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Chapter 1: Introduction

Walking down Al-Mi‘uzz Street, one is bombarded by the spirit of historical buildings from every side. The street is usually buzzing with tourists and local residents going in and out of monuments, buying and selling or taking photos. It is rare that they venture out to side streets such as the wide Bayt al-Qadi Street, that extends next to the complex of Sultan Qalawun. Upon entering the street, the scene significantly changes and the noise levels drop. Within less than a hundred meters, one arrives at Bayt al-Qadi Square, a humble space that once belonged to the grandest of palaces. Today, the palace is forgotten but its mighty loggia stands tall, dominating the entire square with its superb proportions and elaborate decoration. Like most Mamluk residences, the palace of Mamay al-Sayfi has vanished leaving minimal traces and one impressive *maq‘ad*. The *maq‘ad* itself survives in good condition with its architecture and decoration still very much intact (Fig. 1).

Only parts of royal and princely palaces dating from the Mamluk period survive. It is very common that we come across a portal and a *qa‘a* with mostly ruins or new constructions surrounding them, such as at the grand palace of Yashbak or Qawsun.¹ Religious institutes have had better chances of survival because of the *waqf* system, which provides funding for the upkeep of its premises in perpetuity (at least in theory). That is not always a case with residential structures, where chances of survival are usually poor due to the lack of upkeep guaranteed by a *waqf* or similar document.² The *maq‘ad* of Mamay al-Sayfi survives in such a good condition due to the fact that it was almost continuously used since its original occupation.

The concept of the *maq‘ad* was introduced in the 9th/15th century in Cairo and was adopted by the Ottomans in the residences of the ruling elite. The word stems from

Ibrahim, "Residential architecture," 52.¹
O’Kane, "Domestic and religious architecture in Cairo," 149.²

the Arabic word *qa'ada*, to sit.³ Yet, the development of the architecture leading to it was not unforeseen. Despite it being hard to trace the roots of the development of the *maq'ad*, experts are certain that this element couldn't just suddenly appear without prior trials. Excavations from Fustat revealed houses from the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries with courtyards opening up to halls, mostly on the northern side, connected only with three arches. The middle arch was the widest and it opened up to an *iwan* with two connecting side rooms. The arcaded *iwan* is perhaps the strongest connection we have to the fully developed Mamluk *maq'ad*.⁴

The *maq'ad* of Mamay (monument number 51) dates to 901/1496 and is located in one of the most prestigious neighborhoods of Cairo at the time of its foundation, *Bayn al-Qasrayn*. The *maq'ad* was dedicated to the reception of the elite and the courtyard housed a vast garden with surrounding quarters possibly of the *salamlik* and *haramlik*. The vanished palace of Mamay and the *maq'ad*, their history and footprint will be investigated in this thesis, along with the events that led to the once very grand palace to be only known as the *Bayt al-Qadi*. What is known now as *Maydan Bayt al-Qadi* was once part of the Eastern Fatimid palace and it is possible that the *maydan* had been one of the Fatimid palaces' courtyards. Historians suggest that these quarters were dotted with *mashrabiyyas* with arcades surrounding the courtyard on the ground floor.⁵

Sources Consulted

The earliest records of the life of Mamay and his grand palace came in the chronicles of Ibn Iyas (b. 852/1448, d. c. 930/1524), Ibn Tulun (b. 880/1473, d. 953/1546) and al-Jabarti (b. 1167/1753, d. 1240/1825). Ibn Iyas and Ibn Tulun were

Abou-Khatwa, "An Ode to Remember," 46.³

Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 21-22.⁴

Pauty, *Les Palais et les maisons d'epoque Musulmane*, 47.⁵

contemporaries to Mamay and have spoken about him briefly. A notable statement in Ibn Iyas' "*Badai' al-Zuhur fi Waqai' al-Duhur*" refers to the palace as *al-Dar al-Mu'athamma*, a description worthy of much discussion on its own.⁶ Al-Jabarti's "*Aja'ib al-athar fil-tarajim w-al-akhbar*" is another important source for it is considered a highly detailed and the most accurate source from the Ottoman period in Egypt.⁷ He mentions *Bayt al-Qadi* several times in all four volumes. While he does not provide a specific description of the palace or the *maq'ad*, the means of story telling he employs sheds light on the dynamics of the use of the complex, especially the courtyard. At the time it was serving as the Ottoman court and the residence of the *qadi*.

Al-Sakhawi (b. 830/1427, d. 902/1497) was another historian and a scholar of *hadith*. His work on the "*al-dau' al-lami' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tasi*" is considered one of the most comprehensive biographies ever written on the Mamluks. His several entries under the name Mamay are not very detailed; therefore they were not useful in determining if any of the individuals mentioned are Mamay al-Sayfi. Since the biographies by al-Sakhawi are an excellent source of understanding *amirs'* positions in society at the time, it is very unfortunate that it had to be excluded as a primary source for Mamay's biography in this thesis.⁸ As for Ibn Tulun, his writing is valuable for his presence in Damascus while Mamay was going back and forth between Cairo, Syria and Constantinople (now Istanbul).⁹

The extent of use of al-Maqrizi's "*Kitab al-mawa'iz wa-al-i'tibar bi-dhikr al-khitat wa-al athar*," also known as *al-Khitat*, might come as a surprise as he lived and

Ibn Iyas, *Badai' al-Zuhur*.⁶
 Al-Jabarti, *Aja'ib al-Athar*.⁷
 Al-Sakhawi, Shams al-Din, *Al-Dau' al-lami' li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tasi*, vol. 6, edit. Muhammad⁸
 Al-Qasimi (Beirut, 1966)
 Ibn Tulun, *Mufakahat al-Khilan*.⁹

died more than a century before Mamay and his palace came to existence.¹⁰ Al-Maqrizi (b. 765/1364, d. 845/1442) provided the most detailed description of the area of *Bayn al-Qasrayn*, therefore it proved to be an invaluable source for this thesis, especially in chapter 2 where the site of the palace of Mamay is described chronologically from before the Fatimid period.¹¹ The descriptions are not highly detailed though. For that reason, I have also consulted several secondary studies that analyze al-Maqrizi's descriptions and that propose ways of reconstructing the architectural history of the neighborhood. Recent publications such as Sylvie Denoix's *Le Khan al-Khalili et ses environs*, Nicholas Warner's *The monuments of Historic Cairo* and Nasser Rabbat's *Mamluk history through Architecture* were useful in developing an understanding of the site prior to Mamay's acquisition of the palace.¹²

For Cairo's medieval palace architecture the main analytical surveys publications are "*Palais et Maisons du Caire*" by Jacques Revault and Bernard Maury and "*Manazil al-Qahira wa-Maqa'idiha fi al-'Asrayn al-Mamluki wal-'Uthmani*" by Ghizwan Yaghi, just to cite two.¹³ Among with support of the various publications listed in the bibliography of this paper, the entries on the *maq'ad* of Mamay in both publications were the most comprehensive. Having said that, this paper would not have been complete without the analysis of a number of photographs and paintings. One of the earliest paintings of the *maq'ad* was by Frank Dillon.¹⁴ Dillon was among a group

Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*.¹⁰

Encyclopedia of Islam, second edition, ed. Peri J. Bearman et al. 2012. I have used the ¹¹ entries for Ibn Iyas (http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3225), Ibn Tulun (http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0344), al-Djabarti (http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1894), al-Sakhawi (http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6503) and al-Makrizi (http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4838) all accessed 30 April 2017. Denoix, *Le Khan al-Khalili et ses environs*, Warner, *The monuments of historic Cairo* and ¹² Rabbat, *Mamluk history through architecture*.

