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Ceramic Evidence for Political Transformations in Early Mamluk Egypt*

The third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (610/1310–641/1341) is viewed by most scholars as a watershed in the history of the Mamluk Sultanate.[1] Often described as the ″Golden Age″ of Mamluk art, this period is generally recognized as one of security and affluence.[2] With the victory over the Mongols at ʻAyn Jālūt in 659/1260 and the campaign against Acre in 690/1291, the borders of the Mamluk state were, for the time being, relatively secure. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad benefited from a lull in regular military activity to develop the infrastructure of Mamluk society. The formation of ″classic″ Mamluk institutions (such as the fully-developed hierarchy of amiral rank and offices, the structure of the army and the *iqṭāʻ* system, and official ceremonial and ideology) was one positive contribution of his reign in this regard.[3] His reign, nonetheless, may have had a negative impact on

*The following article is based on three chapters from the author′s doctoral dissertation, ″The Ceramic Correlates of Decline in the Mamluk Sultanate: An Analysis of Late Medieval Sgraffito Wares,″ University of Toronto, 1998. Research for the original dissertation was conducted in 1995 and 1996 and was funded by a Fulbright predoctoral grant (administered through the Cyprus American Archaeology Research Center), a Kress Predoctoral Fellowship in Egyptian Art and Architecture (facilitated by the American Research Center in Egypt), and the University of Toronto. Research permits to study sherds and complete vessels in museums on Cyprus and in Egypt were provided by the Cypriot Department of Antiquities and the (then) Supreme Council of Antiquities of Egypt. This article reflects the Egyptian portion of the comparative ceramic study. The author would like to thank Bruce Craig for his invitation to submit the manuscript to *Mamlūk Studies Review.*

[1]For a summary of this period, see P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986), 114–20, and Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate 1250–1382* (Carbondale, IL, 1986), 105–24. Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History: The Third Reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310–1341)* (Leiden, 1995), and Ḥayāt Nāṣir al-Ḥajjī, *The Internal Affairs in Egypt During the Third Reign of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn* (Kuwait, 1978), offer specialized studies of this reign.

[2]Esin Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, D.C., 1981), and Henri and Anne Stierlin, *Splendours of an Islamic World: Mamluk Art in Cairo 1250–1517* (New York, 1997), survey the artistic achievements of this period.

[3]On the artistic representations of graded offices, see L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* (Oxford, 1933); on the structure of the Mamluk army: David Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the

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Egyptian society and economy in the long run. Amalia Levanoni′s claim that the excesses of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s policies ushered in the political and economic decline of the fifteenth century constitutes an important paradigm for the present study.[4]

The following is an art historical contribution to the debate on Mamluk decline, one that highlights the ways in which the demographic upheavals of the later fourteenth century transformed Egyptian society and the arts. This article specifically explores the relationship between ceramic development in the fourteenth century and government practices that affected social mobility and, thus, structured patronage. Sgraffito ware is an important category of glazed ceramics, in this regard, because it is the most visible archaeologically (it is the hallmark of Mamluk-period sites in Egypt), experienced significant development in form and decoration during this period, and seems to have passed out of fashion (at least in Egypt) by the beginning of the fifteenth century. ″Sgraffito″ refers to a surface design cut through a light-colored slip, laying bare the dark-colored earthenware body of the vessel′s fabric. Ideally suited to the reproduction of lengthy inscriptions, the sgraffito technique was adopted in Egypt for the rapid and large-scale manufacture of monumental, ceremonial vessels with complex, militarized designs. This study attempts to demonstrate that the mass-production of this ware was related to the rise of the amiral class at the turn of the fourteenth century and that its subsequent development was a response to the social effects of particular policies initiated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad during his third reign and continued by his successors.

Transformations of Mamluk Society under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

Modern scholars frequently note the ″nostalgic idealization″ of the fourteenth century by fifteenth-century Egyptian historians.[5] Al-Maqrīzī, for instance, regularly bemoans the political corruption of turn-of-the-century Cairo. In contrast with the fiscal and moral bankruptcy of the fifteenth century, the Bahri Mamluk period, was considered a ″Golden Age″ when there were periods of peace between Egypt

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Mamluk Army,″ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 no. 2 (1953): 203–28, 15 no. 3 (1953): 448–76, and 16 no. 1 (1954): 57–90; on the *iqṭā*′ system in the early Mamluk period: Sato Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta′s and Fallahun* (Leiden, 1997); and on Mamluk ceremonial: Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden, 1995) and Karl Stowasser, ″Manner and Customs at the Mamluk Court,″ *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 13–20.

[4]Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*. Reuven Amitai-Preiss, ″The Remaking of the Military Elite of Mamluk Egypt by al-Nasir Muhammad b. Qalawun,″ *Studia Islamica* 72 (1990): 145–63, adopts a similar theme.

[5]David Ayalon, ″Some Remarks on the Economic Decline of the Mamluk Sultanate,″ *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 16 (1993): 110.

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and her neighbors, the state coffers were full, and the arts and crafts flourished. The third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (710/1310–741/1341) is considered by many to be a watershed in this regard. Scholars have emphasized various ways in which his reign was a turning point in the fortunes of the state: in the realm of the arts,[6] policy-making,[7] and the physical development of the modern city of Cairo,[8] for example. Until recently, his sultanate was considered, by both medieval and modern historians alike, to be one of security, prosperity, and growth.

This view, however, is not embraced by all students of the period. Modern historians are increasingly turning to the ″Golden Age″ of the fourteenth century in order to explain the origins of Mamluk decline. While acknowledging the economic dilemmas of the fifteenth century, they emphasize social and demographic developments of the late Bahri period that weakened the state early on and contributed to the collapse of the regime in 1517.

A series of plagues (beginning with the Black Death of 748/1347–750/1349) and natural disasters (earthquakes, drought, famine) were certainly factors that, when combined, were demographically devastating.[9] Al-Maqrīzī′s estimate that one-third to one-fifth of the combined population of Egypt and Syria was lost to the plague seems to be accurate.[10] Abu-Lughod, citing Michael Dols, suggests that

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[6]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*: 15.

[7]Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History*.

[8]Ayalon′s negative evaluation of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s ″building craze″ in Cairo (D. Ayalon, ″The Muslim City and the Mamluk Aristocracy,″ *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 2 [1968]: 311–29) contrasts markedly with Rabbat′s assessment of the sultan′s contributions to the development of the modern city (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).

[9]See Z. H. el-Isa, ″Earthquake Studies of Some Archaeological Sites in Jordan,″ *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 229–35; N. Shehadeh, ″The Climate of Jordan in the Past and Present,″ *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 25–37; Willem van Zeist, ″Past and Present Environments of the Jordan Valley,″ *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 199–204; Yousef Ghawanmeh, ″The Affects of Plague and Drought on the Environment of the Southern Levant During the Late Mamluk Period,″ *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 2 (1985): 315–22; and idem, ″Earthquake Effects on Bilād ash-Shām Settlements,″ *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 4 (1992): 53–59, for data on natural disasters and environmental degradation in Jordan during this period. For a general discussion of the decline of the Mamluk state in geographical Transjordan, see Bethany J. Walker, ″Mamluk Administration of Transjordan: Recent Findings from Tall Hisban,″ *Al-ʻUṣūr al-Wusṭá* 13 no. 2 (2001): 30–33; idem, ″Mamluk Investment in Southern *Bilad al-Sham* in the Fourteenth Century: The Case of Hisban,″ *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (2003) (forthcoming); and idem, ″Mamluk Investment in the Transjordan: a ′Boom and Bust′ Economy,″ *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8 no. 2 (2004) (forthcoming). The author′s forthcoming monograph, *Life on the Mamluk Frontier: Transjordan, 1260–1516 A.D.,* treats this topic in more detail, drawing on archival, faunal and floral, numismatic, and archaeological data.

[10]These statistics are also supported by Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tadhkīrat al-Nabīh fī Ayyām al-Manṣūr*

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a death toll of 10,000 daily in Cairo alone would account for a drop in population of 40% when the plague was at its worst.[11] These numbers support the popular claim that the economic depression, political corruption, and artistic decline of the fifteenth century were the result, in part, of the demographic changes that followed the fourteenth-century plague.

For Abu-Lughod, Dols, Ashtor, and Irwin the Black Death (*ṭā'ūn,* or bubonic plague) was the single most important factor in the economic disasters of the following century. According to Abu-Lughod, reduced labor led to a shortfall in surplus. Burji Mamluk sultans, who depended on ″labor-intensive methods of production″ to support their high expenditure, responded with the exploitative practices mentioned above.[12] Government monopolies, whimsical taxation, confiscations of property, and the export of raw materials to Europe contributed to the ″technological stagnation″ of Egyptian industries described by Petry.

Dols′ frequently-cited *The Black Death in the Middle East* examines the phenomenon of Mamluk decline in its cultural totality and stresses that the Black Death and recurrent epidemics had an enormous effect on the Egyptian economy, industries, arts, and social structure. Artistic development and social change are interrelated in Dols′ model of economic decline. Most art historians agree that Mamluk art declined as a result of the plague, but they seldom define what is meant by ″artistic decline″ and generally fail to account for its origins. The traditional notion is that stylistic and technical quality fell because skilled artisans died during the plague and there were fewer customers to buy their products. Furthermore, many crafts, such as ceramics and textiles, were replaced by the higher-quality European and Chinese imports that flooded the markets in the fifteenth century. Dols suggests a more complex process. He argues that some industries (for example, sugar production) flourished for a time because the shortage of labor pushed up salaries. Artisans also benefited by the rise in wages: their social status rose as a result of the demand for skilled labor.[13] However, other industries and crafts (which Dols calls ″unessential manufactured products″) disappeared.[14]

In a similar vein, the economic historian Eliyahu Ashtor writes about the role of the plague in the three-fold crises of the mid-fourteenth century: demographic,

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wa-Banīh, cited in Eliyahu Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History of the Near East in the Middle Ages* (London, 1976), 302.

[11]Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A. D. 1250–1350* (New York, 1989), 237.

[12]Ibid., 239.

[13]Michael W. Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1977), 263 ff.

[14]For the impact of a declining economy on the local metalworking industry, see J. W. Allan, ″Sha'bān, Barqūq, and the Decline of the Mamluk Metalworking Industry,″ *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 85–94.

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economic, and social.[15] For Ashtor, the new elite which emerged after the plague was civilian and was comprised primarily of successful merchants and the ulama (religious scholars). Their rise in status is attributed to the sale of *ḥalqah iqṭā'āt* in the mid-century and, ironically, government monopolies.[16] The title of *khwājah,* adopted by the sultan's merchants in the fifteenth century, is cited as evidence of social advancement.[17]

The emergence of a new social elite in the second half of the fourteenth century has become a regular theme of recent Mamluk scholarship. Unlike Ashtor, who describes the increasing power of the business and intellectual elite, Levanoni describes the process through which a new Mamluk elite emerged, inverting the "traditional" Mamluk social order. Over the course of his third reign, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad rejected the restrictive recruiting and slow but steady process of advancement maintained by earlier Mamluk sultans. In a passage in his *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* al-Maqrīzī explains his innovations in the areas of recruitment, promotion, and military expenditure as necessary for helping mamluks forget their homeland.[18] Levanoni, on the other hand, interprets these as methods for this sultan of non-mamluk background to buy the support and loyalty of the Mamluk corps.[19] His recruitment of non-mamluks and the promotion of *awlād al-nās* and unseasoned mamluks to amirships, however, gradually dissolved the solidarity between mamluk and master and among mamluks that gave the Mamluk system its cohesion and strength.[20]

According to Levanoni's model, high expenditures combined with counter-productive practices such as these weakened the governing body so that it could not properly respond to the succession crisis after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's death. It is primarily through the inversion of the Mamluk social order after 1341, that is, with the rise of previously disenfranchised groups, that the strength of the sultanate began to wane. The new "elites" of this period were not veteran amirs, but second-

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[15]Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History,* 301.

[16]The sale of these *iqṭā'āt* began as early as 1337, and by 1347 they were taxable, like any other civilian property. According to al-Maqrīzī, Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'bān's (ruled 746/1345–747/1346) establishment of the *dīwān al-badal,* the administrative department that regulated the sale of *ḥalqah iqṭā'āt* to civilians, was necessitated by the impoverishment of the *ḥalqah* that followed the *rawk al-Nāṣirī* in 615/1315 (al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* in Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History,* 171).

[17]Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History,* 321; Ira M. Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Boston, 1967), 128.

[18]Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyadah et al. (Cairo, 1934), 2:2:524–25; Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History,* 31–32.

[19]Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History,* 30–33.

[20]Ibid., 118.

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generation amirs (sons of amirs) and rank-and-file mamluks.[21] These second-class soldiers, the *ḥalqah,* and common civilians *(ʿāmmah)* participated in the power struggles that took place in Cairo′s streets in this period.[22] The rebellion of the *julbān* in the fifteenth century, therefore, had a precedent. The poor economic state of Egypt in the fifteenth century is attributed, in part, to a divided and dissolute governing body, bullied by new recruits and the masses, which was ill equipped to handle the economic and political challenges of the time.

What Levanoni and others are describing is a social crisis created by the proletarianization of the army and the rise to power of certain sectors of the civilian population. Social transformations such as these certainly impacted the arts: new classes of patrons emerged and artistic sensibilities (tastes) may have changed accordingly. Historians have begun to explore the impact plague and government policies had on artistic production in the fourteenth century. Dols, for example, describes the ambiguous effects of the Black Death on the arts. Because of the labor shortage, skilled artisans were able to demand higher prices for their work, and their social status rose accordingly.[23] One material expression of this process may be the sharp increase in the number of potters′ signatures on underglaze-painted ware in the fifteenth century. Some crafts survived and seemed to thrive because they served a particular purpose. In the case of architecture and architectural revetment, these industries continued to do well because of increased building activity, which Dols argues was one reason for increased endowments of property as *awqāf.*[24] Burji Mamluk architecture, however, pales in comparison to the fresher, more innovative styles of the Bahri period. In this sense, artistic decline in the later Mamluk period can be defined in terms of a stagnation of style, where quantity (or proportions) takes precedence over quality. At the same time other art forms disappeared. While the imitation of Chinese blue-and-white porcelains in underglaze-painted ware was popular in the fifteenth century, Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito seems to have passed out of fashion. The disappearance of sgraffito may be related to either a change in taste or shifting patronage patterns.

The inversion of Mamluk social structure, envisaged by Levanoni, is a useful model for describing the development of sgraffito in the fourteenth century. The empowerment of the amiral class (and particularly the *khāṣṣakīyah*) early on in

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[21]Amitai-Preiss describes Levanoni′s ″social inversion″ as a ″remaking of the [Mamluk] elite.″ With the replacement of veteran (Mansuri) amirs with his own amirs, who were promoted immediately to amirships of 100, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad effected the ″transformation,″ rather than the ″decline,″ of the Mamluk′s social order (Amitai-Preiss, ″The Remaking of the Military Elite″).

[22]See Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History,* 118–32.

[23]Dols, *The Black Death,* 270.

[24]Ibid.

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al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s third reign and its replacement by second-class soldiers (*awlād al-nās* and other non-mamluks) and the assumption of mamluk prerogatives by civilians after his death—all are reflected in the decorative development of sgraffito ware in Egypt. These practices, to which Levanoni devotes her book, combined with the plague in mid-century to create a new elite, or, for our purposes, a new class of patrons. It is their adoption of earlier elitist symbols that accounts for the degeneration of sgraffito designs by the end of the century.

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAMLUK SGRAFFITO[25]

DEFINITION OF EGYPTIAN SGRAFFITO (FIG. 1)

The standardization of art forms from capital to province is one frequently noted characteristic of the Mamluk period. However, there is marked regionalism in ceramic styles. Mamluk lusterware, for example, was probably a Syrian specialty, and there is some question whether it was manufactured at all in Egypt.[26] Recently, the differentiation of Syrian underglaze-painted wares from Egyptian products has been a focus of active scholarly debate.[27] Similarly, the mutually exclusive styles of slip painting in Syria and Egypt, an area understudied at present, bespeaks of regionalism in ceramic production. Among other regional specialties are the imitation celadons of Egypt, which are among the most numerous ceramic types from excavations at Fustat.[28]

The production and distribution of sgraffito ware present unique problems for the study of Mamluk art. There seem to have been at least two distinctive regional sgraffito styles produced in the fourteenth century: the ″military style″ of Egypt with blazons and inscriptions (the focus of the following study) and a Levantine variety found in Israel, and perhaps Syria.[29] ″Mamluk sgraffito″ in Israel, for

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[25]The following typological study of Egyptian sgraffito is based on fieldwork conducted piecemeal over several years in Egypt (Cairo: the Islamic Museum, ARCE′s Fustat stores in al-Ḥilmīyah, A.U.C.′s Fustat study collection; Alexandria: the Greco-Roman Museum and the Polish Institute′s on-site stores at Kom ed-Dikka), Cyprus (various national and regional museums and private collections throughout the island, south of the Green Line), Canada (Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto), and the United States (Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Brooklyn Museum). Approximately 1300 sherds and 15 whole vessels of the Egyptian ware were analyzed for this study; of comparative material in Cyprus, some 2500 sherds and 150 complete vessels were consulted. The author would like to thank the Departments of Antiquities in Egypt and Cyprus for the permits that made access to the relevant collections possible.

[26]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 147.

[27]R. B. Mason and E. J. Keall, ″Petrography of Islamic Pottery from Fustat,″ *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): 181–82; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 146.

[28]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 190; personal communication, George Scanlon.

[29]I am indebted to Edna Stern, Antiquities Official at Acre, for sharing with me the Mamluk-period

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Figure 1. Rim sherds of Fatimid and Ayyubid sgraffito bowls, Fustat

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example, is essentially a development of earlier Crusader and Ayyubid sgraffito wares under the influence of Venetian and Egyptian sgraffito designs. There is considerable local variation within this regional ware. A brick-red fabric, yellow glaze, and coarsely-incised designs characterize much of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sgraffito excavated at Acre; a freer sgraffito pattern under a brown or yellow glaze is more common in Jerusalem.[30]

Levantine Mamluk sgraffito must, then, be differentiated from Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito. While both groups are indebted, to some degree, to earlier Crusader and Byzantine-derivative wares, the Egyptian variety is distinctive. Furthermore, its stylistic and technical development in the fourteenth century is closely related to the social circumstances of contemporary Cairo. The variety of Mamluk sgraffito produced and distributed only within Egypt is a uniquely Egyptian phenomenon, a point that will be demonstrated later in this paper.

Egyptian sgraffito (hereafter called ″Mamluk sgraffito″) has several readily recognizable characteristics. Although there are exceptions, most vessels are coarsely potted and thick-walled.[31] There is a tendency for vessels that imitate metalware shapes to be very heavy, quite possibly the result of trying to reproduce sharp profiles in a less plastic, coarse clay. The clay itself is Nile alluvium; several chemical and petrographic studies have been devoted to separating the constituent elements of the fabric.[32] The body of Mamluk sgraffito vessels is covered by a stonepaste white slip, which contrasts with the clay slip of contemporary slip-painted ware.[33] Because of the porosity of the clay, the slip is either thickly applied or tends to peel off the vessel surface, obliterating the design. In a later stage of sgraffito development, a thick layer of white or brown slip stands in relief and enhances particular areas of the design, such as the letters of an inscription.

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sherds excavated in the Acre area. The major publication dealing with ceramics from Syrian excavations (later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) is P. J. Riis and V. Poulsen, *Hama: fouilles et recherches, 1931–1938,* vol. 4 pt. 2, *Les verreries et poteries médiévales* (Copenhagen, 1957). There seems to be considerable variety in fabric and decoration in the Levantine wares. Publication of these wares by the Departments of Antiquities in Israel, Syria, and Jordan will be eagerly awaited.

[30]Personal communication, Edna Stern.

[31]The best products of the Sharaf al-Abawānī ″workshop″ are of high quality, with thin walls, sharp carinations, and even slipping and potting (see below).

[32]For chemical profiles see M. A. Marzouk, ″Egyptian Sgraffito Ware Excavated at Kom ed-Dikka in Alexandria,″ *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria* 13 (1949): 3–23, and A. ʻAbd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l′Égypte dans la collection d′al-Sabah,″ *Annales Islamologiques* 24 (1988): 1–23. Recent petrographic analysis can be found in R. B. Mason and E. J. Keall, ″Petrography of Islamic Pottery from Fustat.″

[33]Mason and Keall, ″Petrography of Islamic Pottery from Fustat,″ 180–81.

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Color enhancement of designs in the earlier phase (transitional late Ayyubid-early Mamluk) is achieved through green and yellow-brown ″stains.″ These colored glazes are applied to the sgraffito decoration and bleed into the covering glaze.[34] A yellowish lead glaze covers the vessel, appearing a golden yellow or brown over lightly slipped or bare surfaces.

Floral, geometric, inscriptional, and heraldic designs are incised through this slip into the earthenware body.[35] The distribution of these designs over the vessel surface adheres to a more or less standardized decorative program. The bowl well, an area emphasized in thirteenth-century sgraffito wares throughout the Byzantine and Crusader territories, was incised with faces, gouged circles, imitative Kufic inscriptions, or amiral blazons (Fig. 2). Amiral blazons not only occupied this zone but were also utilized in wall registers to break up inscriptions (Fig. 3). The influence of metalwork can be seen in the reliance on registers to organize inscriptional and heraldic designs (Fig. 4). Inscriptional registers are often framed by floral rinceaux and ″drip lines,″ vertical dashes that recall textile fringes.[36] Narrow registers filled with a repeating series of ″Mamluk braids,″ a stylization of the Coptic version of the Byzantine-late antique guilloche, are a familiar sight in sgraffito ware, and can be found at the juncture of stem and bowl, just below the

[34]Lead-based stains and glazes naturally ″run″ into one another during firing, and indeed, this is often the desired effect.

[35]Figural designs are very rare. See George T. Scanlon, ″Preliminary Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1964,″ *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 4 (1965): 7, ″Frontispiece″ for illustrations of sherds from Fustat, now in the study collection of the American University in Cairo. These were initially identified as Persian (thirteenth-fourteenth c.) and Rhodian or Anatolian (fifteenth c.) imports. It is more likely, however, that ″face bowls,″ angels, and equestrian figures such as these were local imitations of sgraffito designs current in eastern Anatolia and Transcaucasia in the thirteenth century.

[36]Similar arguments have been made by Fouquet, in emphasizing the role of Coptic textiles in determining patterns of decoration of Mamluk sgraffito in the thirteenth century (Daniel Fouquet, ″Contribution à l′étude de la céramique,″ *Mémoires présentés à l′Institut Égyptien publiés en l′honneur de la naissance de S. A. Mohammed ʻAbd-ul-Munaima* 4 [1900]: 71), and much later by Mackie, who discusses the possible decorative influences of wrapping metalware in textiles for transport (Louise W. Mackie, ″Toward an Understanding of Mamluk Silks: National and International Considerations,″ *Muqarnas* 2 [1984]: 143). The interplay of textile and ceramics warrants future investigation. Lisa Golombek has made a significant contribution in this regard in her description of the ″textile mentality″ of medieval Islamic society (Lisa Golombek, ″The Draped Universe of Islam,″ in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World,* ed. P. P. Soucek [University Park, PA, 1988], 25–38). Here she compares Samanid epigraphic pottery to white linens with *ṭirāz* bands (p. 35). See also Yasser Tabbaa, ″Bronze Shapes in Iranian Ceramics of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,″ *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 98–113, and J. W. Allan, ″The Survival of Precious and Base Metal Objects from the Medieval Islamic World,″ in *Pots and Pans,* ed. M. Vickers (Oxford, 1986), 57–70, on the relationship between the metalworking and ceramics industries.

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Figure 2. Cypriot sgraffito bowl with pseudo-heraldic design in well, 13th century, Polis

Figure 3. Early Mamluk sgraffito bowl with inscription and pseudo-heraldic designs, 13th century

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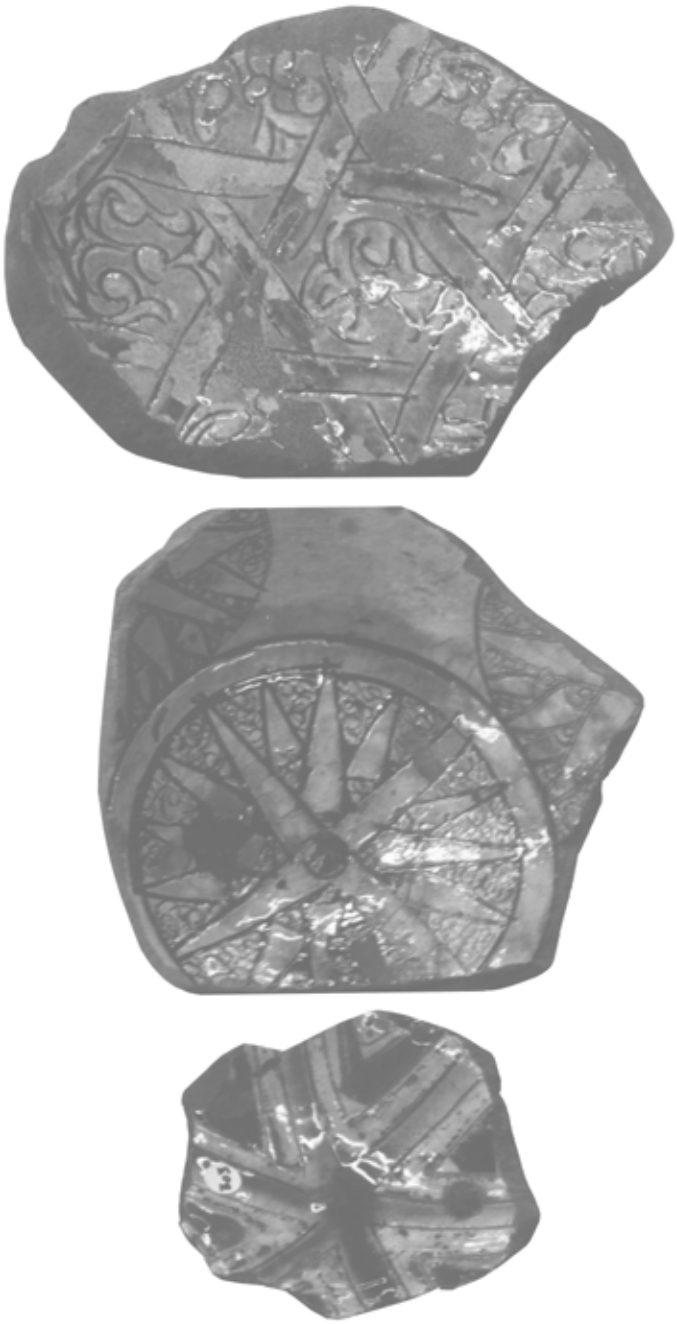

Figure 4. Egyptian sgraffito designs inspired by metalwork (top and center) and underglaze-painted ware (bottom), late 13th century, Fustat

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vessel′s rim on the exterior face, and framing the tondo inside.[37]

Sgraffito ware, like much of Mamluk art, is stylistically hybrid and borrows extensively from other media. Most of the motifs adopted by Mamluk potters belong to the decorative vocabulary of thirteenth-century sgraffito, fourteenth-century underglaze-painted ware, and metalwork. ″Eastern Mediterranean wares,″ as Seljuk, Crusader, and Byzantine-derivative wares are often called, were most influential for the early development (thirteenth-century) of Mamluk sgraffito. Some motifs with a long history in Byzantine art (the guilloche, rinceaux, and repeating arch friezes, for instance) could have been borrowed directly from much older Coptic painted wares.[38] In the fourteenth century, potters imitated the forms and decoration of Islamic metalwork, an extensively traded commodity both within and outside Mamluk domains . The ″Y-pattern,″ broad interlaces, and animal friezes are among the motifs lifted directly from the repertoire of Mamluk metalworkers by sgraffito artists.[39] The popularity of amiral blazons and Arabic inscriptions in many media in the fourteenth century, the most distinctive characteristic of this phase of sgraffito in Egypt, was probably also due to the influence of metalwork. At the same time, contemporary underglaze-painted styles exercised an influence on sgraffito. For instance, radial designs were achieved through the use of sgraffito lines and differently colored stains.

Mamluk sgraffito vessels conform to two main shapes: a deep, hemispherical cup on a high pedestal foot and an even deeper, carinated bowl (or ″chalice″) with straight, flaring sides on a splayed foot (Fig. 5). The hemispherical cup, often called a ″goblet,″ has parallels in glassware and metalware and was a common form for drinking vessels. The carinated form has no clear parallels in any other media but is strongly suggestive of a prototype in inlaid brass that may have had ceremonial or commemorative significance. The only regular exceptions to these

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[37]This braid has been called by various names: a ″Greek key″ (George T. Scanlon, ″Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes from Fustat: ′Sgraff′ and ′Slip,′″ *Islamic Archaeological Studies* 2 [1980]: 62), an ″S-shaped motif″ (Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 188), and ″a band of undulating lines″ imitating *ablaq* arches (*The Luxor Museum of Ancient Egyptian Art: Catalogue* [Cairo, 1979], 204).

[38]Daniel Fouquet first recognized the similarity of designs in Coptic slip-painted wares of the seventh and eighth centuries and thirteenth- to fourteenth-century sgraffito (Fouquet, ″Contribution à l′étude de la céramique,″ 125, Pl. XV). Coptic and Mamluk bird designs have been compared in C. Décobert and R.-P. Gayraud, ″Une céramique d′époque mamlouke trouvée à Tod,″ *Annales Islamologiques* 18 (1982): 101. A comprehensive study of the designs used in medieval Coptic pottery can be found in William Y. Adams, *Ceramic Industries of Medieval Nubia* (Lexington, KY, 1986). For illustrations of the Byzantine guilloche, see Gawdat Gabra, *Cairo, the Coptic Museums and Old Churches* (Cairo, 1993).

[39]One such animal frieze in sgraffito has been illustrated in Aly Bahgat and Félix Massoul, *La céramique musulmane de l′Égypte* (Cairo, 1930), Pl. XLIX.6.

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Figure 5. Most common forms in Egyptian sgraffito: hemispherical (top) and carinated (bottom) bowls, 14th century, probably Fustat, Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito ware

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shapes are those that directly imitate contemporary metalware, such as basins, tray stands, and possibly candlesticks. Regardless of the shape, sgraffito vessels tend to take on largish, if not monumental, proportions.

The goblet form is also shared by two other groups of Mamluk pottery: slip-painted and underglaze-painted wares.[40] Many designs are common to all three wares. Slip-painting and sgraffito are related techniques. The basic application of a slip (clay slip in the first case and quartz-based in the second) and the technique of painting a design in slip (the primary decoration in slip-painting and a secondary one in sgraffito) are grounds for association. Furthermore, sgraffito and underglaze-painted wares were fired together in the same kilns; the proficiency of some workshops in both techniques is discussed below.[41]

In spite of the designs and range of motifs shared by the various categories of Mamluk pottery, the wares differ in their individual histories. Slip-painted wares are stylistically more related to underglaze-painting and the contemporary slip-painted styles of eastern Anatolia and Iran.[42] There is continuity from the Ayyubid period in underglaze-painted and lusterwares. Blue-and-white porcelains and celadons imported from China were imitated locally in Egypt and had a significant impact on the development of local underglaze-painted wares in the fifteenth century.

The history of Mamluk sgraffito is quite different. Although it shares designs with many of the groups listed above, its earliest phase (thirteenth century) was oriented to the Crusader eastern Mediterranean. During its later development in the fourteenth century the ware imitated contemporary Islamic metalwork. The stylistic differences between Mamluk sgraffito and other Egyptian ceramic groups are due to several factors, not the least of which relates to marketing, or patronage. The classification of Mamluk sgraffito ware has, therefore, traditionally focused

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[40]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 169, cat. #78 is an example of the goblet form in underglaze-painting. For slip-painted ware, see the profiles in Scanlon, ″Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes.″

[41]In modern kilns all ″slip-wares,″ including sgraffitos and slip-painted styles, are fired at the same time. Both require a leather-hardening process before firing, the clays (and the temperatures at which they are fired) are common to both, and they generally take the same glazes. Although there is no historical evidence to support this, one could argue that, like underglaze-painted ware, slip-painted ware was produced alongside sgraffito in Mamluk Cairo.

[42]The history of fourteenth-century slip-painted wares is complex and poorly understood. For assorted attempts at clarifying the relationship of the Mamluk ware with foreign ones see George T. Scanlon, ″The Fustat Mounds: a Shard Count, 1968,″ *Archaeology* 24 (1971): 229 (who emphasizes the influence of ″Eastern Mediterranean relief slip-wares″ and the trailed glaze of ″Athlit wares″) and Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 149 and 192 (pointing to parallels in underglaze-painting and imitation celadons). Lane′s comments concerning the influence of the so-called ″Sultanabad″ wares (Arthur Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery* [London, 1947]) are somewhat outdated.

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on its comparatively restricted range of decorative styles and the technical aspects of form and fabric.

Unlike other wares, Mamluk sgraffito can be considered a purely Egyptian product.[43] Evidence of production at Fustat in the form of wasters and kilns and the sheer quantity of the material collected from medieval sites throughout Egypt attest to an intensive, indigenous production.[44] Moreover, there is no convincing evidence that it was ever transported to Syria or any of the other Mamluk provinces, not to mention ever having been manufactured in these places.[45] The extra-Egyptian provinces had their own local styles of sgraffito that were quite different from the Fustat product. To my knowledge there are no published examples of clearly Egyptian-style Mamluk sgraffito from sites in Syria or Israel. Ambiguous references in archaeological reports to scraps of ″Egyptian″ sgraffito found at Syrian sites are never illustrated and do not alter the picture of an Egyptian-only distribution.[46]

If ″military″ sgraffitos are found at administrative sites and garrisons throughout Egypt, why are they not found in Syria? Egyptian amirs were given *iqṭā‘āt* in Syria, were made governors there, lived there, retired there. Yet, there was apparently no export of Egyptian sgraffito to Syria, and if an Egyptian amir had commissioned a vessel in Cairo before his posting in Syria, he apparently did not take it with him. Taking into consideration the indigenous ceramic tradition in Syria one

[43]Décobert and Gayraud, ″Une céramique de l′époque mamelouke,″ 102.

[44]Aly Bahgat, ″Les fouilles de Foustât: Découverte d′un four de potier arabe datant du XIVe siècle,″ *Bulletin de l′Institut Egyptien* 8 (1914): 245–333 (excavation of a fourteenth-century kiln at Fustat; wasters did not include sgraffito, however); Mason and Keall, ″Petrography of Islamic Pottery,″ 180, Fig. 13 (ROM cat. # 909.43.21 is a waster with an attached tripod from the Fustat excavations. Petrographic thin-sectioning verified local manufacture). Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito has been excavated at the following sites: ″metro″ Cairo (Fouquet, ″Contribution à l′étude de la céramique,″ 121; Bethany J. Walker, ″New Approaches to Working with Old Maps—Computer Cartography for the Archaeologist,″ *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 31 [1994]: 189–200); ″metro″ Alexandria (see references to Kubiak, François, Marzouk, and Lane throughout this paper); Quseir al-Qadim (Donald Whitcomb and Janet Johnson, *Quseir al-Qadim 1980: Preliminary Report* [Malibu, 1982]); Jebel Adda (N. Millet, ″The Jebel Adda Project, Nubia, 1962,″ in *National Geographic Research Reports [1961–1962],* ed. P. H. Oehser [Washington, 1970], 191–200); Tod (Décobert and Gayraud, ″Une céramique de l′époque mamelouke,″ 98); Akhmim (Fouquet, ″Contribution à l′étude de la céramique,″ 121); Dronca (Fouquet, ″Contribution à l′étude de la céramique,″ 121); and Luxor *(Luxor Museum)*.

