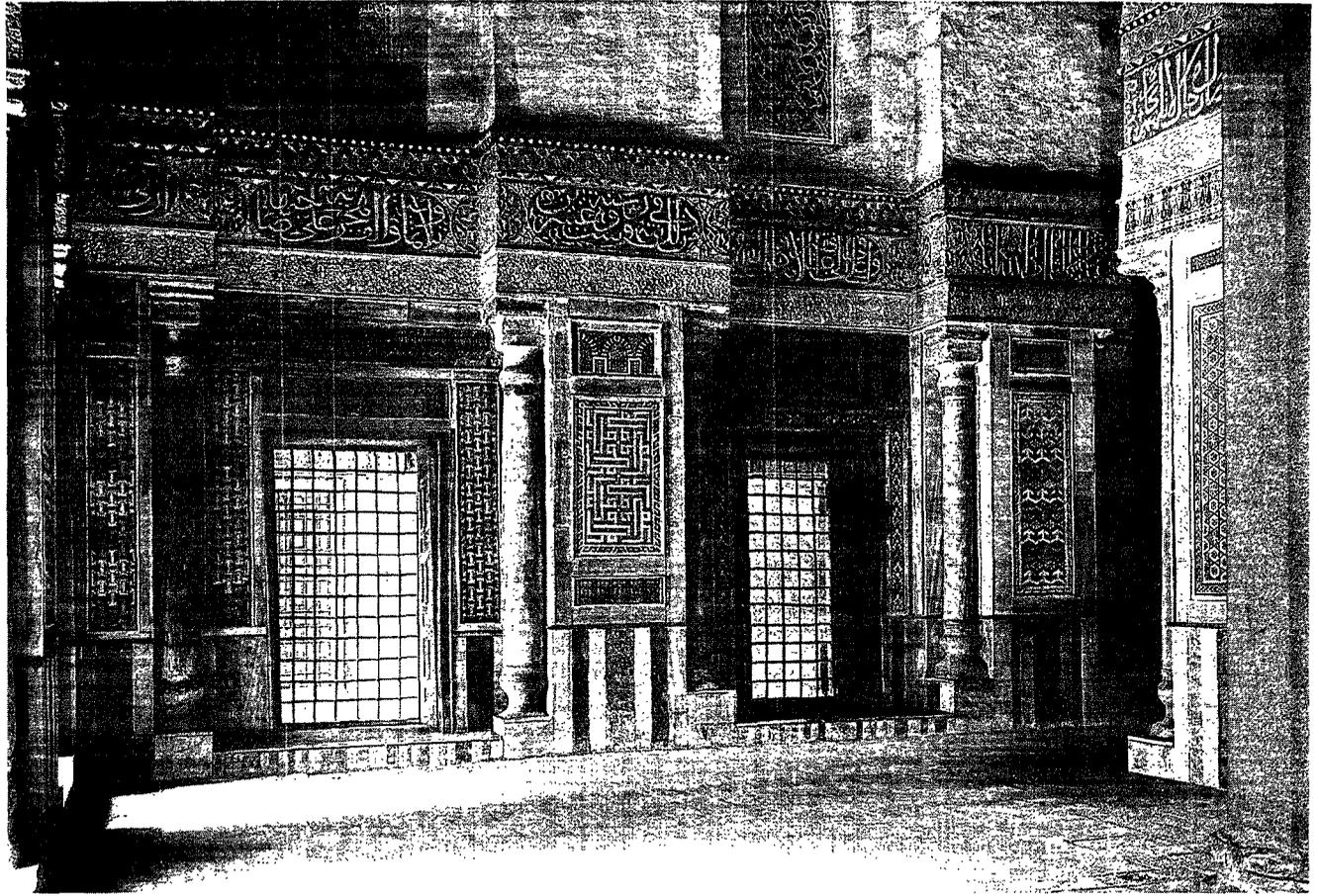


Fig. 9. Cairo. Mausoleum of Qalawun. Creswell Archive no. 1068, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

from which it is separated by only a few minutes' walk. Indeed other elements in the later redecoration of the *māristān* appear to show influence from the eighth-century mosque.²⁹

Although Mamluk interest in the copying of decorative forms specifically associated with the Great Mosque of Damascus began naturally enough in Damascus itself, it was not confined to that city. The monumental tomb which Qalawun built for himself in the imperial capital of Cairo in 1285 makes use of similar decoration. That the form of the tomb, an octagon inscribed in a rectangle, was intended to evoke that of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem has been noted elsewhere.³⁰ What has largely escaped notice until now is that the force of this allusion is amplified by the fact that the tomb also contains references to the Great Mosque of Damascus. These references are expressed not in the architecture of the tomb, but in its decoration. They are made by

transposing the most characteristic elements in the decoration of the Damascus mosque and replicating them in a Cairene setting.

The first of these elements is the famous vine frieze. The copy of the *karma* manifests itself in the familiar gilded marble frieze which runs around all four walls of the tomb, surrounding its interior above the level of the marble dado (figs. 9–10).³¹ On the basis of the suggested resemblance between this frieze and another in the church of Hagia Sophia (fig. 11), the frieze has been cited as evidence for Byzantine influence on the architecture of Cairo at that time, during a period of rapprochement between the Mamluk and Byzantine courts.³² This suggestion was made, however, at a time when little was known about the Damascus vine frieze. When one examines the evidence in the light of what can be gleaned about the *karma* of Damascus, a quite different picture emerges.

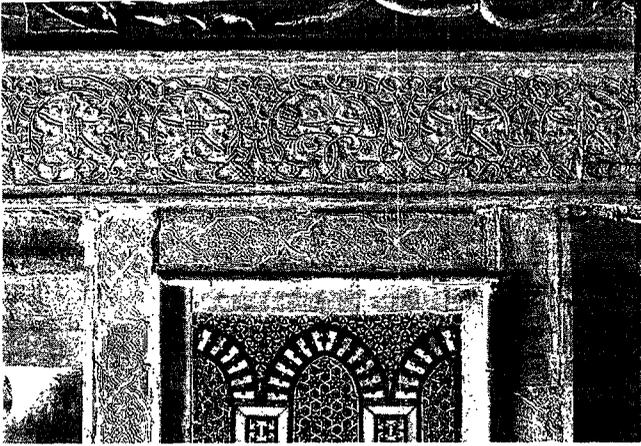


Fig. 10. Cairo. Mausoleum of Qalawun. Detail of vine frieze. Creswell Archive no. 1070, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

The Cairene frieze has little in common stylistically with its purported prototype from Hagia Sophia. Indeed, apart from the general conception of a continuous vine frieze used in conjunction with marble paneling as a form of interior decoration, there is little to suggest a relationship between the two. The Cairene vine frieze is in fact much closer in style to the Umayyad *karma*, as a comparison between figures 3, 10 and 11 shows. The frieze in Hagia Sophia consists of a dense, deeply undercut tangle of vines which forms a continuous convex molding.³³ That formerly in the Damascus mosque consisted of a two-dimensional relief in which single vine leaves alternated with hanging fruit; both

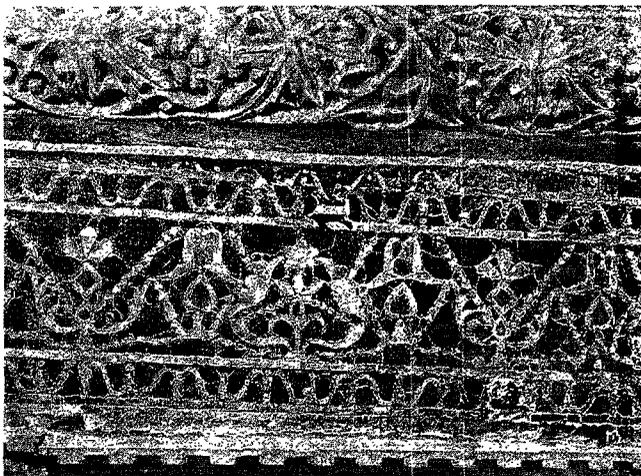


Fig. 11. Istanbul. Hagia Sophia. Detail of vine frieze and marble dado. (Photo: courtesy Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, Washington, D.C.)

these features recur in the Cairene frieze. Added to this is the fact that, whereas the Byzantine vine frieze is executed in stucco, the friezes in both Damascus and Cairo are of marble.

It is highly likely that, at least conceptually, the Umayyad vine frieze is related to the Justinianic decoration of Hagia Sophia,³⁴ but such a genetic relationship cannot be taken as evidence for a direct relationship in the Qalawunid period. The existence of similar vine friezes which can be clearly identified as copies of the Umayyad *karma* in two earlier Damascene buildings associated with Qalawun confirms that one should see in the decoration of the Cairene tomb one more copy of the Umayyad prototype.

Further support for the suggestion that it is to Damas-

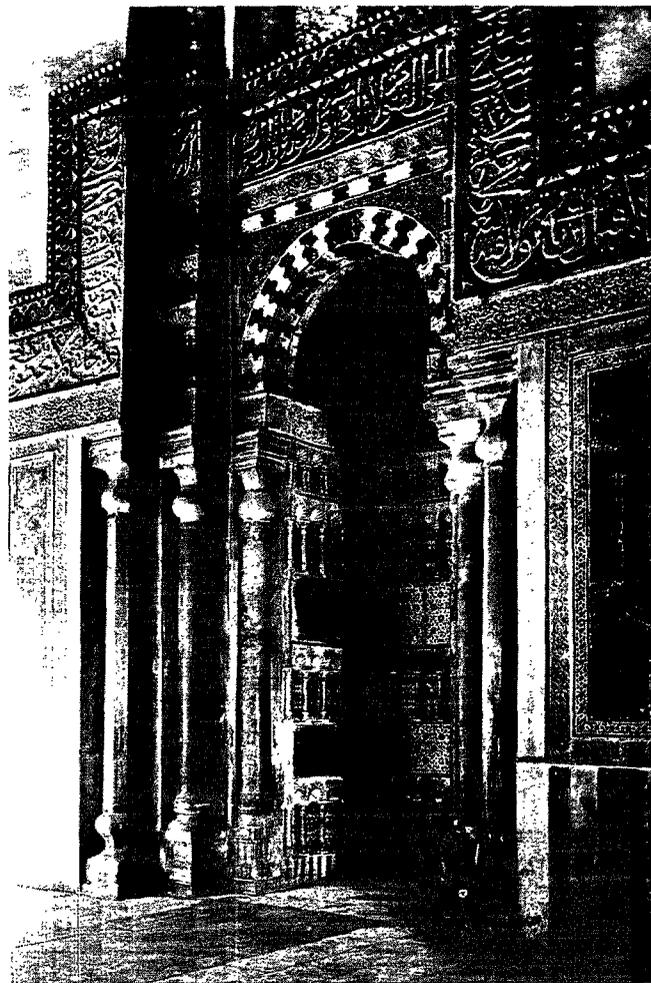


Fig. 12. Cairo. Mausoleum of Qalawun. Mihrab. Creswell Archive no. 507, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

cus that one should look for the inspiration behind the decoration of the tomb is found in another of its most prominent elements, its mihrab (fig. 12). The mihrab — at 7 meters high one of the most monumental in Cairo — is decorated internally with four tiers of miniature arcades composed of scalloped niche-heads borne on single or double columns. It was Rivoira who suggested that the form of this mihrab may have been influenced by the main mihrab in the Great Mosque of Damascus,³⁵ an idea first rejected, then adopted, by Creswell.³⁶

The arcaded mihrab in Damascus no longer exists, but was seen by the traveler Ibn Jubayr when he visited the mosque in 1184. He describes it as follows:

Its mihrab is the most wonderful in Islam for its beauty and rare art, and the whole of it gleams with gold. Within it are small mihrabs adjoining its wall and surrounded by small columns, voluted like a bracelet as if done by a turner, than which nothing more beautiful could be seen, some of them being red as coral.³⁷