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons* and Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*.¹³ The painting is in watercolor on pencil and is in the possession of the Victoria and Albert ¹⁴ Museum in London.

of artists, including Pascal Coste and Owen Jones, who portrayed the monuments of the Middle East as accurately as possible at a time when British architecture was creeping in and the monuments were being quickly destroyed.¹⁵ For that reason, I have found it possible to use the painting as a relatively reliable source. It is titled “The *Mahkemeh* or Court of the *Cadi*, Cairo” and was painted in 1286/1869. It depicts the *maq‘ad* with ruins on the foreground a number of the public lingering at the courtyard and a giant tree over a drinking trough for the animals (Fig. 2).¹⁶ A number of photographs taken by Creswell (early 14th/20th century), Ghizwan Yaghi (1425/2004) and myself (1435/2014-1437/2016) were also used along with a number of images taken in 1427/2006 provided by The Cairo Heritage School (see Figs. 3, 4 and 5 for Creswell). I have also found an image taken from the courtyard of the palace of Mamay and looking towards Bayt Al-Qadi Street. The image is of an unknown source but I am certain that it dates to after 1321/1903 as the dome of Sultan Qalawun’s mausoleum was reconstructed by the *Comité* in 1321/1903.¹⁷

A monographic study of a Mamluk building in Cairo usually leads researchers to *waqf* or any kind of sales documents. In his comprehensive publication “*Atlas al-Imara al-Islamiyyah wal-Qibtiyya bil-Qahira*,” Rizk mentions a document supposedly referring to a purchase made by Mamay.¹⁸ The document records the sale of *makan* (a place) in *khatt* al-Azhar. The seller’s name is Shams al-Din Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-‘Al and the purchase was made by al-Sayfi Mamay b. ‘Abdullah al-Muzaffari. The purchase was made in 861/1456, exactly forty years prior to the completion of the *maq‘ad* of

Atil et al. *Voyages and Visions* and “The Mahkemeh or Court of the Cadi, Cairo,” Victoria¹⁵ and Albert Museum. Date Accessed: 30 April 2017.

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O143180/el-mahkemeh-or-court-of-watercolour-dillon-frank-ri/>

Another painting is printed in al-Hadidi’s *Dirasat fi Madinat al-Qahira*. I could not verify¹⁶ the drawing therefore I have chosen not to use it as a reference for any description or analysis. For more information: Al-Hadidi, *Dirasat*.

Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 138.¹⁷

Rizk, *Atlas al-Imara al-Islamiyyah*, 3:1579.¹⁸

Mamay. Having not found the document myself, I cannot confirm whether it refers to the palace in question or not.¹⁹

Last but not least, the *Bulletin of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* has been used extensively especially in chapter 6, in which I describe and analyze the conservation and restoration projects carried out on the *maq'ad*. For the most part I have used the Arabic versions of the translations by Ali Bahgat (or else noted otherwise). The volumes used were numbers 18 (1319/1901), 19 (1320/1902), 21 (1322/1904), 22 (1323/1905), 23 (1324/1906), 24 (1325/1907), 25 (1326/1908), 26 (1327/1909) and 27 (1328/1910).²⁰

A Note on the Naming of the Monument

The name used to refer to the monument itself might be one of its most controversial aspects. In the earliest mention I have encountered, Ibn Iyas refers to the palace as *al-Dar al-Mu'athamma*, a statement that I interpreted as a descriptive term as well as a designation. This was deduced from his way of writing and not because it was unusual to name a residential complex. On the contrary, in medieval Cairo - as elsewhere - it was common for palaces to be known by an honorary name. The sense of grandeur that comes with the statement led me to investigate al-Maqrizi's description of the area of *Bayn al-Qasrayn* with its palaces and markets, in hopes of finding a similar reference. If a grand palace was constructed on the site of the Fatimid palaces, I would

Rizk mentions the document number as *hijjat waqf* 577 in the archive of The Ministry of Awqaf. When I visited in October 2016, I was provided with the following information: document number 577 is an Ottoman document belonging to 'Aisha Khatun bint al-Shaykh Darwish al-Qali al-Shahir bi (Known as) al-Khawaja. I have also visited Dar al-Kutub in Bab al-Khalq and The Egyptian National Library and Archives in Bulaq but the document is nowhere to be found. I believe that this is a lead worth perusing and could provide valuable information for future research purposes.

Volume 38 (1936-1940) was consulted but was not particularly put into use. *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe. Procés Verbaux des Seances. Rapports de la deuxième commission*. 41 vols. (Cairo, 1882-1961). I use the Comité in reference to the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe or their team throughout the text.

expect al-Maqrizi to mention it as he did in the case of the palace of *amir* Bashtak.

While he does not make any mention of *al-Dar al-Mu'athamma* in the *Khitat*, he describes the Fatimid palaces in reference to what replaced them during the early and mid Mamluk eras.²¹ The palace was not properly mentioned again until the Ottoman era. Al-Jabarti makes a few related comments, referring to the residence, its gate and the courtyard with names such as *al-mahkama al-kubra*, meaning The Supreme Court and the *huwsh*, the courtyard.²² The name *Bayt Al-Qadi* didn't come to existence until the late 10th/16th century, when the users of the courthouse started referring to it that way. Frank Dillon's 13th/19th century painting is inscribed as "The *Mehkemeh*" and "Court of the Cadi," meaning the courthouse and the court of the judge, respectively. The *Comité*'s common reference to the monument uses both names. Before 1320/1902, they referred to the monument as *maq'ad bayt al-Qadi*. The name of Mamay resurfaced probably due to Max Berchem's reading of the foundation inscription as it first appeared in the 1319/1902 issue of the Bulletin by the *Comité*. Since then, the *Comité* started using both names combined or interchangeably. Today, members of the academic community use both names loosely. I have chosen to use the "maq'ad of Mamay al-Sayfi" when referring to the element of the *maq'ad* block and "the palace of Mamay" when referring to the vanished palace. This, in a way, is in keeping with the academic community and supportive of my conclusion at the end of the study.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter one indicated that the location of the *maq'ad* in such an exclusive area in Cairo, *Bayn al-Qasrayn*, shows that the property must have been owned originally by someone very powerful, wealthy or both. The site of *Bayn al-Qasrayn* is described extensively by many historians and is discussed by many experts in detail.

al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 1:214-223.²¹
al-Jabarti, *'Aja'ib al-Athar*, 1:502.²²

Chapter two sheds light on every detail mentioned about the building and its site

prior to it becoming isolated into the freestanding *maq'ad*. Here I am mostly using information from historical sources in order to understand the state of the site prior to Mamay's acquisition of the palace. The main focus is to find out whether the palace of Mamay was on the site of the Fatimid palaces and which part of the Fatimid palaces would that be. Later chapters draw on findings from the site and building's histories.

In chapter three, the *maq'ad* structure is compared to other residences and palaces of its time in terms of its layout and architectural configuration. The thorough inspection of old images and current remains, along with a comparative analysis with residences such as *manzil* Qaytbay and the palace of *Amir* Taz, helps with understanding the use of the existing spaces as well as visualizing what might have been directly attached to the current structure. Throughout this chapter, a comparative method will accompany the description in order to shed light on possible architectural features and functions of the whole palace.

The architectural decoration is described and analyzed in chapter four. It might be a compact structure, but the *maq'ad* boasts a very rich decorative program especially on the façade, its entrance portal and on the ceiling of the loggia. There are a variety of inscriptions, moldings and woodwork elements on the exterior and interior of the building. While the façade doesn't boast a decorative program that is unique to the Qaytbay period, the beautiful wooden ceiling of the *maq'ad* is very elaborate with a painted wooden coffering and a huge *thuluth* inscription all around, a ceiling that is considered a rare survival within the architecture and decorative elements of residential buildings in Cairo.

In chapter five, I will attempt to gather all information found about Mamay in order to weave together his biography. Mamay al-Sayfi served in the Egyptian and

Syrian Mamluk courts of Qaytbay for years before he was sent to Constantinople as his emissary. That being said, historians neither provided his full biography nor did they dedicate any major part of their writing to him or the *maq'ad*. Their accounts only reference historical incidents in which he played a part. Putting together the accounts of multiple historians creates a better but still incomplete picture about him during his time in the Mamluk court. Along with the Ottoman occupation of Egypt came the occupation and first re-used of the *maq'ad*. It carries the name of *Bayt al-Qadi*, in reference to an Ottoman court that was later held there for decades. The chapter continues to examine the usage of the remains of the palace and the *maq'ad* after the Cairo becomes a provincial capital of the Ottoman Empire.