[45]On the issue of transport, evidence from shipwrecks would be particularly illuminating. However, there are precious few excavated wrecks from this time period in the eastern Mediterranean and of those cargoes that have reached the attention of scholars, none seem to have included this kind of pottery (see Rachel Ward, *Islamic Metalwork* [New York, 1993], 113; reference is to a shipwreck of ca. 1400 off the coast of Syria, published in *From the Depths of the Sea,* The Israel Museum [Jerusalem, 1985]).

[46]Décobert and Gayraud, ″Une céramique de l′époque mamelouke,″ 99.

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could conclude that:

1. The unattractiveness of Mamluk sgraffito did not find a market in Syria, which had its own respectable, long history of sgraffito manufacture.
2. A high tax on ceramic imports in Syria discouraged Egyptian potters from sending their wares there.[47]
3. The Glazed Relief Ware of Syria served the same purpose as Egyptian sgraffito and was of a generally higher quality. This mass-produced ware was also decorated with dedicatory inscriptions and blazons and distributed to administrative centers and garrisons throughout the region.[48]

It is difficult to assess the Syrian ceramic aesthetic or to find documentary evidence for taxes on a commodity that is very rarely mentioned in either historical or administrative sources. I consider the following as socio-political factors that contributed to the restricted distribution of Mamluk sgraffito.

1. Mamluk ″military″ sgraffito, or the inlaid brasswares it imitates, was the special prerogative of amirs serving in the capital, as were certain styles of

[47]Pringle cites documentary evidence from commercial treaties for a 25% tax on all pottery sold in Acre in the 1230s (Denys Pringle, ″Pottery as Evidence for Trade in the Crusader States,″ in *I comuni italiani del Regno Crociato di Gerusalemme*, ed. B. Kedar and G. Airaldi [Geneva, 1986], 469). He argues, unconvincingly, that this was an effort on the part of local officials to preserve ″local stocks of pottery that were needed by the local citizens.″

[48]Glazed Relief Ware is a mold-made ceramic of a fine, white or pinkish clay (5 YR 7/4), decorated in Arabic inscriptions and, for the most part, pseudo-heraldic devices, and covered in a heavy green or yellow lead glaze. Vessel shapes tend to be hemispherical or carinated bowls, with either a simple rounded rim or a characteristic incurving rim, placed on a high pedestal foot. Vessel sizes range from miniature (bowls as small as 8 cm high, 13 cm max dia. at rim) to monumental (bowl rim dia. max. 38 cm wide). Distribution of this ware seems to be concentrated in southern Syria. They have been excavated in large quantities in administrative centers/regional capitals: Jerusalem (M. Avissar, ″The Medieval Pottery,″ in *Yoqne'am I: The Late Periods,* ed. A. Ben-Tor, M. Avissar, and Y. Portugali [Jerusalem, 1996], 102–4); Kerak (M. Milwright, ″Trade and Patronage in Middle Islamic Jordan: The Ceramics from Kerak Castle,″ Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1998, 176–79 and 184–91); and Hiṣbān (Bethany J. Walker, ″The Islamic Age,″ in *Hesban 11: The Pottery of Hesban*, ed. J. A. Sauer and L. G. Herr [Berrien Springs, MI, 2003], forthcoming; Bethany J. Walker and Ø. S. LaBianca, ″The Islamic *Quṣūr* of Tall Hiṣbān: Preliminary Report on the 1998 and 2001 Seasons,″ *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 47 [2003], forthcoming). They were likely manufactured in Jerusalem, and perhaps also Damascus, and sent from there to Mamluk garrisons throughout the region (R. B. Mason and M. Milwright, ″Petrography of Middle Islamic Pottery from Kerak,″ *Levant* 30 [1998]: 188; M. Ben-Dov, *The Dig at the Temple Mount* [Jerusalem, 1982], 365; Avissar, ″Medieval Pottery,″ 102). The inscriptions tend to be generic wishes for prosperity for an unnamed amir (″Glory, good fortune, achievement, and happiness, to the amir″), a statement of commission (″Made [on the order of] the amir . . .″), or poetic verses. Glazed Relief Wares were both made-to-order and mass-produced throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

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dress and lifestyle privileges (hunting excursions with the sultan, monopolies on certain commodities).

2. This ceramic style was part of the way the city of Cairo framed its self-view in artistic terms.[49] In other words, it was a specifically Cairene art style, like monumental architectural façades with niches.[50]
3. Mamluk sgraffito was the product of a time and place, a product of the socio-political atmosphere of the time. Most of the characteristics of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad´s reign relevant to the ceramic arts were phenomena of Egypt only.
4. This style of sgraffito was made in imitation of vessels in more expensive materials that played an important role in Mamluk ceremonies carried out in the capital.

Typology of the Ware

Egyptian sgraffito ware is the hallmark of the Mamluk period in the country. No other kind of pottery is found in such abundance, it was distributed throughout Egypt, and it is readily recognizable to archaeologists and art historians by its characteristic surface decoration. In spite of this, sgraffito has limited archaeological value, because it cannot be dated using traditional techniques; it is often retrieved from secondary (the trash heaps of Fustat and Alexandria) and unstratified (and thus chronologically contextless) deposits during excavation or as isolated surface finds on surveys.[51] Pottery from these contexts is often poorly preserved: the predominance of sherds makes it difficult to ascertain the forms (and range of forms) of the original vessels. The abundance of sherd material in Egyptian museums has encouraged the art historical analysis of surface designs, and this kind of scholarship has a long history in Arabic, French, and English literature. However, the fragmentary nature of the pottery has discouraged any broader analysis, which would enable archaeologists to date it (and, in turn, allow them to use this pottery

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[49]Sgraffito would have been associated with Cairo as the luster technique was with Damascus. The ″popularization of forms and the use of techniques . . . may have served to reduce socioeconomic distinctions in urban society and to enhance a common local identity″ (Michael Morony, ″Material Culture and Urban Identities: The Evidence of Pottery from the Early Islamic Period,″ in *Identity and Material Culture in the Early Islamic World,* ed. Irene Bierman [Los Angeles,1995], 30).

[50]Michael Meinecke, ″Mamluk Architecture, Regional Architectural Traditions: Evolution and Interrelations,″ *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 2 (1985): 166.

[51]George T. Scanlon, ″The Pits of Fustat: Problems of Chronology,″ *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 60 (1971): 60–78; W. B. Kubiak and M. Redlak, ″Kom ed-Dikka: Islamic Finds—Storehouses Survey 1995/96,″ *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 8 (1997): 32–39; Arthur Lane, ″Archaeological Excavation at Kom-ed-Dikka: a Preliminary Report on the Medieval Pottery,″ *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria* 5 (1949): 143–47.

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to date sites and their strata with some precision) or explain to historians the unique role it played in fourteenth-century Egyptian society. Until now, there has been no typology of Egyptian sgraffito ware.

The formal art historical study of the ware began a century ago with Daniel Fouquet, whose stylistic analysis of sgraffito sherds has remained influential until today.[52] Although outdated, his monograph, *Céramique orientale*, has been singularly responsible for the current debate on the influence of eastern Mediterranean sgraffito. His work was ground breaking on many accounts. Fouquet was concerned with the historical context of sgraffito ware and dated sherds on the basis of inscriptions and blazon designs. He analyzed artists´ signatures in order to reconstruct workshop structures, examined stylistic parallels in media as far afield as textiles and metalworking, and examined decorative motifs with an eye towards seriation. One legacy of these approaches can be seen in the several generations of signature studies that have followed.[53] He was, most importantly, the first to suggest a connection between Crusader (particularly Cypriot) and Mamluk sgraffito (an idea that has only recently gained some popularity)[54] and to recognize the impact of ″Mosul″-style metalwork on ceramics.[55] These have remained key concepts in the interpretation of sgraffito designs, even though scholars of Mamluk sgraffito seldom cite Fouquet as an authority on the matter. Fouquet´s stylistic analysis was not hampered by the fragmentary remains of sgraffito, and perhaps it is for this reason that archaeologists, consciously or unconsciously, have adopted his approach in working with this material.

With Scanlon´s publication of profiles for sgraffito and slip-painted wares in 1980, discussion about the development of sgraffito forms became possible.[56]

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[52]Fouquet, ″Contribution à l´étude de la céramique.″

[53]M. A. Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïnciers égyptiens d´époque mamlouke avec un catalogue de leurs oeuvres conserves au Musée d´art arabe du Caire* (Cairo, 1930) and idem, ″Un maître céramiste égyptien du XIVe siècle—Gaiby,″ *Annales de la Société Royale d´Archéologie de Bruxelles* 35 (1930): 141–56; M. A. Marzouk, ″Three Signed Specimens of Mamluk Pottery from Alexandria,″ *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 497–501; A. ‘Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie d´époque mamelouke—Sharaf al-Abawānī,″ *Annales Islamologiques* 7 (1967): 21–32; B. Peterson, ″Blue and White Imitation Pottery from the Ghaybi and Related Workshops in Mediaeval Cairo,″ *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 52 (1980): 65–88; and M. Jenkins, ″Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery: Foundations for Future Study,″ *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 95–114.

[54]Jenkins, ″Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery,″ 124; Scanlon, ″Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes″ (for the Cypriot connection); W. H. Kubiak, ″Crusaders´ Pottery of al-Mina Found at Fustat,″ *Folia Orientalia* 12 (1970): 113–23 (for parallels with al-Mina wares).

[55]Fouquet, ″Contribution à l´étude de la céramique,″ 131; Marzouk, ″Three Signed Specimens,″ 498.

[56]Scanlon, ″Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes,″ is an extremely useful study in this respect, although many conclusions made about origins and stylistic parallels can be challenged.

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Very few complete profiles were available and of those that were published (such as the whole vessels in the gallery of the Islamic Museum in Cairo) emphasis was placed on rare forms, ones slavishly imitative of metalware.[57] One is given an impression in the art historical literature that vessel forms were static. Scanlon´s preliminary study, made possible by a careful piecing together of copious sherd material from Fustat, indicates that a typology of sgraffito based on its constantly changing vessel form is possible. Therefore, while the high-footed hemispherical bowl and carinated ″chalice″ with high, straight walls are the most common forms, there is enough variety within those two groups to consider the possibility of continuity with the Ayyubid period and steady development of form within the Mamluk period.

Modern research on sgraffito has dealt less with typology and chronology, the building blocks of ceramic analysis, and more with the larger issues of trade and provenance. Several recent studies have focused on the roles played by eastern Mediterranean pottery imported through the port of Alexandria, although Fouquet and his contributions in this area are never acknowledged.[58] Another line of inquiry begins with laboratory analyses of fabric and glaze as methods of locating centers of manufacture.[59] In spite of the unquestionable usefulness of such studies, other crucial questions remain unanswered, such as the origins of the Mamluk sgraffito style, its specific dates of manufacture and use, the process and social significance of its development, and the reasons for its restricted distribution.

The typology developed in this paper goes beyond the stylistic analyses of Fouquet and Scanlon in two ways. First, it attempts to overcome the stratigraphic problems associated with Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito by developing a relative chronology for different phases of its development (an archaeological contribution). Second, it relates ceramic development to social, political, and economic challenges to the Mamluk establishment in the fourteenth century (a socio-historical contribution). Egyptian sgraffito underwent two distinct phases of development. I date Phase I sherds by their stratigraphic association with chronologically secure

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[57]Marzouk, ″Egyptian Sgraffito Ware″; A. ‘Abd al-Rāziq, ″Notes on Islamic Graffito Ware of the Near East,″ *Annales Islamologiques* 9 (1970): 179–86, and idem, ″Le sgraffito de l´Égypte.″

[58]W. H. Kubiak, ″Overseas Pottery Trade of Medieval Alexandria as Shown by Recent Archaeological Discoveries,″ *Folia Orientalia* 10 (1969): 5–30, and idem, ″Crusaders´ Pottery″; V. François, ″Contributions à l´étude d´Alexandrie islamique: la céramique médiévale de Kom el-Dikka et Kom el-Nadoura,″ in *Alessandria e il Mondo Ellenistico-Romano* (Rome, 1995), 314–22, Pls. XLVI–XLVII. Scanlon, ″Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes,″ highlights the influence of foreign sgraffito styles in Fustat.

[59]The methods of analysis are varied: chemical (included in Marzouk, ″Egyptian Sgraffito Ware″ and ‘Abd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l´Égypte″) and petrographic (Mason and Keall, ″Petrography of Islamic Pottery″).

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imports (where that is possible) and through stylistic comparisons with non-Egyptian sgraffito wares at archaeological sites outside Egypt. For Phase II I rely on datable elements of Mamluk metalwork that are adopted by potters in the fourteenth century. Most important in this regard are the shift from *naskhī* to *thulūth* script in inscriptions (roughly 1320s), the replacement of figural designs with epigraphic ones (1320s on), and the use of blazons (first used in metalwork during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s reign) and names in inscriptions that can be identified from inlaid brasses or historical sources.[60] My reliance on foreign and domestic stylistic criteria is necessitated by the absence of stratigraphic information that the archaeologist normally expects from excavated material.

PHASE I

The influence of the thirteenth-century Mediterranean sgraffitos on the Egyptian ceramic industry has long been recognized, although the emphasis has traditionally been on Byzantine-derivatives and Levantine Crusader (″al-Mina,″ Athlit, etc.) wares.[61] In recent years, the Cypriot connection has been cited as an important element in the emergence of Mamluk sgraffito (Fig. 6).[62] It is difficult to distinguish between the various regional styles of sgraffito in the eastern Mediterranean, thus the confusion in equating all eastern Mediterranean products with either al-Mina or Cyprus. Most archaeologists have focused their efforts on a single region and have acquired an intimate familiarity with one sgraffito group. My own fieldwork has covered three regions (Cyprus, Israel, and Egypt), and it is on the basis of intensive analysis of the Cypriot and Mamluk sgraffitos that I can make the following generalizations.

The great debt Mamluk sgraffito owes to its Cypriot counterpart is indicated by the earliest products of the local Ayyubid and Mamluk Phase I period. I have grouped them into the following categories.

1. Alexandrian Zeuxippus″—a coarsely potted ware in Nile alluvium. The exterior is left plain and rather unfinished, and the slip has a tendency to peel. There is no added color. The tondo designs cut in a wide, shallow sgraffito recall the deeply gouged designs of ″thirteenth-century Aegean wares″ and other Zeuxippus-derivative produced at coastal sites on Cyprus (see below). The most common design is the circle divided into two by double, curved lines in its center (Fig. 7). The complete vessel form is unknown (I have seen only heavy bases). It is found at Kom ed-Dikka in large numbers (some 15% of the Mamluk sgraffitos at the site) and more rarely at Fustat. An analogous

[60]These developments are conveniently summarized in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 50–53.

[61]Kubiak, ″Overseas Pottery Trade,″ 12–13, and idem, ″Crusaders′ Pottery.″

[62]Scanlon, ″Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes.″

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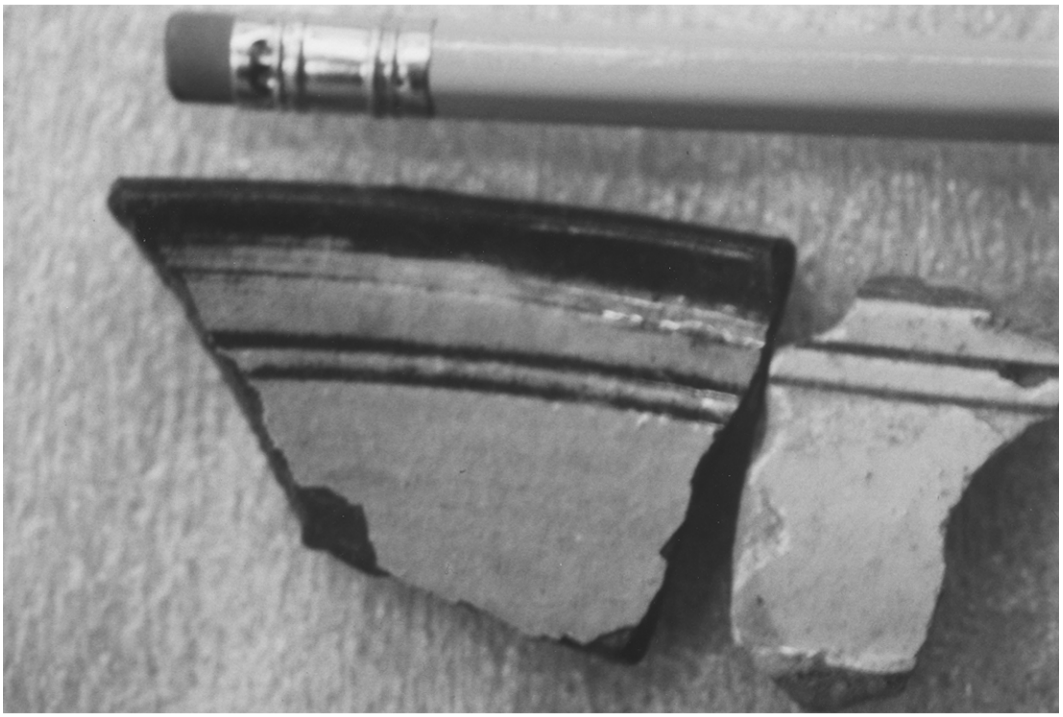

Figure 6. Egyptian (left) and Cypriot (right) sgraffito rim sherds compared

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Figure 7. Alexandrian Zeuxippus, 13th century, Kom ed-Dikka, Ayyubid sgraffito ware

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product found at Fustat, ″Fustat Zeuxippus,″ was probably derived from the Alexandrian ware. The tondo circle of ″Fustat Zeuxippus″ is bisected by three or more lines.

2. ″Wide Rim Arabesque″—This is a crucial ware typologically, because it bridges the transition between local derivates of eastern Mediterranean sgraffitos and the fully developed Mamluk ware of ″Phase II.″ It is the most finely potted of Egyptian sgraffitos, and its red fabric is well levigated. Most of the sherds are large, straight wall sections, so the original vessel form was probably the straight-walled, carinated chalice. This form is confirmed by a variant with lightly incised, doubly outlined floral designs on a scribbled ground. The fine, double outlines relate it to Zeuxippus-derivative wares. The exteriors of both styles are plain or very lightly glazed, but the interiors are covered with a slip and incised with a floral arabesque or Arabic inscription (both real and imitative) on a scribbled sgraffito background, designs which share both Phase I and Phase II characteristics. Yellow glaze (Fig. 8) is as common as the green glaze (Fig. 9). This group is found in Alexandria and Cairo. It represents approximately 6% of the Mamluk sgraffitos at Kom ed-Dikka (the Greco-Roman Museum collection).

The most prominent surface decoration is a wide inscriptional register, which is executed in a deep and wide incised line, often on a scrolled background. Such scrolling is not uncommon in Cypriot sgraffito, where the uprights of pseudo-Kufic are also repeated as part of a general rim design.[63] In ″Wide Rim Arabesque″ this inscriptional register is widened, occupying much of the vessel′s wall interior down to the carination. The inscriptions are either illegible or pseudo-calligraphic. One Egyptian potter, Sharaf al-Abawānī, has signed several examples of ″Wide Rim Arabesque″ that have parallels with Cypriot and Transcaucasian sgraffitos of the late thirteenth century.[64] In later stages of his work the scribbled ground disappears, but the inscriptional register is retained, including legible and formalized Arabic dedications to military dignitaries along with sultanic emblems and amiral blazons. This later style belongs to Phase II, or the ″military style,″ the one most readily recognized as Mamluk sgraffito by archaeologists working in Egypt.

Phase I products share a common repertoire of designs that have currency throughout the eastern Mediterranean in the thirteenth century: the six-pointed

[63]J. du Plat Taylor and A. H. S. Megaw, ″Cypriot Medieval Glazed Pottery,″ *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* (1937–39): Pl. VII (14) and Pl. IX (3.15).

[64]Compare Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* Pl. 50 (bottom center) with A. I. Dikigoropoulos and A. H. S. Megaw, ″Early Glazed Pottery from Polis,″ *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* (1940–48): 77–93, Pls. VIII and IX. Also Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* Pl. 50 (uppermost left) with R. L. Hobson, *A Guide to the Islamic Pottery of the Near East* (London, 1932), Pl. 13, Fig. 37.

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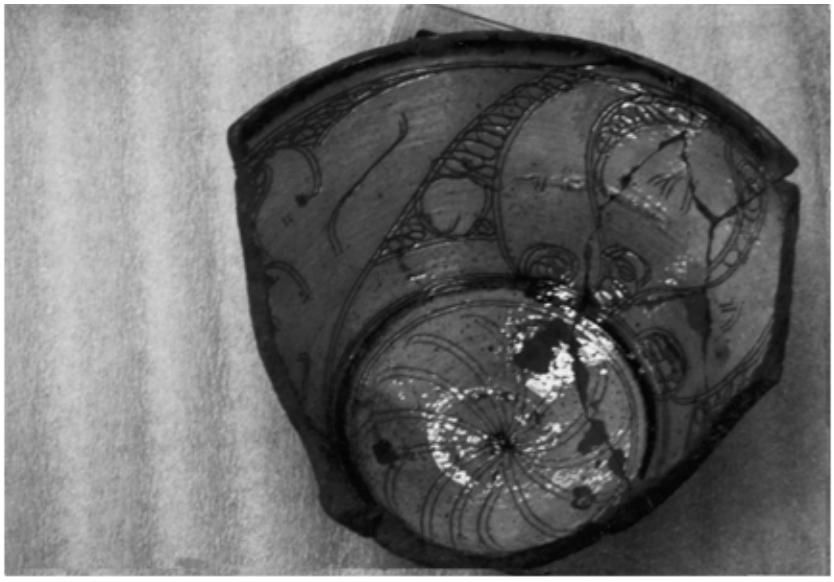

Figure 8. Yellow-glazed Wide Rim Arabesque, late 13th century, Fustat, Phase I Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito ware

Figure 9. Green-glazed Wide Rim Arabesque, late 13th century, Fustat, Phase I Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito ware

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star tondo, registers of ″fat″ Kufic, pseudo Kufic inscriptions in the tondo, the scribbled sunburst, the ″Mamluk braid″ (also called a cable or S-motif), champlevé triangles and checkerboards, registers of crescents, textile-imitative fringes framing registers, pseudo-Arabic inscriptions, and proto-blazons (or ″sultanic devices″) and ″Norman shields″ in the tondos. A variety of designs and decorative techniques are adopted from Crusader and Anatolian wares, such as the ″al-Mina leaf″ pattern, the double-incised rim, and champlevé guilloches and sunbursts.

These late Ayyubid and early Mamluk sgraffitos are usually found in stratigraphic association with ceramic imports from throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Although previous scholarship has emphasized the presence of Levantine Crusader imports (al-Mina wares) in Alexandria, Cypriot pottery was, in fact, imported in significantly larger numbers.[65] The majority of all ceramic imports at Kom ed-Dikka, roughly 40-50%, are clearly identifiable as Cypriot; Byzantine, Byzantine-derivative, and Crusader wares are the minority. Several groups of Cypriot imports are represented in Alexandria; Groups III (west and southwest coast products) and IV (produced throughout Cyprus) are dominant (Fig. 10).[66] Of other Byzantine-style wares, Zeuxippus ware dominates, followed by Levantine Crusader and Megaw´s ″thirteenth-century Aegean.″[67] At the salvage

[65]See Kubiak, ″Overseas Pottery Trade″ and idem, ″Crusaders´ Pottery″ for interpretation of ″al-Mina″ imports at Kom ed-Dikka and Fustat.

[66]The Cypriot typology refers to categories and a relative chronology established by A. H. S. Megaw in the 1930s, based on stylistic analysis (du Plat Taylor and Megaw, ″Cypriot Medieval Glazed Pottery,″ 1–13). His ″groups″ are still valid among archaeologists working on the island today. Excavation of well-stratified sites and church cemeteries, both with coins, have verified many of Megaw´s dates (D. Papanikola-Bakirtzis, ″Ξρονολογημενη Κεραμεικη 14ου Αιωνα απο την Παφο,″ *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* [1988]: 245–48; J. du Plat Taylor, ″Medieval Graves in Cyprus,″ *Ars Islamica* 5 [1935]: 56–86). Groups III and IV are dated to the late thirteenth and early-mid fourteenth centuries, respectively. The kind of Group III Cypriot sgraffito bowls found in Egypt tend to be typical products of the Lemba and Paphos kilns (verified by petrographic analysis—Walker, ″The Ceramic Correlates of Decline,″ 175–76); Group IV imports are, for the most part, Polis products.

[67]For technical definitions of Zeuxippus and thirteenth-century Aegean ware, se Ch. 3 of Walker, ″The Ceramic Correlates of Decline.″ For Megaw´s intuitive discussion of both wares and their relationship to Cypriot sgraffito, see A. H. S. Megaw, ″Zeuxippus Ware,″ *British School at Athens* 63 (1968): 67–88 and idem, ″An Early Thirteenth-Century Aegean Glazed Ware,″ in *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice,* ed. G. Robertson and G. Henderson (Edinburgh, 1975), 34–54. For regional varieties of Zeuxippus ware, see P. Armstrong, ″Zeuxippus Derivative Bowls from Sparta,″ in *Φιλολακων: Lakonian Studies in Honour of Hector Catling,* ed. J. M. Sanders (Athens, 1992), 1–9. For additional studies of Aegean ware and its distribution, consult G. Philotheou and M. Michailidou, ″Plats byzantins provenant d´une épave près de Castellorizo,″ in *Recherches sur la céramique byzantine,* ed. V. Deroche and J.-M. Spieser (Athens, 1989), 173–76, and idem, ″Βυζαντινα Πινακια απο το Φορτιο Ναυαγισμενου Πλοιου Κοντα στο Καστελλοριζο,″

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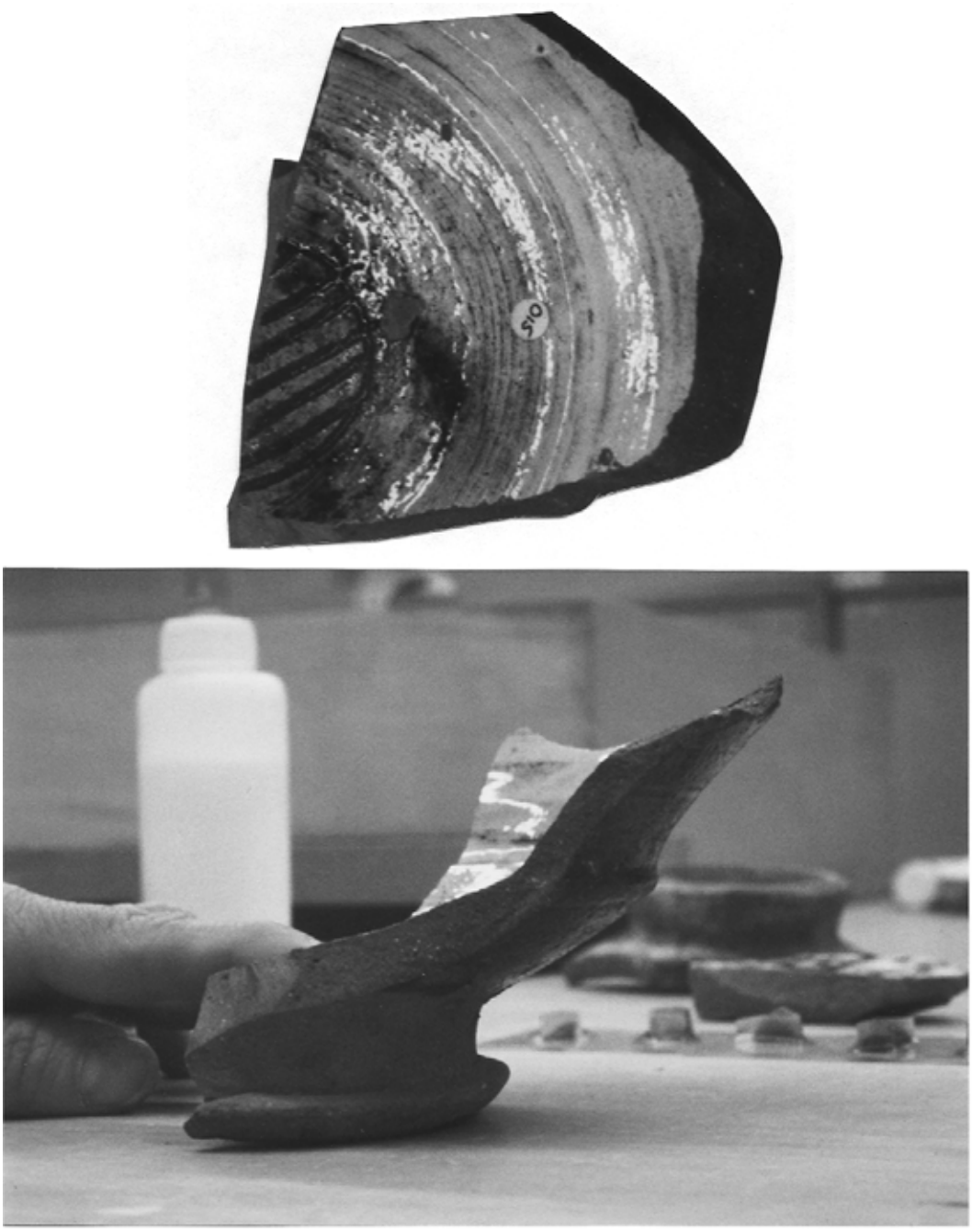

Figure 10. Group III Cypriot sgraffito import from Prastion-Paphos, found at Fustat, 13th century

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excavations of Kom al-Nadoura, also in Alexandria, Cypriot ″bird bowls″ and ″wedding bowls″ were rare finds.[68] What is interesting about this distribution of ceramic types is that not only are Levantine imports rare, but so are the highest-quality groups of Cypriot sgraffito. The most common type of sgraffito import at Kom ed-Dikka belongs to Megaw′s Group II and is of very poor quality (roughly incised, often overfired). The picture is similar to Fustat, where 28% of the imports are clearly Cypriot, and of the Cypriot wares an equal number were of the ″Lemba III″ and ″Polis IV″ varieties.[69]

Phase II (see Fig. 5)

War, plague, and a change of economic fortunes took their toll on the city of Alexandria in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The native craft industries, including ceramic production, went into decline. At some early point in the fourteenth century the ″Alexandria school″ of sgraffito was abandoned. The absence at Kom ed-Dikka of vessels with fully developed dedicatory inscriptions, true blazons, or imitations of the *thulūth* script indicates that the ″Fustat school″ took over the Alexandrian market sometime before the 1320s and even as early as 1290.[70]

The supposed ″hiatus″ in ceramic production in Fustat during much of the thirteenth century has often been attributed to the burning of the city by Shāwar in 1168. According to Kubiak, the *kharāb* (ruins) of Fustat were the result of the abandonment of the eastern and southern parts of the city after the famine and plague of 1066–72, but in the thirteenth century Fustat (those areas still occupied) was fully functioning socially and industrially.[71] There does seem to have been a

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Αρχαιολογικο Δελτιο 4 (1991): 271–330; P. Armstrong, ″A Group of Byzantine Bowls from Skopelos,″ *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 10 no. 3 (1991): 335–47; and I. Loucas, ″Les plats Byzantines à glaçure inédits d′une collection privée de Bruxelles,″ in Deroche and Spieser, *Recherches sur la céramique byzantine*, 177–83.

[68]François, ″Contribution à l′étude d′Alexandrie islamique,″ 316, and personal communication.

[69]The attribution of one complete ″Lapithos IV″ bowl in the ROM study collection (inv. # 909.25.46) to Fustat, on the basis of the art dealer′s reports of 1909, can be rejected. The excellent preservation of this vessel is not in keeping with the fragments normally recovered from the Fustat mounds. Moreover, this particular group of Cypriot sgraffito was particularly popular for medieval burials on Cyprus. It is unfortunate that the looting of church cemeteries of their grave goods provided the international antiquities market with vessels of this sort.

[70]In metalwork large inscriptions in *thulūth* and heraldic blazons replaced figural decoration and the *naskhī* script after the 1320s (Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 50–51). The first blazon of office has been located on two candlesticks of Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā while he was still amir; it was made around 1290 (Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 52 and 64–65, cat. #15–#16).

[71]W. B. Kubiak, ″The Burning of Misr al-Fustat in 1168: A Reconsideration of Historical Evidence,″ *Africana Bulletin* 25 (1976): 51–64.

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reduction in the production of luxury ceramics after the Fatimid period,[72] but the kilns themselves were still operative in the thirteenth century. Thirteenth-century sgraffito styles such as ″Fustat Zeuxippus″ and ″Wide Rim Arabesque″ are proof of the activity of Fustat′s kilns in the period of the ″hiatus.″

Ceramic production at Fustat came into full swing in the fourteenth century, as is evidenced by the extensive ″sherd mounds″ excavated by the American Research Center in Egypt.[73] The sgraffito style associated with the Fustat kilns in this period (Phase II—the ″military style″) is characterized by formulaic Arabic inscriptions dedicating the vessel to a military dignitary (usually an amir) and the extensive use of amiral blazons within these inscriptional wall registers and in the tondos. Occasionally contemporary designs from other Mamluk wares are imitated. The most important influence, though, comes from contemporary metalwork. The shapes (basins, tray stands), designs (woven bands, the ″Y-fret,″ animal friezes), and color scheme (yellow glaze as brass, white slip as silver inlays) of silver-inlaid brasses are reproduced in sgraffito.

″Military style″ vessels were commissioned primarily by amirs and mass-produced for the general public, who had developed a taste for the vessels they had seen displayed at official banquets and at amiral palaces. It was an extremely popular style, probably because it was an effective but less costly alternative to inlaid brasses. Vessels were distributed throughout Egypt but not outside her borders.

Phase II should be roughly dated from 1290 to the late fourteenth century. Phase II sgraffito imitates many of the changes in metalwork of the 1290s–1320s in terms of script, inscriptions, and heraldic blazons. The style apparently petered out by the end of the fourteenth century. Atıl cites the absence of the compound blazons of Burji officers as evidence that the ″military style″ had passed out of fashion by the fifteenth century.[74] The absence from sgraffito inscriptions of the names of Burji officers or Mamluk sultans of the fifteenth century, in addition to the title *khwājah* (for civilian patrons) that appears in this period, further supports the fourteenth-century chronology.[75]

Not only in decoration but also in form does Phase II sgraffito continue the long development begun in the thirteenth century with eastern Mediterranean sgraffitos and Ayyubid lusterwares (Fig. 11). The hemispherical bowl changes little from the thirteenth century to the fourteenth. It is the carinated profile that is

[72]Kubiak, ″Overseas Pottery Trade,″ 27.