The fame of this mihrab was, like that of the *karma*, perpetuated in literary accounts of the mosque; writing at the end of the fifteenth century, Abu'l-Baqa informs us that the mihrab was one of the most beautiful and extraordinary mihrabs of the Muslim world.³⁸ Before the fire of 1893 the interior of the main mihrab of the mosque was indeed filled with miniature arcades (fig. 1).³⁹ The form of these arcades was, however, relatively crude, and on stylistic grounds this mihrab might be consigned to the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The mosque was gutted by fire during the ravages visited on Damascus by Timur in 1401, and it seems likely that the mihrab in place before 1893 dates from the subsequent restoration of the mosque. The similarities between what Ibn Jubayr describes and what is visible in the nineteenth-century photograph indicate that the form of the restored mihrab was reasonably faithful to that of the mihrab formerly in place. What is not clear is the date of the mihrab which Ibn Jubayr describes. It has usually been suggested that the mihrab was one of the features associated with the restoration of the mosque in 1082, during the reign of Malik Shah, when the monumental qibla dome was replaced.⁴⁰ This may be so, but it does not preclude the possibility that the form of an earlier mihrab was preserved. The evidence for the perpetuation of the arcaded form in the mihrab presumed to have been installed after 1401 indicates that even when a new mihrab was installed it might well follow the general form of that which preceded it. It could hardly be

argued that the dwarf arcade is a characteristic feature of Seljuq architectural decoration. It is, however, a prominent element in the decoration of several Umayyad buildings,⁴¹ which leaves open the possibility that the mihrab seen by Ibn Jubayr was the original Umayyad mihrab, or that it preserved something of the form of the latter.⁴²

Regardless of its date, what is certain is that a mihrab with miniature arcades in the Great Mosque of Damascus was being described in extravagant terms by visitors to Damascus a full century before one finds a mihrab of a similar form appearing elsewhere. The first of these still extant is in the mausoleum of Qalawun (fig. 12). The superlative beauty of the Damascus mihrab, like that of the golden vine, evidently rendered it a suitable model for the mihrab in Qalawun's tomb; the conjunction of both these features in the Mamluk tomb suggests that its decoration was intended to evoke that of the Great Mosque in Damascus. Taken alongside the reference to the Dome of the Rock in its plan, what we have in the form of the tomb and its decoration are references to the two most important early Islamic religious monuments in the area most securely under Mamluk control — the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Umayyad mosque in Damascus. This reference is made by copying the most characteristic or celebrated features of each building: in one case its octagonal plan, in the other its prayer niche and the gilded vine frieze that sat above it.

Since the form of the Umayyad *karma* in Damascus relates it to the late antique sculpture of the Levant,⁴³ it seems judicious at this point to consider the "revival vs. survival" debate.⁴⁴ Although this controversy has mainly focused on the use and reuse of classically inspired and classical elements in Syrian architecture, since I have suggested that the Qalawunid use of decorative forms derived from Damascus clearly represents a conscious revival of archaic forms of decoration, rather than their fortuitous survival, it seems appropriate to lay bare the premises on which such a conclusion is based.

That Mamluk vine friezes first appear in buildings erected as part of imperially sponsored projects in Damascus, that one is found in a building with mosaics clearly inspired by those of the Great Mosque of that city, and that in both their general conception and specific form they are similar to the renowned vine frieze in the nearby mosque would all support the suggestion that these Mamluk friezes are copies of the vanished *karma*. Based on the surviving evidence, such friezes do not appear as a feature of Islamic architectural decora-

tion in the half a millennium or so intervening between the completion of the Umayyad mosque and the mausoleum of Baybars I.⁴⁵ In the single case which may have represented an exception to this — a marble vine frieze of similar type in the mihrab of Sultan Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub's tomb in Cairo (1239–40)⁴⁶ — it has been argued that this postdates the tomb, being introduced in the Qalawunid period.⁴⁷

The figure of Qalawun looms large in all this, since he was responsible in one case for the completion, in the other for the restoration, of the two Damascene structures in which copies of the vine frieze first appear. The fact that a similar frieze was introduced into Egypt, where there is nothing to suggest that it had any historical antecedents, to serve as an element of decoration in the mausoleum of the same sultan suggests that the feature was deliberately imported from Syria and was not, as Creswell assumed,⁴⁸ the random product of Syrian craftsmen fleeing the Mongol advance. The same is true of the mihrab in the mausoleum of Qalawun, which there are good reasons for seeing as a copy of the principal mihrab in the Great Mosque of Damascus.

Perhaps the most potent evidence supporting the view that the appearance of these two features — vine frieze and arcaded mihrab — represents a deliberate Qalawunid revival of archaic forms⁴⁹ is chronological: both features hardly survive the reign of Qalawun's son,

al-Nasir Muhammad (d. 1340). Transplanted from its Damascene home to alien soil, the golden vine evidently failed to flourish. It makes one last appearance in another royal tomb in Cairo, the tomb of al-Nasir Muhammad built in 1303–4, before disappearing into oblivion. The incarnation of the vine frieze in al-Nasir Muhammad's tomb is less grandiose than that in his father's tomb, with gilded wood substituting for the carved marble of the original (fig. 13).⁴⁹ The same is true of the mihrab with miniature arcades. Unlike the vine frieze, the arcaded mihrab was not exclusive to imperial contexts; after its use in the funerary complex of Qalawun one can trace a series of such mihrabs in Cairo and the provinces in buildings erected during the late thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century (fig. 14); thereafter they die out.⁵⁰ It is conceivable that the disappearance of these non-indigenous features reflects the fact that their relationship to their Damascene prototypes became obscured through time.

By focusing on a single feature, what I have been suggesting up to now is that the decoration of the Great Mosque of Damascus had an impact on Mamluk architectural decoration in the years between 1260 and 1340 which has previously been unacknowledged. In the case of the vine frieze this impact seems to result from the conscious copying of the *karma* in the Umayyad mosque as an appropriate feature for the decoration of a series

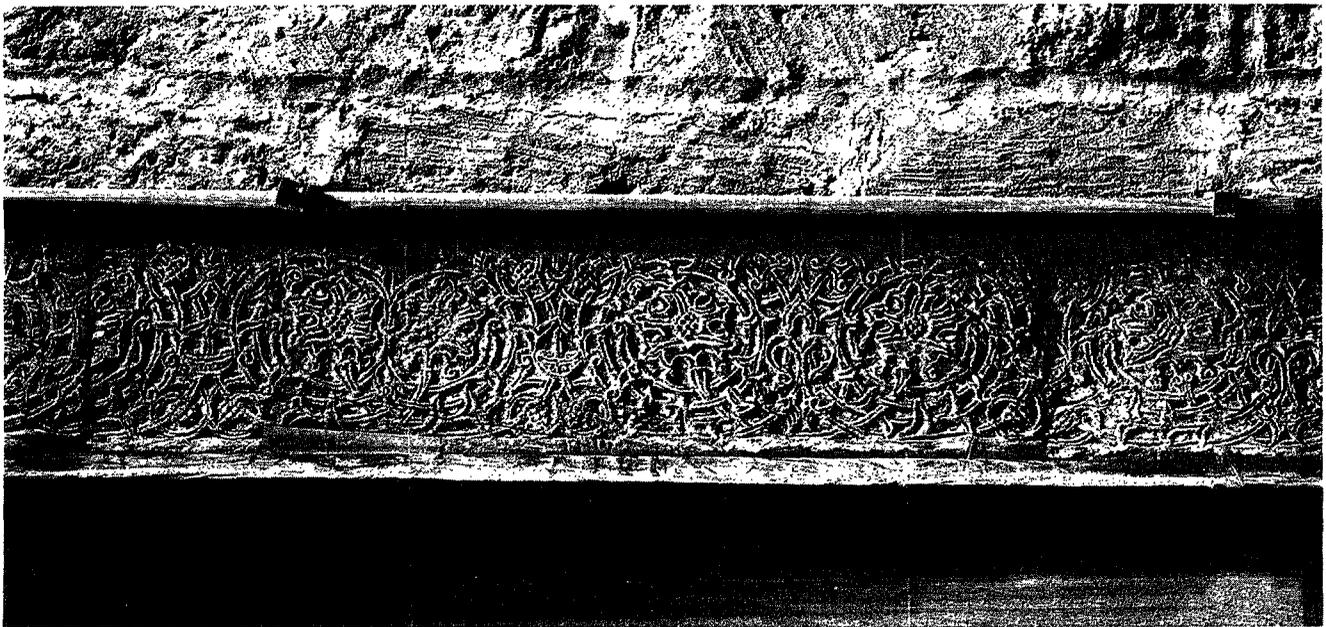


Fig. 13. Cairo. Mausoleum of al-Nasir Muhammad. Detail of vine frieze. Creswell Archive no. 1092, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)



Fig. 14. Cairo citadel. Mosque of al-Nasir Muhammad (1335). Mihrab with the remnants of a miniature arcade. Creswell Archive no. 1178, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

of imperial tombs in Damascus and Cairo. A similar phenomenon is apparent in the replication of the design of the main mihrab of the Damascus mosque in buildings erected during the reign of Sultan Qalawun and al-Nasir Muhammad.

While the discussion has so far concentrated on types of decoration associated with the Qalawunid revival of archaic forms which are quite specific to Damascus, the incorporation of a reference to the Dome of the Rock in the plan of Qalawun's tomb in Cairo indicates that it was not to Damascus alone that those responsible for this revival were looking. I would like to suggest that the Qalawunid revival was not confined to copying specific elements in the form and decoration of the early Islamic monuments of Syria, but is also manifest in the use of certain media which are characteristic of their decoration, most notably glass mosaic.

It has sometimes been argued that the use of glass

mosaic in Mamluk monuments between the reign of Baybars and that of al-Nasir Muhammad (that is, from about 1260 to 1340) is evidence for a continuous tradition of glass mosaic in the Levant, stretching from the Umayyad period through to the Mamluk.⁵¹ It can be argued, however, that, far from this being the case, there was no enduring tradition underlying the use of glass mosaic in Bahri Mamluk architecture, but that the art was revived during the reign of Sultan Baybars (that is, in the 1260's) and formed part of the repertoire of archaizing decoration under discussion. Furthermore, it is, I believe, possible to show that the inspiration behind this revival was the use of glass mosaic in both the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus.⁵² The mosaics of both monuments were several times repaired and restored during the eighty-year period from 1260 to 1340. Such programs of work on the mosaics of both buildings may be convincingly correlated to the use of the same medium in the decoration of contemporary Mamluk buildings.

It is true that there are two Ayyubid tombs in Cairo — the tomb of Sultan al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub (1239–40), the last Ayyubid ruler of Egypt, and his wife Shajar al-Durr (1250) — in which glass mosaics appear in the hood of the mihrab.⁵³ The presumption has always been that the mosaics, which appear in the mihrab, were contemporary with the completion date of the buildings. On stylistic grounds, however, the late Michael Meinel argued that, like the vine frieze in the mausoleum of al-Salih Ayyub, these mosaics were introduced during or after the reign of Sultan Qalawun, and were inspired by the Syrian decoration introduced into Cairo in his funerary complex.⁵⁴ Although this later dating is still a matter of contention,⁵⁵ if one accepts it, then a much more coherent and intelligible picture of the use of glass mosaic in Egypt and the Levant emerges.