In their reports, the *Comité* mentions that the *maq'ad* had been in use as the courthouse for approximately a century. Their teams worked on the structure for years and documented all their efforts in their publications: the *Bulletin du Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe*. Chapter six will explore the various projects of restoration and conservation the building underwent focusing on - but not limited to - the work carried out by the *Comité's* technical team.

In chapter seven, I collect my findings from the previous chapters, put forth my conclusions and plan on concluding the paper and discuss the future of the monument.

Chapter 2: Location and Site History

Today, what remains of the palace that would become Mamay's is located

directly behind the remains of al-Salihiyya complex and near the complexes of Qalawun, al-Nasir Muhammad, Barquq and palace of Bashtak. To the east of the remaining elements of palace of Mamay is Khan Ja'far Street, an extension of al-Jamaliyya and to the west, al-Mu'izz street. This site is in direct proximity of Bayn al-Qasrayn, one of the most prestigious areas since the foundation of Cairo and until the Mamluk era (see Fig. 6). In order to understand how this palace came into existence and how afterwards it went from the palace to the *maq'ad* of Mamay or Bayt al-Qadi, it is important to peel away the superimposed layers of history and urbanization that made this site so complex to study today.

The site of the palace of Mamay has a long history of continuous occupancy, starting even before the Fatimids conquered Egypt and built al-Qahira. The exact site of the palace is located in the heart of the Fatimid city; the land that the rulers' grand palaces, their gardens and the city's major square, Bayn al-Qasrayn, once occupied. Since its first royal foundation and until today, Bayn al-Qasrayn remains a landmark of Cairo. Throughout this chapter, I use historical sources along with modern surveys to re-imagine the site in different eras, beginning with the site as it was the home of the royal Fatimid family and until the Ottomans used it as a courthouse. I have chosen a chronological method in order to reconstruct an image of the site as it was historically built up. Fortunately, some monuments preceding the palace offer boundaries for the parameters of Mamay's palace in some directions. In others, ruins blur the lines what belonged to the palace and what was neighboring it.

The earliest known structures to have been built on the site in question are elements of the Eastern Fatimid Palace of al-Qahira. Before the founding of al-Qahira,

part of the area chosen for the Fatimid city was occupied by a Coptic Monastery and a small castle.²³ Al-Maqrizi also mentions that on this particular site, a house belonging to Banu Ezra used to stand before the foundation of al-Qahira.²⁴ The building of the Great

Eastern Fatimid Palace began with General Jawhar al-Siqili in 359/970 under the instructions of Caliph al-Mu‘izz and was intended to function as his royal residence when he arrived in his new capital.²⁵ The total area of Jawhar’s plan for the Eastern Palace was approximately nine hectares and the first foundation laid in its construction belonged to the mausoleum located in the southeastern corner to house the remains of the sovereigns that Jawhar had carried all the way from Ifriqqiya. Between 364/975 and

386/996 Caliph al-Aziz added to the Eastern Palace and began construction of the Western Palace. Within these same nine hectares, he added Qasr al-Dhahab and the Great *Iwan*. From that time until the middle of the 8th/12th century, many more elements were added to the Eastern Palace including three pavilions or *manazir* (see Fig. 7)²⁶ The Eastern Palace was described in great detail by a number of chroniclers

and travelers including al-Maqrizi and Nasir-i-Khusraw. To the northeast was the festival square, also known as *Rahbit al-‘Id*, which measured 157 by 105 meters. To the west, the main ceremonial thoroughfare of the city - al-Mu‘izz Street - connected the northern and southern gates of the city, Bab al-Futuh and Bab Zuwayla. It widened slightly in the middle to form the maydan of Bayn al-Qasrayn. The palace itself had nine main gates, Bab al-Dhahab was the largest and it opened directly onto Bayn al-Qasrayn and the Western Palace. This was not the only gate along the 345 meters long

Raymond, *Cairo: City of History*, 36.²³

Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:154.²⁴

Raymond, *Cairo: City of History*, 37.²⁵

Ibid, 50.²⁶

western façade. Bab Zuhuma was located to the south of Bab al-Dahab and was the gateway to the main kitchen.²⁷

The entire western façade was about twenty-five meters to the east of where Al-Mu‘izz Street runs today. The northern façade had only one gate, Bab al-Rih. This gate was standing until 810/1408 and was seen by al-Maqrizi. Bab al-Zumurrud to the northeast led to the Emerald palace, the ruler’s own residence, and Bab al-Daylam opened onto a *rahba* that would become *al-mashhad al-Husayni*, the shrine of al-Husayn.²⁸ The tower of Bab al-Akhdar was located somewhere close to Bab al-Daylam as it overlooked the same *rahba*.²⁹ Bab al-Bahr was an addition by Caliph al-Hakim bi-‘amr Allah. It was in the northwest of the complex and was later demolished by the Mamluk Sultan al-Zahir Baybars.³⁰ The palace of Bashtak is now located at the site of what was Bab al-Bahr.³¹ The gate of *al-Za‘afaran* tomb opened up to the burial grounds of the Fatimids. Al-Maqrizi reports that the Mamluk Amir Jaharkas al-Khalili removed the remains of this tomb to make way for his caravanserai built during Sultan Barquq’s first reign in the late 8th/14th century, today known as Khan al-Khalili.³²

Fewer descriptions have been made concerning the eastern façade, Qasr al-Shawk and its gate, Bab Qasr al-Shawk. However, al-Maqrizi informs us that the street adjacent to the Palace and Qasr al-Shawk, possibly al-Jamaliyya Street, was often used by the Fatimid rulers for processions and as a primary route for accessing Bab al-Nasr on route to the *musalla* beyond the city walls, in which events took place.³³ Later, the

Ibid, 52.²⁷

Ibid, 51.²⁸

Russell, “Are There Any Remains of the Fatimid Palaces of Cairo?” 116.²⁹

Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:218.³⁰

Ibid, 2:159.³¹

Raymond, *Cairo: City of History*, 51 and Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 62.³²

Raymond, *Cairo: City of History*, 54.³³

Gate of Qasr al-Shawk would be demolished by Jamal al-Din al-Ustadar in 811/1408, the same individual whose name al-Jamaliyya street carries.

Upon gaining control of the Egyptian lands, the Ayyubid Salah al-Din evacuated the Fatimid palaces and seized their contents. In 567/1171-1172, his *amirs* were gifted parts of the Fatimid palaces to be used as their residences. The *bimaristan* of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, built in 577/1181, was located in this area and made use of Qasr al-Shawk's gate for an entrance.³⁴ On the site of the *bimaristan*, a *qa'a* of the palace of Caliph al-'Aziz Ibn al-Mu'izz used to stand. According to the texts of al-Maqrizi, al-Qalqashandi and Ibn Jubayr, the *bimaristan* was built within the palace, not only on its site. Al-Maqrizi quotes Ibn al-Zahir narrating, "the *maristan* was formerly, according to what reached me, in al-Qashshashin, and I think it is the site of Dar al-Daylam."³⁵

The first demolition of the Eastern Palace took place in 639/1242 and in conjunction with the *madrasa* of al-Salih Najm al-Din, the last Ayyubid Sultan, which was founded in 640/1242. The *madrasa* was built on the site of Bab al-Zuhuma.³⁶ The legality of the Ayyubid acquisition of the property is unclear but al-Maqrizi explains its transfer to the Mamluks. The Sultan al-Zahir Baybars al-Bunduqdari transferred the ownership of the Bayn al-Qasrayn area to the Bayt al-Mal through *istibdal*.³⁷ One detailed description made by al-Maqrizi states that in 660/1262, the supreme judge

Zaki, *Al-Azhar*, 18.³⁴

Mackenzie, *Ayyubid Cairo*, 143.³⁵

Al-Maqrizi mentions Al-Qashshashin as the same place as Dar al-Daylam. He further elaborates stating that during his lifetime it was known as al-Kharatin, leading to the tentmakers and al-Azhar. Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:160.

Mackenzie, *Ayyubid Cairo*, 123.³⁶

Muhammad Hussam al-Din Ismail, "Idarit al-awqaf fi al-'asr al-Mamluki," in *Le Khan al-Khalili et ses environs: Uncentre commercial et artisanal au Caire du XIIIe au XVe siècle*, ed. Sylvie Denoix (Cairo, 1999), 1:46.