[73]Scanlon, ″The Fustat Mounds.″

[74]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 149.

[75]For the title *khwājah* and its relationship to state monopolies in the fifteenth century, see Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 128.

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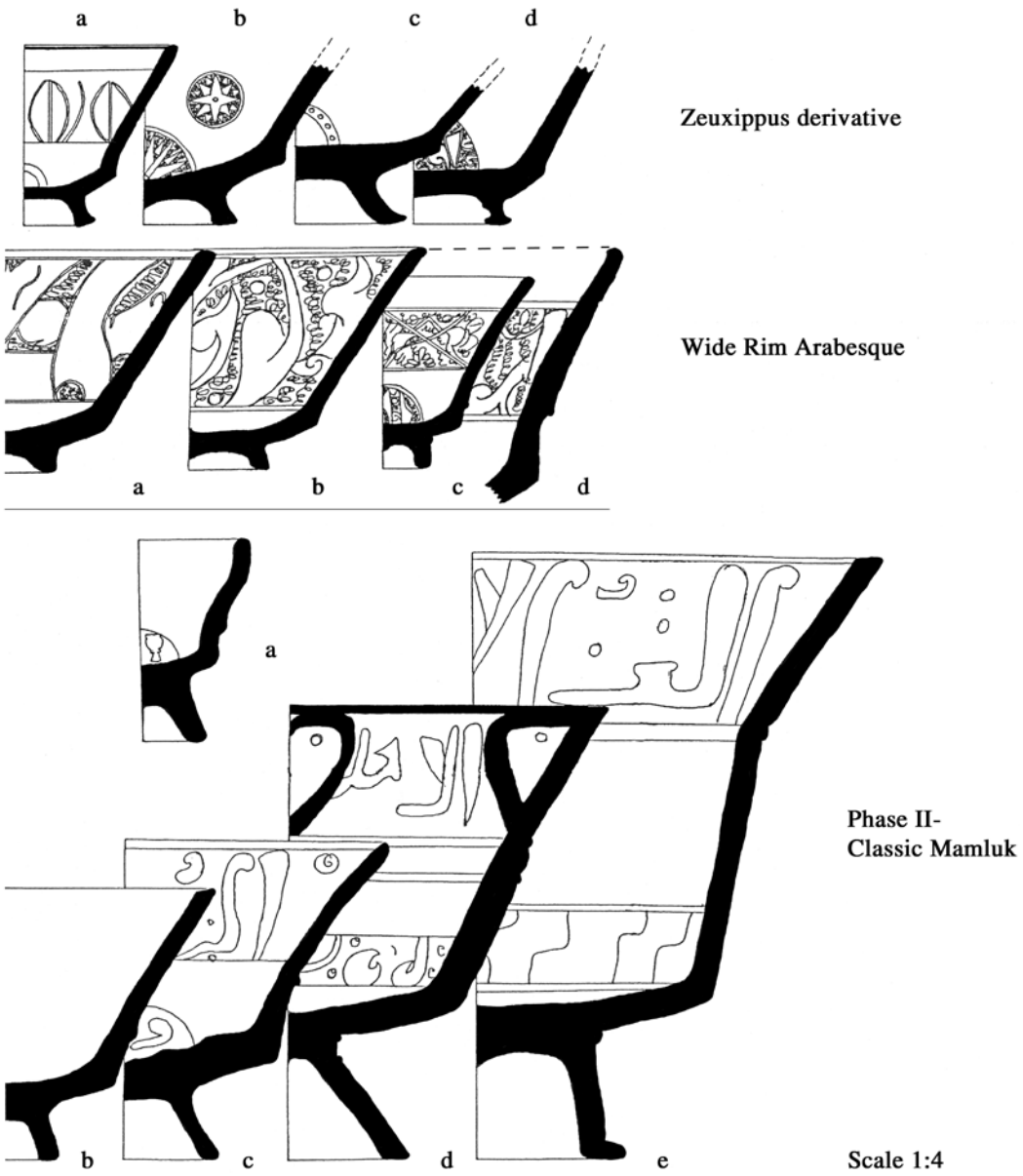

Figure 11. Typological development of late Ayyubid and Mamluk sgraffito

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transformed. The ″classic Mamluk chalice″ usually associated with military inscriptions and blazons in Cairo is not a static form but is remarkable for its variety.

SUMMARY OF TYPOLOGY

In summary, Egyptian sgraffito developed in two distinct stages in the Mamluk period, each related to special social and economic circumstances of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The first phase is chronologically earlier because it shares so many traits with Cyprus′ Group III and some Group IV sgraffitos. The second phase is later and recalls Islamic inlaid metalwork covered with military inscriptions. Some decorative designs of Egyptian sgraffito shared with Cypriot sgraffito include wall registers interrupted by generic shield blazons and the placement of heraldic devices in the tondo circle and on the wall.[76] This use of heraldic devices is also found in Anatolian sgraffito of the thirteenth century and may well have had some currency throughout the eastern Mediterranean.[77]

The following summarizes a preliminary relative chronology for the Mamluk sgraffitos that is based on the data available at present.

Ayyubid (1200–1250): influence from Zeuxippus and other Byzantine-derivative wares (like ″Thirteenth-century Aegean″). Groups include ″Alexandrian Zeuxippus,″ ″Fustat Zeuxippus,″ and tondos circles with the radial design.

PHASE I Mamluk: 1250–1300: strong Cypriot influence. Groups include ″Wide Rim Arabesque,″ green-glazed wares, poorly incised inscriptions in *naskhī,* fake or practically illiterate inscriptions for decorative value, green and brown stains, generic symbols of authority used outside of Egypt (like the rosette, the lion, and the double-headed eagle), and pseudo-blazons or ″Norman shields.″

PHASE II Mamluk: fourteenth century: less Mediterranean influence and more emphasis on eastern Islamic art (the ″Mosul″ metalwork style). Characteristics include the mature, classic profile of the Mamluk chalice, formalized military inscriptions and blazons, slip-painted relief inscriptions outlined in sgraffito, the absence (or rarity) of staining, biographically identifiable amirs, and careful

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[76]For published illustrations of shield devices in Cypriot sgraffito see du Plat Taylor and Megaw, ″Cypriot Medieval Glazed Pottery,″ Pl. V.8 and p. 4, Fig. 1, and A. Papageorghios, ″Έρευνα εισ τον ναον του Αγ. Κυπριανου εισ Μενικο,″ *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* (1964): 236, Fig. 14.

[77]See G. Öney, *Anadolu Selçuklu Mimarisinde Süsleme ve El Sanatlari* (Ankara, 1978), 107, Fig. 90.

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imitations of metalware shapes (candlesticks, inlaid basins, stands). Mass-produced vessels carrying generic dedications and decorative blazons can be considered the latest phase.

By the end of the Ayyubid period, eastern Mediterranean imports (most importantly Cypriot sgraffito) exerted a stylistic and technical influence on Egyptian potters, who adapted such elements as scribbled inscriptional registers, shield devices, the beveled rim and upturned ringfoot, and the use of brown and green stains to designs that appealed to the military elite. The steady development in design from ″scribbled sgraffito″ to ″Wide Rim Arabesque″ and then to the Phase II ″military style″ was paralleled by the accentuation of the Zeuxippus carinated profile, resulting in the ″classic Mamluk chalice″ form. Additional evidence for continuity in Mamluk sgraffito is found in the work of Sharaf al-Abawānī, an Egyptian potter usually associated with the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. His signature is found on both Phase I and Phase II products. It is possible to trace the maturation of his style from the thirteenth century, when he continues the practices of Cypriot and other Mediterranean potters, to the fourteenth century, at which time he adopts the militarizing style of other Mamluk arts.[78]

Historical Backdrop of Ceramic Development in Egypt

Why is Cypriot influence so marked in Egypt and why at this period? A comparison with Cypriot exports to the Crusader Levant is informative. At Acre, Cypriot sgraffito and slip-painted wares (Groups I–III) are represented in high numbers (8% at coastal sites and 24% inland), although at coastal locations proto-majolica and Crusader Levantine wares (″al-Mina″) predominate.[79] Coastal distribution of Cypriot ceramic imports (Groups Ic/X, II, and III) is, in fact, characteristic of the Crusader States.[80] The pattern of Cypriot sgraffito imports in Egypt differs, however, from that in the Levant in two important ways. First, while the overall percentages are much lower in comparison to local products (3% of all sgraffito at Kom ed-Dikka and far below 1% at Fustat), Cypriot sgraffito far outnumbers any other ceramic import. This may indicate a difference in consumption patterns: the mercantile communities of the coastal Levant relied on both imported and domestic pottery, while Egyptian residents were largely satisfied by the local market. Second, the Cypriot groups represented in Egypt (Groups III–V) are chronologically later

[78]The development of his style is more fully described below.

[79]E. Stern, ″Exports to the Latin East of Cypriot Manufactured Glazed Pottery in the 12th–13th Century,″ in *Cyprus and the Crusades,* ed. N. Coureas and J. Riley-Smith (Nicosia, 1995), 335, Fig. 5.

[80]Pringle, ″Pottery as Evidence for Trade,″ Fig. 2.

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than those in the Levant (Groups I–III). Mamluk destruction of the Crusader strongholds in the Levant is the obvious factor in the absence of these later Cypriot styles at Acre and other sites.

The high visibility of Cypriot imports at coastal sites is a characteristic shared by both the Levant and Egypt. Thus, one factor that contributes to the location of imports and the period of the importation is the foreign mercantile community. The influence of Cypriot sgraffito imports on the early development of Mamluk sgraffito is intimately connected to the history of the mercantile communities in Alexandria. The imposing presence of Cypriot pottery in thirteenth and fourteenth-century Alexandria is probably not due to the local residence of Cypriot merchants. The large numbers of Lemba III sgraffito (an estimated 44%), one of the poorest products of Cyprus′ kilns in this period, do not necessarily indicate a Cypriot community in the port city. They were, more likely, the tablewares of the international crews manning the ships coming from Cyprus. Many of the Cypriot ″imports,″ which are unexpectedly inconsistent in firing and general appearance, may not have been imported, as such, but belonged to the inhabitants of the foreign *funduq*s in Alexandria or were used as ballast in transport ships.

Cyprus had neither a consul nor a *funduq* in the city. The state of political tension between Cyprus and Egypt during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the result of corsair activities generally encouraged by the Cypriots, did not make Cypriots welcome in Mamluk territory.[81] However, European merchants coming from Cypriot ports were able to establish residences and businesses in Alexandria. Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Marseilles, and the Catalans had permanent communities in the city.[82] Cypriot merchants who wanted to trade in Egypt generally leased the ships of these European states and hired their crews.[83] The demands of Peter de Lusignan in 1368 for the appointment of a consul, the establishment of a *funduq*, and customs exemptions in Alexandria for Cypriots underline the fact that European middlemen handled the bulk of the Cyprus-Egypt commerce in this period.[84]

The papal bulls prohibiting mercantile activity in Mamluk territories forced

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[81]Egyptian paranoia over rumors of Cypriot spies in Alexandria following the events of 1365 illustrates the extent of the bad relations (A. S. Atiya, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* [London, 1938], 351).

[82]Ashtor, *A Social and Economic History,* 299; M. Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte Alexandrias von 564/1169 bis in die Mitte des 9./15. Jahrhunderts: Verwaltung und Innerstädtische Organizationsformen* (Berlin, 1992), 251; Atiya, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages,* 366.

[83]P. W. Edbury, *The Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus and its Muslim Neighbors* (Nicosia, 1993), 10.

[84]G. F. Hill, *A History of Cyprus* (Cambridge, 1940–52), 2:340; Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-Nuwayrī, *Kitāb al-Ilmām bi-al-I'lām,* ed. A. Atiya (Hyderabad, 1970), 5:371; Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte,* 59.

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clandestine trade through Cypriot ports. So, in spite of the state of ″cold war″ between Cyprus and Egypt, Cypriot pottery reached the shores of Egypt in large numbers. This is a useful lesson: one should not necessarily equate pottery with people. Cypriot pottery in Alexandria represents the local activities of Venetian merchants and other European businessmen, not the presence of Cypriots.

The changing status of Cyprus as the middleman in east-west trade in the second half of the fourteenth century had important consequences, not the least of which was the disappearance of Cypriot sgraffito in Egypt. This was, ironically, a catalyst for the further development of Mamluk sgraffito. A series of events contributed to this state of affairs. Peter I′s invasion of Alexandria in 1365, which left much of the city in ruins, marks the beginning of the city′s decline.[85] A series of plagues in the middle of the century drastically reduced the city′s population, forcing the temporary closure of the *Dār al-ṭirāz*, *Dār al-wikālah,* and the markets and customs houses. By the end of the century the city recovered, as the population recovered and the markets were able to reopen.[86]

The decline of the city of Alexandria did not render her port useless, however, and trade continued in spite of internal problems. The decline of Cyprus was a much more important factor in the transition in Egypt from Crusader-derivatives to the ″military style″ of Mamluk sgraffito. The Genoese wars of the 1370s and changing trade routes weakened the Lusignan dynasty and the Cypriot economy, in general, by the second half of the century. Moreover, relations with the Mamluks were strained until 1370, when a peace treaty was finally signed. A final factor that contributed to the marginalization of Cyprus in east-west trade was the damage done by earthquakes to the island′s major ports. The port at Paphos, from which merchant ships departed directly for Alexandria, was all but abandoned after the earthquake of 1222.[87] Limassol then took over its commercial traffic, but in the first half of the fourteenth century it, too, suffered a series of devastating earthquakes that rendered its port useless. With the Genoese in possession of Famagusta and its port from 1373 on, Cypriot control of dependable ports on the island was disrupted.

At the same time, events coincided to make the European merchants independent of Cypriot ports. The disintegration of the Il Khanid empire and Mamluk operations

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[85]Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte;* al-Nuwayrī, *Kitāb al-Ilmām*—this Arab historian was an eye-witness of the event.

[86]S. Labib, ″ al-Iskandariyya,″ *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., 4:134. Labib has estimated that 200–700 deaths were recorded on a daily basis from 1347 to 1350.

[87]R. Gertwagen, ″Maritime Activity Concerning the Ports and Harbours of Cyprus from the Late 12th to the 16th Centuries (1191–1571),″ in Coureas and Riley-Smith, *Cyprus and the Crusades,* 511–38.

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against the southern coast of Anatolia in the mid fourteenth century forced European merchants to look for ports of call further south in the Mediterranean. Venice began its annual, direct service to Alexandria in 1345. The visits were more regular than during the papal prohibitions, and they bypassed Cyprus altogether.[88] Therefore, by mid-century regular traffic between the Cypriot ports and Alexandria was coming to an end.

The implications of the decline of Cypriot ports and Alexandria for the further development of Mamluk sgraffito are two-fold. First, by the middle of the fourteenth century contact between Alexandria and Cyprus was less regular. By avoiding Cypriot ports, Venice, among the other mercantile states, had no occasion to bring Cypriot pottery to Egyptian shores.[89] Second, the concurrent decline of Alexandria negatively affected several crafts, including the city's textile industry. Whether the gradual impoverishment of the city contributed to the decline of the local kilns and the expansion of a ceramic market based in Cairo, the country's political and military center, cannot be substantiated at this point. The notion, however, does explain the shift from a ceramic industry based on the tastes of well-traveled merchants in Alexandria (eastern Mediterranean influence) to one that catered to the military elite of Cairo ("military wares"). A transition in style such as this indicates a shift in patronage, one that could have been facilitated by the waning influence of Alexandria.

The most important development in Mamluk sgraffito, the transition from Phase I to Phase II, can be attributed, in part, to Egypt's political isolation from Cyprus. When Cypriot sgraffito was no longer available locally, Egyptian potters no longer imitated its styles. They began to rely, instead, on indigenous art forms. If Phase I Mamluk sgraffito adopted characteristics of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Cypriot sgraffito, Phase II was imitative of fourteenth-century Islamic metalwork. The transition was a gradual one. The following three sections serve to document the continuity from the Cypriot-influenced style to the mature Mamluk style with formal military inscriptions and amiral blazons.

THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EGYPTIAN SGRAFFITO

PRODUCTION

I. CAIRO'S CERAMIC MARKET

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[88]Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 24; Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte,* 66.

[89]A sharp increase in the numbers of Venetian pottery in Alexandria in the second half of the fourteenth century would verify this hypothesis. The latest deposits at Kom ed-Dikka are slightly earlier than this, so such statistics from this site are unavailable. Full publication of the ceramic finds from Kom el-Nadoura may provide this information (see preliminary study in François, "Contribution à l'étude d'Alexandrie islamique").

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Phase II sgraffito ware imitated more expensive vessels of brass or bronze inlaid with gold and silver. The metal prototypes were produced for the military elite, as their dedicatory inscriptions indicate. The decorative inscriptions of the less expensive earthenware, on the other hand, was a convenient avenue for the nouveaux riches to express their newly acquired status. While the objects and inscriptions alone illustrate this pattern of patronage, they reveal little by themselves about production or marketing. Archaeological excavations, potters´ signatures, and a reading of contemporary Arabic sources do provide information, however limited, about the ceramic market in Mamluk Cairo.

What is Cairo today consisted of two cities in the medieval period: al-Qāhirah and Fustat. The economic health of medieval Cairo depended, in part, on the dynamic relationship between the marketplaces of those two cities. Their markets, although distinct and independent, overlapped to some degree. Most (but not all) of the official or semi-official centers of manufacture, trade, and sale in the Mamluk period were located in al-Qāhirah, close to the palaces of the amirs.[90] The Fustat markets, on the other hand, consisted of small, privately-owned businesses, managed with little interference from the state, and organized by an informal ″guild″ system or ″craft group.″[91]

There has been much debate about the character of Islamic guilds and the way they compare or contrast with the sophisticated guild system of medieval Europe.[92] Guilds in Europe were formed voluntarily by the artisans to protect their economic interests. By contrast, the ″guilds″ of medieval Egypt were created by the state to facilitate tax collection and urban policing and to stop fraud.[93] The state delegated these responsibilities to market inspectors (*muḥtasib*s), who were appointed to collect market taxes, ensure quality of merchandise, control prices and coinage,

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[90]The concentration of Mamluk and Ottoman *wakālah*s and *khān*s off of the Qasabah between Bāb al-Futūḥ and Bāb Zuwaylah is illustrated on Map 9 (p. 330) and Map 10 (p. 331) in R. B. Parker, B. Sabin, and C. Williams, *Islamic Monuments: a Practical Guide* (Cairo, 1988).

[91]The art historian Irwin argues that formal guilds in the European sense (called *asnab* in later sources) did not exist in Egypt before the Ottoman period. For an overview of the history of the guild structure in Islam, see R. Irwin, *Islamic Art in Context: Art, Architecture, and the Literary World* (N.Y., 1997), 138.

[92]‘A. M. Rezq, ″The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt and Their Social and Military Rank During the Medieval Period,″ *Islamic Archaeological Studies* 3 (1988): 4–5, and Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 97–105. Lapidus´ bibliography on European and Islamic guilds is worth consulting.

[93]The state imposed the guild system on local craftsmen as a way of controlling the economy of the private sector. This arrangement even penetrated the amiral-run establishments. According to al-Maqrīzī, the workshop space in the textile market belonging to one Amīr al-Juyūsh was organized according to guilds (W. ‘Izzi, ″Objects Bearing the Name of an-Nasir Muhammad and His Successors,″ in *Colloque International sur l´Histoire du* Caire, ed. A. Raymond, M. Rogers, and M. Wahba [Cairo, 1972], 235).

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and maintain moral standards.[94] The *muḥtasib,* in turn, selected representatives from among the craftsmen (*ʻārif*s) to assist him in these tasks. The functional equivalent of the *ʻārif* among the merchants was the *shaykh,*[95] a term also applied to the head of a craft workshop, as the potter´s signature *″Shaykh al-Ṣināʻah″* indicates. That Egyptian craftsmen routinely signed their work is, to use Lapidus´ words, ″a sign of pride and individuality out of keeping with the guild spirit as we know it for the West.″[96]

The Arabic sources have little to say about the ceramics industry of Mamluk Cairo in any detail, however some generalizations can be made. Most of the pottery made for both local consumption and export was produced in Fustat. Ceramics, along with glass, metal smelting, and soap making, were mainstays of Fustat´s economy.[97] The American and French excavations of Fustat have produced a large quantity of ceramic material, including wasters and kilns, providing archaeological evidence for a vibrant ceramics industry in the city.[98] Mamluk sgraffito, found in abundance during the excavations, was, apparently, a specialty of the Fustat kilns and had a strong popular appeal. However, neither the local production nor import-export of pottery in the Mamluk period was so lucrative a business that it attracted the interest of the state. [99] Thus, there is no evidence for a state monopoly on pottery manufacture or the inclusion of potters within amiral or sultanic *wakālah*s and only sporadic references to the industry in contemporary written sources.

While the majority of the Fustat kilns were small, the large number of signed vessels in this period attests to some degree of industrial-scale production. For example, roughly one hundred underglaze-painted vessels alone can be attributed to the potter who signed his name ″Ghaybī.″[100] This, compared with the twenty known vessels signed by the earlier Fatimid artist ″Muslim″[101] (a prolific potter in

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[94]Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 98.

[95]Ibid., 99.

[96]Ibid., 276, n. 47.

[97]ʻA. Rezq, ″Crafts and Industries in Medieval Egypt and Their Role in Building the Social Structure of its Main Urban Centers,″ *Islamic Archaeological Studies* 4 (1991): 72.

[98]See especially Bahgat, ″Les fouilles de Foustât.″ For a comprehensive list of publications related to modern excavations at Fustat, see B. J. Walker, ″New Approaches to Working with Old Maps.″

[99]In his recent review of the contemporary Arabic sources touching on this industry, Marcus Milwright concludes that pottery was generally of little interest to historians of the day and not as highly valued by Egyptian and Syrian consumers as other goods (M. Milwright, ″Pottery in the Written Sources of the Ayyubid-Mamluk Period [c. 567–923/1171–1517],″ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 62 no. 3 [1999]: 504–18).

[100]Abel, ″Un maître céramiste,″ 149.

[101]M. Jenkins, ″Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist,″ *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*

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his own day), illustrates to what degree ceramic production had grown by the Mamluk period. The most prolific of Mamluk potters, Sharaf al-Abawānī, seems to have specialized in the production of sgraffito wares. It is difficult to make an estimate of the scale of his workshop′s output. Much of the material that bears his signature is fragmentary and inaccessible.[102] The few publications of his work are based, for the most part, on the whole vessels on display at the Islamic Museum or random sherds from small excavations in Cairo and Alexandria and do not reflect the impressive extent of his production. [103] Nonetheless, the quantity of excavated sherds from Mamluk sites far surpasses that for any other period of Muslim Egypt′s history.

Regardless of the quality of the individual vessel, glazed pottery (such as underglaze-painted, luster, and sgraffito wares) was time-consuming and expensive to produce. The application of the slip, the incision, the glazing, and additional slip-painted designs were stages in the manufacturing process that, in spite of the number of firings, added to the production time.[104] Even the most simple and quickly executed designs were produced in this manner. The sheer volume of sgraffito fragments recovered from Mamluk deposits in Egypt is one indication of the extensive activity of these workshops. It is significant that the long process of manufacture did not prevent mass-production of such wares by the ceramic shops.

No single workshop monopolized sgraffito production either through special order or for the general market. The multiplicity of potter′s signatures supports this notion and so do scattered references to ceramic kilns in the Arabic sources. The historian Ibn Duqmāq merely mentions the locations of *fakhkhūrah,* that is groups of ceramic kilns, and their owners.[105] His brief notes are important, because they indicate that individual potters routinely managed multiple kilns and that these kiln groups were scattered throughout the city. Although Ibn Duqmāq names several of the kiln owners, none of the names corresponds to the potters′ signatures inscribed on sgraffito ware. The historian does not specify the products of the kilns, but it is probable that they did not specialize in sgraffito and sold, instead,

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26 (1986): 363.

[102]Large cases of the ceramic material from the Fustat mounds are stored in the Islamic Museum in Cairo, where much of it is uncataloged, difficult to access, and largely unstudied. My own work is based on the sherds and complete vessels in the gallery and the museum′s small study collection.

[103]Marzouk, ″Three Signed Specimens″ (3 sherds); ‘Abd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l′Égypte,″ 1–23, Pls. 1–8 (2 sherds); idem, ″Documents sur la poterie″ (3 complete vessels and 7 fragments). Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* do not estimate the number of sherds carrying this potter′s name from their excavations at Fustat.

[104]In some cases, sgraffitos may have been fired twice (Décobert and Gayraud, ″Une céramique d′époque mamelouke trouvée à Tod,″ 98, n. 1).

[105]*Kitāb al-Intiṣār li-Wāsiṭat ‘Iqd al-Amṣār* in Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* 9.

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ordinary, unglazed table and kitchenwares.[106]

Allusions to kiln specialization can be found in the Geniza documents, where terms used for particular kinds of potters are defined. For example, the *fakhkhār* (pl. *fakhkhūrī*) made architectural pipes from clay. The *qaddār* specialized in pots for export, the *kūzī* produced narrow-necked and spoutless water jugs, and the *ghadā'irī* made translucent dishes.[107] On the basis of this, Goitein concludes that "each type of vessel was made by a separate group of artisans."[108] Such a rich vocabulary also suggests that the average Cairene consumer was quite knowledgeable about pottery and could distinguish among the many products of an extensive and specialized urban market.[109] However, the kinds of pottery described in the Geniza documents are unglazed and industrial wares, not the glazed and signed vessels excavated at Fustat.

References to pottery in the chronicles and administrative manuals are more problematic. The difficulty with these texts rests in the ambiguous ceramics terms that are used intermittently in the narratives. Various attempts by scholars to define these terms have had some limited success.[110] Many of the terms refer to vessel shapes and fabric composition, which are the most important criteria in determining ceramic typology. In the Arabic chronicles, *aṭbāq* (serving trays), *suḥūn* (dishes), *awānī* (vessels), and *mā'idah* (table or large tray) were inclusive terms that correspond to a variety of vessel types based on broad categories of shape and function.[111] Occasionally, the medieval author offers additional information about the vessel, such as its composition (gold, silver porcelain/earthenware), relative size, and function (for serving meat, for drinking flavored refreshments), especially when he is describing an important affair, like an official banquet *(simāṭ)*. These descriptions, however, are short and inconsistent in the details they provide. The chroniclers were not as interested in the serving vessels or even the food served on these occasions as in the expense of the affair and the guest list.[112] The shape and decoration (if any) of the serving and drinking

[106]For a definition of *fakhkhūrah,* see below.

[107]S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* (Los Angeles, 1967–93), 1:110.

[108]Ibid., 111.

[109]The same is true for textiles. The Geniza texts reveal a language replete with terms to describe raw materials, colors, cuts, and technologies of weaving and embroidery.

[110]Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 1:110–11; Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* 4–7.

[111]The definitions I have provided are based on the way al-Qalqashandī uses the terms in his description of banquet ceremonial (Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-A'shá* [Cairo, 1963]).

[112]Al-Qalqashandī's descriptions of court banquets held on the two *'īd*s is more informative than those al-Maqrīzī includes in his *Khiṭaṭ*. See especially *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá,* 3:523–24, as described

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vessels used at banquets cannot be reconstructed from these chronicle entries alone.

Vessel shapes are not the only criteria by which we can determine workshop specialization in the medieval sources. *Khazaf* and *ṣīnī*, for example, refer to fabric composition. They are problematic terms. *Ṣīnī* (″in Chinese style″) literally refers to porcelain; *khazaf* has until today retained its traditional meaning of ordinary pottery, or earthenware. The differentiation between the two materials may not have been so clear-cut, though, to authors like al-Maqrīzī and al-Nuwayrī. The two terms are used almost interchangeably in the texts.[113] *Zabdīyah* (plates or platters) are usually described as *″ṣīnī″*;[114] expensive grilled lamb and sweet chicken were served in *suḥūn khazafīyah* (clay tableware/dishes).[115] The textual association of earthenware with Chinese porcelain may indicate that a fine, glazed earthenware, rather than true porcelain, was intended.[116] It is likely that these were underglaze-painted earthenwares (the local imitations of Ming blue-and-white porcelains), although the texts are not specific on this point.

A third source of information on the products of medieval ceramic kilns, in addition to the Geniza documents and the Arabic chronicles, are the *ḥisbah* manuals. These were written for the market inspectors (*muḥtasib*s) and provide invaluable information on prices, quality, and market terminology from the twelfth century and throughout the Mamluk period.[117] One Mamluk manual, *Ma'ālim al-Qurbah fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisbah,* is of particular importance for its contribution to our knowledge about ceramic specialization. The author, who is known as Ibn al-Ukhūwah (d. 1329), was an Egyptian *muḥtasib* and a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.[118] Ibn al-Ukhūwah devotes two chapters (chs. 55 and 56) to the sellers of earthenware and waterpots *(fī al-ḥisbah 'alá bā'ati qudūri al-khazafī wa-al-kizānī)* and clay merchants and molders *(fī al-ḥisbah 'alá al-fākhīrānīn wa-al-ghaddārīn),* respectively.[119] In spite of their brevity, these two entries are informative. The author differentiates between two kinds of ceramic products: unglazed cooking pots and small jugs and glazed wares of a finer quality clay. In the first entry (ch. 55) the guidelines are addressed to those who sell common, unglazed wares. The

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below.

[113]Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* 9.

[114]Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 1:145.

[115]Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá,* 3:524, ll. 6–7.

[116]Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* 5; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 1:145.

[117]Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 1:82.

[118]Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Ma'ālim al-Qurbah fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisbah* (London, 1938), xvii. His full name is Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Qurashī al-Shāfi'ī.

[119]Ibid., 222–23.

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merchants themselves may have been the potters, because they are advised not to sell broken vessels plastered in such a way that they appear whole.[120]

The second entry (ch. 56) is particularly interesting for its data on raw materials. In this section, Ibn al-Ukhūwah specifies the market standards for ceramic kilns and deals with such issues as the proper dung to fire kilns and the composition of clays and colored glazes. He distinguishes between potters *(fākhīrānīn)* and clay merchants *(bā'atu al-ghaddārī);* it is significant that fine clay could be sold separately from the finished product. The term used for this fine clay *(ghadar)* has been translated by Levy as ″porcelain clay,″ but Goitein's ″finely glazed earthenware″ seems more suitable.[121] Furthermore, Levy's ″porcelain vase″ *(zabādī),* described in the text as produced from either crushed pebbles or sand,[122] is likely a local imitation of porcelain made of the friable Egyptian and Syrian stonepastes usually associated with Mamluk underglaze-painted ware.[123] The author refers to the raw materials acceptable in the production of blue, green, and manganese coloring.[124] There is little doubt that underglaze-painted ware is what is being described here, rather than sgraffito. In fact, there are no specific references to sgraffito ware in Ibn al-Ukhūwah's text.

The potters of medieval Cairo specialized in a variety of earthenware tablewares and accessories. It is difficult to determine, however, exactly how this market specialization operated, because of the ambiguity of the ceramic terms used in the Arabic sources. The sources provide little detailed information on vessel shape and have nothing to say about cost of manufacture or prices paid for special orders. Furthermore, neither the Arab historians nor the authors of the documents in the Ben Ezra geniza specifically address the production, marketing, and use of sgraffito wares. In fact, there seems to be no Arabic term that we can identify with sgraffito.[125]

What may at first appear to be an oversight on the part of the historians may, rather, reflect a significant characteristic of the sgraffito manufacturing process. The patterns of some Phase I Egyptian sgraffito resemble the radial designs of underglaze-painted ware produced in the Bahri Mamluk period and they may

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[120]Ibid., 89 and 222.

[121]Ibid., 89, l. 13.

[122]Ibid., ll. 3–4.

[123]R. B. Mason and E. J. Keall, ″Petrography of Islamic Pottery from Fustat,″ *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27 (1990): 181.

[124]Ibn al-Ukhūwah, *Ma'ālim al-Qurbah,* 89 (l. 6) and 223 (ll. 5–6).

[125]There is no standard term in modern Arabic for ″sgraffito.″ *Maḥfūr* (dug or carved) is often used today in Egypt for both sgraffito and champlevé.

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have been fired together in the same kilns.[126] According to medieval sources, unglazed wares were made and sold separately from glazed wares. Furthermore, the production of glazed pottery was specialized, and a wide variety of function-specific types were available to the general populace. It is possible that most, if not all, of these glazed wares were produced in the same workshops. That there was no term for ″sgraffito″ (otherwise known as ″incised and slipped pottery″) in Mamluk Egypt may indicate that most workshops did not specialize in sgraffito manufacture. In this scenario, sgraffito would have been produced by the same potters that made underglaze-painted wares and fired them in the same kilns. The range of potters′ signatures and their products supports this argument. The names of Ghaybī, al-Ustādh al-Maṣrī, Ghāzī, and Shaykh al-Ṣinā‘ah are inscribed on both sgraffito and underglaze-painted wares.[127]

Potters′ workshops were organized by the state-imposed guild structure outlined earlier.[128] The workshops that constituted these proto-guilds were organized internally according to a hierarchy of offices, some of which were by state appointment while others were earned through artisanal proficiency. The shaykh and his assistant in the provinces, the *nāqib,* were selected by the state. They acted on behalf of the workshops in dealings with the state, oversaw their daily activities, and resolved problems among craftsmen. Another supervisory officer, the *ustādh,* assisted the *nāqib*. Among the regular craftsmen, the *mu‘allim* (master craftsman) occupied an important position within the workshop. He was responsible for the management of the kiln and training new apprentices.

The word *mu‘allim* was inscribed on many objects and buildings in Cairo.[129] It may have been common practice for guild and workshop directors to sign their works. It is this custom which is reflected in the potters′ signatures. Signatures such as *al-Ustādh al-Maṣrī* (the Egyptian ″master,″ or supervisor), *Shaykh al-Ṣinā‘ah* (workshop director), and *al-Mu‘allim* (the master craftsman) are titles that correspond to rank within the workshop or guild and are not names or nicknames in and of themselves.

It is also possible that the apprentices of the master craftsmen signed their works with the titles of their teachers. There is precedence for this practice in the

[126]When going through boxes of sherds in Cairo, Alexandria, and Toronto, I found many sgraffitos with spots of blue glaze adhering to the exterior, the result of simultaneous firing with blue-stained, underglaze-painted pottery.

[127]‘Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie,″ 4; M. A. Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers égyptiens*, 142–43; and idem, ″Un maître céramiste.″ Of course, the workshop of Sharaf al-Abawānī is an obvious exception. His signature has not been associated with underglaze-painted wares.

[128]Rezq, ″The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt,″ 6.

[129]Ibid., 5–7.