It is known that Sultan Baybars ordered major restorations to the Dome of the Rock, including its mosaics, which commenced in 1261.⁵⁶ The first recorded use of glass mosaic in a Mamluk building is not until five years later, in the palace built by Baybars in Damascus known as the *Qasr al-Ablaq*. This does not survive, and the earliest surviving Mamluk glass mosaics are preserved in the tomb of Baybars in Damascus (1281, fig. 6), a building constructed by Ibrahim ibn Ghanim, the architect of the vanished palace.⁵⁷ Both the vine frieze in this tomb and its mosaics are clearly inspired by the decoration of the nearby Umayyad Mosque.⁵⁸ Concern about the poor state of the mosaics in the Damascus mosque is said to have led Sultan Baybars I to provide 20,000 dinars for

their restoration in 1269.⁵⁹ Mosaics likely to date from this period are among those found in the mosque.⁶⁰ It might be argued that a gap of twelve years between the restoration of the mosque and the construction of the tomb precludes the possibility of any connection between the two events. There is, however, an interesting passage in the history of the Mamluk writer al-^cUmari which indicates that substantial amounts of glass tesserae, remnants from a restoration of the mosaics in the Damascus mosque, were damaged in the fire which swept through the mosque in 1339.⁶¹ Al-^cUmari does not specify which restoration he is talking about, but, based on the historical sources, only two possible candidates exist: the restoration ordered by Baybars in 1269, or that carried out during the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad in 1328.⁶² This suggests that glass tesserae (and presumably the expertise to use them) were available for at least a decade, and possibly a lot longer, following such a campaign of restoration. There are thus no chronological difficulties with the suggestion that the impetus behind the revival of glass mosaic was provided by the interest taken in the monument and its mosaics.

We have already seen that the tomb of Baybars was completed by Sultan Qalawun. The interest of this sultan in forms of decoration associated with the Great Mosque of Damascus is apparent in his introduction of copies of the vine frieze into the mausoleum of Baybars and the Maristan al-Nuri in Damascus, and of both the vine frieze and arcaded mihrab into his own tomb in Cairo. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to find that Sultan Qalawun also introduced the use of glass mosaic to Egypt, for the hood of the arcaded mihrab in the madrasa adjoining his tomb (completed in 1285) is filled with a mosaic (fig. 15).⁶³ The subject matter of this mosaic — vegetal scrolls with clusters of mother-of-pearl grapes or flowers issuing from a vase — shows clear affinities with the mosaic in the head of the mihrab in the earlier tomb of Baybars.⁶⁴ The next recorded use of glass mosaic in the capital, in the mihrab of Lagin in the mosque of Ibn Tulun (1296),⁶⁵ follows a restoration of the mosaics in the Dome of the Rock by Sultan Kitbugha in 1294–96,⁶⁶ the craftsmen responsible for both this restoration and that ordered by Baybars may have been brought from Damascus.⁶⁷ It has been suggested that Qalawun brought craftsmen from Damascus to work on his complex in Cairo,⁶⁸ or even that the mosaics were the product of the same workshop that had worked on the decoration of Baybars' mausoleum in Damascus.⁶⁹ The similarities between the Cairene and Damascene mosaics and vine friezes would appear to support this.

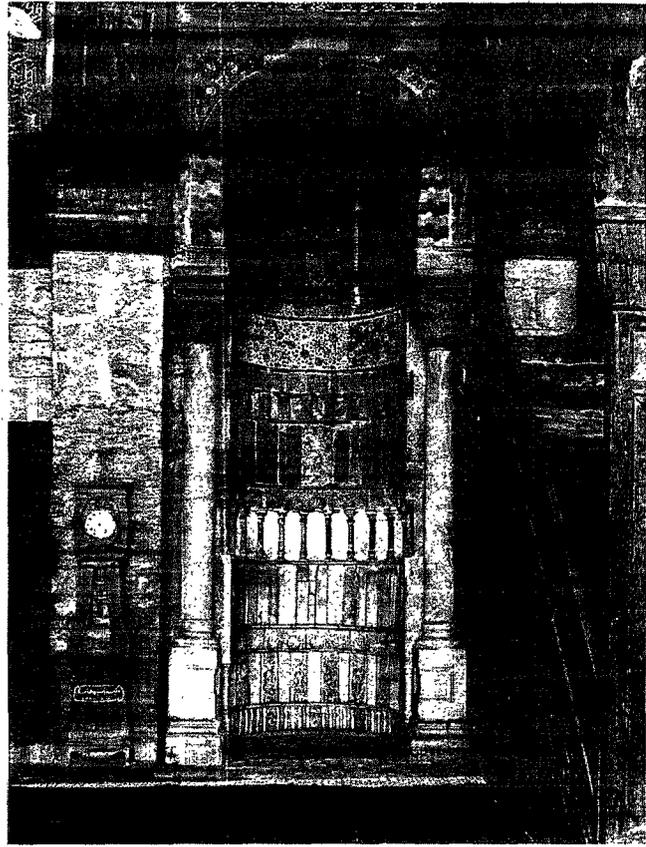


Fig. 15. Cairo. Madrasa of Qalawun. Mihrab. Creswell Archive no. 453, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

As mentioned previously, the series of copies of the Damascus vine frieze comes to an end in the reign of Qalawun's son, al-Nasir Muhammad. Significantly, the end of al-Nasir Muhammad's reign coincides with the disappearance of glass mosaic from the repertoire of Mamluk architectural decoration. It is also in buildings erected in Cairo and the Levant during the reign of this sultan that the greatest number of Mamluk glass mosaics are found. One of the earliest occurrences of glass mosaic in Cairo during the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad is in a building in the Cairo citadel which has been identified as either the *Qa'a al-Ashrafiyya* or one of the halls of the *Qasr al-Ablaq*.⁷⁰ The latter palace appears to have been inspired by an earlier palace of the same name built by Baybars in Damascus, which also had mosaic decoration.⁷¹ While the motifs are less skillfully rendered, the content of the mosaics in the Cairo citadel, in which trees and architecture are prominent, is similar to that of the mosaics in the tomb of Baybars

and, ultimately, to those in the Great Mosque of Damascus.⁷² In view of the probability that Syrian craftsmen also worked on the decoration of his father's funerary complex, it seems significant that workers were brought to Cairo from Damascus to work on the palace of al-Nasir Muhammad, completed in 1315.⁷³

The majority of the surviving examples of Mamluk glass mosaics can be ascribed to the activities of the Amir Tankiz, viceroy of al-Nasir Muhammad in Syria and governor of Damascus between 1312 and 1340. In this period campaigns of restoration were carried out on the Dome of the Rock (1318–19), the Great Mosque of Damascus (1328–29), and the Aqsa Mosque (1328–31).⁷⁴ After these campaigns, one finds glass mosaic appearing in a series of buildings associated with Tankiz.⁷⁵ Glass mosaic was used to decorate the hood of the mihrab in the mosque erected by Tankiz in Damascus in 1317–18,⁷⁶

in his madrasa in Jerusalem (1328–29, fig. 16),⁷⁷ and in the contemporary Madrasa al-Burtasi at Tripoli.⁷⁸ The imagery of these mosaics, many of which feature vegetal scrolls issuing from vessels of various types, is broadly similar to those found in the Cairene tombs mentioned earlier, to those of the mihrab in the mausoleum of Baybars in Damascus, and, ultimately, to the imagery of the Umayyad mosaics in Damascus and the Haram al-Sharif.⁷⁹ The dates of the structures in which mosaic decoration appears point to the fact that the availability of glass mosaic was linked to the restorations of the mosaics in the Umayyad monuments; it may be that the tesserae used in the decoration of both the Tankiziyya in Jerusalem and of the main mihrab in the Haram al-Khalil at Hebron (restored by Tankiz in 1331–32) were left over from the restoration of the Umayyad mosaics in Damascus.⁸⁰ I have suggested elsewhere that the design of the latter mihrab was influenced by early Islamic features of the Haram al-Sharif.⁸¹

The latest occurrence of glass mosaic in Cairo is in two structures, the madrasa of Aqbugha and the mausoleum of Sitt Hadaq, both erected in 1339, towards the end of al-Nasir Muhammad's reign.⁸² In a recent article in which she suggests that the occurrence of glass mosaic in Cairo at this period was linked to the activities of Tankiz in Syria, Caroline Williams concludes, "It seems likely . . . that restoring the early Syrian monuments had led Tankiz to revive this ancient craft for decorating monuments of his own time."⁸³ In fact this might equally be applied to the entire period between 1260 and 1340, not just the period when Tankiz was active in the Levant. A similar conclusion was reached by Nasser Rabbat:

The revival of mosaic techniques introduced into the Mamluk artistic repertoire not only a medium and its iconography that had long been forgotten, but also the interpretations that had developed over time to explain the Umayyad precedents in the Great Mosque [of Damascus]. Mamluk sultans such as Baybars and Qalawun seem to have ample opportunity to admire the mosaic scenes in the Umayyad Mosque; they must also have perceived the capacity of these scenes to carry messages of a connotative nature. The repairs they ordered of them had also produced an acceptable degree of expertise for the use of the same techniques in new structures.⁸⁴

It is not my intention to deal with the iconography of the Mamluk mosaics here — although in most cases they are clearly inspired by Umayyad prototypes — but to suggest that the use of glass mosaic in Bahri Mamluk monuments should be seen as part of a revival of deco-



Fig. 16. Jerusalem, Tankiziyya. Mihrab with mosaic decoration. Creswell Archive no. 5091, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

rative forms closely identified with the Umayyad monuments of Syria and with the Great Mosque of Damascus in particular. That this is so is underscored by the fact that all the instances of Mamluk glass mosaics occur during the reigns of the three Mamluk rulers in whose tombs copies of the Damascus vine frieze exist (that is, between 1260 and 1340). If one seeks to argue for the existence of a continuous tradition of glass mosaic in the Levant, then one needs to explain why examples of glass mosaic are not found after the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad, when other features associated with the early Islamic monuments of Syria and Palestine also disappear. It can hardly be coincidental that the last great recorded campaigns for restoring the Umayyad monuments of Syria during the Mamluk period were carried out at the behest of this same sultan.⁸⁵

Added to the weight of circumstantial chronological evidence is the fact that, even aesthetically, the Umayyad mosaics were the standard against which contemporary mosaic work was measured and evidently found lacking. In a discussion of Mamluk mosaics written just before the art finally disappeared from the architecture of Egypt and the Levant al-ʿUmari remarks: "... this kind [of mosaic] does not turn out completely equal to that which was made in olden times, as regards the purity of colour or beauty of aspect. The difference between the old and new consists in the fact that in the old [the tesserae] are uniform and of equal size, whereas in the new they are of varying size."⁸⁶

The implications of this correlation between restorations to the Umayyad monuments and the occurrence of glass mosaic needs to be investigated further, but the available evidence is sufficient to suggest that the use of glass mosaic in Mamluk architecture, like that of the gilded vine frieze, should not be attributed to any continuous tradition, but to the deliberate copying and revival of archaic forms. It seems likely that the very presence in Mamluk buildings of decoration executed in glass mosaic was sufficient to suggest a connection with the early Islamic monuments of Syria; the use of the medium should therefore be seen in conjunction with the appearance of other architectural or decorative forms copied from the early Islamic monuments of Syria.