Istibdal is an exchange process that the Mamluks used to acquire lands with *waqf* instead of confiscations. It is a legal process that was rejected by religious scholars at first but was accepted as a legitimate process in the 9th/15th century. More information is found in: Fernandes, "Istibdal," 203-222.

known as *Qadi al-Qudah* Shams al-Din al-Hanbali purchased a hall known as al-Sadra, possibly the Hall of the Lotus, from the Bayt al-Mal. He later sold it to al-Zahir Babybars, who demolished it along with the *Qa'a al-Khiyyam* (hall of the Tents), to build his madrasa.³⁸ The lands to the east of these halls also included the seven posterns, *Dar al-Fitra* and *Istabl al-Tarima* (the royal stables).³⁹

Between the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk eras, the rulers of the walled city of Cairo were changing rapidly and so was the city's landscape. This is evident in the various markets named in Bayn al-Qasrayn and within proximity to the site of the destroyed Fatimid palaces. *Suq* Bayn al-Qasrayn was described by al-Maqrizi as a vast market area so wide that it could accommodate ten thousand men and horses. It was already in decline during al-Maqrizi's lifetime.⁴⁰ The same area between Bayn al-Qasrayn and al-Jamaliyya Street also included *Suq al-Silah*, the name of which refers to the market of weaponry that once stood between al-Zahiriyya *madrasa* and the palace of Bashtak,⁴¹ and a *suq* for money-changers near Bab al-Zuhuma.⁴² Al-Maqrizi also makes mention of *suq* Bab al-Zuhuma as one of many of the markets that were in the vicinity of Bayn al-Qasrayn.⁴³

The construction of al-Zahiriyya madrasa was only the beginning of the transformation of this quarter (Fig. 8). The high point of the Mamluk urbanization began under Sultan Qalawun, who started royal foundations on the western side of al-Mu'izz Street. Within a century, the Western palace of the Fatimids was wiped out and replaced by Mamluk foundations, mostly under his son al-Nasir Muhammad, who

Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:367. For more information: Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of*³⁸
Egypt, 2:142-146.
Rabbat, "al-Azhar mosque," 54-55.³⁹
Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:585.⁴⁰
Ibid, 2:586.⁴¹
Raymond, *Cairo: City of History*, 54. ⁴²
Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:587.⁴³

reigned until 741/1340.⁴⁴ Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad encouraged his *amirs* to build within the city and the palace of Bashtak stands witness to his efforts.⁴⁵ The Eastern palace was gradually disappearing and being replaced by religious foundations. Al-Maqrizi explains how the sites of al-Salihiyya, al-Zahiriyya and the palace of Bashtak were transformed but makes no specific mention of the site that Mamay was going to purchase more than a century later.⁴⁶

The Western Palace was replaced almost completely by Bahri Mamluk foundations, first by the *maristan* of Qalawun built in 683/1284 and shortly after the Mamluk Sultans started demolishing and building on the site until the panorama of the west side of the *qasaba* was formed. The buildings included the madrasa and mausoleum of Sultan Qalawan, the mosque and mausoleum of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad (703/1304) and the later mosque of Sultan Barquq (788/1386).

It is evident that the main thoroughfare of al-Qahira, al-Mu‘izz Street, was completely packed during the 8th/14th century (Fig. 9). Al-Maqrizi states that before 741/1340, Amir Qawsun built a *funduq* close to Bayn al-Qasrayn, including a *wikalah* and a *rab‘*, on the site of a private house.⁴⁷ Even though more than seventy percent of the capital’s residents were within the walled city of Cairo during the Circassian Mamluk dynasty, *amirs* were already building outside in newer quarters since the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad.⁴⁸ It was also under the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad that the suburban areas of al-Husayniyya and al-Azbakiyya flourished and his *amirs* were not only building in these suburbs but palaces have been constructed in Saliba, closer to the

Raymond, *Cairo: City of History*, 118-120.⁴⁴

Ibid, 120.⁴⁵

Ibid, 122.⁴⁶

Ibid, 123.⁴⁷

Ibid, 151.⁴⁸

citadel, including the palaces of Amir Taz and Yashbak.⁴⁹

Mamay's choice for Bayn al-Qasrayn as a location to acquire and renovate a palace would not have been a foregone conclusion. By the beginning of the 9th/15th century, the walled city of Cairo and its environs were in decline. Al-Maqrizi reports that many of the commercial activities on the *qasaba* were disappearing and the state of his beloved city deeply saddened him. After the vacuum left by the plague, Cairo was starting to slowly repopulate by the first quarter of the century and al-Maqrizi makes one more mention of the Fatimid palaces. The area around Bab al-Zuhuma was to be built up and the old center, which had been neglected during the crisis, was to be rehabilitated.⁵⁰

It is very unclear when the palace that would become Mamay's was constructed. Ibn Iyas mentions the high cost of the restoration of the residence at Bayn al-Qasrayn; this is the first piece of evidence pointing towards the existence of parts of the palace before Mamay purchased it.⁵¹ In his sources, Rizk mentioned a *waqf* document referring to a sale to al-Sayfi Mamay in the *khatt* of al-Azhar in 861/1483,⁵² thirteen years prior to the completion of the palace. Max Van Berchem mentions that the palace built at the end of the fifteenth century was in fact built on top of older constructions.⁵³ The foundation inscription on the *maq'ad* dates this architectural element to 901/1496.⁵⁴

To the north of the site in question, two monuments preceded the *maq'ad* of Mamay, but not necessarily the palace to which it belonged. These monuments are the mausoleum and *madrassa* of Tatar al-Hijaziyya and the mosque of Mithqal, dating to

Ibid, 123-127.⁴⁹

Ibid, 173.⁵⁰

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:12.⁵¹

Rizk, *Atlas al-Imara al-Islamiyyah*, 3:1579.⁵²

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:12.⁵³

Ibid, 1:12.⁵⁴

749/1384, 761/1360 and 763/1361, respectively.⁵⁵ Currently, the mausoleum and *madrasa* of Tatar al-Hijaziyya are on the northern road that connects *maydan* Bayt al-Qadi back to al-Jamaliyya Street. The mausoleum is said to be an extension of the princess's palace, which she later converted to the *madrasa*.⁵⁶ Al-Hijaziyya *madrasa* was in fact Qasr al-Zummurud. It had been an Ayyubid property since the division of the Eastern Palace was initiated by Salah al-DIn.⁵⁷ The location of these monuments set the northern boundaries for the palace of Mamay, as it could not have extended further (see Fig. 6).

Today, the scene is quite different but some monuments standing from the 9th/15th century, but dating prior to Mamay's acquisition of the site, can help us reconstruct the boundaries of the land he acquired. The *hara* of Bayt al-Qadi begins at Al-Mu'izz Street at the area known as *al-nahassin* and ends at *maydan* Bayt al-Qadi. While relatively short, only one hundred meters long, the street is dotted with buildings that force the path to bend eight times, making the alley seem more like a narrow zigzag or a series of very short alleyways. This alley wasn't always the way it is now. What we experience now is a result of Khedive Ismail's desire to bring more light and air into the narrow Cairene road. This is the reason it is zigzagged.⁵⁸

The al-Zahiriyya *madrasa* was destroyed in 1252/1874 to connect *Suq al-Nahassin* with *Maydan Bayt al-Qadi*.⁵⁹ Bayt al-Qadi Street, that links *Maydan Bayt al-Qadi* and al-Mu'izz street, did not exist during the 19th century but long before that a connection did in fact exist.⁶⁰ The new street, constructed during the reign of Khedive

Warner, *The Monuments of Historic Cairo*, 94-96.⁵⁵
Speiser, "Restoration of the Darb al-Qirmiz," 28-29.⁵⁶

MacKenzie, *Ayyubid Cairo*, 82.⁵⁷

Al-Hadidi, *Dirasat*, 115-117. ⁵⁸

Williams, *Islamic Monuments in Cairo*, 184-185 and Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of*⁵⁹
Egypt, 2:143-144.