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Fatimid period: the lusterware artist Muslim sometimes countersigned the work of his students.[130] Apprenticeships seem to have been more important in the fourteenth century than in the fifteenth. For instance, the vessels signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī were produced over a long period of time, considering the long development of signature style, decorative program, and vessel shape. There is little doubt that this artist's name came to be associated with quality sgraffitos, and no other name is as well known in the realm of ceramic objects with "military" inscriptions. Not only did his students continue to copy their master's style(s) after his death,[131] but they may have adopted his signature as a brand name. This would account for the large number of vessels signed by him and the wide range of styles represented.

Potters' signatures indicating either guild-workshop status or ethnicity are more a phenomenon of late fourteenth and fifteenth century underglaze-painted ware than of sgraffito.[132] Signatures are relatively rare on Bahri Mamluk ceramics; the series ascribed to Sharaf al-Abawānī and other isolated signatures[133] are some notable examples and most are associated with sgraffito. This, compared to the roughly thirty different signatures inscribed in the foot rings of Burji Mamluk underglaze-painted vessels,[134] suggests changes in ceramic production patterns. One impetus for the widespread use of potters' signatures was porcelain imported from China.[135] The import of Ming blue-and-white porcelains bearing reign marks (painted in blue on the exterior base of the ring foot) may have initiated the practice of marking the foot ring of blue-and-white underglaze-painted bowls with two oval blue dots in fifteenth-century Egypt.[136]

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[130]Jenkins, "Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist," 364.

[131]'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie," 32.

[132]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 150–51; Abel, "Un maître céramiste."

[133]For instance, a single bowl in Kuwait signed by one "Ḥannā," ('Abd al-Rāziq, "La sgraffito de l'Ègypte," 4). The inscription is broken, however, and the author is unsure of the reading of the artist's name. There are also references to work in sgraffito (?) by Ghaybī (Abel, "Un maître céramiste," 143) and several signatures mentioned in 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie," 4. Unfortunately, the authors do not clarify whether their work was true sgraffito or a plain glazed earthenware.

[134]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 149.

[135]There have been many studies on the impact of Yuan and Ming imports on the development of Islamic underglaze-painted wares. Some of the more comprehensive ones include Peterson, "Blue and White Imitation Pottery"; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 150–51; B. Gyllensvard, "Recent Finds of Chinese Ceramics at Fustat (Parts 1 and 2)," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 45 (1973): 91–119 and 47 (1975): 93–117; and L. Golombek, R. B. Mason, and G. A. Bailey, *Tamerlane's Tableware: A New Approach to the Chinoiserie Ceramics of Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Toronto, 1996).

[136]Chinese reign marks in porcelains began with the reign of Xuande, ca. 1426. For illustrations of the blue-dot mark in Mamluk pottery see Peterson, "Blue and White Imitation Pottery," 79 (cat.

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Whatever the stylistic origins, the need for including a workshop mark (as an inscribed signature or a painted dot) reflected general developments in the organization of production. Guild membership was originally restricted to skilled craftsmen. Only through lengthy apprenticeships could an inexperienced artisan gain a foothold in a respected and established workshop.[137] Whether the preponderance of signatures and marks in the fifteenth-century underglaze-painted wares corresponds to an expansion of the ceramic industry (which is unlikely) or a breakdown of the internal hierarchy of the workshops (and the abrogation or shortening of apprenticeships) cannot be determined. These factors, apparently, did not exist in the first half of the fourteenth century, when potters′ signatures were much less common. That only the signature of Sharaf al-Abawānī appears at all frequently in this period may indicate a smaller or more exclusive ceramics industry.

Lapidus reduces the Mamluk class structure to four components: the ruling elite *(al-khāṣṣah)* comprised of the sultan and his retinue and the highest ranking amirs and civil officials; the notables *(al-aʿyān),* that is the religious leaders (ulama) and low level officials, the rich merchants, distinguished local families, and skilled individuals (physicians, architects); the common people *(al-ʿāmmah);* and the lumpenproletarians.[138] The social status of potters in Mamluk society was nebulous. According to al-Maqrīzī, craftsmen, including potters, belonged to the sixth class of Egyptian society—collectively called *al-ʿāmmah* (commoners) or *al-ʿawāmm* (the masses).[139] To this class also belonged the taxpayers, retailers, and the working class in general.[140] Clearly, they were not among the elite of society. In today′s parlance, we would call them lower middle-class. However, certain trades enjoyed some respectability. Both al-Maqrīzī and Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī (a market inspector) write about a social hierarchy of trades that reflects relative degrees of religiosity, cleanliness, and prosperity. Tailors, bakers, carpenters, and furriers were the most respectable trades; goldsmiths and silk merchants were moderately respectable; and slaves, singers, prostitutes, and garbagemen were social outcasts.[141]

#22); Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers,* 112, Pl. 24; Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* Pl. 45.1 and 3; and du Plat Taylor and Megaw, ″Cypriot Medieval Glazed Pottery,″ 148 (cat. A1 and A2)—exported to Cyprus. Unpublished example in Royal Ontario Museum, Fustat collection—inv. #909.42.1.

[137]Rezq, ″The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt,″ 6.

[138]Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 79–82.

[139]Rezq, ″The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt,″ 4.

[140]Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 82.

[141]Ibid.; Rezq, ″The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt,″ 4.

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Pottery production was a moderately respectable profession and perhaps occupied the lower end of the scale, because the work dirtied the craftsman's hands. To equate an individual with the "potters in Fustat" was an insult.[142] That potters are seldom mentioned specifically in the Arabic sources also illustrates their relatively low status among "respectable" Cairenes. However, as in all the crafts, there was an opportunity for advancement within the workshop and some degree of social mobility. Skilled craftsmen were in demand and were held in some esteem. A master craftsman, for example, could be addressed as shaykh[143] and, with the assistance of an important or wealthy patron, could attain official positions in the government.[144] The career of Sharaf al-Abawānī may reflect this pattern; the work he did for amirs and judges gave him a practical monopoly on inscriptional sgraffito.

What effect the plague of 1348–49 had on the social status of craftsmen is difficult to ascertain. Crafts certainly went into decline, because both craftsmen and patrons perished. Al-Maqrīzī informs us that "most of the crafts ceased and it was difficult to find a water-carrier or any craftsman."[145] The decline and demise of sgraffito production in Egypt could, then, be related to the events of this year. The proliferation of potters' signatures on underglaze-painted wares of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century may indicate that the social position of potters had improved in this period and that production was growing.

II. Potters' signatures—Sharaf al-Abawānī

It was relatively rare for medieval potters in the Islamic world to sign their work. With the exception of Iranian Seljuk[146] and Fatimid lusterware, only Mamluk sgraffito (fourteenth century) and underglaze-painted wares (late fourteenth-fifteenth centuries) were signed on a regular basis. The incorporation of the potter's name into the inscriptional design of Mamluk sgraffito is a complicated phenomenon that requires a reassessment of medieval Cairene "guild" structure and patterns of market and patronage. A precedence for such practice may have been set in the Fatimid period, with the work of the potter Muslim.

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[142]Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 1:91–92.

[143]Ibid.

[144]Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 129.

[145]*Kitāb al-Sulūk,* quoted in Rezq, "The Craftsmen of Muslim Egypt," 13.

[146]A. Caiger-Smith, *Lustre Pottery* (New York, 1985), 71, cites the signatures of two potters from Kashan, Abū Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad and Abū Zayd. There are also isolated examples of signatures from earlier ceramic traditions, such as the "Aḥmad" that appears on one Samanid ware vessel from Nishapur (personal communication, Lisa Golombek). An example of a potters' signature from Anatolian sgraffito is published in Ö. Süslü, *Tasvirlere Göre Anadolu Selçuklu Kiyafetleri* (Ankara, 1989), Photo 149.

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Various forms of the signature *'aml Muslim ibn al-Dahhān* (″the work of Muslim, the son of al-Dahhān″) appear on some twenty known lusterware vessels of the Fatimid period.[147] Several of these are inscribed with the name of the patron, usually a member of Caliph al-Ḥākim′s (r. 996–1021) court. Chronological attributions depend entirely on these dedicatory inscriptions. For example, Marilyn Jenkins has identified Ghaban, named as Commander-in-Chief in the inscription on one plate in the Islamic Museum in Cairo, as a military commander who served al-Ḥākim in 1011–13.[148] It is a very useful piece of information, because it narrows the production of Muslim to at least this two-year period. Likewise, the dedication of another plate in the Benaki Museum in Athens—which reads ″[The work of] Muslim, son of al-Dahhān, to please . . . Ḥassān Iqbāl al-Ḥākimī″—can be attributed to the reign of al-Ḥākim on the basis of the *nisbah* ″al-Ḥākimī,″ even if the particular individual is unknown from historical sources. The work of the Mamluk sgraffito artist Sharaf al-Abawānī can be dated in the same manner. The *nisbah* ″al-Nāṣirī″ in the dedicatory inscription identifies the patron as a mamluk of the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (r. 1293–94, 1299–1309, and 1310–41) or al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (r. 1347–51, 1354–61).

Many parallels can be drawn between the vessels signed by Muslim and those produced some three and four hundred years later by Mamluk ceramists. Muslim painted his signature in various locations on the vessel: in the foot (the name usually reduced to ″Muslim″), on the exterior, within the interior wall registers, and in the bowl′s well.[149] Likewise, abbreviated signatures are painted in the vessel foot of fourteenth- to fifteenth-century underglaze-painted ware. Sgraffito signatures of the fourteenth century were more ambitious: Sharaf al-Abawānī initially inscribed his signature upside-down in hidden areas of the decoration and, in a later phase of his work, incised and slip-painted his name in a signature phrase in individual, prominent registers. Furthermore, Muslim′s incorporation of his signature into a scrolled register seems to foreshadow the early inscriptional, scribbled registers and later signature registers that distinguished the work of Sharaf al-Abawānī two hundred years later.[150]

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[147]Jenkins, ″Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist,″ 363.

[148]Ibid., 361.

[149]For illustrations of these, see Jenkins, ″Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist.″ Other sources include Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* and ′A. Yūsuf, ″Pottery of the Fatimid Period and its Artistic Style,″ *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University* 20 no. 2 (1958): 173–279 (in Arabic).

[150]Two bowls in the Islamic Museum in Cairo are important in this regard. Muslim has signed the exterior of one bowl, the interior of which is occupied primarily by a wide, scribbled inscriptional register (inv. #15958—Jenkins, ″Muslim, an Early Fatimid Ceramist,″ 368, App. #12). On another his signature appears below the interior rim festoon, apparently taking the place of a dedicatory

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Do these similarities constitute continuity or revival of ceramic styles? Inscriptional registers on a scribbled ground continued in Ayyubid luster and sgraffito ware, but artists′ signatures apparently did not. It would seem, then, that the singular emphasis by Sharaf al-Abawānī on his own signature at a time when potter′s signatures were rare would represent a revival of an earlier practice. If potter′s signatures are somehow related to the production process, then one could argue for parallelisms in kiln or ″guild″ organization, as the signature of sgraffito artist ″Shaykh al-Ṣinā‘ah″ indicates. There is another important point of comparison between the work of Muslim and Sharaf al-Abawānī. The dedicatory inscriptions which are so prominently displayed on their vessels emphasize that they worked, at least part of the time, for court patrons. The association of Muslim with al-Ḥākim′s court and Sharaf al-Abawānī with the amirs of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his sons suggests commonalties in patronage practices, ones that will be discussed further in this section.

Sharaf al-Abawānī is not the only Mamluk potter who signed his work. Although his signature is the most well known for local sgraffito, other names of sgraffito artists are known to us. ‘Umar, Mūsá, ‘Umar al-Asyūṭī (from Asyūṭ, Upper Egypt), Aḥmad al-Asyūṭī, al-Ra’īs (the master craftsman),[151] ‘Alī, Ḥannā (or Ḥasan), and al-Kaslān (″the lazy″) are names that have appeared only rarely on sgraffito sherds in the Islamic Museum in Cairo and in the Dār al-Āthār al-Islamīyah in Kuwait.[152] Other signatures on sgraffito ware have also been found on sherds of contemporary underglaze-painted ware, which is perhaps our best evidence that the two wares were fired together in the same kilns. Among the artists who manufactured both wares were al-Ustādh al-Maṣrī (or simply al-Maṣrī, ″the Egyptian supervisor″), Shaykh al-Ṣinā‘ah (″the workshop director″), Ghāzī, and al-Faqīr (″the poor″).[153]

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register (description in ibid., 369, App. #20; illustrated in Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* Pl. XXII, 8a and b).

[151]The organization of workshops must have been more or less the same for all crafts, because many terms of ″guild″ hierarchy can be found in artists′ signatures in different media. L. A. Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and Their Works* (Geneva, 1959), provides some useful definitions of some of these terms from metalwork. The terms *tilmīdh, ghulām, ra’īs,* and *’ājir* are defined as student, apprentice, master, and journeyman, respectively (p. 14). His point of reference, in this case, is the medieval European professional guild, which probably differed to some degree from the structure of Islamic workshops.

[152]The names can be found in ‘Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie″; idem, ″Le sgraffito de l′Égypte″; and Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* 84.

[153]Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane;* Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers;* idem, ″Un maître céramiste,″ 142; and Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* Pl. XLIV.1, 2, and 3.

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Few of the sherds that bear these signatures are illustrated in publications, but of those that are one is given the impression that the artist made no attempt to hide the signature. The artists′ names can be the primary decoration of the well of the bowl or may be placed in inscriptional registers just below the interior rim or in the larger cavetto along with dedications to patrons or general blessings.[154]

With the exception of Sharaf al-Abawānī, signing sgraffito was not a common practice. While ceramic signatures are rare in the Bahri Mamluk period (1250–1382), in the Burji period (1382–1517) more than thirty names are known.[155] Abel′s analyses of signatures in Mamluk underglaze-painted wares, published sixty years ago in an article and monograph, remain the most comprehensive catalogue and stylistic study of what he considers different workshops.[156] The signatures are usually painted in blue in the underside of the foot and, like the signatures inscribed on sgraffito ware, represent a wide range of personal names, nicknames, *nisbah*s, and professional titles.[157] Many are family names; one imagines father and son working alongside one another or the son receiving his training from his father.[158] Other names indicate professions other than pottery making, such as ″al-Khabbāz″ (the baker). The majority of the signatures are not identifiable as personal names. The potters were, therefore, anonymous to most consumers of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Egypt and Syria, as they are to us today.[159] The purpose in placing what are, for the most part, nicknames on the underside of the foot may be related to the same workshop practices that are described by Cushion and Honey

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[154]For signatures as tondo designs, see Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique muslmane*, Pl. XLIV. 2 and 3. For more published illustrations of artists′ names in inscriptional registers, see ‘Abd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l′Égypte,″ and Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique muslmane*, Pl. XLIV.1.

[155]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 149.

[156]Abel, *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers,* and idem, ″Un maître céramiste.″

[157]This is by no means an exhaustive list of names, although I have tried to be as thorough as possible: Sār al-Fākhūrī al-Maṣrī (″the chief Egyptian potter″), al-Ustādh al-Maṣrī, Shaykh al-Ṣinā‘ah, al-Muhandim (″the tidy″), al-Tawrīzī (from Tabrīz), Ghaybī, Dāhin (″painter, glazer″), al-Faqīr, al-Naqqāsh (″inciser″), Darwīsh (Sufi ″dervish″), al-Khabbāz (″the baker″!), al-Buqaylī (″little green-grocer″?), al-Hurmūzī (from Hormūz), ‘Ajamī (a Persian), Ghazzāl (″gazelle″?), Ghāzī (″frontier warrior″), al-Shāmī (″the Syrian″), al-Shā‘ir (″the poet″), al-Mu‘allim (″master craftsman″), al-Ujayl (″Speedy″), al-Razzāz (″the polisher″), Bādir, Abū al-‘Izz, and al-Barrānī (″potter″) (Abel, ″Un maître céramiste,″ 142, and Jenkins, ″Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery,″ 112).

[158]There are, for instance, Sār al-Fākhūrī ″et ses fils,″ Ghāzī and Ibn Ghāzī, and al-Khabbāz and Ibn al-Khabbāz (Abel, ″Un maître céramiste,″ 142) and Ghaybī and Ibn Ghaybī al-Tawrīzī (ibid., 151; idem, *Gaibi et les grands faïnciers*, 17; and Jenkins, ″Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery,″ 111–12).

[159]Ghaybī, for one, worked in both Syria (probably Damascus) and Egypt (Cairo) (see Jenkins, ″Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery,″ 112, and Abel, ″Un maître céramiste,″ 151–52).

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for European porcelains.[160] Abbreviated signatures were all that was needed to separate one artist's products from another in the kiln.[161] This is particularly significant, given the evidence that underglaze-painted wares and sgraffito (and probably other ceramic types) were produced in the same workshops and fired in the same kilns.

The most prolific of the fifteenth-century potters of underglaze-painted ware is known to us as Ghaybī. His name appears on approximately 100 sherds in the holdings of the Islamic Museum in Cairo and a tile in Damascus.[162] Known alternatively as Ghaybī al-Tawrīzī and Ghaybī al-Shāmī, his signatures indicate that he originally came from Tabrīz ("al-Tawrīzī") and then worked in Syria ("al-Shāmī") and Egypt.[163] His nickname, "Ghaybī," literally means "hidden" or (in a slightly different form)" absent"; it is a fitting signature for a migrant or, more likely, Sufi artist (see below).

On the basis of design parallels with Persian manuscripts and Chinese blue-and-whites, signed underglaze-painted wares can be dated from the third quarter of the fourteenth century to the end of the fifteenth.[164] The most conclusive evidence for dating Ghaybī's work to the mid-fifteenth century is a tile panel from the mausoleum complex of Ghars al-Dīn Khalīl al-Tawrīzī al-Dasarī in Damascus, completed in 1423 and signed by Ghaybī al-Tawrīzī.[165] This is not the only instance of an underglaze-painted tile signed by an artist hailing from Tabrīz. Ghaybī has signed another tile from the shrine of Sayyidah Nafīsah in Cairo.[166]

This relationship between the tile and pottery industries may be the key to understanding the role of potters' signatures in the fifteenth century. Clearly, artists who worked in the underglaze-painting technique produced both ordinary tablewares and architectural tiles, most likely in the same workshops. Signatures on tilework may have served a purpose similar to masonry marks from Crusader

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[160]J. P. Cushion and W. B. Honey, *Handbook of Pottery and Porcelain Marks* (London, 1956), 115.

[161]The practice is still used today in kilns shared by multiple potters. Students in ceramics classes generally carve their names into the foot of the vessel to identify their work from that of their classmates.

[162]Abel, "Un maître céramiste," 149, and Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery," 104.

[163]Artists in the fourteenth century frequently changed their *nisbah*s when moving within and outside of Iran. See S. Blair, "Artists and Patronage in Late Fourteenth-Century Iran in the Light of Two Catalogues of Islamic Metalwork," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48 (1985): 58–59.

[164]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 150. Abel, "Un maître céramiste," 153, suggests a fourteenth-century date for Ghaybī's work by stylistic comparisons with Chinese elements in Il Khanid manuscripts.

[165]Jenkins, "Mamluk Underglazed-painted Pottery," 104.

[166]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 151.

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monuments in the Latin Kingdom, which identified the work of individual artisans or companies of masons to facilitate the division of labor and payment.[167] This practice would then have been extended to tablewares, particularly if several artists shared the same kiln. Thus, the signature is placed in the ringfoot, out of the way of the vessel′s decoration and of importance only to the internal operations of the workshop.

The *nisbah* ″al-Tawrīzī″ indicates a style associated with a place and is comparable, in this sense, to the popularity of the Mawṣilī *nisbah* in late Ayyubid and early Mamluk metalwork.[168] Atıl identifies potters′ signatures in the Mamluk period with workshops, regional styles, and types of wares (underglaze-painted and sgraffito, for instance).[169] This would be a logical enough explanation if it were not for the fact that the fifteenth-century signatures are essentially invisible to the public eye and that both fourteenth- and fifteenth-century signatures are more or less anonymous to the consumer. I would argue that underglaze-painted signatures were meaningful primarily within the workshop. Sgraffito signatures, while functioning in the same manner, may have served an additional purpose. The placement of the signatures within the vessels′ decoration would have caught the attention of the public. This, indeed, was probably its purpose.

Sharaf al-Abawānī is remarkable for signing his work at a time when sgraffito artists remained essentially anonymous. Much of his work is of rather fine quality, surpassing the indifferent appearance of most Mamluk sgraffito products, which are of coarse fabric, poor finish, and careless manufacture. His name, moreover, stands out for its sheer visibility. Rather than hiding his signature in the footring, like ceramic artists of the following century, in the latest phase of his career al-Abawānī incorporated his name within the main registers of the vessels′ exterior decoration, relegating the patrons′ names and titles to the less conspicuous interiors. This would seem to be contrary to the consumer practices of Mamluk patrons, who delighted in the grandiose display of their own names and blazons on the vessels they commissioned. For a patron to have purchased a vessel on which the artist′s name appeared in a location more prominent than his own speaks of the reputation of this potter and the ambiguity of artistic patronage in Mamluk Egypt.

In spite of his importance, very little is known about Sharaf al-Abawānī. There are no monographs on his career comparable to Abel′s *Gaibi et les grands faïenciers égyptiens d'époque mamlouke* and surprisingly few articles devoted to

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[167]D. Pringle, ″Some Approaches to the Study of Crusader Masonry Marks in Palestine,″ *Levant* 31 (1981): 173–99.

[168]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 151.

[169]Ibid.

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him.[170] His association with the court of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is confirmed by the dedicatory inscriptions and amiral blazons that appear on many of the vessels signed by this artist.[171] Al-Abawānī´s best work is dominated by blazons of office, several of which were introduced by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. There is steady technical and stylistic development in al-Abawānī´s pottery; these emblazoned vessels represent the apex of his career. There is little doubt that he was manufacturing sgraffito wares well before the advent of the ″military″ style of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad´s third reign, but exactly when his career began or how long it lasted is difficult to determine. Furthermore, as no catalogue of his work has been published and many collections in Egypt are difficult to access, one cannot begin to estimate the quantity of his production.

His signature includes the geographical *nisbah* ″al-Abawānī,″ ″from Ab(a)wān.″ Yaqut *(Mu'jam al-Buldān)* lists three places in Egypt by this name. 'Abd al-Rāziq cites the third, a village in the province of Bahnasā in Upper Egypt (well-known for pottery production), as the most likely candidate for the artist´s home.[172] The *nisbah* may have stood for a regional ceramic style, as ″al-Mawṣilī″ did for metalwork and ″al-Tawrīzī″ did for underglaze painting. Whatever his origins, al-Abawānī did not limit his market to Upper Egypt. Vessels and sherds with his signature have been found in Cairo (Fustat), Alexandria (Kom ed-Dikka), and Luxor (Luxor Temple).[173] Wasters signed by him have been recovered from Fustat.[174]

If the origins of this artist are enigmatic, so is his identity. ″Sharaf al-Abawānī,″ like so many other potter´s signatures, is a nickname and not identifiable from historical sources. The name is an abbreviation for ″Sharaf al-Dīn,″ a fairly common title for Mamluk amirs in the fourteenth century.[175] The title was equally popular among the civilian elite of Cairo in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, where it was adopted by the ulama as well as artisans, and frequently used in conjunction

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[170]Among the most commonly cited, and consulted for this study, are 'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie″ and Marzouk, ″Three Signed Specimens.″ M. Muṣṭafá, ″Sharaf al-Abawānī Ṣāni' al-Fākhūr al-Maṭlī,″ *Mu'tamar al-Āthār al-'Arabīyah al-Thāmin fī Dimashq* (1947), and Aḥmad 'Abd al-Rāziq, ″La poterie glacée de l´époque mamluke d´après les collections égyptiennes,″ Ph.D. diss., Paris, 1970, were unavailable to me. However the results of both were incorporated into 'Abd al-Rāziq´s 1967 article.

[171]For the use of the *nisbah* ″al-Malikī al-Nāṣirī″ see Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 148, and my discussion below. 'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie,″ 31, and Marzouk, ″Three Signed Specimens,″ 501, make a point about the use of the *jāmdār* blazon. See 'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l´Égypte,″ 9, for a discussion on the eagle.

[172]'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie,″ 28–29; also idem, ″Le sgraffito de l´Égypte.″

[173]*The Luxor Museum,* 204, cat. #325; 202 and 205, figs. 163–65.

[174]'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie,″ 29–30.

[175]D. Ayalon, ″Names, Titles, and ´Nisbas´ of the Mamluks,″ *Israel Oriental Society* 4 (1975): 191.

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with a geographical *nisbah*.[176] The title was by no means limited to Muslims, as Copts in the administration used it as well.[177] While the historical potter, then, cannot be identified, his signature form fits in comfortably with the titles assumed by many (we may believe successful) artists of the fourteenth century.

'Abd al-Rāziq describes five different signature styles used by Sharaf al-Abawānī.[178] They fall into two distinct categories: his name carelessly scratched in small *naskhī* characters, often upside-down and discreetly incorporated into the interior design,[179] and a longer, more complex signature phrase carefully inscribed and often slip-painted in large *thulūth* characters, which usually occupies the main decorative register of the vessel exterior. These groups clearly belong to different stages of the potter's career. *Naskhī* script, while it continued to be used for Qurans during the Mamluk period, is more characteristic of Ayyubid-period decoration. Similarly, *thulūth,* a script with long and straight uprights, barbed heads, and long and deep flourishes on final letters, was the decorative script *par excellence* of Mamluk art.

The more decorative and technical aspects of his work also indicate that Sharaf al-Abawānī's career probably spanned the late Ayyubid-early Mamluk period. In stylistic terms, the artist was initially influenced by contemporary eastern Mediterranean sgraffito wares and then, with the enormous popularity of emblazoned and inscriptional damascened vessels, by local inlaid metalwork. What is most likely his earliest work is rather experimental and hybrid in style. There are many sherds from Kom ed-Dikka, signed by him, with exaggerated beveled rims and Cypriot-like shapes. A variety of designs on scribbled ground, familiar to thirteenth-century luster, underglaze-painted, and Byzantine-derivative sgraffito wares, on sherds from Fustat bear his signature in scrawled *naskhī*.[180] Anatolian-style champlevé, some of fine quality, and radial designs adopted from late Ayyubid and early Mamluk underglaze-painted wares were also adopted by al-Abawānī.[181]

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[176]There are many references in contemporary biographical dictionaries to civilians with this title. For a few, see Mūsá ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir fī Sīrāt al-Malik al-Nāṣir,* ed. A. Huṭayṭ (Beirut, 1986), 122–24, 131, 255 *(quḍāh);* Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-'Aynī, *'Iqd al-Jumān fī Tārīkh Ahl al-Zamān,* ed. M. M. Amīn (Cairo, 1988–), 2:326–27 (poets), 340 (carpenter); 3:370 (poet); 4:260, 279 (copyists), and 132 (historian).

[177]'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie,″ 28—citing passages in al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ* and *Kitāb al-Sulūk.*

[178]'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l'Égypte,″ 11.

[179]See 'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Document sur la poterie,″ Pls. I and II.

[180]Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* Pl. L; 'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie,″ Pls. I and II.

[181]Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* Pl. L, and 'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie,″ Pl. V.

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At the turn of the fourteenth century al-Abawānī's style underwent a transformation. Like most arts of the period, Mamluk pottery fell under the powerful influence of contemporary metalworking.

Metalwork artists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries routinely signed their work. Most Mamluk vessels signed in this manner date from 1275–1350.[182] The signature phrase usually associated with Sharaf al-Abawānī, *'aml al-'abd al-faqīr al-miskīn Sharaf al-Abawānī ghulām al-nās kullihim* ("the work of the poor, humble slave, Sharaf al-Abawānī, servant of all the people"), is an elaboration, and an unexpectedly humble one, of the way metal artisans of the mid-thirteenth century signed their work. *'Aml*, and less frequently *ṣāni',* are terms used by the metalworkers to describe their final products.[183] The problematic term is *ghulām*. According to Mayer, *ghulām* was a guild term that corresponded to an apprentice, that is, the artisan who was one step below the master, or *ra'īs*.[184] Rice takes a different view on the matter. He suggests that while *ghulām* took on many shades of meaning over time, by the middle of the thirteenth century, the period the "Mosul school" of metalworking was at its height, a *tilmīdh* was the guild master's student, and a *ghulām* was literally the master's "slave" or at least a hireling.[185] Al-Abawānī, therefore, adapted a signature phrase commonly associated with the contemporary metalworking industry.[186]

In this second phase of his career, al-Abawānī was heavily influenced by expensive metalwork. By imitating silver, gold, and brass work in earthenware through the use of color and forms, the quality of his work improved accordingly. Thinner walls in some cases, monumental but elegant proportions in other instances, and the application of slip-painted designs to highlight blazons and inscriptions created a product that was very different from the Byzantine and Cypriot-derivative sgraffito styles with which he was associated earlier. A change of taste alone would probably not account for such a significant development in ceramic style. It is apparent that al-Abawānī was producing sgraffito for a new market in the

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[182]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 51.

[183]Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and Their Works,* 11.

[184]Ibid., 14.

[185]D. S. Rice, *The Baptistére de Saint Louis* (Paris, 1953), 67.

[186]It is likely that al-Abawānī, like many artisans of his day, was a practicing Sufi, as the title "al-'abd al-faqīr al-miskīn" and even "ghulām al-nās" indicate. The nicknames taken by contemporary potters when signing their work attest to the same affiliation (al-Faqīr, Darwīsh, and Ghaybī). If this is so, the potters' organization of Fustat would be one of only two known "craft-based religious fraternities" in the Mamluk state (on the oft-cited silk-workers fraternity in Damascus, see Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 102–3). For the relationship between the quasi-guilds of the day and Sufi brotherhoods, see ibid., and Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981), 271.

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fourteenth century.

Al-Abawānī sold his work to a variety of clients. While there is no doubt that his earlier products were mass-produced, everyday tablewares for Cairo′s civilian population, by the fourteenth century Sharaf al-Abawānī was commissioned privately part of the time for amirs. The inscriptions occasionally name particular patrons. The majority, however, include a long list of formal military titles, without specifically naming a particular client. In spite of the standardization of vessel shape, size, and, above all, decorative program, the quality of these inscriptional wares varies considerably. Michael Rogers′ suggestion that Sharaf al-Abawānī ″may have been a high contractor who supervised the issue of standard equipment to an emir upon his appointment to high office″ is a reasonable one.[187]

All of these factors suggest that al-Abawānī began to manufacture sgraffito wares in the early Mamluk period, a transitional one for Egyptian art, and continued to be productive throughout al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s third reign. This is a very long career for an individual potter. However, the name may have referred to the original master of a workshop. Given the quantity of vessels that contain his name, it is more reasonable to consider ″Sharaf al-Abawānī″ the brand of a workshop that specialized, at some point, in outfitting the kitchens or ″mantle pieces″ of amirs. It is significant that the popularity of this kind of inscriptional and emblazoned sgraffito ware probably did not survive into the fifteenth century, in spite of the fact that the hierarchical social system that promoted its production did. In a sense, the name of Sharaf al-Abawānī has come to stand for a passing Mamluk ″fad.″

Market

I. Heraldry

Scholarship on Mamluk heraldry tends to emphasize the sultanate of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad because the elaboration of blazon forms and adoption in all media as surface decoration can be largely dated to his third reign. This was a period of artistic development. Amiral blazons of office were introduced into metalworking at this time and replaced the more universal emblems of royal authority. Contemporary with this innovation is the introduction of the epigraphic blazon, intimately related to the replacement of figures with inscriptions.

In his notes to Ibn Taghrībirdī′s *Tārīkh Miṣr,* William Popper enumerates those objects and privileges he considers the ″emblems of authority″ for sultans and amirs.[188] Among the sultan′s prerogatives were the royal saddle cover *(ghāshiyah),* sunshade *(miẓallah),* tents *(khiyām),* and official inscriptions in

[187]*The Luxor Museum,* 204.

[188]William Popper, *Egypt and Syria under the Circassian Sultans* (New York, 1977), 84–87.

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embroidery *(ṭirāz)*.[189] The amirs′ symbolic world, on the other hand, consisted of the overcloak *(fawqanīyah)*, robes of honor *(khilā‘),* horses and swords, and coats-of-arms, or blazons (*rank*). The widespread use of Arabic inscriptions and heraldry in all media of Mamluk art, including ceramics, in the fourteenth century is a phenomenon that requires a somewhat lengthy explanation.[190]

The Arabic sources have little to say about Mamluk blazons. Outside of isolated references to unidentified blazons, the most important information about Mamluk heraldry has been documented by Abū al-Fidā, Ibn Taghrībirdī, al-Dhahabī, and al-Qalqashandī. A frequently cited passage from the chronicle of Abū al-Fidā (1273–1331) associates certain emblems *(‘alāmāt)* with particular amiral offices.[191] For instance, the emblem of the *dawādār* was the penbox, the *silāḥdār* was the bow, the *jāmdār* the napkin, and the *jāwīsh* the golden dome. That amirs of a certain rank and office were assigned blazons of that office is supported by Ibn Taghrībirdī, according to whom the last Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ gave his taster *(jāshankīr)* Aybak the table *(khanjah)* as an emblem,[192] and also by al-Dhahabī, who describes the blazon of the amir Kitbughā as a gold cup (the symbol of his office as cupbearer, or *sāqī*) on a *fesse* and red ground.[193] The association of Mamluk blazons with amiral office is, in this way, established by the Arabic sources.

Both Arabic and European sources record the methods by which amiral blazons were awarded. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, the sultan assigned blazons to his amirs upon their promotion.[194] Al-Qalqashandī, on the other hand, claims that

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[189]To the category of official, sultanic inscriptions belong the sultan′s ″signature″ *(‘alāmah)* that validates documents of appointments to public office (*taqlīd*s) and assignments of *iqṭā’* (*manshūr*s) (Aḥmad ibn Faḍl-Allāh al-‘Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār fī Mamālik al-Amṣār: L′Égypte, la Syrie, le Higaz et le Yemen*, ed. A. F. Sayyid [Cairo, 1985], 43–46). This point is discussed in detail in the following section.

[190]*Rank* is a Persian term that originally meant ″color″ or ″dye″ (L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* [Oxford, 1933], 26; Nasser Rabbat, ″Rank,″ *EI*^{2}, 8:431; and Abū al-Mahāsin Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* [Cairo, 1963–72], 15:36, n. 1). The term was used by medieval Arab historians in the general sense of ″emblems.″ It designates, more specifically, the colorful insignia of the amirs and sultans of Egypt, Syria, and al-Jazira in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods (Rabbat, ″Rank″). Mamluk *runūk* (pl.) have been broadly understood as symbols of military office.

[191]*Al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar;* passage quoted in Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 4.

[192]*Nujūm al-Zāhirah,* as cited by Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*.

[193]W. Leaf and S. Purcell, *Heraldic Symbols, Islamic Insignia, and Western Heraldry* (London, 1986), 58. In his *Al-Muntaqá,* al-Dhahabī provides what is probably the only illustration of a Mamluk blazon in a contemporary Arabic source (Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 1, n. 7).

[194]W.-H. Rüdt de Collenberg, ″L′héraldique de Chypre,″ *Cahiers d′héraldique* 3 (1977): 95.