Although a full exploration of the topic lies beyond the scope of this paper, the evidence for Mamluk usage of the art strongly suggests that there was no flourishing tradition of glass mosaic in the Levant in the post-Umayyad period. In fact, when one pauses to consider the published evidence, it quickly becomes clear just how

slender the grounds are on which the continuity of such a tradition has been adduced. The suggestion of a local school of Muslim mosaicists — a popular one among those arguing for the existence of a continuous tradition⁸⁷ — cannot be substantiated, for the use of glass mosaic in pre-Mamluk Muslim buildings is inextricably linked to the Umayyad mosaics in the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus. The latter were restored in 1082–83, during the reign of Malik Shah, and again under Nur al-Din in 1159,⁸⁸ it is tempting to see the occurrence of a post-crusader mihrab with mosaic decoration in the Jerusalem Haram as being related to the latter campaign.⁸⁹ A heavily restored mihrab with glass mosaic decoration in the Great Mosque of Hims (fig. 17) might also be mentioned, although it shows sufficient stylistic similarities with the mosaic mihrabs which one finds in buildings associated with the activities of Tankiz to suggest that it may have been added later, as part of the Qalawunid revival of the art.⁹⁰

The Christian monuments of Palestine are, by their very nature, unique monuments, their decoration frequently the result of foreign patronage or the work of imported artists. For this reason the occurrence of glass mosaic in the Holy Sepulchre, or in similar monuments, cannot be taken as evidence for the continuity of a local tradition.⁹¹ Although the participation of local craftsmen seems likely in certain instances — in the twelfth-century mosaic decoration of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem for example — in this case those craftsmen seem to have been operating under the direction of a foreign master in the execution of a project which was the product of Byzantine funding.⁹² It seems likely

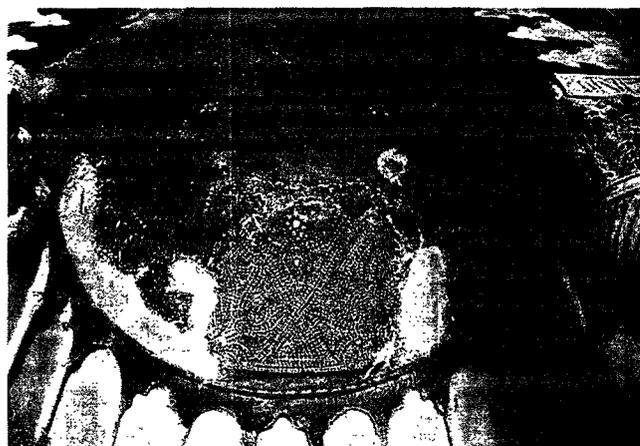


Fig. 17. Hims, Great Mosque. Mihrab with mosaic decoration. Creswell Archive no. 5905, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. (Photo: courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

that, on occasion, Byzantine assistance was forthcoming with the mosaic decoration of both Christian and Muslim buildings.⁹³ The evidence for an indigenous school of Egyptian mosaicists rests primarily on a dubious reading of an inscription formerly in the Aqsa and cited by al-Harawi (d. 1215).⁹⁴ Stern showed that the reading could not be trusted, and raised the possibility that the Fatimid mosaics in the Aqsa mosque were executed with Byzantine help.⁹⁵ In fact this suggestion derives some support from circumstantial chronology. In 1027, the year that the mosaics on the drum of the Dome of the Rock were restored,⁹⁶ an agreement was reached with the Byzantine emperor regarding the rebuilding of the Holy Sepulchre.⁹⁷ In 1035 the emperor is reported to have sent funds, and possibly materials, to assist with this rebuilding.⁹⁸ The mosaics in the Aqsa appear to have been executed in the same year.⁹⁹ Ibn al-Athir's statement that Salah al-Din's restorations of the Aqsa made use of *al-faṣṣ al-mudhahhab al-qusṭantīni* points in the same direction.¹⁰⁰ Although the wording is obscure, the reading "Constantinopolitan gilt mosaics" seems preferable to "Constantinian gilt glass mosaics," the alternative suggested by van Berchem.¹⁰¹ In terms of the Mamluk revival of the art of glass mosaic, it is not inconceivable that an interest rooted in the Syrian monuments was developed with Byzantine assistance.¹⁰²

The fact that the subject matter and style of many of the rare surviving instances of mosaic decoration in either the medieval Muslim or Christian monuments is often clearly related to that of the Umayyad monuments is in itself significant.¹⁰³ It might be argued that the parallels are intentional and represent a desire to surpass the glories of the Umayyad mosaics.¹⁰⁴ If, however, a local tradition did exist, then one might reasonably expect it to have developed an iconographic repertoire of its own rather than constantly harking back to archaic predecessors. This might lead one to wonder at what point emulation begins to appear more as a sign of iconographic bankruptcy due to the lack of a flourishing tradition than a profound political statement. As Salam-Liebich remarks in her discussion of the iconographic relationships between the Umayyad and Mamluk mosaics: "This suggests that by Mamluk times the art of glass mosaic was not a flourishing one; it was expensive and therefore rarely and sparingly used. Consequently, it had no chance to develop a vocabulary of its own, and relied instead on the classical past."¹⁰⁵

In the light of the various and disputed traditions regarding a Byzantine role in the Umayyad mosaics at Medina, Damascus, and Córdoba,¹⁰⁶ one wonders

whether the apparent failure to develop a continuous indigenous tradition of glass mosaic in the medieval Islamic world led to the perception of such decoration as in some way foreign or exotic. For all their aniconism and culturally modified iconography, there is little in the Umayyad mosaics at either Jerusalem or Damascus which cannot be paralleled in the work of Byzantine mosaicists. In addition to their fame and the much-deserved admiration which the Umayyad mosaics inspired, in an era in which the skills to rival such large-scale high-quality work in mosaic was lacking, the exotic character of such decoration may well have been a factor in the periodic revivals of the art.¹⁰⁷

If there was no tradition of glass mosaic in the Levant in the post-Umayyad period, then one must consider the likely source of the tesserae used in the restorations of the Umayyad mosaics, or in the periodic use of glass mosaic which one finds in Jerusalem and elsewhere.¹⁰⁸ Part of the answer may lie in the fact that the tesserae which dislodged themselves from the Umayyad mosaics appear to have been collected for reuse.¹⁰⁹ Glass mosaic was also used sparingly; Mamluk usage was confined to narrow friezes or the concave head of the mihrab. It may be that sufficient expertise for mounting the mosaics could be gleaned from studying the Umayyad decoration *in situ*, although technical studies to determine any differences between Umayyad and later mosaics have yet to be undertaken.

In any case it seems likely that the idea of a flourishing school of Muslim mosaicists spanning the six hundred or so years between the erection of the Umayyad monuments and the Qalawunid period should be rejected.¹¹⁰ Instead, one should probably envisage the art as either defunct or maintained at a very low level, with periodic repairs to the Umayyad mosaics generating both the materials and the expertise to permit a limited use of glass mosaic in contemporary monuments. As the series of mosaic mihrabs associated with the patronage of Tankiz shows, a workshop brought into existence in the course of a restoration program might continue to flourish for a generation or so, applying its skills even to monuments which had previously lacked this kind of decoration. In our own century a good example of the same phenomenon is the workshop created for the restoration of the stucco and colored-glass windows in the Dome of the Rock in the 1920's. This art was defunct in Jerusalem, but was revived for the restoration.¹¹¹ The workshop thus created was responsible for installing similar windows in buildings which had previously lacked them,¹¹² and its successor continues to be re-

sponsible for producing replacement windows for the buildings of the Haram until the present day. None of these facts can, however, be taken as testifying to the existence of a flourishing industry in Jerusalem in the centuries following the major renovations ordered by Sulayman I.

Before concluding, it seems appropriate to consider the means by which the features discussed above were copied, the modes of transmission by which they were transposed from Syria to embellish the monuments of the Mamluk capital. As Jonathan Bloom has pointed out, it is probable that the transmission of monumental architectural forms was often the result of the word — of descriptions both oral and literary.¹¹³ In this case the identification and evocation of a characteristic feature are often more important than the style in which it is evoked, which explains why the relationship between prototype and copy is often rendered opaque to the modern eye.¹¹⁴ Certain types of architectonic decoration may also have been transmitted in the same way: one can, for example, imagine a description such as Ibn Jubayr's of the mihrab in the Damascus mosque providing the basis for the arcaded mihrab in Qalawun's tomb.

In other instances it seems more likely that the initial transmission of a particular decorative element or style should be attributed to the presence of artisans familiar with it. One can, for example, easily envisage the similarities in form between the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo and its Mesopotamian prototypes as the result of verbal transmission; it is harder to argue this for its stucco decoration. In the case of the vine frieze the similarities in detail between the Umayyad *karma*, the friezes in Damascus, and their Cairene counterparts suggest that we may well be dealing with the movement of craftsmen. The migration of skilled artisans from Damascus and Aleppo to Jerusalem and Cairo to work on various imperially sponsored building projects during the Bahri Mamluk period is well attested,¹¹⁵ and the appearance of glass mosaic in Egypt at this time may well be due to the import of both craftsmen and materials from the Levant.

Having established that there was both a revival and a replication of types of decoration identified with the Great Mosque of Damascus and the Dome of the Rock, we need to turn finally to look at the significance of the phenomenon, to consider why the new rulers of Egypt and the Levant felt it necessary to hark back to early Islamic themes in their imperial architecture. The answer, or a large part of it, lies perhaps in the nature of the dynasty itself. The Mamluks began as the elite mil-

itary slave corps of the last Ayyubid ruler of Egypt, al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, who seized power at his death. The new rulers of Egypt and Syria were Turks: many of the Mamluk sultans, including those who ruled during the period from 1260 to 1340, spoke the language of their Arab subjects only imperfectly, if at all.¹¹⁶ Thus the newly ascendant dynasty shared neither the language, nor the culture, nor the history of those they ruled. Moreover, the early years of the dynasty were characterized by chronic political instability, a result both of external pressures (the advance of the Mongols, for example, or the threat still posed to the new regime by the Ayyubid princelings in Syria and the crusader kingdoms in the Levant) and of internal frictions generated by the struggle for power among the various Mamluk factions which emerged to fill the political vacuum after 1250. In such a climate the issues of succession and legitimacy loomed large. In the years following their seizure of power some of the Mamluk sultans issued coins on which they are named, not as imperial overlords of the Islamic world, but as lieutenants of the Ayyubid ruler of Egypt, a man who had been dead several years.¹¹⁷ That such a patent piece of fiction was deemed necessary is an indication of just how keenly the issue of legitimacy was felt.

A dramatic use of symbolic legitimization can be discerned in the revival of the caliphate by Baybars in 1261.¹¹⁸ The institution of the caliphate, although devoid of any real power, had long been a powerful weapon in the armory of those seeking to confer an aura of legitimacy on their rule. Since the eighth century the caliphate had been firmly fixed in Baghdad. From the tenth century onwards the caliph, nominally the spiritual leader of the Sunni Muslims, had become a hostage to fortune as a succession of non-Arab dynasties occupied Baghdad, granting the caliph their protection and gaining *de facto* legitimacy in the process. Through this fictional pedigree a sense of continuity with the historical past was maintained.

The murder of the caliph by the Mongols when they seized Baghdad in 1258 sent shock waves throughout the Islamic world. Three years later, in 1261, Baybars re-established the institution in Cairo. If Baybars's intention was to confer an aura of legitimacy on his own rule, then the new caliph played his role well. Eight days after his installation in the citadel of Cairo he gave the *khutba* in the mosque of the citadel, recognizing Baybars as sultan over Egypt, Syria, Diyarbakir, the Hijaz, Yemen, Mesopotamia, and all other lands he might conquer.¹¹⁹ Henceforth the center of the Islamic world was no long-

er Baghdad but Cairo, which fell heir to the traditions of a vanished culture.

In a climate in which the issue of legitimacy was compelling, the trappings of that legitimacy were often acquired by forging (in every sense) links with the historical past and by fabricating a continuity with that past. Perhaps in no earlier period is the desire to forge a link with the glories of the past as apparent as it is in Mamluk architecture between 1260 and 1340. One of the ways in which this manifests itself is in an almost obsessive interest in the two most significant early Islamic religious monuments in the Levant: the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus. The attention to the upkeep, to the repair, and to the restoration of these two buildings over these years is unparalleled at any other period. There were, for example, three recorded phases of restoration to the Dome of the Rock in these eighty years,¹²⁰ compared with a total of eight in the six hundred years that followed.¹²¹ Are we to assume that the wear and tear on the monument over these years was particularly excessive, or, as seems more likely, that the considerations which underlay the activities of the Mamluk sultans and their viceroys were more than utilitarian? It is particularly striking that the last recorded major Mamluk restorations of both the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus were during the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad, the end of which coincides with the disappearance of features such as vine friezes, arcaded mihrab, and glass mosaic, which I have suggested were directly inspired by the same two buildings.