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:14.⁶⁰

Ismail and known *Bayt al-Qadi* Street, became one of the widest streets in the area, fifteen meters wide and about one hundred meters long. It was previously known as *al-mahkama al-jadida*, the new court.⁶¹ This street is now considered the main access to the *maydan* and the *maq'ad*. During the opening of the street, Ali Pasha Mubarak, who was in charge of much of the planning work, states that massive remains of the Fatimid Zumurud palace were found, of which he took the masonry to construct the al-Sayidda

Zaynab police station and *majlis al-ahkam*, currently known as al-Jamaliyya police station.⁶² The Zahiriyya madrasa was not the only monument demolished to make way for this street. The *qa'a* of Muhib al-Din al-Muwaqqi, also known as *qa'a* of Baybars and *qa'a* of 'Uthman Katkhuda, dates to 751/1350 and is what remains of a large palace.⁶³ It was occupied by Katkhuda in the 18th century but was partly demolished along with the Zahiriyya madrasa. The *Comité* restored what remained of the palace, the *qa'a*, in 1911.⁶⁴

Darb Qirmiz is another narrow alley extending from al-Mu'izz Street towards the *maydan* as well. Within the middle of this Mamluk alley, a narrow tunnel extends for 20 meters under what used to be the madrasa and mosque of the Mamluk Sabiq al-Din Mithqal. On the west side of the *maq'ad*, traces of masonry show where the palace extended (see Fig. 13). On the east side, however, a modern construction was constructed between the gate of Bayt al-Qadi and the *maq'ad*. Traces of masonry on the ground floor of the building show the boundary of the palace running along Khan Ja'far Street, usually referred to as al-Jamaliyya street.⁶⁵

To the south of the *maq'ad*, Hammam al-Affandi now stands in ruins. The

Al-Hadidi, *Dirasat*, 114.⁶¹

Ibid, 116.⁶²

The dating of this *qa'a* is debatable. Its accurate dating would provide a lot of insight and support the studies of the palaces of Bashtak and Mamay.⁶³

Warner, *The Monuments of Historic Cairo*, 98.⁶⁴

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:14.⁶⁵

dating of this bathhouse is vital for producing an accurate reconstruction of the palace of Mamay. Nicholas Warner suggests that it might be Fatimid in origin; its known dating is the 12th/18th century.⁶⁶ In *al-Khitat*, al-Maqrizi reports that on the site of the Fatimid Qasr al-Shawk a *hammam* is known as *hammam* al-Aydumari or *hammam* Yunis. I could not determine whether this is the same *hammam* or not; it is unlikely that they are the same.⁶⁷ According to Rabbat's and Denoix's findings, *hammam* al-Aydumari is further to the southeast of the *maq'ad* and that the area directly behind the *maq'ad* was part of the courtyard of the Fatimid palace. The courtyard on which the *maq'ad* was built on top is not that of Qasr al-Shawk, according to Rabbat.⁶⁸ Another 11th/17th century monument stands further south and is known as the *wikala* and *sabil* in the *waqf* of al-Haramayn. Warner suggests that this dating refers to an addition to a monument that had earlier origins.⁶⁹

Although the various phases of demolition of the elements of the Eastern Fatimid Palace were recorded, some details have been lost. Statements such as that of Ali Mubarak testify to some remains still being in place but for the most part, we cannot tell if a *hara* existed before the construction of the palace of Mamay, especially since we cannot date the start of construction on the palace. Some main streets, such as al-Mu'izz and al-Jamaliyya have existed since the foundation of al-Qahira, others were as modern as the constructions surrounding them. It is likely that none of the streets surrounding the *maq'ad* today existed at the time. Even al-Jamaliyya Street possibly

Warner, *The Monuments of Historic Cairo*, 168.⁶⁶

I was not able to determine the patron of the *hammam*, whether under the name al-Aydumari or Yunis. Aydimur al-Bahlawan and Aydimur al-Khatri founded their mosques in the middle of the 8th/14th century. Yunis al-Dawdar was contemporary to Faraj ibn Barquq and was in the early 8th/14th century. It is possible that one of the mentioned figures owned or renovated the bathhouse; yet, my research has not lead me to any conclusive results. More information is found in Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 17, 20, 57 and 231.

Rabbat, *Mamluk history through architecture*, 85. ⁶⁸

Warner, *The monuments of historic Cairo*, 155.⁶⁹

stopped at the northeastern corner of and continued further to the east.⁷⁰

The police station at the *maydan* was constructed and used as *majlis al-ahkam* up until 1262/1884, when the *majlis* was moved to Bab al-Khalq and the police station previously located on Tumbakshiyya Street, in front of Jamal al-din al-Ustadar mosque, was moved to *maydan* Bayt al-Qadi. A fire fighting station is attached to the police station and is sheltered under an undated but certainly medieval vault (Fig.10)⁷¹

Today the center of the *maydan* is occupied by government structures. A water trough for animals was located the *maydan* but it was removed in 1328/1950.⁷² In his description of the courtyard, Arthur Rhonét, an artist of the French expedition, does not make any mention of a trough;⁷³ which may lead us to believe that it has been reconstructed in the 13th/19th century.⁷⁴

It is evident that the Grand Eastern Fatimid Palace of al-Mu‘izz, extended as far as the current *maydan* of Bayt al-Qadi and beyond. The continuous occupation of the area surrounding Bayn al-Qasrayn and since Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi started gifting and selling parts of the palace,⁷⁵ makes it very difficult to carry out full excavations especially since the area wasn’t built up in one phase, but rather constructions and demolitions took place over centuries. Within the gaps in recorded historical events, we find a few fragments of information that might eventually construct a narrative for the site. This might demonstrate the possibility that the *maydan* of Bayt al-Qadi was a courtyard right outside the Eastern Fatimid palace but most of the reconstructions point towards the *maydan* being located within one of the Fatimid palaces.

Domestic Mamluk architecture in Cairo has been studied closely over the past

Rabbat, *Mamluk history through architecture*, 85.⁷⁰

Al-Hadidi, *Dirasat*, 117.⁷¹

Ibid, 117.⁷²

Pauty, *Les Palais et les Maisons*, 47.⁷³

I will provide further details on the trough and well in chapter 6. ⁷⁴

Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:367.⁷⁵

few decades. This provides us with a lot of insight on the main spaces and their functions of similar palaces. Now that the external parameters of the palace are defined to a certain extent, a closer look at the residential architecture of the Mamluks and the analysis of the *maq'ad* and the surviving components of the palace could prove useful in attempting to understand the site of the ruined palace, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: The Facade and the Layout of the *Maq'ad* and the Ruins of the Palace

Throughout years of studies of the medieval architecture in Cairo, a number of publications have provided descriptions for the architecture and decorative program of the *maq'ad*. From what remains of the palace, the façade and layout of the *maq'ad* are easiest to describe because of how well preserved they are. The *maq'ad* is comparable to many elements in residences and palaces of its time in terms of its layout and architectural configuration. Therefore, by comparing different reports and images, it is safe to deduce that the architecture of this structure has not been subject to a lot of modifications. In this chapter, I will be providing a detailed description of the architectural configuration of the *maq'ad* and the other remaining elements.⁷⁶ I will also be using a number of palaces belonging to the same era of which the *maq'ad* was built in order to attempt to provide a possible location for some of the missing elements of the palace. Unfortunately, the palace's layout, and its decaying state, is more complex than that of the *maq'ad*. This makes it difficult to date accurately to a certain era. The inspection of old images and existing remains, along with a comparative analysis of residences such as *manzil* Qaytbay might support an understanding of how existing

All the description provided is for the palace as it is today, unless noted otherwise.⁷⁶

spaces were used, and may help us to visualize what might have been directly attached to the monument as it exists currently.

The block of the *maq'ad* is a relatively simple structure in terms of architectural configuration. Its exceptional proportions resonate well with Sultan Qaytbay's elegant architecture.⁷⁷ The ground floor plan is mainly composed of storage spaces, accessible directly from the courtyard. The mezzanine floor is accessible by a flight of stairs. It currently only houses the loggia and the annex (Fig. 11 and 12).