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each amir chose his own.[195] European historians also recognized the relationship between late Ayyubid and early Mamluk heraldry and amiral promotions. Describing events following the Battle of Mansura during St. Louis′ First Crusade (1250), the French historian Joinville writes:

> The arms of the sultan were gold, and such arms that the sultan bore, these young lads bore as well; and they were called *baharīz*. . . . When their beards started to grow, the sultan knighted them and they continued to bear his arms except that they were differenced, in that they had crimson charges such as rosettes, red bends or birds or other charges that they placed on their gold arms as they pleased.[196]

There was a general understanding, then, among both Arab and European historians that Mamluk blazons were amiral prerogatives related to promotion to particular offices.

The proliferation of amiral blazons in glasswork, metalworking, ceramics, textiles, architecture, and painting in the early fourteenth century may be related to an intensified purchase of mamluks and an accelerated system of amiral promotion. Our primary sources on army statistics for the period are al-Maqrīzī *(Khiṭaṭ)* and al-Ẓāhirī *(Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik),* who report on the redistribution of *iqṭā'āt* by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 1314–15 *(al-rawk al-nāṣirī)* and an army census of unidentified date, respectively.[197] It is difficult to ascertain the numbers of mamluks made amirs from one reign to the next, but one does detect a general trend over time towards accelerated promotions and the enlargement of the sultan′s private corps, the *khāṣṣakīyah*. Although al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was said to have bought mamluks on a scale never known before, the size of his army does not seem to have surpassed that of his predecessors.[198] In spite of this, the four hundred twenty-four amirs of different ranks accounted for in the *rawk al-nāṣirī* exceeds the one hundred sixty-four amirs ″of former times″ and eighty to three hundred amirs of

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[195] *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá*, in Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 3.

[196] From his *Histoire de St. Louis,* translated and cited by Leaf and Purcell, *Heraldic Symbols,* 57–58.

[197] These accounts are reviewed in D. Ayalon, ″Khāṣṣakiyya,″ *EI*^{2}, 4:1100.

[198] Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,″ *BSOAS* 15 (1953): 223–24; Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages,* 108. Al-Maqrīzī repeats 12,000 as the number of Royal Mamluks under three different sultans—Qalāwūn, al-Ashraf Khalīl, and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,″ *BSOAS* 15 [1953]: 224). Rather than take this figure too literally, we may consider this a statement emphasizing the equivalent sizes of the respective armies.

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different years of the Circassian period.[199] As the numbers of amirs increases, so does the number of *khāṣṣakīyah,* from whose ranks most of the high amirs were recruited. Statistics taken from a variety of sources indicate that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad invested in the *khāṣṣakīyah*. The numbers vary according to the source: al-Ashraf Khalīl maintained some thirty to fifty *khāṣṣakīyah,* al-Nāṣir Muḥammad increased this number to at least forty and as many as ninety-two, Barsbāy named some one thousand, and al-Ghūrī supported nearly one thousand two hundred.[200]

Although the numbers of *khāṣṣakīyah* fluctuated throughout the Mamluk period, there is a more or less steady trend towards expanding the corps over time, a practice that seems to have begun with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and was further developed by his successors. Al-Nāṣir's practice of accelerated promotion of mamluks to amirships continued after his death. The references to the immediate promotion of common mamluks to an amirship of ten and the office of *sāqī* in mid-fourteenth-, fifteenth-, and sixteenth-century sources are too numerous to mention.[201] This practice, according to Ayalon, began around the end of Qalāwūn's reign. He adds:

> Thus the numbers of amirs who, during the Circassian period, are stated to have passed directly from the rank of private to that of the highest amirs, is extremely great. The common expression used for such elevations is *"*(promoted) at one stroke*" (daf'atan waḥīdatan)*.[202]

Rapid promotion of amirs in the mid-fourteenth century was, in part, a response to a shortage of manpower following a series of plagues.[203] The practice, however, continued an initiative of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that aimed at fostering a circle of intimate and trustworthy associates, as Levanoni has demonstrated. This may also have been the rationale behind the build-up of the royal guard, the *khāṣṣakīyah.* Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad actively promoted his *khāṣṣakīyah,* advancing them to

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[199]The sources used here by Ayalon should be treated with caution (Ayalon, *"*Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,*" BSOAS* 15 [1953]: 471).

[200]Figures from the Circassian period may reflect a change in nomenclature, as *"khāṣṣakīyah"* came to mean the Royal Mamluks in general (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 290). From other numbers take from al-Maqrīzī, al-Ẓāhirī, al-Qalqashandī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, and Ibn Iyās, see Ayalon, *"*Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,*" BSOAS* 15 [1953]: 215.

[201]Rabbat refers to the high incidence of *suqāh* reaching prominent amirships in the mid-Bahri period but does not cite sources (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 138). A full discussion of the Circassian sources appears below.

[202]Ayalon, *"*Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,*" BSOAS* 15 [1953]: 475.

[203]Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages,* 136.

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important administrative and ceremonial offices. [204]

The rise of the *khāṣṣakīyah* and the creation of ceremonial offices for them was a gradual process. Many administrative positions under Baybars were borrowed from the Ayyubids and organized according to a system of amiral rank. However, the first ceremonial offices (the *silāḥdārīyah* or sword-bearers, for example) appeared with Qalāwūn, who also introduced new styles of dress that identified amirs of different ranks.[205] The *suqāh* (cupbearers) and *jāmdārīyah* (wardrobe masters), offices that were later to become extremely influential, gained importance under al-Ashraf Khalīl as his personal bodyguard.[206] It was al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, however, who extended and codified this system of ceremonial offices.[207]

These trends, then, have important implications for the development of the ″military style″ in sgraffito, among the other arts, in early to mid-fourteenth-century Egypt. As larger numbers of mamluks became amirs, and many of these were advanced from the *khāṣṣakīyah* to high-rank amirships, amiral blazons of ceremonial office came to dominate the decorative scheme of Mamluk art. The relationship between the advancement of the *khāṣṣakīyah* and the decorative use put to blazons can be implied from a reference from al-Ẓāhirī, a mid-fifteenth-century source.[208] At the time al-Ẓāhirī was writing, the largest numbers of *khāṣṣakīyah* assigned to the heads of important administrative and ceremonial offices were as follows: ten *dawādārīyah* (pen-box holders), ten *suqāh khāṣṣ* (cup bearers), seven *rā' s nawbat jāmdārīyah* (wardrobe masters), four *khāzindārīyah* (treasurers), four *silāḥdārīyah* (armor bearers), and four *bashmaqdārīyah* (shoe bearers). It is no coincidence that the blazons most frequently encountered on objects, including sgraffito bowls and cups, are the chalice of the *sāqī*, the sword of the *silāḥdār*, the napkin of the *jāmdār*, and the pen-box of the *dawādār*.[209] We have every indication of extensive patronage of the arts by the amirs. Not only were financial resources available for

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[204]The increase in *khāṣṣakīyah* numbers and further elaboration of the ceremonial offices occupied primarily by them can be related to his expansion of Mamluk ceremonial in all its manifestations—protocol, architecture, and military office. This subject has been admirably analyzed by Rabbat in his study of the Cairo Citadel, cited above.

[205]Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History,* 12.

[206]Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 289.

[207]Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,″ *BSOAS* 16 (1954): 68–69. The crucial source in this regard is Ibn Taghrībirdī′s *Nujūm al-Zāhirah*. Ayalon′s review of his entries for the sultanates of Qalāwūn and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is preliminary, and a more detailed study of the source material, a task beyond this article, is needed.

[208]*Kitāb Zubdat Kashf al-Mamālik wa-Bayān al-Ṭuruq wa-al-Masālik,* cited in Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,″ *BSOAS* 15 (1953): 214.

[209]Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 138; Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 10; Leaf and Purcell, *Heraldic Symbols,* 73.

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artistic sponsorship, but so was the sponsorship: the potential patrons from among the amiral class, and particularly the newly promoted *khāṣṣakīyah,* were numerous. Contemporary developments in sgraffito, along with all art forms, illustrate these trends. The widespread use of amiral blazons, specifically blazons of ceremonial office, in Mamluk art of this period reflects the rise of the favored amirs.

The earliest heraldic devices adopted in Mamluk art, however, were not amiral but sultanic. Such emblems served to legitimize the sultan´s rule by visually linking him with earlier Islamic dynasties. The first blazons to appear in the interior of Mamluk sgraffito bowls—eagles, rosettes, lions, and the fleur-de-lys—were borrowed from the artistic repertoire of the Seljuk and Seljuk-successor states. The bicephalic eagle is one of the most common symbols of royal power in Seljuk Rum and appears in glazed tiles, architectural façades, and ceramics.[210] Its long association with royal sovereignty in the arts of the Buyids, Ghaznavids, and Artuqids (from whom the Anatolian Seljuks no doubt borrowed much of their iconography)[211] made for easy transfer to the Egypt-based sultanate just beginning to develop its own royal iconography in the mid-thirteenth century. Rosettes, common to both Seljuk Rum sgraffito and slip-painted wares, were astral symbols suitable for adoption as royal icons.[212]

The origins of the lion *passant,* usually associated with Baybars, is more difficult to determine. Lions used in architectural fixtures in Seljuk Anatolia are, with few exceptions, depicted in frontal view.[213] Gazagnadou´s argument that Baybars adopted the lion *passant* from Mongol silver coins is not convincing for its lack of evidence and confusing chronology.[214] The lion *rampant* was introduced to Cypriot coins, architectural façades, and ceramics in the same period. The Lusignan and Mamluk lions are depicted in different stances, true, but they are both profile figures and noteworthy for the heraldic purposes to which these contemporary dynasties put them. Familiarity with Crusader coins may also explain

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[210]G. Oney, ″Kubadabad Ceramics,″ in *The Art of Iran and Anatolia from the 11th to the 13th Century A.D.*, ed. W. Watson (London, 1977), 75–76.

[211]C. Otto-Dorn, ″L´Aïas dans le dernier tiers du XIIIe siècle d´après les notaries Génois,″ *Asian and African* Studies 22 (1978): 124.

[212]Oney, ″Kubadabad Ceramics,″ 74.

[213]The apotropaic effect of the frontal lion has long been valued in Anatolia and was also applied to gateways by the Hittites of the second millennium B.C. The talismanic qualities of figural art in Seljuk Rum architecture are explored in Scott Redford, ″Thirteenth-Century Rum Seljuq Palaces and Palace Imagery,″ *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 219–27. One exception to the frontal pose is the lion *passant* that appears in a portal relief at the Çifte Medrese in Kayseri (1205–6) (Otto-Dorn, ″L´Aïas dans le dernier tiers,″ 110, Fig. 8).

[214]See D. Gazagnadou, ″Note sur une question d´heraldique mamluke: l´origine du ´lion passant à gauche du Sultan Baybars I al-Bunduqdārī,″ *Der Islam* 65 (1988): 98–101.

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the adoption of the fleur-de-lys by Nūr al-Dīn in the second half of the twelfth century.[215]

The bicephalic eagle, fleur-de-lys, lion *passant,* and rosette can best be described as dynastic symbols. They were hereditary to some extent: the lion *passant* was used by Baybars and his son and the eagle and rosette by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his sons. Mamluk armorial blazons did not come into their own, however, until the early fourteenth century, when amiral symbols of office began to dominate the decoration of architecture, metalworking, glass, ceramics, and painting. The transition from sultanic symbols of authority to amiral blazons is a crucial one for Mamluk art. It affects all media and is socially significant for two reasons: it illustrates the rise of a new social class and the creation of a new self-image for the Mamluks.

Leaf and Purcell outline three developmental stages of Mamluk blazons.[216] At the beginning of the Mamluk period (the middle of the thirteenth century), amirs adopted the sultans′ emblems as their own.[217] At the end of the century simple amiral blazons of office began to replace the lion, fleur-de-lys, eagle, and rosette and were placed on bipartite shields. The earliest dated examples of an amiral blazon of this sort are the cup blazons of the *sāqī* displayed on two candlesticks made for Kitbughā, the important amir who became sultan in the interlude between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s first and second reigns.[218] The cup was the most common sign of the twenty some amiral blazons that appeared now, followed in number by the sword of the *silāḥdār* and the napkin of the *jāmdār*—all ceremonial offices. Blazons such as these were not entirely an Egyptian invention. According to Abū al-Fidā *(Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar),* the Mamluks may have been influenced by the practice of the Khwarazm-Shahs, whose leader Muḥammad ibn Tekish [r. 1200–20] assigned members of his guard emblems of office (here called *ʻalāmah*).[219] The full flowering of blazons of office in the fourteenth century,

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[215]J. W. Allan, ″Mamluk Sultanic Heraldry and the Numismatic Evidence: A Reinterpretation,″ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1970): 104. Some of the earliest instances of an Islamic ″blazon″ can be found on the doorways of Nūr al-Dīn′s foundations in Damascus (his madrasah, 1154–73) and at Ḥimṣ (his Congregational Mosque) (Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 22).

[216]Leaf and Purcell, *Heraldic Symbols,* Ch. 3 (67–76). While the authors too often define developments in Islamic heraldry according to European criteria, the following outline is a reasonable one and is based heavily on the material evidence provided by Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*.

[217]Leaf and Purcell compare this practice to the European livery (*Heraldic Symbols,* 63). Examples in Egypt include Aydamūr al-Jāmdār, an amir of Baybars, who used the lion *passant* as his own insignia (ibid.), and contemporary amirs who adopted the fleur-de-lys, eagle, and rosette normally associated with the sultan (ibid., 70).

[218]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 52, cat. #15–16.

[219]Rabbat, ″Khāṣṣakiyya,″ 432; for the reign of ʻAlā al-Dīn Muḥammad (ibn Tekish), see C. E.

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though, were a uniquely Mamluk contribution.

In the second stage of blazon development, around 1320–30, the sultans had adopted inscribed cartouches as their emblems, and blazons of office were now the exclusive property of the amirs. The introduction of the tripartite shield (or ″composite shield,″ to use Mayer′s nomenclature) defines the third and final stage and is a fifteenth- and sixteenth-century phenomenon. The sword blazon disappears while the cup and penbox (of the *dawādār*) come to prominence. Composite blazons combine the emblems of several offices and probably represent the offices held in sequence by a particular head of state. One blazon of this sort may be adopted by a number of amirs who belong to the same household, that is *khushdāsh* (mamluks of the same master) who wish to affiliate themselves with their former master.

Changes in heraldry such as these reflect changes in the Mamluk social structure, ones that had important consequences for Egypt′s economy in the fourteenth century. At the risk of oversimplifying the processes of cultural change, each of the ″stages″ presented above can be related to the various stages of restructuring of the Mamluk elite and the ways each of these groups chose to identify themselves artistically. Blazons thus became a mode of self-expression for newly empowered social groups.

The Arabic sources are unanimous in acknowledging the strength of the sultanate under Baybars and Qalāwūn. Mamluk heraldry at this point corroborates the picture of an authoritative sultan supported by a disciplined body of mamluk soldiers and commanders. Sultanic emblems of authority (the lion and eagle, for example) are assumed by the amirs as their own, emphasizing the bonds of sponsorship between mamluk and master. There are signs of the breakdown of sultanic authority in the early fourteenth century as the amirs begin to assert themselves. The appearance of the amiral blazons of office illustrates the growing influence of this class and its ability to forge an identity independent of the sultan. The centralizing policies of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad are one reaction to the rise of the amiral class and are reflected in the subsequent adoption of the sultanic inscribed cartouches.

These processes are further accentuated by the use of the penbox blazon (of the *dawādār*) on a large scale and the proliferation of composite shields containing the cup blazon in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The widespread occurrence of the penbox blazon would, as the *sāqī* blazon (cup) in the previous century, signal the growing importance of the *dawādārīyah,* in whose hands much power

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Bosworth, *EI*^{2}, 4:1067–68.

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was concentrated towards the end of the Mamluk period.[220] The cup blazon is a familiar element, as well, in composite blazons and illustrates one aspect of the fifteenth and sixteenth-century promotional procedures which the Arabic sources confirm: the preliminary advancement of mamluks to amirships of ten and then to the *suqāh*. Most sultans of the period began their careers as *suqāh,* and this is reflected in the composite blazons adopted by their amirs. Unlike the amiral blazons of office that were characteristic of the fourteenth century, the composite blazons of the following centuries represented not office but membership in a mamluk ″household″ and identification with the sultan as head of this household. In this way composite blazons are equated with a sultan and his entire mamluk establishment.[221]

As in all media, the adoption of amiral blazons in sgraffito decoration in the early fourteenth century is socially, politically, and economically significant. It is the single most important factor behind the development of Mamluk sgraffito and is, I believe, one of the keys to understanding the central role this mass-produced but short-lived ceramic style played in contemporary Egyptian society. Furthermore, the precise dating and seriation of Mamluk sgraffito is guided by the chronological development of not only the amiral blazons themselves, but the historical circumstances behind their growing popularity.

In the late Ayyubid period Egyptian potters adopted the decorative layout of inscriptional registers with roundels. Roundels were transformed into pseudo-heraldic (″Norman″) shield devices and placed in the wall registers and in the tondo area, as was the custom in Crusader sgraffito of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and Lusignan Cyprus. The early Mamluk sultans adopted symbols of authority used by the Seljuks, Byzantines, and Crusaders, such as the lion and eagle, and incorporated them into the decoration of their tablewares at the end of the thirteenth century. Amiral blazons of office began to appear in all art forms and gradually replaced the lion, eagle, rosette, and fleur-de-lys motifs. The development of ceremonial offices and the subsequent rise of the *khāṣṣakīyah* in the early fourteenth century are reflected in the proliferation of complex amiral blazons of office on round shields and accompanied by elaborate dedicatory inscriptions. The composite blazons of the fifteenth century are not found in sgraffito wares. We can infer

[220]For instance, the amir Yashbak was not only *dawādār,* but also *amīr silāḥ, wazīr, ustādār, kashf al-kushshāf, mudabbir al-mamlakah,* and *ra's al-maysarah.* Before he became sultan, Tūmānbay also held these offices (Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,″ *BSOAS* 16 [1954]: 63—citing Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*).

[221]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 54; Michael Meinecke, ″Zur mamlukischen Heraldik,″ *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 27 no. 1 (1972): 47–80, and idem, ″Die Bedeutung der mamlukischen Heraldik für die Kunstgeschichte,″ *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft,* suppl. 2 (1974): 213–40.

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from this that sgraffito ware was no longer manufactured at this time.[222] The development of sgraffito decoration, and particularly the transformation of the heraldic devices executed in it, is therefore typical of general developments in Mamluk art in the fourteenth century.

Fully developed sgraffito decoration of Mamluk Egypt consisted primarily of shield devices (of various forms) and inscriptional registers. Other motifs and techniques—such as scrolling, the occasional human figure or cross, and floral rinceaux—were either borrowed from Crusader wares or belonged to the more trans-Mediterranean milieu of Zeuxippus-derivative sgraffitos. Heraldic and inscriptional registers clearly belong to the realm of Mamluk metalworking.

It was in the general layout of design that metalwork most influenced other media. The organizing system of registers and cartouches (or roundels) was adopted and canonized in Egyptian metalwork, glass, ceramics, and textiles, while other characteristics of the northern Mesopotamian style were modified. Inscriptions of blessings on the patron, for example, were adapted to emphasize his military titles. The court scenes and zodiac figures originally placed in cartouches were replaced by amiral blazons in pointed or round shields. Characteristics of sgraffito wares, in particular, illustrate the dependence of Mamluk designs on the effect produced by inlaid brasses. The color play of earthenware ground against a white base slip, yellowish glaze, and yellow, brown, and green slips and stains imitated rather successfully the color contrasts of yellow brass and silver and gold inlays of metalwork. Furthermore, the scrolled ground of late Ayyubid and early Mamluk sgraffito recalls not only Ayyubid luster wares but also Ayyubid-period metalwork, such as the Cleveland Ewer, dated by an inscription on the vessel to 1223 and signed by Aḥmad al-Dhākī al-Mawṣilī (″of Mosul″).[223] Similarly, the familiar ″Y-fret″ roundels encountered on sgraffito sherds from Fustat are unquestionably reproductions of metalwork designs as is the ″T-fret″ pattern associated with metalwork signed by ″Mosul″ artists.[224]

The impact of Mosul and the greater northern Jazira on early Mamluk art lies not in the specifics of metalwork decoration but in the broader category of figural art. Figural decoration in all media—coins, manuscript illumination, metalwork, and architecture—was particularly rich in this region in the twelfth and thirteenth

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[222] Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 149.

[223] Line drawings and discussion of this vessel can be found in Rice, ″Inlaid Brasses from the Workshop of Ahmad al-Dhaki al-Mawsili,″ *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 283–326. Scrolling is a common technique in this period and widespread in many media.

[224] The Y-fret is called an ″arrow interlace″ by Scanlon (″Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes from Fustat,″ 62, Pl. IV.b). For the use of the T-fret in Mosuli metalwork, see G. Fehervari, *Islamic Metalwork of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection* (London, 1976), 96 and J. W. Allan, *Islamic Metalwork: The Nuhad Es-Said Collection* (London, 1982).

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centuries. The visual vocabulary of the Artuqid and Zengid northern Jazira and Rum Seljuk central Anatolia was one and the same. Many of the sovereign symbols found in early Mamluk art, including the double-headed eagle and astrological motifs, while originating in Seljuk Iranian art, reached their full development in these areas.[225] Thus, the north Jazira-east Anatolia region was a distribution point for figural art with political connotations.

In a revealing study by Rabbat, the impact that wall paintings of one *qā'ah* (hall) from Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu''s palace in Mosul may have had on the interior decoration of early Mamluk palaces in Cairo, now gone, has been pieced together from little-known historical references.[226] Figures seated in a row and enclosed within circles most likely represent the attendants of Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' and can be compared to so many other similar representations from metalwork, where the ruler is flanked by his attendants or officers and all is arranged in registers and circular cartouches. The Mamluk-period "St. Louis basin" is decorated in this manner, along with amiral blazons.[227] Such parallels extend to Egyptian palaces where, according to Ibn al-Dawādārī, the walls of Sultan Khalīl's *īwān* (palace or reception hall) had "representations of his amirs, each with his own *rank* above his head."[228]

There is a nuanced relationship between the adoption of the Mosul-based figural program and the emergence of heraldry in Mamluk art. In this regard, Whelan's critical analysis of the social significance of Mamluk blazons and their art historical and social historical origins is ground-breaking and has become a catalyst for debate about developments in symbols of authority in Islam.[229] The focus of the study is the "highly developed sovereign imagery" of northern Mesopotamia in the middle of the twelfth century until about 1230. Her arguments are somewhat complicated but can be reduced to the following: 1) Mamluk heraldry (my amiral blazons of office) is a reduction of *khāṣṣakīyah* figural imagery developed from the iconography of the Mesopotamian courts; 2) the codification of Egyptian blazons in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries was the direct result of problems of succession inherent in the Mamluk system, where blood ties were at

[225]The Urtuqid setting of some of these motifs is presented in S. N. Redford, "How Islamic Is It? The Innsbruck Plate and its Setting," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): 119–35.

[226]Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 174–75.

[227]See D. S. Rice, "The Blazons of the 'Baptistère de Saint Louis,'" *BSOAS* 13 (1950): 367–80.

[228]*Al-Durrah al-Zakīyah;* cited in Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 170.

[229]The study is published in E. Whelan, "Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah* and the Origins of Mamluk Emblems," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World,* ed. P. P. Soucek (University Park, PA, 1988), 219–43. For another discussion of image making in northern Mesopotamia see W. F. Spengler and W. G. Szyles, *Turkoman Figural Bronze Coins and Their Iconography*, vol. I (Lodi, Wisconsin, 1992).

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odds with the bonds of *khushdāshīyah*. By marking all personal belongings with their emblems of former office, amirs were, initially, expressing legitimate claims to the sultanate by emphasizing relationships with former sultans. The widespread use of blazons in fourteenth-century art illustrates the amirs′ success in establishing their positions vis-à-vis the sultan.

Whelan defines the *khāṣṣakīyah* as ″intimates with ceremonial responsibilities.″[230] The term itself is a product of the Mamluk period, even though related institutions of ceremonial offices probably existed under the Ghaznavids, Seljuks and Zengids.[231] The term *khawāṣṣ* appears in the Ayyubid period to denote the closest personal associates and bodyguards of Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb.[232] The elite corps of Baybars′ mamluks were called *khāṣṣakīyah,* an adjectival derivative of the Turkish colloquial term for the Arabic *khāṣṣah,* or ″special″ (privileged group).[233] With al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who elaborated Mamluk ceremonial and codified amiral ranks, the word was applied to amirs of high rank who usually performed ceremonial duties.[234] By this period, according to Whelan, the *khāṣṣakīyah* had come to be the ″recognized organ of upward social mobility.″[235] Membership in this privileged corps was the first step to amiral advancement. The majority of the *suqāh* (cup-bearers), *jāmdārīyah* (wardrobe master), *silāḥdārīyah* (sword-bearers) and other such ceremonial officers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries came from this select group.

Much of the figural art of northern Mesopotamia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries relates to the court. In addition to the familiar ″courtly pleasures″ (scenes of revelry and the hunt) there are representations of the sovereign and his entourage. The figures include not only servants but high-ranking officials who walk towards the ruler carrying objects associated with ceremonial offices—a sword, an ax, polo sticks, and a bottle and beaker, to name only a few. One of the earliest examples of these scenes appears on an Urtuqid stone bridge at Ḥiṣn Kayfa, dated to the reign of Qara Arslan (r. 1148–67).[236] Single relief sculptures of striding figures in Turkish costume, carrying a spear, bird, and sword are depicted. The procession

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[230]Whelan, ″Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah,*″ 220.

[231]Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 290–91.

[232]Ibid.

[233]Ibid., 135.

[234]Ibid., 288. A central thesis of Rabbat′s book is the relationship between al-Nāṣir′s development of Cairo′s Citadel and the expansion of state pomp-and-circumstance. He suggests that the term *khāṣṣakīyah* meant, in this period, those specially selected mamluk recruits who lived in the Southern Enclosure with the sultan himself.

[235]Whelan, ″Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah,*″ 234.

[236]Ibid., 222.

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of ceremonial officers is a popular theme in silver-inlaid brassware of the mid-twelfth century to about 1230. Whelan describes several of these, three of which are signed by artists that use the *nisbah* ″al-Mawṣilī.″[237] Basins and candlesticks of this style were made in Egypt under the Mamluks.

The most important developments in Mamluk metalwork can be dated between 1275 and 1350, when the figural style was at its best and inscriptional decoration was just beginning to appear.[238] This was a crucial period for Mamluk sgraffito, too, as figural art, in the form of sovereign symbols, was gradually replaced by large inscriptional registers and amiral blazons. The reduction of figural scenes to hieratic, military symbols is symptomatic of the maturation of Mamluk art and the internal development of visual forms more appropriate to Mamluk society. The shift to non-figural decoration was due to a combination of factors. The stabilization of the state under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, in part attributable to the disappearance of foreign threat, demilitarized the state in an active sense. The growth of ceremonial and military art in the fourteenth century only masked the increasing acculturation of the mamluks to the civilian culture of Cairo. The artistic correlates of this development may be seen in the growing emphasis on epigraphy (reflecting perhaps intensified cultivation of the ulama by the state) and the iconoclastic removal of figural art.[239] Artistic factors may also have contributed to the disappearance of figural art: as inscriptional registers got larger, there simply was no room left on the vessel for processional or court scenes.

On the eclecticism of Mamluk architecture, Rabbat states:

> Their use of various imported and revived modes and techniques to decorate their structures indicates that they had no strong and binding cultural tradition of their own, and this allowed them to choose from several that were available.[240]

I believe this statement is aptly true for the minor arts, namely metalwork and ceramics. Mamluk artists borrowed from everyone, adapting all figural and symbolic design to the requirements of their militarized social system.[241] There is some

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[237]Ibid., 222–23.

[238]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 51.

[239]Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 179. For the late Mamluk period, see B. Flemming, ″Literary Activities in Mamluk Halls and Barracks,″ in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet,* ed. M. Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem, 1977), 249–60.

[240]Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 179.

[241]Rabbat′s argument in this regard is convincing: ″the Mosuli style was directly introduced to the Mamluk realm, where it was adapted to the new requirements and incorporated the features specific to the Mamluk heraldic system″ (*The Citadel of Cairo,* 177).

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indication, though, that the reduction of figural representations of the *khāṣṣakīyah* to amiral blazons of office was not entirely a Mamluk innovation. According to Abū al-Fidā, the Khwarazmshah Muḥammad ibn Tekish (r. 1200–20) was, like al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, interested in the image-making potential of official ceremonies.[242] He maintained a personal group of mamluks, many of whom were later promoted to amirships. Emblems of their ceremonial offices displayed on their banners identified them in processions: a bow for the *silāḥdār,* for instance, or a horseshoe for the *amīr akhūr*.

Historical and cultural associations with the Khwarazmians may in part explain how many motifs of sgraffito, including sovereign emblems (the bicephalous eagle) and amiral blazons (the cup of the *sāqī*) came to Egypt. After the Mongol advance into their territory in the 1220s and 1230s, many Khwarazmian Turks entered the service of the Ayyubids in Egypt as mercenaries. They are mentioned as late as the reign of Quṭuz, who was the reputed descendant of a Khwarazmian prince, and Baybars, who married the daughter of an important Khwarazmian *wāfidī*.[243] An artistic style is not introduced to a country through the migration of military men alone. However, banners used in procession and on the battlefield, basic accouterments of the soldier, do and it is perhaps through martial accessories such as these, brought by foreign mercenaries, that the Mamluks in Egypt became acquainted with amiral blazons and other symbols of military authority. The impact of coins, discussed above, must have been equally important in making familiar certain sovereign emblems—the bicephalous eagle and lion, for instance. Therefore, rather than overemphasize the role of migrating craftsmen,[244] we should consider military equipment brought by mercenaries (weapons and banners), coins in circulation throughout the eastern Mediterranean, and objects imported in large numbers (most importantly inlaid brasses) as the most plausible modes of transferring sovereign imagery to Egypt.

Mamluk amiral blazons can be understood as either the actual objects these former *khāṣṣakīyah* carried in procession or the objects emblazoned on the gear

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[242]*Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar,* cited by Whelan, ″Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah*,″ 220–21.

[243]Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages,* 33 and 62, respectively.

[244]Rogers rejects the role of immigrant artists in transmitting Mongol (J. M. Rogers, ″Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations, 1260–1360,″ in Raymond, Rogers, and Wahba, ed., *Colloque International sur l'Histoire du Caire,* 385–403) and Seljuk art styles (J. M. Rogers, ″Seljuk Influences on the Monuments of Cairo,″ *Kunst des Orients* 7 no. 1 [1970–71]: 40–68) to fourteenth-century Egypt. In both articles he argues for the defining role of imports, which both respond to and create a ″taste″ for foreign objects, and Egyptian travelers to Iran and Anatolia, upon whom local monuments would have made an impression.

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carried and worn by them during processions.[245] Blazons were meant to be seen; they were public expressions of military rank and authority. In this sense, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad adopted the sovereign images of the former Seljuk world, claiming a stake in the ″larger political arena″[246] of the Islamic borderlands of the eastern Mediterranean and legitimizing his rule in the process. The development of amiral blazons during the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad can be related to these attempts to define an appropriate visual image for the Mamluk state.

On the level of the individual, the Mamluk blazon helped to identify the patron for which the object was made. Its role in public propaganda and legitimization within the Mamluk social structure should not be underestimated. It is not entirely clear whether an amiral blazon referred to the present or a former tenure of office, the first stage in amiral advancement, or the position held by the bearer′s father or manumitter. In fact, it is probable that the meaning and use of blazons was not static and changed with the progressive codification of rules concerning their use and elaboration of official relationships within Mamluk society. While objects decorated with blazons are usually attributed to amiral patrons, the widespread use of blazons of office in poor-quality sgraffito ware suggests mass-production of the product for other patrons. We should not automatically assume that there was a consistent, one-to-one correspondence between blazon and amir. Other aspects of the decoration of emblazoned sgraffito vessels, for example, indicate that blazons, while generally understood by the larger public as military emblems, had at some point become commonplace status symbols. The popularization of blazons and titles used in inscriptions indicates the dissolution of official control over Mamluk prerogatives and the breakdown of the system that maintained the social hierarchy.

II. Dedicatory Inscriptions

Blazons are not the only method which Mamluk potters employed to identify their patron and his social class. Vessels are often decorated with dedicatory inscriptions that include formulaic production orders (usually *mimmā ʿumila bi-rasm al-dārī*),[247]

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[245]See Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 5.

[246]Whelan, ″Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah,*″ 232.

[247]This is the standard commissioning formula used with Mamluk sgraffito. The word ″dār″ probably indicates that the vessel was destined for the amir′s own residence and kitchen (see definition of *dār* in M. M. Amīn and L. A. Ibrāhīm, *Architectural Terms in Mamluk Documents (648–923 H/ 1250–1517)* [Cairo, 1990]). *Dār* could also refer to the Mamluk ″household.″ Alternative terms like *tisht-khānah*, *rabāṭ*, and *bayt Allāh al-Ḥaram* in inscriptions on brass, bronze, and glass vessels specify other destinations (illustrations in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*). One view, still followed by many scholars, defines *dār* as the wife or daughter of an amir or sultan (M. van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabicarum, Égypte I* [Paris, 1903], 188).

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standard phrases used to honor military patrons *(al-amīr al-kabīr, al-muḥtaram, al-ʿālī),* the patron´s personal name (often abbreviated) or office, and well-wishes for prosperity and success (*adāma ʿizzuhā*, for instance). The inscriptions are produced through a combination of sgraffito and slip-painting and are displayed in the most prominent zones of the vessel—usually a wide register just below the lip and above the carination (if there is one). The placement of the dedicatory inscription in the interior of the vessel and the artist´s signature on the exterior is characteristic of most vessels signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī. Military-styled inscriptions seem to be inspired by the designs of contemporary metalworking and are found on glasswares and textiles.[248] In Egyptian ceramics these formal dedications are limited to sgraffito wares. They do not normally appear on underglaze-painted or lusterwares.

Dedicatory inscriptions on sgraffito wares occasionally include the name or office of the amir. His full title could consist of an honorific *(laqab),* his personal name (in Turkish), a fictitious patronymic (*ʿAbd Allāh*, for instance), patron affiliation *(nisbah),*[249] and his rank (which would theoretically correspond to the blazon).[250] Official inscriptions containing Mamluk names, titles, or official forms of address represent the status and authority of the patron in much the same fashion as amiral blazons. Mamluk names carried prestige. In spite of the official restrictions, there were attempts by civilians to adopt the Turkish names of the Mamluk aristocracy. The leaders of the *ʿurbān* (bedouin) took on Mamluk names as a way of expressing their authority locally.[251] Foreigners could enter the upper strata of the Mamluk military apparatus by adopting Turkish names to conceal their ethnic background to slave dealers.[252] Turkish names given to children of private citizens in Mecca honored the dignitaries of the local Mamluk garrison.[253] The adoption of Turkish names by non-Mamluks was rare in Cairo. The few exceptions were individuals among the *awlād al-nās* (sons of Mamluks) who

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[248]S. N. Redford, ″Ayyubid Glass from Samsat Turkey,″ *Journal of Glass Studies* 36 (1994): 81–91, discusses possible levels of meaning in glass inscriptions from the Ayyubid period.