It is evident that the ability of these references to the early Islamic monuments of Syria to fulfill the function just ascribed to them, that is, to service internal Mamluk needs, is inextricably linked to the perception of the prototypes, to their external status. The status of the Dome of the Rock as the third holiest shrine of Islam ensured its fame throughout the medieval Islamic world. The renown of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus is hardly less apparent in the medieval sources, and is predicated both on the basis of its sanctity and the splendors of its decoration. The sanctity of the mosque, derived largely from its association with the Islamic conquest of Syria, is reflected in a tradition ascribed to the eighth-century traditionist, Sufyan al-Thauri. According to it, the value of one prayer in Mecca is equal to one hundred thousand prayers anywhere else, in the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina to fifty thousand prayers, in the Aqsa mosque of Jerusalem to forty thousand prayers, and in the Great Mosque of Damascus to

thirty thousand prayers.¹²² That the Damascus mosque ranks fourth, after the three most important mosques in the Islamic world, is an adequate indication of its religious status. In another tradition the equality of the mosque of Damascus with the mosque of Jerusalem is stressed, for a spot is indicated in the mosque of Damascus in which prayer has the same value as prayer in the mosque of Jerusalem.¹²³ Other sources report that worship will continue in the Damascus mosque for forty years after the destruction of the world.¹²⁴

Added to this belief in the sanctity of the Damascus mosque is its status — universally acknowledged in medieval Islamic sources — as one of the wonders of the world. The number of wonders in the medieval Muslim world varies from three to five or even thirty, depending on which source one consults, but whether a greater or lesser number of wonders is cited, the Great Mosque of Damascus is consistently among them.¹²⁵ On a human level, the impact which the Umayyad mosque and its decoration had, not just on foreign visitors and pilgrims, but even on those who worshiped daily within its walls, is amply illustrated by a story related by al-Tha'alibi, writing in the early eleventh century:

Also, there is the mosque of Damascus, one of the wonders of the world in its beauty and uniqueness; to describe it adequately would take too long. Al-Lahham relates from a certain elder of Damascus, who lived close by the mosque, that the latter said that he had never missed a single act of worship in it since he reached the age of reason . . . , and that he had never once entered it without his eye alighting on some piece of inscriptional carving or ornamentation or some other aspect of its beauty which he had never noticed before. This one story is sufficient witness to its uniqueness.¹²⁶

A similar sentiment is apparent in the belief that even if one stayed in the mosque for one hundred years, at every instant of each of those years one's eyes would fall on another marvel.¹²⁷

There was clearly an aesthetic dimension to the wonder which the Umayyad mosque in Damascus inspired in the medieval Islamic world. In addition to its association with the Muslim conquest of Syria and its religious significance, the cost and quality of its decoration are frequently cited among the reasons for the high regard in which the mosque was held.¹²⁸ Several medieval authors, in a somewhat idiosyncratic enumeration, count the Great Mosque of Damascus not just as one, but as two, wonders of the world. They tell us that among the five wonders, the Damascus mosque ranks fourth due to its superlative beauty and the large amount expended

on its construction. The fifth wonder is the mosaic, marble paneling, and carved marble decoration with which it was embellished.¹²⁹ This occasioned much admiration: the marble paneling on account of the mystery of how it was held in place; the carved decoration on account of the skill and beauty of its execution. One should presumably include the famous marble vine frieze among the marble decorations that rendered the mosque such a wonder in the eyes of the medieval Arab writers; the prominence of the *karma* in literary accounts of the mosque is proof enough of this.

Seen in this light, the sudden appearance in Mamluk buildings of elements which are clearly inspired by, if not copied from, the decoration in the Umayyad mosque of Damascus, appears more intelligible. In the case of three royal tombs, that of Baybars, Qalawun, and al-Nasir Muhammad, it seems likely that copying the most renowned features of the Damascus mosque represents an attempt to appropriate for these buildings some of the kudos associated with the prototype. Although I have not explored any iconographic dimension to the phenomenon, this has an obvious relevance to both the perceived significance of the various features that formed part of the Qalawunid revival of early Islamic decorative styles and, consequently, to the role they played in that revival. Several scholars have detected paradisaical or eschatological allusions in the mosaics of the Damascus mosque.¹³⁰ The occurrence of golden vines at various points in the surviving mosaics of the western *riwāq* suggests that there was an underlying coherence to the decorative program of the mosque which is now difficult to appreciate, and there are good reasons for seeing the *karma*, and possibly the miniature arcade, as imbued with similar paradisaical significance.¹³¹

It may be that the intertextual references in Bahri Mamluk architecture are related to a contemporary re-interpretation of Umayyad iconography.¹³² In terms of the golden vine frieze, however, the fact that, with one exception, its use is restricted to funerary architecture suggests that its original significance may have been as apparent to Muslims in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as it was in the eighth. Similarly, the reservation of the motif for royal contexts suggests that the ancient association between the ruler and the golden vine survived well into the medieval Islamic period.¹³³ Both aspects are equally relevant to the imperial mausolea of Mamluk Cairo in which highly charged architectural and architectonic forms served equally as expressions of extravagant (if not strictly orthodox) religiosity and secular glorification.¹³⁴

It should be pointed out that the perpetuation of certain architectural features which derive from the form of the Damascus mosque — the axial nave or the gabled entrance, for example — in the medieval mosques of Syria is quite a different phenomenon from the one I have been discussing. What we are dealing with here is the deliberate copying of archaic architectonic and decorative forms which are specifically identified with, and therefore seen as characteristic of, the Umayyad mosque. There is good historical precedent for the latter phenomenon, not least in the apparent attempts of the Andalusian Umayyads to create the Great Mosque of Córdoba in the image of the mosque erected by their forebears in Damascus. This included both the replication, however schematic, of architectural forms known to characterize the latter mosque and the use of certain types of decoration — notably glass mosaic — which were associated with the Umayyad prototype.¹³⁵ It is also worth noting here that certain scholars have seen in the gilded marble vegetal ornament that occurs in the spandrels of the Córdoba mihrab an echo of the famous *karma*.¹³⁶

Among the features of such conscious attempts to evoke the glories of past architectural traditions as embodied in potent archetypes is the tendency to be periodic, episodic, and typically to involve the transposition of characteristic architectural forms and decorative features from one cultural context to another. They are often, but not always, associated with the search for images of legitimacy and continuity by newly emergent dynasties or following periods of political disjunction.¹³⁷ One further example of the impact of the Damascus mosque which falls into this category is the influence it appears to have exerted on the development of Seljuq architecture. It was Sheila Blair who first pointed out that the addition of the monumental south dome to the congregational mosque of Isfahan in 1086 followed a visit by Malik Shah to Damascus in 1082.¹³⁸ At that time the dome of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus had just been replaced by order of the Seljuq vizier Abu Nasr Ahmad b. Fadl as part of the restorations to the mosque, including the mosaics, following a fire of 1069.¹³⁹ The spectacular appearance of the new dome is described by the geographers,¹⁴⁰ and it seems likely that the addition to the Isfahan mosque was inspired by a desire to emulate the monumental dome in Damascus, even if in an Iranian idiom.

The significance of the Damascene references in Seljuq architecture merits further investigation,¹⁴¹ but there is a curious parallel here with the case of the

arcaded mihrab, for it was not an Umayyad feature, it too may have been introduced following the fire of 1069, possibly at the same time as the dome. Malik Shah's emulation of the new dome, on the one hand, and the Mamluk copying of the arcaded mihrab, on the other, suggest that it was less the Umayyad associations of the Great Mosque of Damascus which rendered it susceptible to imitation than more general considerations of status and antiquity. It may be, therefore, that in the desire to acquire some of the sanctity or cachet of a famous prototype, the copying of characteristic elements reveals a chronological eclecticism, based not on considerations of antiquity alone, but on a perception of the mosque as an accretion of famous features. If the arcaded mihrab was in fact a Seljuq innovation, then the replication of this feature in the Bahri Mamluk monuments of Cairo may reveal an important factor in the phenomenon of copying in medieval Islamic architecture, for it is indicative of a perception of architecture as accretional rather than chronologically discrete. Apparently it was not the most ancient features of the prototype, or those associated with a particular phase in its history, that were copied, but the most remarked upon, the best known, and therefore the most characteristic.

The architecture of the Qalawunid period is characterized by a search for a defining Mamluk style, a search which manifests itself both in the appearance of novel or exotic elements and a use of resonant archaisms.¹⁴² While the effect in both instances was to introduce non-indigenous features into the repertoire of Egyptian architecture, the archaizing revival I have been discussing looked primarily to Syria for its inspiration. In an era of political instability and cultural turmoil, the early Islamic monuments of Syria were enduring symbols of continuity and stability. The attention paid to these monuments by each of the succeeding dynasties which came to control the region in the post-Umayyad period was as much an undertaking designed to stamp a dynastic mark upon them as it was an attempt to preserve their material fabric. In the imperial architecture of the Qalawunid era, both secular and religious,¹⁴³ this homage to the architectural past takes the form of a dynamic dialogue conducted using quotations from particular structures seen to characterize or embody that past. The phenomenon is characterized both by the revival of archaic forms of decoration — such as glass mosaic — and by the deliberate copying of specific features associated with the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus: the octagonal plan, in one case, and the arcaded mihrab and golden vine frieze, in the other. In

his classic study of copying in medieval Western architecture Krautheimer concludes that its defining characteristics are "the disintegration of the prototype into its single elements, the selective transfer of these parts, and their reshuffling in the copy."¹⁴⁴ The Qalawunid transposition of Damascene elements meets all of these criteria.

The appropriation of the characteristic features of these buildings in the imperial architecture of Mamluk Cairo and Damascus is an act which looks towards the past in order to convey a message about the present and the future. It is both a blatant attempt to create links with an ancient and venerable architectural heritage and, by fostering a sense of continuity, however contrived, it is a visible expression of the belief of the new regime in its own ability to endure. To this extent one might compare the copying and revival of archaic forms in the realm of architecture with the revival of the most ancient and legitimizing of institutions, that of the caliphate itself. Just as the roots of the caliphate, which had been firmly fixed in Baghdad for almost half a millennium, were, soon after they had been cut by the Mongol onslaught, reestablished in Cairo, so too were appropriate forms of decoration transplanted from Syria to the imperial capital. It seems likely that, in copying the most characteristic features of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus, one of the wonders of the world, the Mamluk sultans were attempting to appropriate some of that wonder for their own dynastic architecture. In the process they were inadvertently preserving copies of a prototype which did not survive into our own age.

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NOTES

Author's note: A large part of the research for this paper was conducted while I held the Nasser D. Khalili Fellowship in Islamic Art and Architecture at Oxford University (1993–95). The paper is dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Michael Meinecke, without whose pioneering and painstaking work on Mamluk architecture so little would be possible.