Ground floor

Today, the ground floor is significantly lower than the current street level. A flight of stairs from the *maydan* leads to the narrow gated courtyard of the *maq'ad*. The façade of the ground floor is slightly deformed. The stone courses are not as aligned as one would expect. On this façade, four doors lead to five different rooms. Two of these rooms are wide enough to need the support of columns to carry the weight of the ceiling.⁷⁸ These rooms are usually described as storage spaces but even this is uncertain. Their height is less than four meters; therefore it is unlikely however that any of them were used as a smaller *qa'a* as is the case in other residences, such as the palace of *Amir Taz* in al-Suyufiyya.⁷⁹ After the Ottoman occupation and during the period when the *maq'ad* was part of the courthouse, the five storage spaces were used as the court archives and for the storage of documents received from regional courts.⁸⁰

The arched doors are framed with the same decorative bands of knots within

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:14.⁷⁷

Ibid, 1:16-17.⁷⁸

The palace of Amir Taz (monument number 267) dates to 753/1354 and is located on ⁷⁹ al-Suyufiyya Street, to the south of the walled city of al-Qahira. While the palace was subject to a number of extreme renovations, the *maq'ad* and *qa'a* on the northwestern wing are original in terms of architectural configuration. Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 37 and 41.

Ibid, 88.⁸⁰

knots as the ones used in the upper level.⁸¹ The five rooms on the ground floor have seven windows, five to the eastern half of the façade and two on the western half. The two windows on the right side are significantly higher than the others and open to the mezzanine floor on their interior (see Fig. 15). The five windows on the eastern half of the façade have lintels made of joggled voussoirs of white and red stones.⁸² While the doors of these rooms look similar from the outside, the interior spaces are slightly different.

To begin, the door on the far west, as opposed to its neighboring ones, does not have any decoration nor do its windows. Upon examining the photographs from Creswell's collection and the *Comité Bulletin*, it seems as though this part of the building was subject to modifications.⁸³ It is unclear if the ceiling was originally covered using wooden beams, as it has been since the 14th/20th century, or if it had a vaulted ceiling like those of the other three rooms. Of course, it seems more likely that it was similar to the others.⁸⁴ The room itself is eight meters deep and 4.25 meters wide.⁸⁵

The second room opens to the left of the staircase and has a door and a window on the main façade. An arch encloses them on the façade and on the inside a vault covers the entire room. Because this room covers a large span of 8.25 meters by 6.5 meters, the ceiling is reinforced with a central pillar of stone and intersecting wooden beams to help carry the vast loggia. The sloping ground under the staircase is connected to this room and is covered by a smaller vault. It is an elongated space that is only 2.5

All doors are 2.40 meters high and 1.25 meters wide. Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 88.⁸¹

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:16-17.⁸²

This point will be further elaborated on in chapter 6.⁸³

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 15, and Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 88.⁸⁴

Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 88.⁸⁵

meters wide.⁸⁶ In order to ensure the ventilation of this storage area, a small aeration chimney is built within the wall. Its lower opening is in the form of a small arch.⁸⁷

The third room is only 4.25 meters wide, which gives a perception of depth, and is located under the center of the loggia. Its door and window are also set within an arch on the façade. The fourth and widest of the ground floor rooms is at the far left of the building and is 11.25 meters wide. It has three windows surrounding its door, one to the right and two to the left. A massive boulder of dark limestone is set as the keystone of the cross vaults on the inside of the room. Opposite to the entrance, at the far end of the room, we can see traces of two openings, currently walled up.⁸⁸

The entrance and façade

Like most residences in Cairo, an emphasis on verticality is present in the façade of the *maq'ad*. It can be observed in the elongation of the arches and the grandeur of the portal.⁸⁹ The portal of the *maq'ad* itself is a recess, punctuated by a modest doorway and a rectangular window on top. The recess measures three meters in height and is 1.67 meters wide.⁹⁰ This window is a clearstory window opening up to the corridor on the interior. The monumental entrance is very proportionate to the whole structure. The limestone used for the entrance matches the arches of the loggia. Unfortunately, the whole façade is partially restored as it was previously whitewashed but it used to be in two colors of limestone, red and white, as it is today.⁹¹ To the right of the portal, on top of the first room, a large rectangular window is shut with a grill of

Ibid, 88.⁸⁶

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:15.⁸⁷

Ibid, 1:15, and Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 88.⁸⁸

Ibrahim, "Residential architecture in Mamluk Cairo," 47.⁸⁹

Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 89.⁹⁰

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:11.⁹¹

intersecting iron bars.⁹² The window has a double lintel; the lower of both is flat and is set underneath a slightly arched one (Fig. 13).⁹³

The twenty-two meter wide arcade of five arches has four columns. For added height, the columns have elongated necks decorated with stalactites on the lateral sides with tie beams joining in horizontally for consolidation (Fig. 14).⁹⁴ The arcade is the widest within the context of Mamluk architecture. Some of the widest and most magnificent *maq'ads* are those at the residences of *Amir* Taz and Sultan Qaytbay. The *maq'ad* at the palace of *Amir* Taz is of four arches that span 13.5 meters. The *maq'ad* at the palace of Sultan Qaytbay is of three arches that span a little less than nine meters.⁹⁵ Although the arcaded façade is wide, the elongation of the columns instantly emphasizes the verticality of the façade, lending it that grand feel the Mamluks have been known for.

Mezzanine floor

The flight of stairs, composed of seven steps, leading to the mezzanine floor ends at a grand double-leaf door that opens up to two built-in seating benches on either side of it, each 0.76 meters high.⁹⁶ The rectangular landing inside the door is 2.52 meters wide and is covered by a painted wooden ceiling. Upon crossing the landing, another flight of stairs, of twelve steps, leads to the loggia on the left-hand side and an annex on the right-hand side.

The doorway to the annex leads to a space 8 meters deep and 4 meters wide. The room is slightly deformed with a few wall protrusions. This room has been subject

This iron grill is likely replaced since this whole side of the façade was restored and ⁹² since the window was blocked and plastered before the *Comité* started their renovation. I will further elaborate on this point in chapter 6.
Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:14.⁹³
Ibid, 1:14.⁹⁴

Source: Ghizwan, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 42-43, 63 and 65. The same source has various ⁹⁵ examples of *maq'ads* that are narrower than Mamay's.
Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 89.⁹⁶

to restoration and no trace of built-in furniture shows (Fig. 15). Although described as a *khazana nawmiyya*,⁹⁷ it seems very isolated to fulfill such a function, unless the main *qa'a* was in fact directly attached to the rear of the *maq'ad*. In Mamluk residences, most rooms have multiple functions so this annex could have served as the *amir*'s salon and a *khazana nawmiyya* among other functions, contingent on the season or the time of day.⁹⁸

The loggia, which is considered the crown of this monument, is a simple rectangular space measuring 21.8 by 10.3 meters on the inside. The ceiling is eleven meters high from the floor of the *maq'ad*.⁹⁹ The three interior walls have also been subject to many changes. The rectangular space had housing built up inside for some time. It has been used as a mosque as well, during which the walls were plastered (see Fig. 16).¹⁰⁰ An opening in the back wall, in the shape of a door, is blocked using courses of brick and stone reveals further intervention in the space or indicates earlier extensions. The wall facing the entrance of the loggia is also newly built-up. It is unclear whether these restorations are to block pre-existing connections or whether they are mere consolidation work. These openings are the only clear interior connections the *maq'ad* had with other components of the residence. A wooden rail, only 0.68 meters high, connects the five arches. The loggia's interior ceiling is of elaborately painted wood supported by a vertical band with corner *muqarnas* supports.¹⁰¹ The decorative program of the *maq'ad* will be analyzed in the following chapter.

The palace

In order to be able to picture the entire palace's appearance, it is important to

Ibid, 90.⁹⁷

The *khazana nawmiyya* is a room where the master of the house slept in. It was usually attached to the main *iwan* of the *qa'a*. Ibrahim, "Residential Architecture," 55.