[249]The ″īyah″ ending reflects the status of a Mamluk to his master—he was formerly his master´s slave and belonged to him. The masculine form of this ending is also used as a nickname of ethnicity or geographical origin (*al-Miṣrī*—the Egyptian, *al-Tabrīzī*—the man from Tabrīz). In this sense the individual ″belongs″ to his homeland.

[250]Ayalon, ″Names, Titles, and ´Nisbas,´″ 190. Few ceramic inscriptions include all of these elements. The titles, in particular, are abbreviated in comparison to those found on metalworking and in architecture.

[251]Ibid., 208.

[252]Ibid., 195. The elite of Mamluk society were slaves of Turkish stock purchased for the sultan and manumitted by him.

[253]Ibid., 209.

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preferred Turkish names to the more traditional Arab-Muslim ones.[254]

While dedicatory inscriptions on inlaid metalwares, glass, and silks may include the full name of the patron, it is very rare on pottery. The incompleteness of inscriptions is one factor behind the scholarly neglect of Mamluk sgraffito. ″Nicknames″ and abbreviated titles do not lend themselves easily to historical study. It is nearly impossible in most cases to identify the patron with any certainty from the *nisbah* or office alone. In those rare instances where an amir is named, misspellings in transliterating his name from Turkish into Arabic, inconsistencies in titulature, and unclear inscriptions render the task of accurate identification equally difficult. Furthermore, most inscriptions refer to the patron only as an ″amir″ and enumerate a list of honorific titles without including the individual′s name. Generic dedications like these may indicate that many of the vessels were mass-produced for a broad clientele within the Mamluk network.

The majority of the legible and specific dedicatory inscriptions in sgraffito include personal names (Kitbughā) and *nisbah*s (al-Malikī al-Nāṣirī) that can, like the amiral blazons, be associated with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.[255] This is equally true for metalworking, textiles, and glass, a fact which indicates the range of patronage of this sultan and his amirs. Incomplete and ambiguous dedicatory inscriptions on all media but ceramics have been studied for their historical content.[256] The following study attempts to do the same for four sgraffito vessels in the Islamic Museum in Cairo that carry partial inscriptions with the aim of identifying the amir and recognizing changing patterns of ceramic patronage. We begin with a review of the primary sources.

The identification of Mamluk officers relies on an accurate reading of the original inscription and interpretation of the patron′s name as it appears in the inscription to determine the personal name or familiar title of the individual. The patron is then identified as a historical figure by relating his name or title to obituary notices in Mamluk chronicles, forms of address explained in administrative manuals, and the personal entries found in contemporary biographical dictionaries. Secondary sources on the spelling and formation of Turkish names used in the Mamluk period and problems of Mamluk titulature have been important resources in this process.[257] Primary sources include al-Maqrīzī′s *Kitāb al-Sulūk* and *Khiṭaṭ,* Ibn al-Dawādārī′s *Kanz al-Durar,* al-Qalqashandī′s *Ṣubḥ al-A‘shá,* the biographies

[254]Ibid., 229.

[255]Most of these remain unpublished; some are discussed below.

[256]Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry;* Rice, ″The Blazons of the ′Baptistère de Saint Louis′″; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* to name a few.

[257]J. Sauvaget, ″Noms et surnoms de Mamelouks,″ *Journal Asiatique* 238 (1948): 31–58; Ayalon, ″Names, Titles, and ′Nisbas′″; and Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*.

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of al-Yūsufī and al-Shujā‘ī, and several biographical dictionaries that cover the fourteenth century.[258]

The first of the four vessels is a heavily-potted chalice with carinated and everted walls and sits on a pedestal foot (the classic Mamluk shape—Fig. 12).[259] Both the interior and exterior are divided into three registers, the top one of which carries a sgraffito and slip-painted inscription in *thulūth* script. A floral design with six pointed petals occupies the tondo circle, and the inscriptions on the wall are interrupted by abstract fleur-de-lys. The lowest exterior register is filled with a guilloche band.

The interior inscription expresses the good wishes of the artist and includes his name.

> al-‘izz wa-al-iqbāl wa-bulūgh al-a‘māl wa-sa‘ādat al-faqīr, al-miskīn
> Sharaf al-Abawānī, ghulām al-nās kullihim
>
> [Glory, good fortune, achievement, and happiness—the poor, miserable
> Sharaf al-Abawānī, servant of all the people]

Some of the best products of Mamluk sgraffito have been signed by this potter, who also inscribed the following dedication that filled the main register on the exterior.

> mimmā ‘umila bi-rasm al-dār al-‘ālīyah, al-mawlawīyah, al-maḥrūsah, al-ma‘mūrah
> Kitbughā, mulkuhā al-‘izz, al-iqbāl, wa-bulūgh

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[258]The biographies are incomplete: al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir,* and Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā‘ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn,* ed. B. Schäfer (Wiesbaden, 1978), vol. I. The most important of the biographical dictionaries are Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt* (Istanbul, Damascus, and Cairo, 1931–83); Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *A‘yān al-‘Aṣr wa-A‘wān al-Naṣr,* ed. ‘A. Abū Zayd (Beirut, 1998); and Abū al-Maḥāsin Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal al-Ṣāfī wa-al-Mustawfá ba‘d al-Wāfī,* ed. M. M. Amīn (Cairo, 1985–90), also summarized by G. Wiet in ″Les biographies du Manhal Ṣāfī, *Mémoires de l′Institut d′Égypte* 19 (1932). Other dictionaries consulted include Muḥammad ibn Shākir ibn Aḥmad al-Kutubī, *Kitāb Fawāt al-Wafayāt,* ed. N. al-Hurīnī (Cairo, 1866) and Faḍl Allāh ibn Abī al-Fakhr Ibn al-Suqā‘ī, *Tālī Kitāb Wafayāt al-A‘yān,* ed. J. Sublet (Damascus, 1974).

[259]Isl. Mus. #15679, by purchase in 1948. Published in ‘Abd al-Rāziq, ″Documents sur la poterie,″ 26 and Pl. IV. Another very similar sgraffito chalice, also signed by al-Abawānī, is in the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, D.C. and is illustrated in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 188–89 (cat. #95).

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Figure 12. Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito chalice with historical inscription and signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī, 14th century, probably Fustat

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> [Among the things made (on order) for the excellent, sovereign, protected, flourishing house of
> Kitbughā. Glory, prosperity, and achievement to its sovereign]

The Kitbughā addressed in this dedication is probably Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā, the mamluk acquired by Qalāwūn at the first battle at Ḥimṣ (1260). Kitbughā ruled as sultan in the years after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's first reign (taking the title "al-'Ādil" in 1294–96) and later served as Sultan al-Nāṣir's viceroy. The blazon of the *sāqī,* or cupbearer, appears on an inlaid brass candlestick dedicated to him.[260] The cup blazon is not represented on this sgraffito chalice. However, the designs that take its place are not blazons in themselves and do not contradict the identification of the patron with this amir. The form of address used in the inscription indicates that the vessel was made for Kitbughā while he was still an amir and not yet sultan.

In the same collection in Cairo is a round earthenware basin decorated in sgraffito inscriptions and blazons (Fig. 13).[261] It has a flat bottom[262] and three decorative spouts attached to the rim, probably in imitation of more functional prototypes in brass or bronze. The decoration consists of a single, wide inscriptional register. The dedication in both the interior and exterior registers is addressed to the son of an amir of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Shihāb al-Dīn. The name of the father is somewhat unclear from the inscriptions and has been variously read as "al-Sayfī Qarjī"[263] and "al-Sayfī Farajī."[264] The interior inscription reads:

> mimmā 'umila bi-rasm al-ajall, al-muḥtaram, al-makhdūm, al-a'azz, al-akhāṣṣ
> Shihāb al-Dīn ibn al-janabī, al-'ālī, al-malawī al-Sayfī Qarjī/Farajī al-Malikī al-Nāṣirī
>
> [Among the things made (on order) for the most magnificent, the honored, the well-served, the most glorious, the favored Shihāb al-Dīn, the son of His High Excellency, the lord al-Sayfī Qarjī/Farajī, the amir of al-Malik al-Nāṣir]

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[260] Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 65 (cat. #16).

[261] Isl. Mus. #3945. It is published in Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 206–7 and Pl. XII.1. A brief discussion of the inscription appears in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 148.

[262] There may have been a narrow stem or ring foot, which has now broken off.

[263] Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 148.

[264] Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 207.

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Figure 13. Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito basin with historical inscription, 14th century, probably Fustat

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This is an important dedication for three reasons: the name is more or less complete, a sultan is mentioned, and the patron is a member of the *awlād al-nās*. The title ″Shihāb al-Dīn″ is a relatively common amiral title for the early Mamluk period.[265] The *awlād al-nās* also took titles of this form, usually in combination with an Arab-Muslim personal name, rather than a Turkish one. For instance, the personal name ″Aḥmad″ was usually combined with the title ″Shihāb al-Dīn″ for sons of Mamluks.[266] The patron of this vessel, then, was probably one Aḥmad Shihāb al-Dīn, the son of the amir Qarjī/Farajī.

I have been unable to locate this Aḥmad in the biographical dictionaries or obituary notices; the name is too common to make a proper identification. The identity of his father is extremely important, though, given his relationship with Sultan al-Nāṣir, as indicated in the amir′s title. Neither ″Qarjī″ nor ″Farajī″ are typical Turkish names of the period. However, ″Qirmishī″ (″Qurmushī″ or ″Qurmujī″)[267] and ″Qarajā″[268] are. On both the interior and exterior inscriptions a faint *mīm* can be discerned above and between the *rā'* and *jīm;* there could be either one or two dots above the first letter. Therefore, the name could read ″Qurmujī″ instead of ″Farajī″ or ″Qarjī.″

There is a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad by the name of Qurmujī/Qirmishī who figures rather prominently in Mamluk politics in the early fourteenth century. The amir Qurmujī Sayf al-Dīn was the brother of the *silāḥdār* Aslam Bahā' al-Dīn; the brothers are mentioned in the chronicles on account of their arrest and lengthy imprisonment in Alexandria.[269] Qurmujī was a mamluk of the *nā'ib al-Shām,* Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī, and later became a *ḥājib* in Syria and the *nā'ib* of Ḥimṣ.[270] These events relate him to a Qarajā Sayf al-Dīn who, according to al-Shujā'ī, served as *nā'ib* of Ḥamāh and was arrested with his brother, the

[265]Ayalon, ″Names, Titles, and ′Niṣbas,′″ 191. It was also popular with the *tājir-khawājah* (high-ranking Karimi merchants) in the Circassian period (Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 214–16).

[266]Ayalon, ″Names, Titles, and ′Niṣbas,′″ 230; Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 207.

[267]The alternative spellings are due to the inconsistencies of transliterating Turkish names into Arabic in the Mamluk texts. ″Sh″ and ″j″ are often alternated (see Sauvaget, ″Noms et surnoms″). Sauvaget also lists the name ″Qirmish,″ which means ″he broke into pieces″ (ibid., 53, #171).

[268]The name appears in Sauvaget′s Turkish name list with the meaning ″little black″ (ibid., 52, #160).

[269]Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir,* 190 (also in al-Ṣafadī′s *Al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt* and al-Maqrīzī′s *Al-Bayān wa-al-I'rāb;* K. V. Zettersteen, ed., *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane* (Leiden, 1919), 178 and 187).

[270]Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 83; Zettersteen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane,* 198.

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silāḥdār in Cairo.[271] Qurmujī died in 1346 (747), five years after the Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.[272]

The title ″al-Sayfī″ that precedes Qurmujī′s name in the sgraffito inscriptions is an abbreviation for the more formal ″Sayf al-Dīn.″ This was, according to the Arabic sources, the proper title of the Syrian amir. The inscriptions also state that Qurmujī was the mamluk of a Sultan ″al-Nāṣir″ (*al-Malikī al-Nāṣirī*).[273] If the amir of the inscriptions can be identified with the Syrian amir of the chronicles, then this *nisbah* would appear to be a misnomer: Qurmujī was the mamluk of an amir, and not a sultan. It is possible, though, that Qurmujī changed his *nisbah*. There are a few examples of mamluks changing their titles in gratitude for favors bestowed on them by amirs or sultans.[274] Al-Shujā'ī reports that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad offered a position to Qurmujī in exchange for Tankiz′s assassination.[275] Under these circumstances, it would not be surprising if Qurmujī had changed his title to reflect his new relationship with the sultan.

The meaning of the blazon that appears in the inscriptional registers, the tondo, and the exterior of the base is ambiguous. It is a golden half-dome supported by a triangular stand, decorated with a round, target-like device. This symbol has been variously called a target, canopy, saddle, and Mongol *tamgha* and could represent a range of offices. Mayer has associated the office of the *jāwīsh* (macebearer or guard) with two early Mamluk *ḥājib*s whose blazons were described as ″dome-shaped palanquins.″[276] There is not enough evidence, yet, to equate either the *jāwīsh* or the *ḥājib* with the blazon that appears on this basin.

The significance of this basin is that it was commissioned for a son of a Mamluk amir. The rise of the *awlād al-nās* began with the third reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who gave positions to the sons of amirs as a way of rewarding his favorite Mamluks. However, it is with the reign of al-Nāṣir Ḥasan that the empowerment of this social class is usually associated. The *awlād al-nās,* and

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[271]Al-Shujā'ī, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn,* 177, 235, and 254. The period of imprisonment differs from that mentioned for ″Qurmushī″ in Zettersteen. Qarajā and Qurmushī/Qurmujī may be the same individual, but this is far from certain.

[272]Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir,* 191, n. 6.

[273]The *nisbah* could just as well refer to Sultan al-Nāṣir Ḥasan (r. 1347–51, 1354–61), the son of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, under whom the *awlād al-nās* came to positions of political power, or his brother Sultan al-Nāṣir Aḥmad (r. 1342). That the *nisbah* probably reflects the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad is indicated by the identification of the amir Qurmujī with this sultan.

[274]A list of these for the early Mamluk period appears in Ayalon, ″Names, Titles, and ′Nisbas,′″ 218–19.

[275]Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 83.

[276]Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 18. The blazons are not illustrated.

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particularly the sons of amirs, emerged as a new class of nobility in the middle of the fourteenth century—they held a number of top amirships and some of the largest *iqṭā'āt*.[277] Ceramics is one area of artistic patronage of this newly empowered class.

The basin in Cairo is not the only sgraffito vessel commissioned by a Mamluk's son. One of the highest quality Mamluk earthenwares in the Cairo collection is a round-bottomed, carinated basin, signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī.[278] Both the potter's signature and the dedicatory inscription appear in two registers on the exterior of the vessel. A variant of the dedication appears in the interior register, which is interrupted along its length by a round shield device carrying three broad bands.[279] The patron named is the "great amir" (*al-amīr al-kabīr*) Sa'd al-Dīn ibn al-Musṭī.

The identity of this Sa'd al-Dīn has not been established yet, however the inscriptions indicate that he was the son of someone important. The formal names of the *awlād al-nās* consist of the personal name of the patron followed by the personal name of his father, the father's office, his *nisbah,* or any combination of them. Occasionally the father's "nickname"—a reference to his place of origin, his manumitter, or personal characteristics—is included.[280] This could be the form of the patron's name that appears on the al-Abawānī basin. If the shield device is a Mamluk blazon, which it appears to be, then either Sa'd al-Dīn or his father was a Mamluk officer. It is highly doubtful that Sa'd al-Dīn was a Mamluk himself, because his father's name is included in the inscriptions.[281] Moreover, religious titles, such as "Sa'd al-Dīn," were adopted by civilians or the *awlād al-nās* and not foreign-born Mamluks. Whether Sa'd al-Dīn was the son of a Mamluk or a private citizen with no direct connections to the military aristocracy, this basin is another example of the ways ceramics express Mamluk social policies. The promotion of non-Mamluks (*awlād al-nās* or otherwise) under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his sons is illustrated in the titulature of dedication inscriptions such as these.

The final sgraffito vessel with a complete inscription in the Cairo collection is a large, footed basin of a slightly piriform shape (Fig. 14).[282] There is little doubt

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[277]Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 46–49.

[278]Isl. Mus. #9089.

[279]It could be a penbox, the blazon of the *dawādār* (secretary) (drawings in Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 12).

[280]Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt,* 6:267 and 10:196; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1963–72), 9:286; Ayalon, "Names, Titles, and 'Nisbas,'" 229–31.

[281]In the Mamluk system, the father was considered to be the master *(ustādh)* or the manumitter, if it was a different individual. For formality's sake, a father's name is sometimes included in Mamluk titles, *'Abd Allāh*—a false name that alludes to the Mamluks' origins in slavery.

[282]Isl. Mus. #3713. Published in 'Abd al-Rāziq, "Documents sur la poterie," Pl. VIIA; idem, "Notes on Islamic Graffito Ware of the Near East," *Annales Islamologiques* 9 (1970), Pl. XXB; idem, "Le

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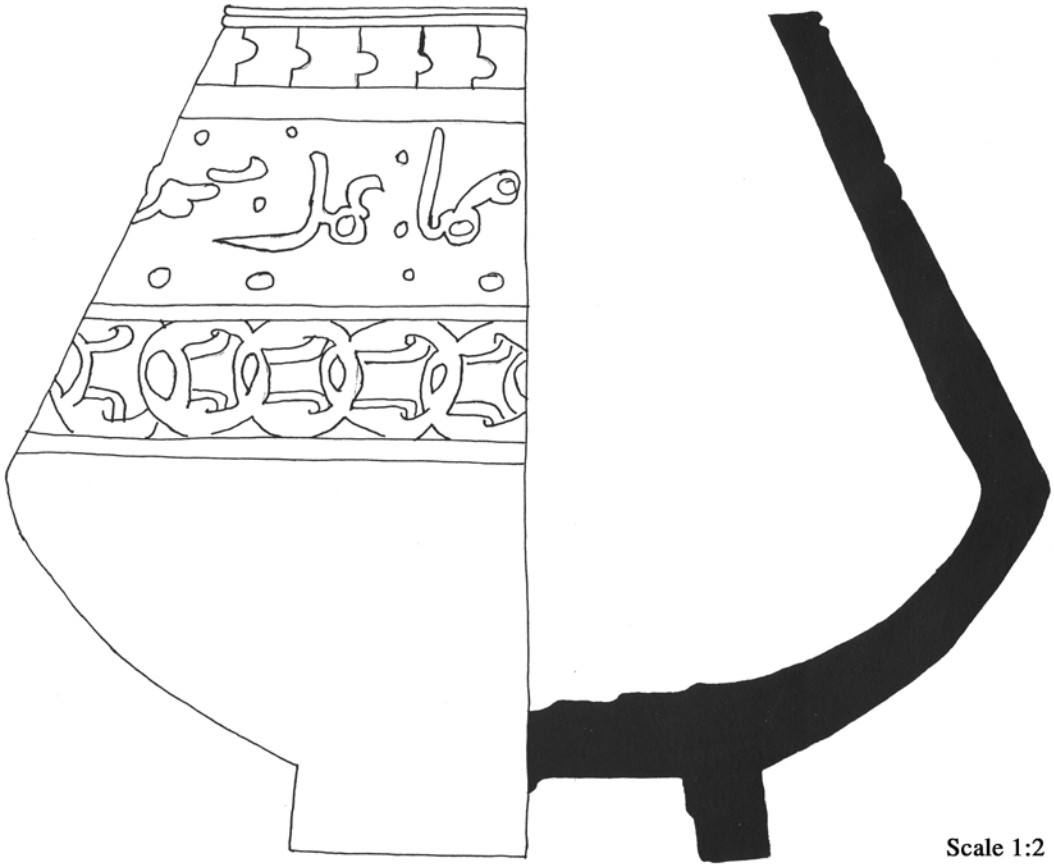

Figure 14. Profile drawing of a Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito basin—ceramic imitation of a 14th-century Persian brass basin, probably Fustat

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that the basin is meant to imitate the form and decoration of cast brass basins with silver and gold inlay from fourteenth-century Persia.[283] The largest of the exterior registers contains the following inscription:

> mimmā ʻumila bi-rasm al-dār al-ʻālīyah, al-mawlawīyah, al-maʻmūrah, al-makhdūmah,
> al-maḥrūsah—al-Azjīyah al-Aydakīyah. ʻadāma ʻizzuhā bi-biqāʼ mulkihā. al-barakah.
>
> [Among those things made (on order) for the excellent, sovereign, prosperous, well-served, protected house of al-Azjīyah al-Aydakīyah. May its glory continue in preserving its sovereignty. Blessings.]

No blazons accompany this inscription.

The quality of potting and the size of the vessel indicate that the patron had some wealth and social stature. His full name, unfortunately, has been reduced to two *nisbah*s, which makes identifying him a difficult task. Consecutive titles in this form often indicate a chronological series of the patron′s masters or the master and the master′s manumitter.[284] Thus, the patron would have been a mamluk of an ″Aydak″ or ″Aybak″ or ″Aydakīn.″ The first *nisbah* makes little sense linguistically in the form above. A scribal error may have produced ″al-Azjīyah″ from ″al-ʻIzzdīyah,″ the abbreviated form of ″ʻIzz al-Dīn.″[285] This would make the patron a Mamluk of one ʻIzz al-Dīn Aybak.[286] Another error could have rendered ″al-Uzkūshī″ as ″al-Azjīyah.″[287] The name would be, then, the mamluk of Aydakīn al-Uzkūshī.

Aydakīn al-Uzkūshī was the mamluk of amir Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Uzkūshī, the governor of Raḥbah. He served as Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s

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sgraffito de l′Égypte,″ Pl. VII.D; and *Islamic Art in Egypt* (Cairo, 1969), 157 (cat. #146). In his 1967 study (″Documents sur la poterie″), ʻAbd al-Rāziq includes the vessel in a study on Sharaf al-Abawānī. The signature of this potter does not appear anywhere on the basin, however.

[283]Compare with Allan, *Islamic Metalwork*, 107, cat. #24, and E. Baer, *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art* (New York, 1983), 280, Fig. 227a.

[284]Ayalon, ″Names, Titles, and ′Niṣbas,′″ 217.

[285]A *dāl* can easily be made a *jīm* by the extension of the final line of the letter. The *ʻayn* may have simply been left out.

[286]The honorific ″ʻIzz al-Dīn″ was usually associated with the personal name Aybak in the early Mamluk period (Ayalon, ″Names, Titles, and ′Niṣbas,′″ 194).

[287]This is more plausible—the *jīm* in Turkish names was transliterated a variety of ways by Arabic-speaking scribes.

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walī of Cairo and worked closely with him on projects of urban development.[288] His collaboration with the *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ* ″al-Nashw″ in collecting Mamluk fines led to his dismissal from this post and banishment to Syria.[289] Aydakīn died in 1339–40.[290]

There were other Mamluks by the name of Aydakīn who appear in the Arabic sources in the Circassian period.[291] However, given the parallels with fourteenth-century damascened basins from Iran and the phraseology of the inscription, the vessel and its patron should probably be dated to the fourteenth century. The identification of the patron with a mamluk of Aydakīn al-Uzkūshī is a plausible, however unprovable, suggestion.

The amirs of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad were not the only patrons of large sgraffito vessels. Occasionally a vessel was dedicated to a judge (*qāḍī*) or a judge′s son, according to the inscription (Fig. 15). One large rim fragment in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto carries duplicate inscriptions on its interior and exterior faces:

> ‘umila bi-rasm al-qāḍī al-ajall al-makh[dūm] . . .
>
> [Among the things made (on order) for the qadi, the most magnificent,
> the (well-served) . . .]

The sherd comes from the excavations at Fustat.[292] Its inscription is a generic dedication to an unnamed judge and honors him with the same military epithets as an amir or amir′s son. Not enough of the sherd remains to determine whether or not a blazon was included.

The same formula appears on a surface find (fragments of a large hemispherical bowl) from an archaeological site at Tod, Upper Egypt. The qadi is unnamed, as on the rim sherd in Toronto. The absence of a higher title, such as *qāḍī al-quḍāh* or *qāḍī al-‘askar* indicates the lower status of the judge.[293]

Qadis are mentioned in the dedicatory inscriptions of other media. The grandson of a prominent Egyptian judge is the recipient of one damascened brass basin studied by Mayer. The inscription is similar to the ROM sherd in its application of

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[288]Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir*, 194.

[289]Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 73–74.

[290]Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir,* 194, n. 2.

[291]Evidence that the ″Aydaki″ of the inscription can be identified with a Mamluk of Qaytbāy is not convincing (*Islamic Art in Egypt*, [Cairo, 1969], 106).

[292]ROM #909.43.16, Fustat study collection. The rim is probably a fragment of a large, carinated bowl.

[293]Découbert and Gayraud, ″Une céramique d′époque mamelouke trouvée à Tod,″ 98.

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Figure 15. Rim sherd of a Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito bowl, inscription refers to a judge, late 14th century, Fustat

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military honorifics for a civilian patron.[294] A different set of epithets appears on a penbox dedicated to the qadi Burhānī. In this instance the patron is described in terms more appropriate for a member of the civilian, rather than the military, elite.[295]

Other members of the urban religious establishment are mentioned in sgraffito inscriptions. A hemispherical bowl of unknown provenance in the Kuwait National Museum is dedicated to a *shaykh Yāsīn,* who was apparently the head of a Sufi establishment.[296] Its dimensions (D 22.5 cm, H 11.3 cm) compare with those of the Tod bowl (D 24 cm, H 13 cm) and other similarly inscribed, hemispherical bowls from Fustat[297] and Jebel Adda (Nubia).[298] The layout of the decoration on the bowl conforms to a standard type: a wide internal register just below the rim frames either a long inscription or short, generic, honorific phrases (*al-a'azz, al-ajall,* for example) separated one from the other by ″Norman shields.″ The tondo motifs consist of a single figure (like a common bird or eagle), genuine blazon, or, more rarely, geometric interlace design. Monolithic hemispherical bowls are a distinct subgroup of Mamluk sgraffito and are found throughout Egypt. The widespread use of generic inscriptions (or explicit dedications to a civilian official), ″Norman shields,″ and decorative tondo circle devices reflects the lower social status of the consumers of this group, as compared to those of the carinated bowls (″military chalices″) and earthenware basins.

A complex relationship existed between the military elite (the Mamluks) and the civilian elite (the merchants and the ulama).[299] The daily life of civilians was organized by legal, financial, and educational institutions funded by private patrons

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[294]Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 45. Honorific titles include *al-'ālī al-mawlawī* (His High Excellency), *al-maqarr* (the established), and *al-makhdūmī* (the well-served).

[295]Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry,* 123. The patron is described as ″*al-wāthiq bi-al-malik al-ḥaqq al-mubīn*,″ or ″the one who trusts in the king, the clear truth.″

[296]LNS #7c ('Abd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l'Égypte,″ 1–2, cat. #1).

[297]See 'Abd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l'Égypte,″ Pl. X (D 23 cm, H?; another D 22 cm, H 10.6 cm)—incomplete inscriptions; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 185, cat. #93 (by purchase—D 21.6 cm, H 13.1 cm)—to an unnamed amir; Scanlon, ″Some Mamluk Shapes,″ 119, Fig. 1 and 121, Fig. 2 (D range 17–20 cm, H range 6–12 cm)—many without inscriptions, those with inscriptions seem to be short, generic phrases (as below) framed by ″Norman shields.″

[298]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 186, cat. #94 (monumental proportions—D 34.5 cm, H 24.5 cm)—illegible; unpublished: ROM (Nubia) inv. #L973.24.909 (D 29.7 cm, H 12.9 cm)—generic inscription to unknown patron (*al-a'azz, al-ajall*—″the most excellent, the most magnificent″).

[299]A discussion of this complicated subject is beyond the scope of this article. The reader should consult the following sources for detailed analysis of Mamluk-ulama relations: Lapidus, *Muslim Cities;* Petry, *The Civilian Elite;* Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,″ *BSOAS* 16 (1954); and Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 1.

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and put under the jurisdiction of members of the ulama, many of whom were chosen by the state. These scholars further supported the Mamluks by working in the state administration and acting as the sultan's spokesmen on the local level. There was a degree of social mobility inherent to this system. A civilian with enough education and ambition could, if he gained the favor of an amir or the sultan, rise to a position of wealth and influence in the Mamluk bureaucracy. This sort of mutually-beneficial patronage "reinforce[d] the bonds between the elites."[300]

The qadis, in particular, acquired positions of some power under Mamluk patronage. On a local level, the qadis occupied some of the most prominent positions in education and the courts as teachers and directors, head preachers and shaykhs, *waqf* overseers, and judges. They were often appointed by the sultan to the upper levels of the state bureaucracy as *kātib al-sirr, nāẓir al-khāṣṣ, nāẓir al-jaysh,* and *wazīr*.[301] In Ayalon's list of army-related offices, only one is said to have been held by a member of the religious establishment—the *qāḍī al-'askar*. Four "army judges" were appointed to accompany the army during expeditions and keep court on behalf of the soldiers while they were on campaign.[302]

Some civilian officials were entitled to honorific names.[303] These often take the form of titles (the *laqab*) familiar from dedicatory inscriptions, like "Sharaf al-Dīn" or "'Izz al-Dīn." The inscription on the ROM sherd, as well as dedications to qadi*s* on other pieces of art, reflect the high status of the Muslim judge in the Mamluk society and his position within the military bureaucracy. Civilian patronage of the arts may have been more considerable than it appears at first. The adoption of honorific titles in dedicatory inscriptions may not necessarily indicate that the patron was a Mamluk or even a member of the *ḥalqah,* particularly if the dedication is generic, in other words the patron is not specifically named. The patron in this case could be either a military officer or a high-ranking civilian official.

The majority of dedicatory inscriptions in sgraffito make no specific mention of the patron. The formulae below, or variants of them, are among the most common:

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[300]Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 138.

[301]Ibid., 136–37. The responsibilities of the *wazīr* changed over time. In the early Mamluk period it was the most important office in the fiscal administration (Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages,* 40). Under Barqūq the office was reduced to management of the army's meat supplies (Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," 61).

[302]Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army," 67.

[303]Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 128 and 266–67, n. 7. Merchants, market inspectors, judges, and a variety of craftsmen held honorific titles and were known by such in the Arabic biographical dictionaries.

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mimmā ʻumila bi-rasm al-aʻazz, al-ajall, al-muḥtaram, al-makhdūm . . .

[Among the things made (on order) for the most excellent, the most magnificent, the honored, the well-served . . .″[304]]

al-amīr al-ajall al-muḥtaram.

[The most excellent and honored amir]

mimmā ʻumila bi-rasm al-dār al-mawlawīyah—adāma ʻizzuhā bi-biqā' mulkihā.

[Among the things made (on order) for the sovereign house. May its glory continue in preserving its sovereignty.[305]]

The title ″amir″ is often absent from generic inscriptions. In fact, there is otherwise no indication that these vessels were produced for military clientele or dignitaries of any sort. The omission of titles from inscriptions on the part of the potter was certainly deliberate. In the case of vessels decorated with blazons, the combination of a generic dedication with an amiral symbol may indicate that the piece was made ahead of time for amirs promoted to this military office (Isl. Mus. #9277).[306] The ″Norman″ shield (a round-topped, pointed-bottom emblem with an empty field) often take the place of official amiral blazons, particularly in generic wall inscriptions (Isl. Mus. #4673). In the absence of a true blazon or any reference to an amir in the inscription, one can assume the vessel was sold to the general public in the city bazaars. Products targeting both groups of consumers were mass-produced and sold publicly. The poor quality of potting, incision, transcription, and coloring of many ″generic″ pieces such as these reinforce these assumptions.[307]

By the end of the fourteenth century many of the common people had the

[304]The inscription is broken at this point but apparently leads directly into al-Abawānī′s signature—Isl. Mus. #14754, published in ʻAbd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l′Égypte,″ Pl. VII, C. This is a ceramic imitation of an inlaid metal tray stand. Compare to a fourteenth-century Mamluk silver and gold inlaid cast brass stand in Allan, *Islamic Metalwork,* 97 (cat. #19).

[305]Isl. Mus. #9277. This is the interior inscription. The exterior carries the signature of Sharaf al-Abawānī. Although the inscription is generic, the polo master′s blazon occupies the tondo. The rim is strongly beveled inwards, in Cypriot style.

[306]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 149.

[307]For an analysis of ″official″ inscriptions on Ayyubid glasswork, see Redford, ″Ayyubid Glass from Samsat Turkey.″

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material means to purchase goods previously accessible only to the upper classes.[308] Furthermore, they adopted customs of the elite: their dress, their ways of socializing, and their tastes in art. With the breakdown of Mamluk social structure in the second half of the fourteenth century, there was a broadening in artistic patronage. Sgraffito vessels that carry generic, non-military dedications and are of a poorer quality than ″official″ military chalices and bowls may have been produced sometime after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s death (641/1341). The distribution of poor-quality, inscribed sgraffito in Nubia may also represent imitation of Cairo elite culture by smaller courts in the south.[309]

While sgraffito vessels could be dedicated to either military or civilian dignitaries, it seems that they were never produced specifically for the sultan. Neither sultanic titles nor the personal names of a sultan have appeared on vessels or sherds that I have seen or which have been published.[310] This pattern of patronage probably reflects on the status of glazed earthenware in Mamluk society. Although Arabic inscriptions, and particularly military titles, were prestigious, ceramics decorated in this fashion were of lower commercial value than similarly inscribed damascened brasses and bronzes and enameled glass.[311] The sultan could afford more expensive ways of promoting his name than through inscriptions on common ceramics. Vessels of precious metals, public architecture, and textiles were avenues of self-expression generally closed to patrons of non-elite status. This is especially true of Mamluk silks and robes of honor, the production of which, while not truly a state monopoly, was to some extent controlled by the sultan and the Mamluk elite.[312] A comparison of the ways in which inscriptions were used on Mamluk pottery and textiles is instructive of these different levels of patronage.[313]

The most significant difference between ceramic and textile inscriptions lies

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[308]Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History,* 113.

[309]The ceramic material from the UNESCO salvage excavations at Jebel Adda, Nubia remains unpublished.

[310]The large sgraffito chalice in the Islamic Museum in Cairo with Kitbughā′s name is one exception. However, the piece was probably produced for him when he was still amir. The titles used in the dedication are typical honorifics for amirs (Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 66). The inscriptions found on royal silks, as below, are more common for sultanic commissions.

[311]Copper wares were also preferred to earthenwares. The higher value of copper vessels is reflected in trousseau lists of the Fatimid period (Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 4, App. D). Ceramics are usually not included in the trousseau (p. 106).

[312]Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* 60.

[313]For one such analysis of Mamluk textiles and their inscriptions, see B. J. Walker, ″The Social Implications of Textile Development in Fourteenth-Century Egypt,″ *Mamlūk Studies Review* 4 (2000): 167–217.