1. Richard Krautheimer, "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture'," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1–33.
2. But see, for example, Ebba Koch, "The Copies of the Qutb Minār," *Iran* 29 (1991): 95–106.
3. Gülru Necipoğlu-Kafadar, "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 100–1; idem, "Challenging the Past: Sinan and the Competitive Discourse of Early Modern Islamic Architecture," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 169–80.
4. Jonathan M. Bloom, "On the Transmission of Designs in

- Early Islamic Architecture," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 23–24. See also George Marçais, "La mosquée d'El-Walid à Damas et son influence sur l'architecture musulmane d'Occident," *Revue Africaine* 50 (1906): 37–56.
5. K.A.C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (Oxford, 1969) [hereafter *EMA*] 1: 151–205.
 6. Creswell, *EMA* 1: 204–5; Michael Meinecke, "Mamluk Architecture. Regional Artistic Traditions: Evolution and Interrelations," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 2 (1985): 166; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Anatolia and the Ottoman Legacy," in Hasan-Uddin Khan and M. Frishman, eds., *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity* (London, 1994), pp. 141–58.
 7. J. Lassus, "Note sur les mosaïques de Jérusalem et de Damas," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 3 (1933): 31–34; E. de Lorey, "L'Hellénisme et l'Orient dans les mosaïques de la Mosquée des Omayyades," *Ars Islamica* 1 (1934): 22–45; Max van Berchem, "The Mosaics of the Great Mosque of the Umayyads in Damascus," *EMA* 1: 323–72; Barbara Finster, "Die Mosaiken der Umayyadenmoschee von Damaskus," *Kunst des Orients* 7 (1970/1): 83–141; G.R.D. King, "The Origins and Sources of the Umayyad Mosaics in the Great Mosque of Damascus," Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1976; G. Hellenkemper Salies, "Die Mosaiken der Grossen Moschee von Damaskus," *Corso di Cultura sull'Arte Ravennate e Bizantina* 35 (1988): 295–313; R. Fortsch, "Die Architekturdarstellungen der Umayyadenmoschee von Damaskus und die Rolle ihrer antiken Vorbilder," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 7 (1993): 177–212.
 8. N. Elisséeff, *La description de Damas d'Ibn 'Asâkir* (Damascus, 1959), p. 53. The same figure is quoted by Yaqut: *Muj'âm al-buldân*, ed. M. de Goeje (Leipzig, 1867), 2: 592–93.
 9. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidâya wa-nihâya fî al-ta'rikh* (Cairo, 1932–) 9: 149; M. Quatremère, *Histoire des sultans mamlouks de l'Égypte*, vol. 2, pt. 1 (Paris, 1842): 269, 271; H. Sauvaire, "Description de Damas," *Journal asiatique*, IX^{ème} série, 7 (1896): 423; Ibn Fadl Allah al-'Umari, *Masâlik al-abshâr fî mamâlik al-amshâr*, vol. 1, ed. A. Zaki (Cairo, 1924): 187; Ibn Shaddad, *al-'Iqd al-khatîr fî dhikr umarâ' al-Shâm wa'l-Jazîra* (Damascus, 1956), p. 79; Rev. J. Reynolds, *The History of the Temple of Jerusalem* (London, 1836), p. 418; Creswell, *EMA* 1: 239.
 10. *A Chronicle of Damascus 1389–1397 by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṣaṣrā*, trans. W.M. Brinner (Berkeley–Los Angeles, 1963) 1: 161; 2: 120.
 11. Ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadani, *Abrégé de livre des pays*, trans. H. Massé (Damascus, 1973), p. 133. Al-Muqaddasi mentions both turquoise (*fayrūziyya*) and cornaline (*'aqiqiyya*): al-Muqaddasi, *Aḥsan at-Taqāsīm fî ma'rīfat al-Aqālīm*, ed. M. de Goeje (Leiden, 1877), p. 158. Al-Idrisi and Ibn Hawqal also mention the use of precious stones in the mihrab: Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* (London, 1890), p. 236; P-A. Jaubert, *La Géographie d'Édrisi* (rpt., Amsterdam, 1975), p. 352.
 12. Marçais, "La mosquée d'El-Walid," p. 54; King, *Origins and Sources*, p. 154.
 13. For others, see H. Saladin, *Manuel d'art musulman I: l'Architecture* (Paris, 1907), figs. 34, 36.
 14. Based on a visit made in 1879, Saladin mentions, "une frise de rinceaux de marbre blanc et doré se découpant sur un fond de marbre foncé: *Manuel* 1: 84.
 15. Creswell, *EMA* 1: 174–76.
 16. For a color reproduction of this important but little-known painting, see the catalogue accompanying an exhibition held at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, *Visions of the Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 63.
 17. Saladin, *Manuel*, vol. 1, figs. 32–33; Creswell, *EMA*, vol. 1, pl. 62a.
 18. One might see a hint of this in Ibn Shakir's statement that textiles were hung across the entrances to the mosque and on the wall below the level of the vine: Quatremère, *Histoire* 1, 1: 273. To the best of my knowledge, there is no evidence that curtains or textiles were hung other than along the entrance (northern) wall, except perhaps on festive occasions.
 19. See, for example, a very similar design on a fifth- or sixth-century synagogue screen from Hammath near Tiberias: E.L. Sukenik, "The Ancient Synagogue of el-Hammeh," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 15 (1935): 151, pl. XIVb.
 20. Jean Sauvaget, *La mosquée omeiyade de Médine* (Paris, 1947), p. 80, no. 6, fig. 3.
 21. Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *Al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, vol. 3 (Bulaq, 1305/1887), p. 282. "A band of about the length of a forearm covered with gilt branches and trees in low relief": R.A. Jairazbhoy, "The History of the Shrines at Mecca and Medina," *Islamic Review* 50 (1962): 31, fig. XIII; Sauvaget, *Médine*, p. 79. Sauvaget gives a width of about 25 cm for the Medinan frieze, considerably less than the estimated 60 cm of the Damascus *karma*: Creswell, *EMA* 1: 176.
 22. In addition to the similarities in the nature and arrangement of various zones of decoration on the qibla walls of both mosques, one might also include an epigraphic band containing a golden inscription: Sauvaget, *Médine*, pp. 79–80. In both the Umayyad mosque in Damascus and the Great Mosque of Córdoba this appeared on a blue ground: Elisséeff, *Description*, p. 55; Creswell *EMA* 1: 235.
 23. In 'Ilmawi's description of the Prophet's Mosque, written in 1566, he mentions a *karma* on the qibla wall on which 70,000 dinars, the sum usually quoted for the cost of the Damascus vine, was spent: H. Sauvaire, "Description de Damas," *Journal Asiatique*, IX^{ème} série, 7 (1896): 186. Creswell suggested that, "the author seems to be confused here, for this detail appears to have been taken from earlier descriptions of the Great Mosque of Damascus" (*EMA* 1: 239 and n. 3). In view, however, of the evidence just cited for the existence of a vine frieze in al-Walid's mosque at Medina, it may be that 'Ilmawi is drawing on the many earlier descriptions of the Damascus mosque in his brief mention of this identical feature in the Prophet's Mosque at Medina.
 24. On the accompanying photograph tonal variations are apparent along the length of the frieze which may indicate repairs and restorations. The mosque sustained fire damage on several occasions in the post-Umayyad period, most notably in 1069 and 1401, and the *karma* may have been repaired in the aftermath of the blazes. A picture taken immediately after the prayer hall was gutted by fire in 1893 shows large sections of the *karma* still intact along the qibla wall: R. Spiers, "The Great Mosque of the Omeiyades, Damascus," *Architectural Review* 8 (1900): 163, fig. 25. These might have served as the basis for a restoration of the frieze, but were apparently swept away in the subsequent rebuilding.
 25. But see Michael Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn in Kairo: Untersuchungen zur Genese der mamlukischen Architekturdekorationen," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Abteilung Kairo* 27 (1971): 63–67; idem, *Die mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien [648/1250 bis 923/1517]* (Glückstadt, 1992) 1: 37–40.

26. É. Combe, J. Sauvaget, and G. Wiet, *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo, 1931-) [hereafter RCEA], no. 4884.
27. RCEA: no. 4820; Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," pp. 67–68.
28. Ernst Herzfeld, "Damascus: Studies in Architecture I," *Arts Islamica* 9 (1942): 10, fig. 55.
29. The parallel incised lines on the strapwork of the stucco window grills of the *māristān* are a characteristic feature of Umayyad stucco and marble grills such as those still to be found in the western *riwāq* of the Umayyad mosque.
30. R.S. Humphreys, "The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo: A Preliminary Essay," *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972): 117; Meinecke, "Mamluk Architecture," pp. 169–70.
31. Like its Umayyad prototype, this was evidently repaired at certain points after its creation, for a fragment of a similar frieze appears alongside woodwork from the Fatimid palace recovered from Qalawun's complex in a photograph taken earlier this century in the Museum for Islamic Art in Cairo (Creswell Archive Negative no. 998).
32. Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," p. 76, pl. XIa. See, however, the earlier discussion of the vine frieze in the Umayyad mosque in relation to the decoration of Baybars' mausoleum (*ibid.*, p. 73).
33. Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," pl. XIa; T.F. Mathews, *The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey* (University Park-London, 1976), p. 306, fig. 31–71; E.S.W. Hawkins, "Plaster and Stucco Cornices in Hagia Sophia, Istanbul," *Actes du XII^e Congrès international d'études byzantines* (Belgrade, 1964), 3: 131–35, fig. 1.
34. As I will show in a forthcoming study of the *karma* and its antecedents, both are likely to derive from the late-antique Syrian tradition of using vine friezes as architectonic framing devices.
35. G.T. Rivoira, *Moslem Architecture, Its Origins and Development* (Oxford, 1918), p. 95.
36. Compare *EMA* I (Oxford 1932), p. 169 and n. 6, where Creswell denies that the description of Ibn Jubayr cited above refers to the mihrab in the Damascus mosque, with his later comments on the mausoleum of Qalawun, where he cites the same description in his text as evidence that the arcaded mihrab originated in the Great Mosque of Damascus (*The Muslim Architecture of Egypt* [Oxford, 1959] [hereafter *MAE*] 2: 202).
37. M.J. de Goeje, ed., *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr Edited from a Ms. in the University Library of Leyden*, 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden, 1907), p. 268; R.J.C. Broadhurst, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr* (London, 1952), p. 279.
38. Quatremère, *Histoire* 2, 1: 282; see also H. Sauvaire, "Description de Damas," *Journal Asiatique* IX^{ème} série, 7 (1896): 422.
39. For further photographs of the mihrab, see Saladin, *Manuel*, vol. 1, figs. 34–35.
40. Creswell, *MAE* 2: 202.
41. Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," p. 74, pls. VIIa and VIIc; Robert Hillenbrand, "Review Article: Qasr Kharana Re-Examined," *Oriental Art* 37, 2 (1991): 111; F.B. Flood, "The Earliest Islamic Windows as Architectural Decoration," *Persica* 14 (1990–2): 87–89.
42. Spiers suggested that the lower part of the mihrab in place before the fire may have been part of the original Umayyad mihrab ("Great Mosque," p. 167).
43. See n. 19 above.
44. J.M. Rogers, "A Renaissance of Classical Architecture in North Syria," *Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes* 21 (1971): 347–56; Terry Allen, *A Classical Revival in Islamic Architecture* (Wiesbaden, 1986); Yasser Tabbaa, "Survivals and Archaisms in the Architecture of Northern Syria, ca. 1080–ca. 1150," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 29–41.
45. See, however, my comments below (n. 141) on the Great Mosque of Diyarbakir. In the latter case we are not dealing with contemporary copies of the *karma*, but with the possibility that spolia featuring vine scrolls were arranged in a manner inspired by the Umayyad vine frieze.
46. Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," pp. 55–57, pl. XII e–f. There are actually two vine friezes included in the decoration of the mihrab; a lower one of marble and an upper one of wood (Creswell, *MAE* 2: 102, pl. 106c). The mausoleum has recently been restored and the surviving fragments of the marble vine frieze reassembled in the mihrab: N. Hampikian, *Mausoleum of Sulṭān as-Saleḥ Nagm ad-Dīn Ayyūb* (Cairo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 1993). I am grateful to May al-Ibrashy for obtaining a copy of this pamphlet for me.
47. Two peculiarities of this vine frieze are particularly noteworthy, for they are also featured on the vine frieze in Qalawun's tomb: the occurrence of single splayed vine leaves in alternate scrolls and the fact that the vine separates the hood of the niche from the body. The latter feature also appears in the tomb of Sultan Qalawun, where the vine frieze is continued in the mihrab. The vine friezes in both the Umayyad mosque and the tomb of Baybars I are carried above the mihrab rather than in it, which suggests that this was an innovation introduced when the Damascene vine scroll was moved to Cairo. The fact that there are two friezes in the Ayyubid mihrab, one of marble, one of wood, also suggests a chronological relationship with the Qalawunid examples, for in the tomb of Baybars one of the nine friezes is marble, the other wooden. The occurrence of single splayed vine leaves is common to all the Mamluk friezes and to the Umayyad prototype. Taken in conjunction with the evidence for Sultan Qalawun's role in transposing the *karma* to Cairo, these facts would appear to support Professor Meinecke's suggestion that the frieze in the Ayyubid tomb is contemporary with or postdates that in Qalawun's mausoleum.
48. Creswell, *MAE* 2: 276.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
50. Creswell, *MAE* 2: 202; L. Hautecoeur and G. Wiet, *Les mosquées du Caire* (Paris, 1932), 1: 294. In addition to the marble mihrabs, one also finds examples executed in stucco; see, for example, the mihrab on the exterior wall of the mosque of Ḥamr, datable to 1303–4; *MAE*, vol. 2, pl. 111b. The vogue for such mihrabs in the capital seems to have spawned provincial imitations; see, for example, the stucco mihrab in the mosque of al-Ḥamri in Qus, datable to ca. 1330, in which the dwarf arcade has the double colonnettes associated with many of the Cairene examples, *ibid.*, pl. 111a.
51. M. Rosen-Ayalon, "Une mosaïque médiévale au Saint Sépulchre," *Revue biblique* 83 (1976): 248–51; N. Kenaan, "Local Christian Art in Twelfth-Century Jerusalem," *Israel Exploration Journal* 23 (1973): 174.
52. Whether or not the existence of Umayyad mosaics at Medina may have influenced the Qalawunid revival is not clear, but in view of the proximity of the Syrian models and the appearance of Damascene ornament in Cairo, it seems more likely that it was the role of Damascus that was preeminent.