Comité, 19:150.⁹⁹

Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 91.¹⁰⁰

Ibid, 91.¹⁰¹

go through the basic elements of the Cairene, and especially the Mamluk house. The architectural configuration of the traditional Cairene house has not developed much for thousands of years.¹⁰² A range of surviving houses from the early Mamluk years informs us about the main architectural and decorative elements and their development. It is clear at this point that the *maq'ad* was Mamay's addition to an existing palace. His major contribution, otherwise, was the renovation of the residence. The dating of the palace, which remains unknown, would determine the existence of some of its elements. This dating could range anywhere between the Fatimid and Ayyubid Eras to the Mamluk Era. If Jamal al-Din al-Ustadar had completely demolished the existing Fatimid residence, *Qasr al-Shawk*, then the palace would have been built after 811/1408, less than a century before Mamay renovated it. Another likely scenario is that parts of the existing residence escaped the demolition as Jamal al-Din died before executing his plan.¹⁰³ This theory is supported by the map after Raviasse, since it is probably that *Qasr al-Shawk* was further to the northeast (see Fig. 7). In all cases, whatever Mamay renovated, he would have appropriated what he acquired to fit the needs of a Mamluk residence.

The Islamic house was designed based on three main aspects, the climatic, the social and the religious. The sustainability of the Egyptian house might be the reason for the very little development that occurs throughout the centuries, even before the Islamic concept were introduced. Some of the best climatic treatments are the open *maq'ad* or as Briggs describes it as a belvedere facing the north, and the *malqaf* or roof ventilation and wooden lattice windows where the cooler north winds are channeled in the main *qa'as* of the residence.¹⁰⁴ Other than the functional living quarters - namely the *salamlík*

Briggs, *Muhammadan Architecture*, 145-147.¹⁰²

Al-Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:154.¹⁰³

Briggs, *Muhammadan Architecture*, 145-146.¹⁰⁴

and *haramlik* and their services – the *qa'a* is one of the most important elements that is missing from the palace of Mamay. In many houses there was more than one *qa'a* and each usually had more than one *iwan* and a lower *durqa'a*. *Qa'as* were usually located on the ground or first floor. We can find them on the ground floor in the palaces of Alin Aq, Bashtak and Qawsun. They are found on the first floor of the houses of Tashtimur, Muhibb al-Din bin Yahya and Muhibb al-Din al-Muwaqqa'. The *maq'ad* was usually attached to the main *qa'a* and was always on the mezzanine or first floor. It was accessed via a staircase with an elaborately decorated portal. Towards the end of the Mamluk and the Ottoman periods, this became a very popular prototype.¹⁰⁵

Two of the most comparable loggias, the one at *manzil* Qaytbay (monument number 228) and that of the palace of *Amir* Taz, had different locations for their *qa'as*. The Palace of *Amir* Taz was completed in 754/1353.¹⁰⁶ The main *qa'a* of the palace was located on the first floor, perpendicular to the *maq'ad* and overlooking the courtyard from its longer elevation. It had two main *iwans*, one of which has deeper wings. The *qa'a* had one large *mashrabiyya* overlooking the courtyard. Another *qa'a*, opposite the *maq'ad* is known as the harem *qa'a*. Service rooms and staircases surround those main spaces.¹⁰⁷ The residence of Sultan Qaytbay was built in 890/1485, approximately eleven years prior to Mamay's palace. The *waqf* document for it describes the main *qa'as* to be located on the ground floor, while the first floor was used for mainly for residential purposes.¹⁰⁸ Its main elements included a stable, as in the palace of Mamay. The main portal leads to a bent entrance, which in turn leads to a courtyard, the major distribution point of the residence. The original borders of the *manzil* are a lot more defined than in the case of the palace of Mamay, but the functions and the distribution of the elements

Abou-Khatwa, *Inscription Programs*, 9.¹⁰⁵

Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 39.¹⁰⁶

Ibid, 41-43.¹⁰⁷

Hampikian and al-Ibrashi, "Archival Photography," 124, 132-133.¹⁰⁸

are still comparable.¹⁰⁹

While the interior spaces might seem of little significance in the case of my thesis, it is important to understand the basic components and average sizes of the main spaces of a house or palace in order to be able to fill in the blanks of the vanished palace of Mamay al-Sayfi. Rooms with secondary functions and services include latrines, staircases and kitchens as well as smaller rooms or *qa'as* that had several functions.¹¹⁰

A photograph of the *maq'ad* of Mamay produced by the *Comité* and dating to 1280/1902 shows the façade overlooking the courtyard to the left of the *maq'ad* (see Fig. 27).¹¹¹ While windows with shutters are very clear in the photograph. It is unclear whether these windows were rebuilt along with the additions to the *maq'ad* or whether they are original. Whether this was the location of the main *qa'a* or the *haramlik*, it is very likely that *mashrabiyyas* existed on both sides, the façade facing the main road and the other facing the courtyard, given that the courtyard is wide and lacks privacy.

Mamluk residences usually had more than one entrance but only two portals would be decorated, that on the façade facing a main street and that on the side opening up to the main courtyard of the house.¹¹² The portal of Bayt al-Qadi is a 1200/1800s structure and it served as a primary entrance for the Ottoman courthouse attached to the *maq'ad*.¹¹³ It was the subject of controversy due to its narrow pathway, restricting passage between the *maydan* and the main street beyond the portal.¹¹⁴ In the 1902 image published by the *Comité*, the portal appearing directly underneath the windows is not the same as the one present today. Though it is similar in appearance, the location is

Ibid, 129.¹⁰⁹

¹¹⁰ O'Kane, "Domestic and Religious Architecture," 152-156 and Abou-Khatwa, *Inscription Programs*, 8-9.

This image appears in the supplement provided in *Comité* 19.¹¹¹

Ibrahim, *Residential Architecture*, 56.¹¹²

Warner, *The monuments of historic Cairo*, 172.¹¹³

Comité, 22:64.¹¹⁴

entirely different. The one in the image is much closer to the structure of the loggia, therefore it is evident that it had been moved or replaced to the position where it is today. The portal possibly once led to the halls in that block and to the upper stories of the palace. The *Comité* had made plans to disassemble it and use its stones in the mosque of al-Hakim due to the high quality of the stone.¹¹⁵ It is likely that instead of using the stone for another monument the portal was reassembled in a neighboring location.

The original portal of the *Bayt al-Qadi* was a connection between the courtyard and Khan Ja'far Street, the extension of al-Jamaliyya, and it was possibly the old gate for the house. This portal was demolished along with the eastern quarters of the palace over which *maslahit damgh al-masughat wal-mawzin* was built.¹¹⁶ Other aspects worth considering regarding the portal have to do with the issue of privacy. The portal of *Bayt al-Qadi* lacks privacy to the extent that rules out the possibility that its architectural configuration is modeled after the original gate (see Fig. 33 and 34).¹¹⁷ A bent entrance or an entrance with two different spaces was a necessity, especially in such a case where the street and the main courtyard have no more than a few meters between them. Another smaller portal appears on the western side of the courtyard in the painting by Frank Dillon dating to 1285/1869. It seems to have lead directly to the street we know today as Bayt al-Qadi Street that connects the palace to Al-Mu'izz Street or only to more of the residence's rooms. In the painting, the palace seems to be in ruins, most notably the northern side of courtyard. The western wall, including the portal, seems to be placed as an enclosure for the courtyard in place of the vanished western wing. Today, this wall does not exist and only on the exterior eastern façade that we can

Ibid, 22:64.¹¹⁵
Al-Hadidi, *Dirasat*, 116-117.¹¹⁶
Ibrahim, *Residential Architecture*, 47.¹¹⁷

see the foundation of the old palace underneath the modern construction, confirming the eastern boundaries of the palace.¹¹⁸ As some residences had shops on the façade of the ground floor, it does not seem unlikely that the original palace had shops opening up to a main street such as al-Jamaliyya Street, also known as Khan Ja ‘far Street. The palaces of Taz and Bashtak had similar arrangements.¹¹⁹

Most extant Mamluk *qa‘as* belong to the earlier Bahri era. The survival of elite Ottoman residences points towards a development of which the *qa‘a* of Mamay could have filled a gap. Residences that survive from the Circassian Mamluk period are of much smaller scale, yet we know that it was not uncommon for a residence to have more than one *qa‘a*, an upper and a lower one in some cases. This is the case at the palace of *Amir Salār*.¹²⁰ Mamay’s missing *qa‘a* could have been located anywhere around the vast courtyard but based on the locations of the *qa‘as* of amir Taz and Sultan Qaytbay and their proximity from their respective loggias, I would suggest that it was located in the eastern wing of the palace. The main *qa‘a* could be on either the ground or the first floor but based on the depth of that wing and its direct contact with the main street, I am suggesting that the main *qa‘a* was located on the first floor.