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in the kind of patrons named.[314] Sgraffito wares were generally produced for a lower class of amirs, while silks were manufactured for and distributed by the sultan. Access to wealth was the determining factor in these consumer patterns. In terms of housewares, the sultan and his top amirs could have afforded silver and gold-inlaid bronze and brass basins and candlesticks and finely enameled glass beakers and chalices. The less affluent amirs and urban dignitaries would have, instead, commissioned earthenware vessels (often oversized), inscribed with their names and titles. The inscriptions ″personalized″ housewares for the patron, serving a purpose similar to the *ṭirāz* borders of textiles.[315]

Comparisons can also be made between the generic court inscriptions of pottery and textiles. Dedications to ″the sultan″ (otherwise unnamed) or ″al-Malik al-Nāṣir″ (a title used by a number of Mamluk sultans[316]) on silks ensured the propriety of the garment for the regimes to follow. Similarly, ceramic inscriptions praising unnamed amirs were appropriate for a broad market and guaranteed greater sales. The expansion of ceremonials necessitating the distribution of robes of honor and the process of easy promotion to amirships under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad may account for the large demand for these kinds of goods.

On the other hand, unofficial inscriptions take a different form in Mamluk sgraffito and textiles. Poetry, proverbs, and congenial wishes for prosperity and happiness have been part of the decorative vocabulary of ceramics, textiles, and metalworking since the early Islamic period. Mamluk textiles continue this tradition; Mamluk sgraffito does not. Generic inscriptions on sgraffito wares duplicate the formal honorific dedications to amirs and high officials common to inlaid metalwork and enameled glass. The placement of these inscriptions in visible areas (like the wide register below the rim on the exterior of a vessel) and their official format are clear indications that the objects were meant to be seen in public places. Therefore, generic inscriptions in sgraffito are a development of official art, rather than popular art. Likewise, sgraffito wares belong to the official and public realm of Mamluk art. The mass-production of these for the general public then reflects, to some degree, on social developments related to the Mamluk elite.

Inscriptions were widely recognized symbols of sovereignty and occupied an

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[314]Inscriptional registers are just one mode of decoration that potters may have borrowed from the design of textiles. The influence of rug fringes on the margin arcades of sgraffito registers has been discussed above. For other studies on the influence of textiles on ceramics see L. W. Mackie, ″Toward an Understanding of Mamluk Silks,″ 143–44, and L. Golombek, ″The Draped Universe of Islam.″

[315]The phrase ″textile mentality″ was coined in L. Golombek and V. Gervers, ″Tiraz Fabrics in the Royal Ontario Museum,″ in *Studies in Textile History in Memory of Harold B. Burnham,* ed. V. Gervers (Toronto, 1977), 82–125.

[316]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 233.

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important position in the visual world of medieval Islam. Architectural inscriptions, although incomprehensible to the many illiterate of medieval society, publicly expressed the power and authority of the patron. Objects decorated with inscriptions were held in high esteem because they represented wealth and status. It was not necessary for the inscriptions to be legible, though. Surface decoration consisting of abstract Kufic letters,[317] abbreviated words,[318] and pseudo-epigraphic registers[319] was quite common in medieval ceramics, metalwork, and textiles. The decorative quality and symbolic value of the Arabic script, in this sense, were more important than the meaning of the inscription. Ibn Khaldūn informs us that textiles with the sultan´s name lent prestige to the person of lower rank on whom the garment was bestowed.[320] Inscriptions on objects were socially meaningful. Likewise, the symbolic effect of inscriptions on Mamluk pottery should not be underestimated. The appearance of an inscription (especially if it was accompanied by a blazon) increased the status of both object and owner, regardless of the quality of the vessel it was decorating.

The Mamluk epigraphic style of decoration, established under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, gradually replaced figural decoration in all media.[321] A variety of factors may have contributed to this development: growing religious orthodoxy, a conscious break with Mediterranean styles associated with the Crusaders, the influence of contemporary metalwork,[322] or simply the changing tastes of the Mamluk elite.[323] The most important catalysts in this stylistic development, however,

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[317]Rim registers of repeated pseudo-Kufic letters were quite common in metalwork in ceramics produced in both the Islamic and Byzantine worlds of the twelfth century. See the characteristic beveled uprights of false Kufic letters in Byzantine sgraffito from Corinth (C. H. Morgan, *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Vol. XI: The Byzantine Pottery* [Cambridge, MA, 1942], Pls. xliv.e, xlviii.b, and xl.a, b).

[318]*Al-sulṭān* was often abbreviated to one or two letters in Mamluk textiles (Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 236). Single and double-letter characters represent the phrases *li-ṣāḥibihi* and *al-yumn* in Samanid ceramics and continues in the painted pottery of eleventh-century Afghanistan (J. C. Gardin, *Lashkari Bazar: Les trouvailles, Vol. II: Céramique et monnaies de Lashkari Bazar et de Bust* [Paris, 1963], 60, n. 6).

[319]Possibly because of its much shorter production time, pottery is more prone to decoration in rapidly executed (and often illegible) inscriptions than other media. For examples from early thirteenth-century Bamiyan see J. C. Gardin, ″Poteries de Bamiyan,″ *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 231, Fig. 2; for Mamluk Egypt see Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 186–87, cat. #94.

[320]L. W. Mackie, ″Increase the Prestige,″ *Arts of Asia* 26 (1996): 84.

[321]Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 90.

[322]Inlaid brasses produced in fourteenth-century Fars are decorated in large *thulūth* inscriptions dedicated to unnamed dignitaries (Ward, *Islamic Metalwork,* 99–100).

[323]Mamluk blazons and inscriptions containing the titles associated with amiral offices replaced the figural designs popular with Mosul metalworkers (Ward, *Islamic Metalwork,* 111 and 113).

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may have been the changes in Mamluk administrative, fiscal, and social policies initiated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Sgraffito inscriptions are particularly illustrative of Mamluk society during and following his third reign. The upward mobility of the *awlād al-nās* is reflected in inscriptions dedicated to sons of amirs. The rapid promotion of Mamluks to amirships is paralleled in the proliferation of vessels inscribed with dedications to unnamed amirs. The mass-production of poorer quality vessels with blanket dedications may be related to the rise of the ″rank-and-file″ soldiers and non-elite members of the civilian population. These formerly marginalized groups became familiar with the epigraphic art of the elite through official ceremonies. The role of Mamluk ceremonial in popularizing inscribed objects, such as textiles and ceramics, is the focus of the following section.

Function

Of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s ambitious building program on the Cairo Citadel, only his Congregational Mosque remains.[324] Contemporary sources on other constructions, no longer standing—the Qaṣr al-Ablaq (built in 1313–14) and the Great Īwān (final rebuilding by al-Nāṣir in 1333)—emphasize the relationship between al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s monumentalization of the Citadel during his third reign and the complicated rituals which were staged in them.[325] The Great Īwān, the ceremonial hall *par excellence,* served as al-Nāṣir′s *dār al-ʿadl* (court of justice). It was here that public hearings with the sultan took place and the processional route through the lower city ended. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad rebuilt the original structure in 1333 on a much larger scale, presumably to accommodate the increasing elaboration of important public events, such as the investiture and the reception of foreign dignitaries.[326] The ceremonies associated with the monumental Qaṣr al-Ablaq (″Striped Palace″) were semi-private. The morning *asmiṭah* (banquets)

[324]Tradition claims that Muḥammad ʿAlī (viceroy of Egypt and Pasha, 1805–188) cleared most of the Citadel platform of earlier Mamluk constructions for his own mosque and military barracks. Nevertheless, the remains of a series of vaults flanking an enclosure wall south of Muḥammad ʿAlī′s mosque have been identified as the subterranean supporting structures of the Qaṣr al-Ablaq (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 34–36). Archaeological work on the Citadel in the 1980s has uncovered the remains of further buildings, the identification of which is still undetermined (M. al-Ḥadīdī and F. ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm, ″Aʿmāl Tarmīm al-Qaṣr al-Ablaq bi-Qalʿat Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn,″ *ʿĀlam al-Binā*ʾ 26 (1986): 4–16; archaeological report reviewed in Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 36).

[325]For a reconstruction of the ceremonies held in these two structures consult Doris Behrens-Abouseif, ″The Citadel of Cairo: Stage for Mamluk Ceremonial,″ *Annales Islamologiques* 24 (1988): 35–51; Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* Ch. 6; and J. S. Nielsen, *Secular Justice in an Islamic State: Maẓālim Under the Baḥrī Mamlūks 662/1264–789/1387* (Istanbul, 1985).

[326]Rabbat suggests that developments in court ceremonial and processions early in al-Nāṣir′s reign may also have necessitated the first reconstruction in 1311, which replaced al-Ashraf Khalīl′s earlier *īwān* (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 193).

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and *khidmah* (royal audience) held here were restricted to the highest-ranking officials and the *khāṣṣakīyah.*[327]

The effect of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's elaboration of Mamluk ceremonial was the militarization of state functions. This is particularly evident in the area of judicial administration. The *maẓālim* sessions, initiated by Nūr al-Dīn in the twelfth century, were public hearings where civilians could demand redress from wrongs suffered at the hands of government officials. The convergence of these hearings with the ceremonial, twice-weekly *khidmah* and the transfer of both functions to the Īwān Kabīr transformed both events into a public display of the sultanate and government authority.[328] It was a powerful legitimizing tool that the sultan controlled for his own benefit. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, furthermore, regularized the *khidmah,* which convened on Mondays and Thursdays, and ritualized the parades *(mawākib)* and banquets *(asmiṭah)* which preceded and followed the royal audience, respectively.

According to Nielsen, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad completed the process of "militarization" of the *maẓālim* sessions which took place in the *dār al-'adl,* now situated in the Citadel's Īwān Kabīr. Al-'Umarī *(Masālik al-Abṣār)* describes in detail the seating arrangement of the *maẓālim* sessions: the sultan was flanked by the four *qāḍī al-quḍāh* and his vizier, surrounded from behind by his top military officers, preceded on each side by the most important administrative officers *(wakīl bayt al-māl, nāẓir al-ḥisbah, kātib al-sirr, nāẓir al-jaysh,* and *kuttāb al-dast),* and the amirs of the royal council remained standing beyond this circle. A protocol for seating was maintained for the banquets, as well; likewise, the line-up of officers who took part twice weekly in the military parades (held before the *khidmah*) reflected the current social and professional hierarchy within the Mamluk elite. In fact, Nielsen argues that such seating/standing arrangements were designed to recreate this hierarchy for public view, yet another method of legitimization with highly political overtones.[329]

It was the participation of the Mamluk military elite in the *maẓālim* sessions that "militarized" the ceremonial events that accompanied them. Nielsen explains this phenomenon:

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[327]Ibid., 201.

[328]Nielsen, *Secular Justice,* 53.

[329]Ibid., 56. N. Rabbat, "Mamluk Throne Halls: *Qubba* or *Īwān*?," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 201–18, also addresses the relationship between the ceremonialization of the *dār al-'adl* sessions and the architectural history of the Īwān Kabīr. For the general history of the term "īwān" see N. Rabbat, "Al-Īwān: Ma'nāhu al-Farāghī wa-Madlūluhu al-Tadhkarī," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 49 (1997): 249–67.

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> The involvement of the Mamluk military officers in the *khidma* inevitably led to their involvement in the *maẓālim* session when the two were combined in Dār al-'Adl. . . . [U]nder the Mamluks the amirs [for the first time] had a permanent place [in the Dār al-'Adl session]. This change is underlined by the Mamluk predilection towards appointing military officers to government posts, such as the vizierate, which had previously been filled by civilians.[330]

Ironically, it is at this time, the early fourteenth century, which one can, in one sense, speak of a ″demilitarization″ of the Mamluk state. Recruitment and training of mamluks continued, it is true, but after the victories at 'Ayn Jālūt (1261) and Acre (1291), the borders of the Mamluk state were, for the time being, secure against foreign threat. However, the winding down of military activity abroad was accompanied by a ″militarization″ of ceremonial and culture. The arts of the period are characterized by the military quality of their decoration. What initially appears as an anomaly makes sense if one considers the methods, and purpose, of legitimization of power in the Mamluk sultanate. From the inception of the Mamluk state, the sultans presented themselves as the representatives and defenders of Islam in the eastern Mediterranean and the Hijaz. Their initiatives against the Crusader States and the Mongols established them as leaders of jihad, one requirement of legitimate secular rule as defined by the political thought of the day. The Mamluk sultans, moreover, annually provided the embroidered cover for the Ka'bah in Mecca (the *kiswah*), had their names mentioned in the *khuṭbah,* and provided financial and organizational support for the ulama—all of which were traditional methods of legitimizing rule in medieval Islam.

With military threats removed, at least for the time being, the sultans were able to focus their energies and resources into transforming their image at home. They created new visual images, meant to solidify and legitimize their regimes. Among these were the development of ceremonial with military themes and the ″militarized″ objects that went with them. The militarization of Mamluk art can, in part, be related to this phenomenon.[331]

The precise origins of the ceremonies associated with the Īwān Kabīr and the Qaṣr al-Ablaq are obscure. Mamluk sources, as related in al-Maqrīzī, al-Qalqashandī, and Ibn al-'Abbās′ manual for kings, credit the Persians for various

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[330]Nielsen, *Secular Justice,* 61.

[331]For a complementary view on the militarization of the early Mamluk state consult N. Rabbat, ″The ′Militarization′ of Architectural Expression in the Medieval Middle East (11th–14th Century): An Outline,″ *Al-'Uṣūr al-Wusṭá* 6 no. 1 (1994): 4–6.

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aspects of not only ceremonial but also architecture.[332] The Il Khanid court represented the ″imperial ideal″ in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, most notably in the areas of ceremonial and state-sponsored art.[333] Two Mongol practices, the ritual drinking of *qumiz* (a fermented and sweetened mare′s milk) and the organization of state-sponsored banquets, were shared by the Mamluk court. Formalized drinking and eating at court were easily translated into a Mamluk context, where they strengthened the bonds of *khushdāshīyah*.[334] Both the protocol and dress adopted for these occasions were incorporated into Egyptian court practice.[335] As for the arts, there are numerous examples of Il Khanid influence in the fourteenth century: the decorative use of faience on minarets (Amir Aytamish′s village mosque, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s Citadel mosque, Amir Qawṣūn′s mosque in Cairo);[336] the layout and iconography of Sultan Ḥasan′s mosque-madrasah complex at the base of the Citadel and the so-called ″Sulṭānīyah″ complex in the Southern Qarafah;[337] the stucco mihrab of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s madrasah on the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn; large Qurans and ″bestiaries″;[338] ceramics (the so-called ″Sultanabad ware″);[339] and large inlaid jugs and ewers with military inscriptions.[340] The aesthetic and overall visual impact of Mongol and Mamluks arts of this

[332]Behrens-Abouseif, ″The Citadel of Cairo,″ 30.

[333]Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250–1800* (New Haven, 1994), 81; S. Blair, ″The Mongol Capital of Sultaniyya, ′The Imperial′,″ *Iran* 24 (1986): 139–51. The method of transmission of Mongol art to Mamluk territories is some matter of debate. Rogers rejects the role of the *wāfidīyah,* exchange of emissaries, ethnic commonality, and migrant artists from Persia, and emphasizes instead the impact of Persian imports (Rogers, ″Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations″). He identifies two phases of Il Khanid artistic influence in Egypt: isolated points of contact (1260–1320) and the adoption of Mongol chinoiserie (1320s on).

[334]For references to Mongol ceremonies in Mamluk-period sources, see L. A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume* (Geneva, 1952).

[335]Mayer, *Mamluk Costume* (textiles); Rogers, ″Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations,″ and Rice, ″Inlaid Brasses,″ 283–326 (for the depiction of Mongol-style dress in Mamluk inlaid basins), describe the kinds of Mongol garments adopted by the Mamluks at court.

[336]Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 265–66; Rogers, ″Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations,″ 386–87; and M. Meinecke, ″Die mamlukischen Fayencemosiakdekorationen: eine Werkstätte aus Tabrīz in Kairo (1330–1350),″ *Kunst des Orient* 11 (1976–77): 85–144.

[337]Blair and Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam,* 84; Blair, ″The Mongol Capital of Sultaniyya,″ 148.

[338]R. Hillenbrand, ″Mamluk and Ilkhanid Bestiaries: Convention and Experiment,″ *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 149–87; Rogers, ″Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations.″

[339]Rogers, ″Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations,″ 397. The ware is defined and illustrated in Lane, *Early Islamic Pottery*.

[340]Blair, ″Artists and Patronage.″

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period are the same: they are monumental in size, colorful, and meant for ostentatious display.

As regards the role of such ceremonies in Egyptian society, more suggestive comparisons may be made with Fatimid customs, upon which many aspects of both public and semi-private ceremony were based.[341] Cairo's Citadel under al-Nāṣir has been described as a stage for the elaborate ceremonials that he developed.[342] Similarly, in her recent work on Fatimid ceremonies, Paula Sanders has described Fatimid Cairo as a "ritual city" and has emphasized how public processions and banquets played against the backdrop of Cairo's urban landscape contributed to the city's "urbanness." [343] Fatimid ceremonies, such as the biweekly audience, the Opening of the Khalīj, urban processions, and official banquets, were adopted by the Mamluks, modified, and elaborated, and many were moved from the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn (the Fatimid center) to the architectural "stage" built for them on the Citadel. By moving parades and sultanic audiences, for instance, to the Citadel, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad was able to claim the Fatimids' symbolic heritage as his own.[344]

"Insignia of sovereignty" associated with the Fatimid court—the throne, parasol, flags and banners—can also be found in Mamluk processions and receptions.[345] The lengthy, detailed descriptions of Fatimid banquets, processions, and formal audiences in which historians like al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī indulge illustrate their interest in the kinds of ceremonies that were the most important in their own day.[346] In these ways, it can be argued, the Mamluks borrowed from the visual vocabulary of Fatimid sovereignty as a way of legitimizing their rule locally.

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[341]For a different view, see R. S. Humphreys, "The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo: A Preliminary Essay," *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972): 86–87, where the "ideology of kingship" symbolized in Mamluk ceremonial is contrasted with the Fatimids' public symbols of universal monarchy.

[342]Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo," 66.

[343]Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Egypt* (New York, 1994). See also Jonathan Katz's review of her book in *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 33 (1996): 212–13.

[344]Similarly, Rabbat argues that some architectural developments in the early fourteenth century "dissociat[ed] the Mamluk ceremonial and official image from that of the Fatimids" (Rabbat, "Mamluk Throne Halls," 208).

[345]Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo," 30–31.

[346]It is significant, in this respect, that al-Maqrīzī documents the organization of the royal kitchen under the sultans al-Ashraf Khalīl and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Mawā'iẓ wa-al-I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* [Bulaq, 1853], 2:230–31) with the same relish for detail on expense as in his descriptions of Fatimid banquets for 'Īd al-Fiṭr (ibid., 1:387; compare al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá,* 3:523–24).

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These symbols and ceremonies were familiar to Egyptians and accepted by them.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad developed complex rituals around these Mongol, Ayyubid, and Fatimid customs.[347] The biweekly audience in the *dār al-'adl* (practiced by both the Fatimids and Ayyubids) was moved to the monumental Īwān al-Kabīr on the Citadel. The Qaṣr al-Ablaq was the scene of the *khidmah* (royal audience or review of mamluks/service ceremony); audiences were followed by large, formal banquets where either the Mamluk elite (in the mornings) or the army as a whole (for afternoon sessions) attended and where, as always, stringent rules regarding seating, serving, and eating were observed.[348] The biweekly polo games, held initially at the Hippodrome,[349] and formalized hunting excursions were innovations of al-Nāṣir and were accompanied by ceremonial extravagance in gift-giving, processions, and banquets. Over the course of the Mamluk period, processions began to take on an increasing importance and were used to mark occasions as diverse as major holidays (the 'Īds, plenitude ceremony, the *maḥmal* procession),[350] coronations, military victories, hunting excursions,[351] and the return of the sultan or an important amir from abroad.[352]

Processions and banquets were rare occasions for the Mamluks to come into contact with the local populace and were taken full advantage of by the sultan as a way of popularizing his rule.[353] The development of ceremonial during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign was, furthermore, another aspect of his policies geared

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[347]Al-'Umarī (*Masālik* and *Al-Ta'rīf*) is the principle source on ceremonial under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign. As al-Nāṣir's *kātib al-sirr* in Syria, al-'Umarī was personally familiar with the organization of festivals and the daily routines of the court. Both al-Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ* and *Sulūk*) and al-Qalqashandī *(Ṣubḥ al-A'shá)* rely heavily on al-'Umarī for their information on Mamluk customs (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 308). They do not differentiate between the Bahri and Burji periods, however, and do not account for developments in ceremonial over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Two secondary studies on Mamluk architecture and the role it played in ceremonial—Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo," and Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*—document the most important developments, particularly the ways in which Mamluk ritual was simplified and curtailed by the Circassian sultans. Other sources consulted for the present study include Stowasser, "Manner and Customs," and B. Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge, 1993).

[348]A description of dining etiquette can be found in Ibn al-'Abbās' manual for kings, *Atar al-Uwwal* (Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo," 44–45).

[349]The polo games were moved to the *ḥawsh* (animal pens) of the Citadel by the Circassian Mamluks (Behrens-Abouseif, "The Citadel of Cairo," 65).

[350]Shoshan, *Popular Culture,* describes several of these events.

[351]Stowasser, "Manner and Customs," 18.

[352]Shoshan, *Popular Culture,* 74.

[353]Popular support for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's regime was exhibited in mob riots during the usurpation of Baybars al-Jāshankīr (609–10/1309–10) (Shoshan, *Popular Culture,* 52–54).

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towards consolidating his power vis-à-vis the factious mamluk system which had dethroned him two times previously. The daily repetition of rituals designed to demonstrate the exalted status of the sultan over the other mamluks reinforced the Mamluk class structure while emphasizing his sovereignty in terms derived from Fatimid symbols of authority.

Drinking parties and formal banquets (both public and semi-private) were focuses of Mamluk ceremonial. To what degree vessels, and particularly ceramic vessels, played a visible role in these is suggested in references to banquets found in the Arabic sources and illustrations of the same in metalworking and manuscript painting. These vignettes of Mamluk daily life are few and restricted in detail.[354] However they are suggestive of a specialization in vessel form and decoration that relates to both their ceremonial use and the Mamluk social hierarchy.

The following section serves two purposes. First, references to vessel shape, decoration, and use will be documented and compared to the typology of sgraffito set forth earlier in this paper. Second, the visibility of the *khāṣṣakīyah* in Mamluk banquets and processions is analyzed and related to characteristics of sgraffito decoration in the fourteenth century. It is argued that the development of sgraffito in Egypt is related to general developments in Mamluk ceremonial introduced by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and continued by his successors.

The term most often applied to banquets in the Arabic sources is *asmiṭah* (singular *simāṭ*).[355] Later historians, such as Ibn Iyās (d. ca. 1524), use the term *walīm* (pl. *walā'im*) interchangeably with *simāṭ*. In Ibn Iyās they appear in the common phrase *wa-fīhi walīmat/asmiṭat ḥaflatin, wa-kāna yawman mashhūdan* (″and in that year was a *dinner party*, and it was a notable day″).[356] *Khiwān* is less common: a more formal kind of banquet may be intended in this case.[357] The

[354]Illustrations from al-Ḥarīrī′s *Maqāmāt* often include scenes from banquets and dinner parties. See D. Haldane, ″Scenes of Daily Life from Mamluk Miniatures,″ in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades,* ed. P. M. Holt (Warminster, 1977), 85, Fig. 3 for a banquet at a merchant′s wedding (fourteenth century, Syrian). D. Hill, *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* (Dordrecht, Holland, 1971), 99, Fig. 82 (fifteenth century) and 219, Pl. 13 (fourteenth century) reproduce drinking sessions from Badī' al-Zamān al-Jazarī′s *Kitāb fī Ma'rifat al-Ḥiyal al-Handasīyah.*

[355]In Fatimid usage it refers to the place where food is eaten, often a temporary construction built of wood or a long, varnished wood table (al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 1:387).

[356]Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* ed. M. Muṣṭafá (Wiesbaden and Cairo, 1975–84), vol. 3 has many examples. See especially p. 468, ll. 18–19.

[357]Humphreys, ″The Expressive Intent,″ 87. In al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá,* 4:56, ll. 1–7, there seems to be slight distinction between *khiwān* as a banquet held on a special occasion and *simāṭ,* one of the daily meals attended by the mamluks at the Citadel. Sayyid, the editor of the 1985 edition of *Masālik al-Abṣār,* equates al-Qalqashandī′s *khiwān* with al-'Umarī′s *simāṭ;* in this case, both indicate the sultan′s table (al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 40, n. 3).

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chronicles and biographies are full of references to banquets of all kinds, but details are often lacking. The occasion for the banquet, however, is usually noted. Banquets could mark a variety of events, such as weddings, national holidays, procession-days, and the completion of a building project or literary work,[358] as well as the five daily group meals that the mamluks attended.[359] The pattern of extravagance established by the sultan was followed by his governors,[360] lesser amirs,[361] and even the civilian elite. The ulama were often invited to sultanic and amiral banquets during special events.[362] They, in turn, held their own banquets, which were attended by other religious scholars, government officials, and members of the court.[363] In this way, civilian Cairo became acquainted with the expensive food, drink, and serving vessels used by the court in the Citadel.

Other information provided by the contemporary historians relates to the expense of the banquet, such as the quantity of chicken consumed, the measure of saffron used in food preparation, and the amount of money spent on food and drink. Al-Maqrīzī is particularly interested in the minutia of pocketbook and kitchen. His descriptions of Fatimid banquets, about which he borrows heavily from earlier

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[358]While amirs marked the completion of a palace in this way in the fourteenth century, this practice becomes more common for sultans, amirs, and the civilian elite in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, according to the numerous references in Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr*. See, for example, 1:1:549, ll. 15–20; 2:207, ll. 5–12; 333, ll. 21–24; and 406, ll. 6–10; and 3:218, ll. 14–21.

[359]There were, technically, two sets of banquets given daily for the mamluks. Of the first set, one was in the morning, the second was called *al-khāṣṣ,* and the third was *al-ṭārī* and was attended personally by the sultan (al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 40). There were two seatings in the evening (Stowasser, ″Manner and Customs,″ 18; Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 201).

[360]The governors in Alexandria and Syria held biweekly justice hearings followed by meals for those officials attending as well as sponsored banquets for the Īd celebrations, in the manner of the sultan. For instance—al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 43, and al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá,* 4:24, l. 7; 197, ll. 7–8; and 225, ll. 16–19.

[361]Amiral banquets usually followed weddings and the inauguration of a new building. See Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 3:302, ll. 6–9 (*walīmatu-'arsin,* ″wedding banquet″).

[362]On procession days, the head qadis and civilian administrators attended banquets held at the Īwān al-Kabīr (al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá,* 4:56). According to al-Qalqashandī, it was the custom of the sultan to share a simple morning meal *(simāṭ)* of stew and sweets with the head shaykhs (ibid., 5:205). His reference to banquets held after military drills, to which the ulama and other civilian elite were invited, suggests that this was a somewhat regular practice (ibid., 206). In 906 Quran readers, preachers, and all of the amirs were invited to an amiral banquet in Ezbekīyah (Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 3:467).

[363]One example has been dated to 842 by Ibn Iyās. The *qāḍī al-quḍāh* (head judge) sponsored a banquet *(asmiṭah/walīmatu ḥaflatin)* to celebrate his completion of a commentary on al-Bukhārī. In attendance were the sultan's son, the other head qadis, Sufi shaykhs, the *kātib al-sirr,* and the *nāẓir al-khāṣṣ* (*Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 2:207, ll. 5–12).

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historians, are long and detailed. The banquet held for ʻĪd al-Fiṭr by the caliph was particularly lavish.[364] Al-Maqrīzī devotes considerable attention to the food and the vessels in which it was served. Silver, gold, and ″porcelain″ *(ṣīnī)* vessels were placed on the table; chicken and bread were stacked ″as high as a man is tall″ on large ceramic *(khazafī)* trays.

For the Mamluk period, the biographer and contemporary critic of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, al-Yūsufī (d. 1358), likewise emphasizes the great expense lavished by the sultan on banquets held in honor of political dignitaries.[365] One is described as an eating frenzy, a festive gorging that lasted as many as four days.[366] Similarly, al-Maqrīzī devotes a lengthy section on the kitchen expenditure of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and includes such details as the number of chickens killed daily for the morning banquets, the amount of sugar purchased annually for Ramaḍān, and the household expenses of al-Nāṣir′s son, al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāʻīl.[367] The wealth and extensive personal estates accumulated by the royal cooks are documented by al-Maqrīzī, but the day-to-day management of the kitchen is not a point of interest.[368] Nowhere in any of these Mamluk accounts are the vessels for cooking, serving, or consumption described or, for that matter, even mentioned.

Short references to vessels can be found, however, in the descriptions of Fatimid banquets, food rations in the Mamluk period, a Mamluk drinking ceremony, and the Geniza documents. The large Fatimid serving trays described by al-Maqrīzī were supported by heavy cylindrical stands. These trays and supporting stands were still used in the Mamluk period, as is suggested by historical references to sizable ceramic trays *(khawāfiq ṣīnī)* used to serve large quantities of sweets and meat at the daily mamluk banquets[369] and the fourteenth-century brass and ceramic stands displayed in museum collections.[370] One sgraffito vessel in the gallery of the Islamic Museum in Cairo is a ceramic copy of a brass or bronze stand of this sort (Fig. 16).[371]

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[364]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 1:387. The same account is found in al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʻshá,* 3:523–24.

[365]Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir,* 364 and 376. Al-Yūsufī was *muqaddam al-ḥalqah* under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. He published his biography of the sultan anonymously because of its critical, even hostile, assessment of al-Nāṣir′s reign (D. Little, ″The Recovery of a Lost Source for Bahri Mamluk History: al-Yūsufī′s *Nuzhat al-nāẓir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*,″ *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94 [1974]: 42–54).

[366]Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir,* 206.

[367]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:236–37.

[368]Ibid.; Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History,* 185 (citing al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*).

[369]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:236.

[370]Examples include a mid fourteenth-century cast brass stand inlaid with silver and gold (Allan, *Islamic Metalwork*, 97, cat. #19).

[371]Inv. #14754; profile published in ʻAbd al-Rāziq, ″Le sgraffito de l′Égypte,″ 15, second row,

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Figure 16. Phase II Egyptian Mamluk sgraffito copy of a local brass tray stand, 14th century, probably Fustat

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The term *zabādī* (sing. *zubdīyah*) describes vessels in which rations or measured portions of meat or sweets were distributed.[372] Individual servings of meat purchased from the *sūq* were sold in *zabādī,* which were, in this case, smallish ceramic bowls. References to the *zubdīyah* as a ″take-out″ dish for meat span the Fatimid to Mamluk periods. According to Ibn Iyās, the vizier′s sister sent him daily a *zubdīyah* of meat from the market, presumably to save him the trouble of going himself.[373] In the late fifteenth century (873), during a food shortage, amir Yashbak reduced the meat rations *(zabādī-laḥmī)* of Sufis and all ″turbaned men″; he then confiscated all meat sold in the *sūq* for the mamluks.[374]

Individual servings of sweets at banquets and during Ramaḍān were also distributed in *zabādī*.[375] At his wedding (892, turn of the sixteenth century), Sultan al-Ghawrī distributed small bowls of sweets *(zabādī ṣīnī fīhi sukkar)* in the mosque.[376] The term also appears in the much earlier Geniza documents. According to Goitein, the *zubdīyah* was the most common vessel on the average Cairene′s table and the regular eating bowl so ubiquitous in museum collections.[377] It came in a variety of sizes and was used for a variety of purposes. In the smallest *zabādī* were served fruits and nuts. They may have been made of wood, at least in the middle-income households of Fatimid and Ayyubid Cairo. Dessert bowls like these were relatively small. The servings distributed to the masses during Ramaḍān would have been meager. Furthermore, references to confiscated *zabādī* from personal treasures in the Fatimid and Mamluk periods number into the tens of thousands; the numbers argue for a small size.[378] The term is current in Egypt today and designates a small yoghurt bowl.

Liquids were also served and consumed in ceremonial vessels called *zabādī*. An important passage in *Kitāb al-Tārīkh* describes the Mamluk custom of drinking

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middle drawing. The Cairo stand has been signed by Sharaf al-Abawānī and carries a generic military inscription of dedication.

[372]The word *khafiqīyah* appears much less regularly. It is also associated with meat ration distribution. Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl was said to have sent his army into the markets while on campaign to get their daily meat. The servings were brought back in *khafiqīyah ṣīnī* (al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:230, l. 36; Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* 7.

[373]Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 1:1:219.

[374]Ibid., 3:22–23.

[375]Al-Nuwayrī, a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, describes *zabādī* as vessels for serving sweets (R. P. A. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* [Leiden, 1881], 1:578).

[376]Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 3:241.

[377]Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 4:145–46.

[378]Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 1:1:193 (confiscation of the vizier Jawhar′s treasury, tenth c.); ibid., 454 (contents of an amiral house, fourteenth century).

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qumiz (fermented mare′s milk or a sour milk sweetened with sugar),[379] a practice the Qipchak Turks brought from their homeland in the southern Russian steppe.[380] According to Ibn Iyās, in 791 (1389) Sultan al-Manṣūr Ḥajjī formalized this practice by obliging the amirs every Sunday and Wednesday to join him in the Maydān below the Citadel for drinks. The ceremony followed the protocol of formal banquets: the amirs were seated according to rank and served *qumiz* by those members of the *khāṣṣakīyah* whose function it was to serve drinks at banquets, the *sāqī*s. The *sāqī*s served the drink in individual ceramic bowls *(zabādī ṣīnī):* ″wa-al-suqāh tasqīhim al-qumiz fī al-zabādī al-ṣīnī.″[381] Like many other formalities initiated by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his successors, the formal drinking ceremony came to an end after the reign of Barqūq (r. 1382–89, 1390–99).

In another entry from al-Yūsufī, the drinking of *qumiz* is described in an informal setting.[382] The *khān* Abū Sa‘īd (r. 1316–35), a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, has confronted the bedouin leader, Mahāh, about his alliance with the Mamluks. In order to fortify himself for the verbal confrontation, the *Īlkhān* drinks *qumiz* from a *hanab,* or beaker. The incident is informative on several accounts. First, the drinking of *qumiz* was a pan-steppe tradition also practiced by the Mongols. Second, it was a custom that could at times be informal and practiced ″at home.″ Finally, one drank *qumiz* from a cup. Unfortunately, neither the size nor shape of the *zubdīyah* or the *hanab* can be established on the basis of these accounts alone.

More detailed information on the custom of drinking *qumiz* is provided by accounts written by European visitors to the Mongol court. The Franciscan William of Rubruck, who spent time in Karakorum from 1253 to 1255, writes frequently about the centrality of *qumiz* drinking parties in the court life of the Mongols. He writes that silver and gold goblets studded with precious stones were kept at the entrance to the Mongols′ tent, along with large containers of *comos*.[383] Drunkenness was not only approved of, but was considered honorable, and both men and women were encouraged to drink as much as they could during these parties. Even guests were showered with drink. ″When they want to challenge someone to drink, they seize him by the ears, tugging them vigorously to make him open his

[379]The term has been defined in Dozy, *Supplément,* 2:405.