53. Creswell, *MAE* 2: 138, pls. 42 and 107a. The mosaics in the mausoleum of Salih al-Ayyub have now disappeared, but see Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," p. 57.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 55–58. A date of 1315–16 for the addition of the mosaics has been suggested; *idem*: *Die mamlukische Architektur* 2: 118, 9C/55.
55. See, for example, Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Minaret of Shajarat ad-Durr at Her Complex in the Cemetery of Sayyida Nafisa," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Institut, Abteilung Kairo* 39 (1983): 14.
56. 'Ulaymi Mujir al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad, *Kitāb al-uns al-jālīl bi-ta'rikh al-Quds wa'l-Khalīl*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1283/1866): 433–34; H. Sauvaire, *Histoire de Jérusalem et d'Hébron depuis Abraham jusqu'à la fin du XV^e siècle de J.C.* (Paris, 1876), p. 239; Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," pp. 74–75, 77; *idem*, *Die mamlukische Architektur* 2: 14, 4/38. It may be that the mosaics in the Dome of the Chain were restored at the same time (Creswell, *EMA* 1: 54, 162, 222; Rosen-Ayalon, "Une mosaïque médiévale," p. 250).
57. Jean Sauvaget, *Les monuments historiques de Damas* (Beirut, 1932), no. 40. On this architect, see L.A. Mayer, *Islamic Architects and Their Works* (Geneva, 1956), p. 71.
58. Nasser 'O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo. A New Interpretation of Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden, 1995), p. 162.
59. Creswell, *EMA* 1: 331; Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," pp. 74–75, 77; *idem*, *Die mamlukische Architektur* 2: 33, 4/142.
60. E. de Lorey, "Les mosaïques de la mosquée des Omayyades à Damas," *Syria* 12 (1931): 346–48, figs. 11–13.
61. Al-'Umari, *Masālik al-abṣār*, p. 193; Creswell, *EMA* 1: 237; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur* 2: 184, 9C/400.
62. For the later restoration, see Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur* 2: 145, 9C/211.
63. Creswell, *MAE* 2: 197, pl. 108c.
64. Although this has been subject to some crude restoration, it shows a similar combination of vessel and vegetal scrolls (Erica Cruikshank Dodd, "On a Bronze Rabbit from Fatimid Egypt," *Kunst des Orients* 8 1/2 [1972]: 70, fig. 24).
65. Creswell, *MAE* 2: 226, pl. 81b.
66. Mujir al-Din, *Kitāb al-uns al-jālīl*, p. 436; Sauvaire, *Histoire*, p. 243; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur* 2: 79, 10/8.
67. Michael Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem. An Architectural Study* (London, 1987), p. 237.
68. Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," p. 71.
69. Rabbat, *Citadel*, p. 166.
70. Rabbat, *Citadel*, pp. 160–1; *idem*, "Mamluk Architectural Mosaics"; I am grateful to Nasser Rabbat for supplying me with a copy of the latter, unpublished, paper. If they are original, an earlier example would be the mosaics in the spandrels of a mihrab in the madrasa of Baybars in Cairo (1309–12), which feature fruit trees similar to those in the mosaics of the Umayyad mosaics in Damascus (Creswell, *MAE* 2: 253–54, pl. 99a).
71. Creswell, *MAE* 2: 247; Meinecke, "Das mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," pp. 68–69.
72. Rabbat, *Citadel*, p. 160.
73. Viktoria Meinecke-Berg, "Quellen zu Topographie und Baugeschichte in Kairo unter Sultan an-Nāsir Muhammad b. Qalā'ūn," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Supplement 3 (1977): 547, n. 19; see n. 115 below.
74. Meinecke, "Das Mausoleum des Qalā'ūn," pp. 74–75. For the restoration of the Aqsa, see Meinecke, "Mamluk Architecture," p. 174, n. 61.
75. Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur* 1: 96–97.
76. K. Wulzinger and C. Watzinger, *Damaskus: Die islamische Stadt* (Berlin–Leipzig, 1924), p. 58, pl. 19b; de Lorey, "Les mosaïques," p. 23, fig. 14; 'Abd al-Qadir al-Rihawi, "Fusayfusā' al-Jāmi' al-Amwī," *Les annales archéologiques syriennes* 10 (1960): 38–44, fig. 4; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, vol. 1, pl. 57d; *ibid.*, 2: 181–2, 9C/387-8; Caroline Williams, "The Mosque of Sitt Hadaq," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 62, fig. 6. The qibla wall of the mosque is said to have been decorated in a similar fashion (Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, p. 237). The use of mosaics in the lunettes of the windows recalls the decoration of the mausoleum of Baybars.
77. Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, p. 237, pl. 18.17.
78. Hayat Salam-Liebich, *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), p. 49, fig. 8; Williams, "Sitt Hadaq," p. 61, fig. 5. Note the presence of the miniature arcade in the hood of the same mihrab.
79. Miriam Rosen-Ayalon, "A Neglected Group of Mihrabs in Palestine," *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization in Honor of Professor David Ayalon* (Jerusalem–Leiden, 1986), p. 560.
80. Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, p. 237. For both these mihrabs see Rosen-Ayalon, "A Neglected Group," pp. 558–61, pls. V–VI.
81. F.B. Flood, "Light in Stone: The Commemoration of the Prophet in Umayyad Architecture," *Oxford Studies in Islamic Art* (forthcoming).
82. A. Abd ar-Raziq, "Trois fondations féminines dans l'Égypte mamlouke," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 41 (1973): 106–7, pl. XIa–b; Williams, "Sitt Hadaq," pp. 58–59, figs. 3–4.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 62. See also Michael Meinecke's suggestion that the workshop responsible for the marble paneling in the buildings associated with Tankiz was established to do restoration work on the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and its marble decoration in 1326–30 (Meinecke, "Mamluk Architecture," p. 174 and n. 60).
84. Rabbat, *Citadel*, pp. 166–67.
85. In 1509–10 there were renovations to the mosaics of the Asqa Mosque, but it is not clear what they entailed (Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur* 2: 463, 47/62).
86. Al-'Umari, *Masālik al-abṣār*, p. 193; English translation from Creswell, *EMA* 1: 237.
87. J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 242; H. Stern, "Encore les mosaïques de l'Église de la Nativité à Bethléem," *Cahiers archéologiques* 9: (1957): 144; Rosen-Ayalon, "Une mosaïque médiévale," p. 249.
88. Creswell, *EMA* 1: 349–51, 362, figs. 410, 413; King, *Origins and Sources*, pp. 68–72; Abd al-Qadir, "Fusayfusā'," fig. 6. Creswell regarded the poor quality of the Ayyubid mosaics as constituting evidence for the decadence of the art.
89. Rosen-Ayalon, "A Neglected Group," pp. 553–57, pls. I–II, IV. Although, as the author points out, the Ayyubid mosaic in the Aqsa mihrab may represent the restoration of an earlier mosaic and another in the Dome of the Rock may be a product of the restoration campaign ordered by Baybars I.
90. Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur* 1: 97, n. 177. These include the presence of clusters of mother-of-pearl grapes or flowers.
91. Even in the twelfth-century redecoration of the Holy

- Sepulchre during the crusader occupation of Jerusalem, earlier Byzantine mosaics were reused, some of them being provided with Latin inscriptions: M-L. Bulst-Thiele, "Die Mosaiken der 'Aufstehungskirche' in Jerusalem und die Bauten der 'Franken' im 12. Jahrhundert," *Frühmittelalterlichen Studien* 13 (1979): 442-71; Folder, *Art of the Crusaders*, pp. 230, 233.
92. H. Stern, "Les représentations des Conciles dans l'église de la Nativité à Bethléem," *Byzantion* 11 (1936): 101-52; 13 (1938): 415-59; V. Tzaferis, "The Wall Mosaics in the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem," *Actes du XV Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Athènes, septembre 1976* (Athens, 1981) 2b: 891-900. Cutler concluded that the mosaics were the product of a team working under a Constantinopolitan or Italian master: Antony Cutler, "Ephraim, Mosaicist of Bethlehem: The Evidence from Jerusalem," *Journal of Jewish Art* 12-13 (1986-87): 179-83. Borg suggested that the artist Basil, mentioned in one of the inscriptions accompanying the mosaics, was a "western artist working under strong Byzantine influence," who may also have worked on contemporary illustrated manuscripts and on another mosaic in the Holy Sepulchre: A. Borg, "The Lost Apse Mosaic of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem," *The Vanishing Past. Studies of Medieval Art, Liturgy, and Metrology Presented to Christopher Hohler*, ed. A. Borg and A. Martindale, BAR International Series no. 111 (Oxford, 1981): 11. See also Folda, *Art of the Crusaders*, p. 238. This view is consistent with the further suggestion that the Byzantine role in the mosaics was restricted to the dispatch of Constantinopolitan models and the funds to execute them (A. Weyl Carr, "The Mural Paintings of Abu Ghosh and the Patronage of Manuel Comnenos in the Holy Land," *Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century*, ed. J. Folda, BAR International Series, no. 152 [Oxford, 1982]: 228). The case for the participation of an indigenous school of Christian mosaicists in the decoration of the church is based mainly on epigraphic evidence and finds its chief proponent in Lucy-Anne Hunt, "Art and Colonialism: The Mosaics of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (1169) and the Problem of 'Crusader' Art," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): 69-85, esp. 74-75. This interpretation of the evidence has been criticized, largely on the grounds that it underplays the Byzantine role in the execution of the mosaics (B. Kühnel, *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century* [Berlin, 1994], p. 59).
 93. Kanaan, "Local Christian Art," p. 174. See also Rosen-Ayalon's comments on the Byzantine affinities of the twelfth-century mosaics in the Holy Sepulchre: "Une mosaïque médiévale," pp. 248-49. In view of the close physical proximity between the two cultural spheres, one suspects that the presence of glass mosaics in the Artuqid palace at Diyarbakir should be attributed to Byzantine influence: O. Aslanapa, "Die Ausgrabung des Palastes von Diyarbakir," *Atti del Secondo Congresso Internazionale di Arte Turca, Venezia 26-29 settembre 1963* (Naples, 1965), pp. 20-23, figs. 4-8.
 94. Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*. Deuxième partie, *Syrie du Sud II: Jérusalem "Haram," Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire* 44 (Cairo, 1927): 382-89. Glass mosaic was not entirely unknown in Fatimid Egypt (ibid., p. 389, n. 2; Behrens-Abouseif, "Lost Minaret," p. 14), but was rare enough to suggest that its occurrence may reflect the influence of non-indigenous forms of decoration.
 95. H. Stern, "Recherches sur la mosquée al-Aqsa et sur ses mosaïques," *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1963): 44-45. For a controversial, and not altogether convincing, suggestion that contemporary perceptions of the Aqsa were influenced by Fatimid-Christian *detente*, see S. Tamari, "Al-Muhallabi's («Al-Masālik wal-Mamālik» Ambrosiana ms.) Christian Conception of the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 59 (1987): 323-37.
 96. Van Berchem, *Haram*, p. 288.
 97. Stern, "Recherches," p. 47.
 98. E.A.W. Budge, *The Chronography of Abū'l Faraj* (London, 1932), 1: 196.
 99. Stern, "Recherches," pp. 39, 44. It should be noted that there may have been Umayyad mosaics on the drum of the Aqsa dome; ibid., p. 46; Creswell, *EMA* 1: 158.
 100. Van Berchem, *Haram*, p. 408; Creswell, *EMA* 1: 241-42.
 101. Ibid., pp. 408-15, especially p. 409; Creswell, *EMA* 1: 165, 242.
 102. As suggested by Professor Meinecke, "Byzantinische Elementen in der mamlukischen Architektur," *Kunstchronik* 23 (1970): 295.
 103. This fact is frequently pointed out even by those who support the idea of a continuous tradition: Rosen-Ayalon, "Une mosaïque médiévale," pp. 242, 245; Hunt, "Art and Colonialism," p. 83. See also Henri Stern's comments on the Aqsa mosaics ("Recherches," p. 40).
 104. Hunt, "Art and Colonialism," p. 85.
 105. Salam-Liebich, *The Architecture of the Mamluk City of Tripoli*, p. 49.
 106. Creswell, *EMA* 1: 231-36; idem, "The Legend that al-Walid Asked for and Obtained Help from the Byzantine Emperor," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1956): 142-45; H.A.R. Gibb, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 (1958): 219-33.
 107. Al-ʿUmari refers to the Umayyad mosaics in the Great Mosque of Damascus as *al-fusayfusāʿ al-rūmī*: *Masālik al-abṣār*, p. 195, l. 3. Bahri Mamluk architecture is not lacking in other indications of a taste for the exotic (see n. 142 below).
 108. The existence of Mamluk glass mosaics is not in itself sufficient to indicate the local manufacture of glass tesserae, although this has sometimes been claimed (S. Abdul-Hak, "Contribution à l'étude de la verrerie musulman du VII^e siècle," *Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes* 8-9 (1958-59): 8). No satisfactory conclusion has been reached regarding the sources of the tesserae used in the Byzantine mosaics of the Levant; L.-A. Hunt, "The Byzantine Mosaics of Jordan in Context: Remarks on Imagery, Donors and Mosaicists," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 126 (1994): 124 and n. 29.
 109. Al-ʿUmari, *Masālik al-abṣār*, p. 193; Rabbat, *Citadel*, p. 162. On the glass tesserae used in the recent restorations of the Umayyad mosaics, see ʿAbd al-Qadir, "Fusayfusāʿ," pp. 41-43. The reuse of tesserae was known even in the Byzantine and early Islamic periods (King, *Origins and Sources*, pp. 304-5).
 110. We have some literary evidence for the activities of mosaicists in the Abbasid period in Damascus, Jerusalem and Medina; A. Frolov, "Le peintre Thomas de Damas et les mosaïques du Saint Sépulchre," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 11 (1945-46): 121-30; *RCEA* no. 83; King, *Origins and Sources*, pp. 63-68. It seems significant that all the artists mentioned are Palestinian or Syrian; in one case from Jerusalem, in the other from Damascus.
 111. Beatrice St. Laurent and Andrés Riedlmayer, "Restorations of Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock and Their Political Sig-

- nificance 1537–1928," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 83.
112. For example, in the Church of the Coenaculum, which was at that time a mosque; see n.121 below.
113. Bloom, "Transmission," p.23. Literary descriptions also played a role in architectural copying in medieval Christendom, but these were often augmented by plans; Krautheimer, "Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture," p.19.
114. The same phenomenon characterizes copying in medieval Christian architecture: *ibid.*, p.17.
115. See, for example, the reference to Christian marble workers brought from Damascus to Cairo in 1313 to work on the Qasr al-Ablaq (Creswell, *EMA* 1: 241). See also Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 237; Meinecke, "Mamluk Architecture," p.171; *idem*, *Die mamlukische Architektur* 1: 97; Nasser Rabbat, "Mamluk Throne Halls: *Qubba* or *Iwan*?" *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 207; *idem*, *Citadel*, p.166.
116. Creswell, *MAE* 2: 135; Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," p.119; R. Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate* (Carbondale–Edwardsville, 1986), pp.1–25.
117. Irwin, *Early Mamluk Sultanate*, pp.28–29.
118. For a good discussion of this event and its significance, see J.M. Bloom, "The Mosque of Baybars al-Bunduqdārī in Cairo," *Annales Islamologiques* 18 (1982): 59–61.
119. Quatremère, *Histoire*, 1, 1: 152.
120. In 1261, 1296 and 1318–19.
121. Under Sulayman I (starting 1528); Ibrahim I (1642–43); Ahmed III (1720–21); Mahmud I (1742); ‘Abd al-Hamid (1780–81); Mahmud II (1817–18); and ‘Abd al-Aziz (1873–75). In the post-Ottoman period a major campaign of restoration began in 1923. For detailed references to these campaigns of restoration, see F.B. Flood, "The Ottoman Windows in the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque," *Ottoman Jerusalem*, ed. R. Hillenbrand (forthcoming).
122. M.J. Kister, "You Shall Only Set Out for Three Mosques": A Study of an Early Tradition," *Le Muséon* 82 (1969): 188–89.
123. *Ibid.*, p.189.
124. H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa A.D. 1325–1354* (Cambridge, 1958), 1: 128.
125. M. Silvestre de Sacy, *Relation de l'Égypte par Abd Allatif* (Paris, 1810), p.442; C. Huart, *Le Livre de la création et de l'histoire de Moṭahhar Ben Ṭāhir el-Maqḍisī* (Paris, 1907), 4: 87; Creswell, *EMA* 1: 154, n.14.
126. C.E. Bosworth, *The Book of Curious and Entertaining Information, The Latāʾif al-maʿarif of Thaʿālibī* (Edinburgh, 1968), pp.118–19.
127. Ibn al-Faqih, *Abrégé*, p.132.
128. See al-Harawī, *Guide des Lieux de Pèlerinage*, trans. Jeanine Sourdel-Thomine (Damascus, 1957), p.38.
129. Elisséeff, *Description de Damas*, p.24; Quatremère, *Histoire* 2, 1: 276.
130. Finster, "Die Mosaiken"; Klaus Brisch, "Observations on the Iconography of the Mosaics in the Great Mosque at Damascus," in Priscilla P. Soucek, ed., *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World* (University Park and London, 1988), pp.13–20.
131. The role of the *karma* and its significance in the original decorative scheme of al-Walid's mosque will be discussed in my forthcoming study of the vine frieze. On the miniature arcade, see n.41 above.
132. Rabbat, *Citadel*, pp.167–69.
133. Among the various pre-Islamic incarnations of the golden vine was its frequent function as a shelter for the ruler, often as part of a throne. In Islamic tradition the golden vine was incorporated into Solomon's throne; see, for example, Priscilla Soucek, "Solomon's Throne/Solomon's Bath: Model or Metaphor?" *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 113.
134. Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," pp.113–19.
135. Marçais, "La Mosquée d'El Walid," pp.37–56; Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Revival of Early Islamic Architecture by the Umayyads of Spain," *The Medieval Mediterranean: Cross-Cultural Contacts*, ed. M.J. Chiat and K.L. Reyerson (St. Cloud, Minn., 1988), pp.35–41; *idem*, "Transmission," p.26. The report that Sulayman ibn ‘Abd al-Malik built the Great Mosque of Aleppo to rival that built by his brother in Damascus suggests the Andalusian experience was not unique: Creswell, *EMA* 1, 2: 483. Ibn ‘Asakir reports, however, that the same individual was charged with carrying out the building work at Damascus (Elisséeff, *Description*, p.47).
136. Marçais, "La Mosque d'El Walid," p.54.
137. See, for example, the role of Timurid revivals in the development of Mughal architecture in Michael Brand, "Orthodoxy, Innovation, and Revival: Considerations of the Past in Imperial Mughal Tomb Architecture," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 324; Necipoğlu, "Challenging the Past," p.170.
138. Sheila Blair, "Surveyor versus Epigrapher," *Muqarnas* 8 (1991): 70–71; Bloom, "Transmission," p.24.
139. Max van Berchem, "Notes d'archéologie arabe," *Journal Asiatique* 17 (1891): 420–23.
140. Gibb, *Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* 1: 125.
141. One might see in the appearance of a vine frieze on the façade of the Ülü Cami of Diyarbakir an earlier copy of the *karma*. The form of the mosque, with its triple-aisled hall and gabled nave, was clearly inspired by the Umayyad mosque in Damascus (Bloom, "Transmission," p.24). The western façade on which the frieze appears carries an inscription which dates its completion to 1155–56, during the reign of the Seljuq ruler Muhammad I (Max van Berchem and J. Strzygowski, *Amida* [Heidelberg, 1910], pp.55–62, pls. IX–XI). The style of the frieze indicates a date in the sixth or seventh centuries, and it seems likely that the elements have been reused from a Byzantine frieze, similar perhaps to the vine friezes which still exist in the churches of the Tur ‘Abdin (Marlea C. Mundell, "The Sixth-Century Sculpture of the Monastery of Deir Zaʿfaran in Mesopotamia," *Actes du XVe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines* [Athens, 1976], vol. 2b, pp.516–20, fig. 3).
142. During the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad, a certain taste for the exotic in architectural decoration was manifested in the use of Iranian tilework; Michael Meinecke, "Die mamlukischen Fayencemosaikdekorationen: Eine Werkstatt aus Tabriz in Kairo (1130–1350)," *Kunst des Orients* 11 1–2 (1976–77): 85–144. The contemporary vogue for stucco ornament of the Maghribi or Andalusian type might also be mentioned. The latter subject has yet to be explored in detail, but see, for example, the decoration of the minaret in the madrasa of al-Nasir Muhammad which shows clear Andalusian affinities (Creswell, *MAE* 2: 237–38, pl. 124d).
143. On the possibility that the palatial architecture of al-Nasir Muhammad contained early Islamic allusions, see Rabbat, "Mamluk Throne Halls," pp.207–9.
144. Krautheimer, "Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture," p.14.