[380]Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 1:1:393; translated into French in Bahgat and Massoul, *La céramique musulmane,* 8.

[381]Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 1:1:393, l. 14.

[382]Al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir,* 202 (esp. l. 9).

[383]William of Rubruck, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253–1255*, ed. P. Jackson (London, 1990), 132.

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gullet, and clap and dance in front of him.″[384]

The khān′s drinking sessions were important occasions with all the formalities of official banquets. Mengu Khān, for example, held court-wide drinking parties twice a year at Karakorum, during which time he distributed garments and other presents to his nobles and organized parades and feasts.[385] This description resembles Marco Polo′s account of the Great Khān′s ″White Feast″ on his birthday, where the cupbearers, tasters, and guards played focal roles and embroidered gold silks with golden belts covered with precious stones and pearls were given to the khān′s intimates.[386]

The few details that can be obtained from these accounts indicate that *qumiz,* whether consumed alone at drinking parties or along with food at banquets, was served from large ceremonial vessels. Marco Polo writes:

> The wine, or precious beverage . . . is drawn into large golden vessels, big enough to contain sufficient wine for eight or ten men. Of these vessels, one is placed on the table for every two guests. Each of the two guests has a golden cup with a handle, and with it he draws his drink from the large golden vessel. And so with the ladies, every two of whom have one of the large vessels and two cups, like the men.[387]

The somewhat fanciful drawing by William of Rubruck of a silver fountain with four spouts for each of the four alcoholic ″staples″ of the Mongol diet—*qumiz,* wine, mead, and rice wine—suggests that a variety of vessels were used to contain and distribute the drink.[388]

In twentieth-century Western culture, we differentiate between eating and drinking and between bowls and cups. This is far from a universal concept, however. In the modern Middle East soup is drunk (not eaten) from a vessel that could be called a bowl or cup. The nomenclature is subjective; in fact, many industrial potters in the modern United States reject the labels and call their vessels of consumption (regardless of shape, size, or form) ″bowls.″ The distinction between ″cup″ and ″bowl″ is a fine one that exists only in the mind of the typologist, at least as far as medieval pottery is concerned. The term *zubdīyah,* for example, could refer to either: both food and liquids were served in this vessel-type.

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[384]Ibid., 76.

[385]Ibid., 209.

[386]Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo,* ed. A. Ricci (London, 1950), 133, 137–38.

[387]William of Rubruck, *The Mission of Friar William,* 131.

[388]R. Tannahill, *Food in History* (New York, 1973), 135.

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The medieval Egyptian sources do, however, mention vessels that were used only for drinking liquids. A variety of drinking vessels were used in the average Cairene home. The *ṭāsah* and *kūz* are two types of cups mentioned in the Geniza documents, differentiated by function and shape.[389] Goitein has defined the *ṭāsah* as a ″wide, but shallow, drinking vessel.″ He suggests it was a communal cup, passed around the table from person to person, and of monumental size. That this was a vessel used on special occasions is suggested by Dozy, who mentions, for instance, that black eyes could be treated by water held in the *ṭāsat al-tarbah,* or ″concussion cup.″[390] Likewise, one drank lukewarm milk, honey, or water from a ″magic bowl″ *(ṭāsah)* inscribed with incantations or instructions for medical use in order to cure a variety of common maladies.[391] The cup used on a daily basis was called a *″kūz,″* which is an Arabic term used today in Egypt. Like *zubdīyah,* the term *kūz* can refer to a variety of shapes, sizes, and materials. The ceremonial *kūz* was rare: it was made of silver and was large and heavy.[392]

Banquet-ware differed from regular tableware in size, material, and decoration. Some of the most well-known banqueting vessels were recovered from a hoard in northwest Iran and have been dated to the late tenth century.[393] They comprise a set of silver and nielloed jugs, bowls, and a platter—the sorts of vessels used in Fatimid banquets, according to al-Maqrīzī′s account. The three bowls have steeply sloping sides, which are internally inscribed with a frieze showering blessings on the patron, one amir Abū al-ʻAbbās Walkin ibn Hārūn. Ward suggests these were dessert bowls, because their steep walls would render drinking difficult.

The notion that form follows function is useful only if one is clear about what *range* of forms are suitable for a particular task. Steep walls do not necessarily eliminate drinking. For example, the silver and enameled Byzantine chalices used for the Eucharist had high, vertical walls. One cannot eliminate the possibility that, like the communion cup, ceremonial drinking vessels among the Mamluks were larger and of a different shape than regular household cups. The deep and wide spaces afforded by carinated or vertical-sided vessels would also have been ideal for serving fruit.[394] Fruit was consumed in some quantity at banquets, both in the Mamluk and Fatimid periods. However, large bowls with straight sides are

[389]Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 4:147.

[390]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm al-Zāhirah,* 16:167.

[391]Wiet, ″Les biographies,″ 269–72. For a bibliography of sources on ″magic bowls,″ see his n. 189 on 284.

[392]Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society,* 4:148.

[393]Ward, *Islamic Metalwork,* 54.

[394]Although I disagree with his notion that large, carinated ceramic bowls held fruit at Mamluk banquets, I am grateful to Prof. Daniel Crecelius of California State University for the suggestion (personal communication, August 1996, ARCE Fellow′s Luncheon, Cairo).

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never mentioned in association with fruit and banquets. We read, instead, of dried sweets served on large platters[395] and fruit in baskets.[396] In the banqueting passages from al-Maqrīzī and al-Qalqashandī mentioned earlier, we get the impression that food in general (whether meat, vegetables, or sweets), if served in large quantities, was carried on large platters. Bowls/cups with carinated or vertical walls, if found at all at banquets, would have functioned in another manner.

Rare illustrations of banqueting vessels in metalwork and illuminated manuscripts are informative about form and function in a way that the historical sources are not.[397] Little is known about the artist who signed his work ″Ibn al-Zayn,″ except that he was a contemporary of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his work represents some of the best inlay work of the early Mamluk period.[398] At least two pieces can be attributed to him on the basis of his signature: the well-known St. Louis basin and the Vasselot bowl.[399]

The ″St. Louis basin,″ now in the Louvre, is so-named because it was originally identified as a fourteenth-century royal French baptismal basin. This notion was rejected with Rice′s 1953 monograph, in which he identified the patron as Salār and assigned its production to the period of his amiral promotion (1290–1310).[400] The central register pictures an array of armed amirs and members of the royal household, bringing ″gifts″ to single equestrians framed by a roundel. Although Rice did not specify these figures as the *khāṣṣakīyah,* the *silāḥdār, jumāqdār, bunduqdār, jāmdār, jukāndār, bāzdār, sāqī,* and *jāshankīr* clearly carry symbols of their office across the surface of the basin in what seems to be a ceremonial procession. The placement of the *sāqī* (cupbearer) and *jāshankīr* (royal taster) close to the equestrian figures and the detailed execution of the vessels they carry emphasize the ceremonial importance of these two officials. The *sāqī* carries a bulbous carafe and offers a drink from a long-stemmed, vertical-sided goblet. At the other end of the procession stands the *jāshankīr* holding a wide, shallow, hemispherical ″bowl″ on a high pedestal foot—a shape that may correspond to the

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[395] Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A‘shá,* 3:524 (Fatimid).

[396] Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 3:241 (late Mamluk).

[397] See note 356.

[398] Rice, *The Baptistére de Saint Louis,* 12.

[399] For the bibliography of sources on these two works, see Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 75. Rice, *The Baptistère de Saint Louis,* has the best plates (in black and white) of the St. Louis basin. Both vessels are illustrated in color in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*. Rogers, ″Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations,″ analyzes in depth their *khāṣṣakīyah* iconography and relates it to Mongol influence on the Mamluk court.

[400] Rice, *The Baptistére de Saint Louis,* 17. Rice recognizes the portrait of Salār in one of the armed amirs.

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Geniza *ṭāsah*.[401] The decoration of the vessel is familiar enough from sgraffito: the dark rim is outlined several times in heavy incisions and a wide, central register carries an inscription: *anā makhfīyah li-ḥaml al-ṭa'ām* (″I am a *makhfīyah*, for serving food″). It is a very fortunate inscription, indeed, for determining banqueting vessel shape and function. However, the term may not have been that familiar to fourteenth-century Egyptians, since Ibn al-Zayn felt it necessary to include this commentary.[402] One thirteenth-century source, al-Baghdādī, defines *makhfīyah* as the food which may have been served in this vessel: a sort of meat stew containing kebabs and strips of red meat cooked in a pot with water, chickpeas, onions, and spices.[403] On the basis of more modern usage, Dozy has identified the term as a Maghribi word for a covered container or tureen.[404]

A similar sort of vessel is inscribed on the other of Ibn al-Zayn′s signed works, a large brass bowl inlaid with silver and gold, also in the Louvre.[405] The main register of the ″Vasselot bowl″ makes explicit reference to a royal banquet: a dignitary sits with beaker in hand inside two medallions and musicians and the *khāṣṣakīyah,* all holding the various objects of their offices, are seated to either side of him. One figure with Mongol features sits cross-legged to the right of the dignitary and holds aloft a wide, shallow vessel on a high pedestal foot. It is almost identical to the *makhfīyah* of the St. Louis basin, except for a pronounced carination and some indication of an out-turned rim. The *naskhī* inscription of its wide, central register displays the artist′s signature—*'aml Ibn al-Zayn* (″the work of Ibn al-Zayn″). Atıl refers to this figure as the *sāqī,* because of the small beaker laid at his feet. However, the artist has incorporated several beakers and pouring vessels into the background rinceau; the beaker here is entirely decorative. The placement of this officer to the right of the dignitary and the shape of the inscribed vessels he holds are the same in both of Ibn al-Zayn′s pieces. It is entirely possible that the St. Louis basin and the Vasselot bowl belong to the same banqueting set and that the scenes were meant to complement one another. If this is so, then the

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[401]Atıl (*Renaissance of Islam,* 76) identifies this official as the *jāshankīr* on the basis of the vessel he is carrying. On another Mamluk inlaid brass, Rogers recognizes the *jāshankīr* by what appears to be a brass ″lunchbox″ in his hands (Rogers, ″Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations,″ 390). The vessel known as the Mamluk lunchbox was a sort of lockable tureen designed to prevent poisoning. See illustration in Ward, *Islamic Metalwork,* 119, Fig. 95. Ironically, in none of these illustrations does the *jāshankīr* carry the official blazon of his office: the table.

[402]Ibn al-Zayn also identifies penboxes *(dawāt)* on the basin in this manner. Rice reminds us that ″explanatory inscriptions″ like these were also part of the decorative vocabulary of thirteenth-century metalworking (*The Baptistère de Saint Louis,* 20).

[403]Tannahill, *Food in History,* 174.

[404]Dozy, *Supplément,* 1:387–88.

[405]See illustrations and descriptions in Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 74–75, cat. #20.

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Vasselot figure is the *jāshankīr,* and he is holding the taster′s bowl, or *makhfīyah*.

The *makhfīyah* and the *sāqī′s* goblet are specialized banqueting vessels and are related to the ceremonial roles of the *jāshankīr* and the *sāqī*. Ibn al-Zayn takes care to detail certain aspects of form and decoration in order to emphasize the ceremonial importance of these two vessel types. The beaker, on the other hand, is a more familiar and widespread form that figures prominently in banqueting scenes. The truncated cone of its profile and the straight, flaring sides are repeated as a decorative device in the Vasselot bowl and as an icon itself of the royal banquet in Islamic minor art. The frontispiece of the Vienna manuscript of al-Ḥarīrī′s *Maqāmāt* essentially repeats the banqueting scene of the Vasselot bowl by emphasizing the drinking dignitary with his beaker surrounded by household officials and musicians.[406] The cross-legged prince lounging with glass beaker in hand is a visual abbreviation for the ″pleasures of the court″ that fits conveniently into a bowl interior. The beaker motif has a long history in Islamic ceramics, one that begins with Abbasid slip-painted and lusterware and continues into Seljuk, Byzantine, Cypriot, and Mamluk sgraffito.

The goblet held aloft by the *sāqī* of the St. Louis basin differs from ordinary stemmed bowls. The artist has emphasized its vertical, carinated walls, and the interplay of brass and silver inlay within the contours of the goblet is meant to indicate a metal vessel rather than a glass one. Similarly, the metal inlay of Ibn al-Zayn′s *makhfīyah*s represents the original inlay of those vessels. Metalworking was imitated in Islamic ceramics before the Mongol invasions.[407] The products of Mamluk metalworkers became extremely influential in the fourteenth century and were reproduced in many media, including glass and ceramics. The debt fourteenth-century Mamluk sgraffito owes to contemporary Egyptian and the slightly earlier Mosul metalworking tradition has been duly noted by scholars of medieval Egyptian pottery.[408]

The full development of brass-imitative sgraffito within a relatively short period of time (early-mid fourteenth century) may indicate factors at work other than technological development, the scarcity of a raw material, or the adoption of

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[406]Vienna, Nationalbibliothek AF 9, dated 1335. Rogers′ claim that this is the only surviving illustration of Mamluk ceremonial can now be rejected (Rogers, ″Evidence for Mamluk-Mongol Relations,″ 395; illustrated p. 394, Ill. 6).

[407]For a discussion of the impact the bronze-working industry had on twelfth- and thirteenth-century Iranian ceramics, see Y. Tabbaa, ″Bronze Shapes in Iranian Ceramics of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.″

[408]Consult the following for observations on decorative composition and general layout: Fouquet, ″Contribution à l′étude de la céramique,″ 130; Marzouk, ″Three Signed Specimens,″ 498; and Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 148. On specific motifs borrowed from beaten and inlaid brass and developments in form see Scanlon, ″Some Mamluk Ceramic Shapes,″ 62.

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the art of the ruling elite by the bourgeoisie.[409] Not all forms of inlaid brass were reproduced in ceramics. In fact, the most popular vessels did not capture the imagination of the Egyptian potter. Lamps, straight-sided basins, trays, penboxes, incense burners, and ewers do not seem to have been produced in sgraffito. On the other hand, rounded basins, tray stands, goblets, large footed bowls, and, arguably, candlesticks do have counterparts in Mamluk sgraffito. It is as if particular vessels associated with banquets and processionals were targeted by Cairene potters. It is significant that these were the largest and most visible brass and bronze accessories. The development of ceremonial in the fourteenth century and the restructuring of the Mamluk elite—both related to the policies of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his successors—emerge as key factors in the development of Mamluk sgraffito in this period.

The monumental, inscribed sgraffito vessels of fourteenth-century Egypt share many characteristics with the ceremonial drinking vessels described here. Exaggerated dimensions are emphasized in the *makḥfīyah*s of St. Louis′ basin and the Vasselot bowl and metalware vessels described in the Geniza documents and contemporary chronicles and administrative manuals. The extended proportions of brass basins, bowls, ewers, and candlesticks are paralleled in fourteenth-century sgraffito bowls. Furthermore, the layout of decoration standardized in Mamluk metalworking is applied to ceramics. The repetition of inscriptional registers interrupted by blazon roundels and the placement and formulae of the artist′s signature is characteristic of Sharaf al-Abawānī′s work, for example. Details such as the ″Y-pattern,″ double register lines, the color combination of yellows and browns (imitative of gold inlay on brass or bronze), and dark outlined rims are also borrowed from metalwork.

Of the two main forms of Mamluk sgraffito, the hemispherical bowl is most easily identifiable as a product of the glass industry.[410] It is impossible to precisely determine, however, what kind of vessel shape from Mamluk metalworking is imitated in the carinated sgraffito forms of the fourteenth century. The carinated shape does not replicate closely enough any form of Egyptian or Mosul metalworking, nor does it reproduce the vessel shapes illustrated in Ibn al-Zayn′s

[409]The development of figural, inlaid metalwork in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries can be explained in terms of a ″silver crisis″ (J. W. Allan, ″The Survival of Precious and Base Metal Objects″—genesis of Iran′s beaten brass and bronze industry) and the empowerment of the non-royal, urban elite (O. Grabar, ″The Illustrated *Maqāmāt* of the Thirteenth Century: the Bourgeoisie and the Arts,″ in *The Islamic City,* ed. H. H. Hourani and S. M. Stern [Oxford, 1970], 207–22—focuses on painting). While these arguments are useful for the Seljuk and Ayyubid worlds, they do not adequately document artistic and social developments of fourteenth-century Egypt.

[410]For a review of the history of this form in glassware and ceramics and its relationship with metalworking, see Tabbaa, ″Bronze Shapes,″ and Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 118–44.

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basin and bowl. One should not read Ibn al-Zayn´s illustrations too literally, however. The vessel profiles and proportions are approximated and only express the impression the *makhfīyah* and *sāqī*´s cup left on an artist who had visited the Mamluk dining halls.[411] The question, then, remains whether carinated forms of Mamluk sgraffito imitate a known ceremonial vessel (such as the *makhfīyah* or *sāqī*´s goblet), reproduce a metalware form that has disappeared, or developed independently. One could imagine the sort of ″large, golden vessel″ described by Marco Polo in reference to alcoholic beverages served at banquets.

The overwhelming decorative influence of contemporary metalwork on all media cannot be ignored. The decoration of fourteenth-century sgraffito, unlike that of the thirteenth century, clearly derives more from contemporary metalworking than ceramics. Likewise, the exaggerated proportions of many fourteenth-century sgraffito vessels can be compared to a developing monumentality in the beaten brass basins, bowls, candlesticks, and trays set aside for banquets and processions.[412] Some vessels resemble goblets; others are remarkably similar to ceremonial candlesticks set upside-down (see Fig. 5, bottom).[413] The base stem, straight flaring sides, and decorative mode of some carinated sgraffito bowls and brass candlesticks are quite similar, although the dimensions are not comparable. Ceremonial metalwork made enough of an impression on contemporary Cairenes to popularize monumentality, untraditional proportions, and inscriptional and heraldic decoration in common tableware.

The ″classic Mamluk chalice,″ however, is neither a true chalice nor a large ceremonial basin or bowl. The dimensions, profiles, organization of decoration, and proportions place it somewhere between the two. Thus, the original typological problem remains: is the ″classic Mamluk chalice″ a cup or a bowl? If its general shape does not seem to correspond to a particular function, neither is the heraldry incorporated into the vessel´s decoration informative about the vessel´s use. While the *sāqī*´s goblet is the most common blazon in Mamluk sgraffito, it is certainly not the only one. Therefore, one cannot assume that every carinated vessel was meant to represent the *sāqī*´s cup, particularly if the blazon is that of the *silāḥdār* or *dawādār*.[414] On the other hand, the blazon of the *jāshankīr* (a circular table) is

[411]The carination of the *sāqī*´s cup on St. Louis´ basin may represent the curvature of a hemispherical wall.

[412]The unwieldy size of the largest sgraffito bowls presents a functional problem. Because Nile clay is porous, vessels tend to be heavily potted. When they reach these proportions they become extremely difficult to lift. The possibility that large sgraffito vessels were meant only for display is worth some consideration.

[413]I am grateful to Dr. Lisa Golombek, Royal Ontario Museum, for this suggestion.

[414]The stemmed bowl does reproduce the *sāqī*´s cup. Glass cups identical to the hemispherical forms of Mamluk sgraffito often have the ringed stem that is illustrated in the *sāqī*´s blazon (Atıl,

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rare in sgraffito, but this does not necessarily eliminate the *makhfīyah* as a source of inspiration for sgraffito shapes. There seems to be no correlation between the blazon and vessel shape or use.

A variety of vessel shapes were executed in the sgraffito technique. While the stemmed, hemispherical bowl imitates the *sāqī*′s goblet used at banquets, the ″classic Mamluk chalice″ recalls a variety of carinated brass vessels used at formal banquets, while not adopting their forms *per se*. The profiles are unique and seem to be transitional between a cup and a bowl, that is between the *sāqī*′s cup and the *makhfīyah* or *ṭāsah*. It is possible that the carinated forms imitated a brass prototype that has left no trace in the archaeological record, such as that described by Marco Polo in regards to the Great Khān′s high feasts. There is, however, a continuous development in profile from Ayyubid luster wares[415] to the Alexandrian products, Wide Rim Arabesque, and fourteenth-century high-footed bowls of monumental proportions. While the profiles are consistently ceramic, specific technical developments such as changes in the color scheme, increasingly large proportions, a decorative program emphasizing inscriptions and blazons, and the elongation of stem and carination point to the realm of metalworking. In short, developments in Mamluk sgraffito from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century can be explained by a consistent and gradual maturation of the Ayyubid ceramic bowl profile along with decorative and technical influence from ceremonial metalwork. It is unfortunate the historical sources have so little to say about tableware. The traditional melting-down of brasses and bronzes has denied us access to what was once a rich repertoire of cups and bowls.

The ceremonial importance of the *sāqī* and *jāshankīr,* more than other *khāṣṣakīyah,* has been emphasized because of their association with expensive tablewares and the central position these figures occupied in Mamluk banquets and processions. The *suqāh* have been described as the overseers of Mamluk banquets. They not only prepared the settings and served drinks to all those in attendance but also cut the meat.[416] The *jāshankīrīyah* played an equally important role. Along with the *ustādār al-ṣuḥbah* (majordomo in attendance), they were in charge of organizing the banquets; both officials remained standing for the duration of the meal. The *jāshankīr* was specifically responsible for tasting both food and

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Renaissance of Islam, 142, cat. #62; compare also cat. #59 and #94). The pronounced carination of the *sāqī*′s cup in St. Louis′ basin may be an exaggeration of the vertical bend in the hemispherical wall or may indicate some variety in goblet forms. ROM 909.43.53 (the chalice miniature) clearly has a sharply carinated wall, and the curvature of its wall and rim parallel the *sāqī* blazon that decorates its tondo.

[415]See Marilyn Jenkins, *Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum* (London, 1983), cat. #51.

[416]Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá,* 5:454.

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drink as a precaution against poisoning, a rather common method of removing political rivals.[417]

There is evidence that the ceremonial offices of the *sāqī* and *jāshankīr* offered more opportunity for upward mobility for the *khāṣṣakīyah* than any other office. Al-Qalqashandī informs us that the *jāshankīrīyah* ranked among the top amirs.[418] The power wielded by these officers is underlined by multiple references to important *jāshankīrīyah* under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.[419] Serial promotions to the office of *sāqī* and an amirship of ten are recorded by Ibn Taghrībirdī and shed some light on why the *sāqī* blazon was so common in Mamluk art: there were a lot of *suqāh.*[420] Promotion alone only partially explains how amirs with ceremonial positions acquired power and wealth. The *suqāh* and *jāshankīrīyah* knew all of the *khāṣṣakīyah* and *barrānī* mamluks by fraternizing with them daily at Citadel banquets.[421] Their high visibility facilitated the strengthening of personal alliances and gave them access to important individuals among the civilian elite.[422]

The *jāshankīr* was as familiar a figure in public processions (*mawākib,* singular *mawkib*) as he was at the semi-private banqueting tables of the Citadel. Along with the *ustādārīyah* and the *silāḥdārīyah,* the *jāshankīrīyah* rode at the head of the sultan′s party in the ʻĪd processions.[423] Processions were among the few occasions when the Mamluks as a group had contact with the civilian population. There were numerous occasions for parades—the two ʻĪds (ʻĪd al-Fiṭr and ʻĪd al-Aḍḥá), the *maḥmal* procession (to celebrate the transport of the *kiswah* to Mecca), Friday prayer, enthronements, military victories, and festivals associated with the flooding of the Nile, to name only a few.[424] Visually and physically Mamluk processions

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[417]Ibid., 4:21 and 5:460; al-Umarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 73, n. 2.

[418]Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʻshá,* 4:21.

[419]See, for instance, the entries on Altunbughā, Tughay, and Tināl in al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk,* 2:3:614, 654, and 822. The power of Tughay and Tināl posed a threat to the sultan′s authority (Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History,* 72).

[420]Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm al-Zāhirah,* vols. 14 and 15. In the early Bahri period more Mamluks held the offices of *sāqī* and *dawādār* at one time than any other ceremonial position (ten each—Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,″ *BSOAS* 15 (1953): 214, citing al-Ẓāhirī, *Zubdah*). Although no numbers are given, Rabbat states that most of the highest-ranking amirs in the middle Bahri period were *suqāh* (Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 138).

[421]Rabbat defines the *khāṣṣakīyah* as those mamluks raised in the Southern Enclosure of the Citadel with the sultan′s sons and the *barrānī* as the recruits who resided in the barracks ″outside″ *(barra),* in the Northern Enclosure (see his glossary in Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).

[422]Lapidus, *Muslim Cities,* devotes some attention to the business and marital relationships cemented between amirs and their sons *(awlād al-nās)* and the powerful families of Cairo.

[423]Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʻshá,* 4:46.

[424]Stowasser, ″Manner and Customs,″ 19.

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integrated civilian Cairo and the royal Citadel through a ceremonial route which began at Bāb al-Nāṣr, followed the Bayn al-Qaṣrayn, and exited Bāb Zuwaylah for the Darb al-Aḥmar, the horse market at the foot of the Citadel, Bāb al-Silsilah (a Citadel gate), and the Īwān al-Kabīr.[425]

The frequency and pomp of these parades increased in the middle Bahri period at a time when other Mamluk ceremonies were being elaborated and codified. A crucial element of these processions, for the purposes of the present study, is the visual display of amiral symbols. It was the responsibility of the sultan´s weapons-officers—such as the *silāḥdār* (armor-bearer), *ṭabardār* (ax-bearer), and *jukāndār* (polo master)—to bear his weapons and display them to the public. They marched directly behind the sultan during processions and ahead of the other amirs.[426] The objects in their care—in this case the sword, ax, and polo sticks, respectively—thus became extremely powerful symbols of authority and cultural elitism to the civilian population. The *khāṣṣakīyah* imagery so carefully documented by Whelan is replete with ceremonial officers displaying their objects of office at court.[427] These figures from miniature painting, stone carving, and metalworking belong to a genre of court art that also includes scenes of ceremonial procession, where the *khāṣṣakīyah,* presumably in order of office and rank, carry their respective objects for public view.[428]

In some cases, the objects themselves were replaced by blazons displayed on the amirs´ clothing, armor, and horsegear. Therefore, the blazons that occur most frequently in Mamluk sgraffito (the *sāqī*´s cup, *silāḥdār*´s sword, and *jukāndār*´s polo sticks) were visually important components of two of the most important public celebrations staged by the Mamluk elite: formal banquets and processions.[429] Similarly, the *jāmdār*´s blazon, the napkin, is a familiar element of sgraffito

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[425]Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 238 (citing al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*); Behrens-Abouseif, ″The Citadel of Cairo,″ 48 (al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*); Shoshan, *Popular Culture,* 74–75.

[426]Stowasser, ″Manner and Customs,″ 19. For another account of objects of office displayed during processions see al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shá,* 4:46.

[427]Whelan, ″Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah*.″ Note especially a miniature from *Kitāb al-Diryāq* in Vienna, the throne niche from Sinjar, and a ewer signed by Aḥmad al-Dhākī al-Mawṣilī now in Cleveland.

[428]To this category belong a candlestick signed by Dā'ūd ibn Salāmah in Paris (Whelan, ″Representations of the *Khāṣṣakiyyah,*″ 224), St. Louis´ basin, and possibly an Artuqid bridge at Ḥiṣn Kayfa (ibid., 222).

[429]The *dawādār*´s penbox is a common heraldic device found on sgraffito that cannot be accounted for in this manner. The bearing of the inkwell was a ceremonial office symbolically associated with the administration and would not, understandably, play a large role in either processions or banquets. It was not an important office under the Bahris (Ayalon, ″Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army,″ *BSOAS* 16 (1954): 62).

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decoration.[430] The *jāmdārīyah* (wardrobe masters) stood alongside the *silāḥdārīyah* during public processions and *dār al-'adl* sessions, visible to the public at all times.[431] This visibility of the *khāṣṣakīyah* in public ceremonial is a key to understanding the process by which ″military art″ was popularized in fourteenth-century Egypt.

There seems to have been a deliberate attempt by many sgraffito artists to reproduce the designs of ceremonial candlesticks used in court and public processions. Monumental brass candlesticks with silver and gold inlay were produced in large quantity for a variety of special occasions. Al-Maqrīzī recounts, for instance, the fantastic spectacle created when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s amirs presented festive candles in celebration of his son Anuk′s marriage; another evening they brought 3030 candles in expensive candlesticks to his palace![432] Magnificent candlelit festivities continued into the fifteenth century. To commemorate the completion of his *qubbah,* the governor of Jedda threw a *walīmah ḥaflah* on the banks of the Nile, the affair luminated by rows of candles set up along the river.[433] Processions and parties, inadvertently, familiarized the local population with amiral art and paved the way for mass-production of ″military″ styles for non-Mamluks.

Mamluk ceremonies captured the imagination of civilian Cairo above all because they were among the rare points of contact between native Cairenes and the ruling elite. Not since the Fatimid period had Cairo witnessed such powerfully symbolic performances by the ruling establishment. While the particulars of Mamluk social hierarchy and self-determination represented in these performances were not comprehended by most Cairenes, their visual symbolism was not lost on them. Brass vessels inlaid with precious metals, military blazons, and bands of inscriptions were consciously associated with the elite of Egyptian society.

Civilian Cairo became familiar with these symbols of the ruling elite, in part, through the production and display of amiral commissions in the public bazaars. One of the most important markets in Cairo in the fourteenth century was the *sūq al-kaftīyīn*, or ″bazaar of inlaid work.″ Al-Maqrīzī describes in some detail the kinds of goods produced there and the clientele that frequented its quarter.[434] The most important service the metalworkers provided for the Mamluk households was the outfitting of expensive bridal trousseaus, which included plates, candles, lamps, basins, small pitchers, and incense burners—many of the same vessel types

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[430]See, for example, Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam,* 185, cat. #93.

[431]Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo,* 142 and 253.

[432]Blair and Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam,* 97–99, and Behrens-Abouseif, ″The Citadel of Cairo,″ 49.

[433]Ibn Iyās, *Kitāb Tārīkh Miṣr,* 2:406.

[434]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:105.

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that were imitated in sgraffito.[435]

That these vessels left an impression on the civilian population is clear from al-Maqrīzī´s narrative. He explains that hardly a single household could be found that did not have some inlaid brass or bronze-work and that the kind of work done for Mamluk patrons was in demand by most Cairenes. The market practically disappeared, however, by the early fifteenth century because of lowered demand and, one can presume, reduced resources. Al-Maqrīzī notes that there was much less inlaid brass available in his day than in the fourteenth century.[436] Beginning with the accession of Barqūq, metalwork production was significantly reduced.[437] The disappearance of sgraffito from the markets may be related, in part, to the decline of the metalwork industry in this period.

The shapes, sizes, decoration, and color scheme of Mamluk sgraffito in the fourteenth century are distinctive and remarkably different from underglaze-painted ceramics and glassware. The unique development of sgraffito in this period can be related to the powerful influence of contemporary metalworking, a consequence of an enriched ceremonial life that helped to bolster the cohesion and prestige of the Mamluk elite. While the impact of metalworking was felt in all media, pottery decorated in sgraffito, more than any other art form, can be considered truly imitative.

The expansion of Mamluk ceremonial in the fourteenth century served as a catalyst for sgraffito development in the same period. There is significantly more variety in Egyptian sgraffito in the thirteenth century, when multiple international ceramic styles were adopted and combined. The move towards homogeneity and mass-production in the following century reflects not changes in dining habits, but the popularization of amiral art forms in non-mamluk society. Formerly elite symbols of military power (emblems of office and elaborate titles) became commonplace, and eventually meaningless, with their introduction into the civilian market through ordinary tablewares.

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[435]This is perhaps the most convincing evidence that some of the sgraffito vessels could have possibly been commissioned for Mamluk women. Basins and candlesticks were not only used on ceremonial occasions, but they comprised the basic accessories of a comfortable household. In some cases, the word *dār* that appears in dedicatory inscriptions may have been intended for the woman of the house, who was an extension, in a sense, of the Mamluk office-holder.

[436]Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* 2:105.

[437]Allan, ″Sha'bān, Barqūq,″ 86.

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Conclusions—Ceramic Development as a Barometer of Social and Political Change

The development of Egyptian sgraffito ware in the fourteenth century is related to the general militarization of Mamluk art that gained momentum under al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The intensive production, limited distribution, and eventual disappearance of this ware cannot be properly understood without appreciating the ways in which this sultan′s third reign was a watershed in Mamluk social and economic history.

Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad impacted the arts through his patronage of the amiral class and his manipulation of symbols of authority. The rise of the *khāṣṣakīyah* is directly related to his desire to define and control the state′s elite from their early stages of training in the Citadel barracks. The prestige of the amiral class rose accordingly and, with it, were developed official ceremonies and images to bolster their elite status. The reinforcement of Mamluk class-consciousness was achieved in the early fourteenth century through an elaborate series of banquets and processions. Objects (primarily silver-inlaid brass vessels) played a focal role in the ceremonies. It was through the public display of basins, serving vessels, chalices, and candlesticks that the civilian population of Cairo became familiar with the symbols of Mamluk elitism: amiral blazons and formal inscriptions of dedication.

The popularization of elitist symbols was achieved through the reproduction of ceremonial vessels in pottery. Compared to brass and silver, earthenware vessels were more affordable for the average Cairene buyer. Furthermore, the sgraffito technique could effectively imitate chasing and inlaying. The mass-production of the military style of sgraffito ware, the reduction of the amiral blazon to pure decoration, and the bastardization of official formulae of address in dedicatory inscriptions are some ceramic correlates of the political and social turmoil in the decades following al-Nāṣir Muḥammad′s death.

The oft-repeated characteristics of Mamluk art—monumentality, the use of color, expense, and elitism—are true of sgraffito ware. What makes this ceramic group unique is its relationship to the social circumstances of the time. The Phase II military style was phenomenon-bound, a ″fad″ of fourteenth-century Cairo. Initially produced for a clientele that was active in creating its own class-mythology and in image building, the mass marketing of Mamluk sgraffito by the end of the century heralded the collapse of the Mamluk social order. With the emergence of a new class of patrons, at the expense of the old, this art form lost its *raison d′être* and fell out of fashion.

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*Abbreviations refer to museum collections as follows:
ROM: Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto, Canada)—Fustat and Jebel Adda study collections
L/Cal: Limassol Castle Museum (Cyprus)—main gallery
Isl. Mus.: Museum of Islamic Art (Cairo, Egypt)—main gallery
Pol. Inst.: Polish Institute, Kom ed-Dikka stores (Alexandria, Egypt)
Pierides: Pierides Foundation Museum (Larnaca, Cyprus)—gallery
Gr.-Rom: Museum of Greco-Roman Art (Alexandria, Egypt)—stores of SCA Kom ed-Dikka excavations
ARCE: American Research Center in Egypt´s Fustat study collection (Cairo, Egypt)—housed at the American University of Cairo stores in al-Ḥilmīyah

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Wide Rim Arabesque
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