In such a large-scale residence, an enclosed outdoor space must have existed for domestic activities and a private bathhouse.¹²¹ The old bathhouse to the south of the *maq‘ad*, known as *Hammam al-Affandi*, was possibly part of the palace. It is logical that a bathhouse would be placed to the south of the residence, yet it is a feature I have not encountered in any other Mamluk palace. Based on Dillon’s painting and the proximity of the ruins to the *maq‘ad*, I would suggest that the northern wing of the palace was much closer than where the courtyard ends today. Another courtyard could have existed

Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 86.¹¹⁸

Ibrahim, *Residential Architecture*, 55.¹¹⁹

Ibid, 55.¹²⁰

Ibrahim, *Residential Architecture*, 49, and Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 86.¹²¹

north to that wing. Drawing conclusions based on a painting might seem farfetched but it was also common for Mamluk residences to have more than one courtyard, as is the case at *manzil* Qaytbay.

Chapter 4: The decorative program

It may be a compact structure but the architecture of the *maq'ad* block boasts a very rich decorative program especially on the entrance portal and on the ceiling of the loggia. There is a variety of inscriptions, moldings and woodwork on the exterior and interior of the building. While the façade does not feature a unique decorative program, the magnificent wooden ceiling of the *maq'ad* is elaborate with painted wooden coffering and a huge *thuluth* inscription surrounding its base. The decorative program of the *maq'ad* is only concentrated on the façade decoration and the painted ceilings. The façade employs richly implemented elements that come together to form an elaborate and proportionate masterpiece. Briggs compares it to the nearly contemporary palace and *maq'ad* of Qaytbay, stating that the *maq'ad* of Mamay is far more elaborate and beautiful in terms of decoration.¹²² Therefore in this chapter, the architectural decoration will be described and analyzed in the context of Qaytbay's established decorative program in order to examine Briggs' statement.

The façade of the *maq'ad* block spans about thirty meters and is built entirely in *mushahhar* masonry, an alternation of red and white stone.¹²³ The use of *mushahhar* was quite common especially on the facades of mosques and in lining the arches of Iwans and arcades. It is obvious that at least one of the lateral sides of the courtyard was of the same design, as observed from the remains of a wall perpendicular to the right side of the surviving façade. The *maq'ad* is similar to others in Cairo in its architectural configuration yet it is wider than most.¹²⁴ Its four columns and five arches are very

Briggs, *Muhammadan Architecture*, 156.¹²²
Mushahhar is the alternation of white and any other color in the courses of stone. *Ablaq*¹²³
is the alternation of black and white. For more information: Shahin, *Qaytbay Decoration*,
1:107.
Comité, 19:150. This comparison is explained in chapter three.¹²⁴

elaborately decorated.¹²⁵ The spandrels and the portal of the façade combine a variety of stone carvings in the form of moldings, joggle voussoirs, geometric panels and stone carved inscriptions.

The Columns

This brings us to one of the most unusual features of the *maq'ad*. The five horseshoe arches of the loggia are supported by four freestanding columns. The columns are of white marble with lotus shaped capitals that are considered an oddity in the design (Fig. 14). Behrens-Abouseif considers them newly made capitals designed in an ancient Egyptian style, stating that they are the only extant reference to ancient Egyptian architecture within the context of Mamluk decoration.¹²⁶ She points out that while ancient Egyptian materials were frequently reused as building materials, rarely- if ever- were ancient Egyptian styles adopted for newly made elements- as is the case here.¹²⁷ Warner also supports the idea that the columns at the *maq'ad* of Mamay were purposely made and not reused.¹²⁸ Al-Nasir Muhammad's great throne hall at the citadel, *al-Iwan al-Nasiri*, utilized ancient Egyptian columns that were repurposed for the hall. They were of red granite and were taken from temples. Al-Nasir Muhammad's hall was standing until the 13th/19th century and even though it was not particularly used as for *Dar al-'Adl* sessions as it was during al-Nasir's time, it was still employed as a reception hall by Circassian Mamluk sultans.¹²⁹ The receptions, especially those of foreign envoys, are events where Mamay as an *amir* would have been regularly exposed

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:14.¹²⁵

Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 100.¹²⁶

Behrens-Abouseif, "Antiquity in medieval Egypt."¹²⁷

Warner, *The Monuments of Historic Cairo*, 98. I did not find anything sources confirming¹²⁸
or refuting this statement.

Rabbat, *Mamluk History through Architecture*, 157 and 160-61.¹²⁹

to. Behrens-Abouseif has proposed that Mamay- or his architect- based the design of these capitals on the reused elements at the citadel.¹³⁰

Stonework

The five spandrels of the arches are framed by a double band of carved stone. The bands also form rectangular friezes of epigraphic bands over the spandrels, on which the inscriptions were carved (Fig. 17). The bands are knotted several times throughout the frame. The arched portal is framed with similar knotted bands and ends with knotting at the apex connecting with an epigraphic band (Fig. 18). The style of using knots within a larger knot is typical of late Mamluk decoration, as seen on the funerary complexes of Sultan Qaytbay and Sultan al-Ghawri and most notably on the mosque of Azbak al-Yusufi.¹³¹ It is also used around the doors of the ground floor rooms, where the knots tie on the top forming a circle to connect the frames of both the spandrels and the arches (Fig. 19).

At the highest point of the portal, the recess ends in a trilobed arch with double *muqarnas* conches of carved stone within the lateral lobes. The top lobe is in *mushahhar* stone and in the center a starburst design is formed between the *muqarnas* conches (Fig. 20). The trilobed archway and the formation of the semi-dome with *muqarnas* is considered a Syrian adaptation. It started appearing in Cairo since Sultan al-Zahir Baybars used it on the portal of his madrasa. By the 9th/15th century, the use of trilobed portals with *muqarnas* for squinches or pendentives was common practice. The portal of Qaytbay at Khan al-Khalili employs a similar design but on a much larger scale.¹³² Within the recess of the portal two square symmetric panels of a geometric design are placed directly under the conch and on either side of the small window. The

Behrens-Abouseif, "Antiquity in medieval Egypt." ¹³⁰
Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 276, 293 and 297.¹³¹
Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 86-89.¹³²

design is simple and is derived from an eight-pointed star. On the spandrels of the trilobed arch of the portal, some vegetal carving survives around the blazons of Mamay. Similarly, the spandrels of the five arches are surrounded with knotted bands and within the spandrels some vegetal stone carving is still visible and the blazons are present on both sides of every arch (Fig. 21). All together they form twelve blazons. All the vegetal carving is very flat; it is probably depleted due to various conditions such as weathering. The spandrels on the ground floor arches are bare of any decoration.

Another stone-carved inscription band runs at eye level on the portal, starting at a lateral side of the recess and ending at the opposite side.¹³³ Above the bands, a lintel of joggled voussoirs of white and black marble sits above the entryway (Fig. 22). This type of lintel decoration is considered common practice, especially in the architecture of Circassian Mamluks. The attractive design was usually complemented by the use of marble- a material used sparingly on facades at the time- creating strong contrast with the earth tones of the façade as a whole.¹³⁴

The Blazons

As a member of the court of Qaytbay, Mamay's blazons are expected to make repetitive appearances on the façade. As previously mentioned, the blazons of Mamay on the *maq'ad* are set within the spandrels on either side of the arches on the façade.¹³⁵ The repetition of the blazons amounts to twelve on this façade, ten within the five spandrels of the arcade and two within the spandrel of the portal. The blazons are round with a composite design of three horizontal divisions. On this façade there are two

Revault and Maury, *Palais et Maisons du Caire*, 1:18.¹³³

Asfour, "Learning from Mamluk Architectural Aesthetics," 251-253.¹³⁴

¹³⁵ The blazon or rank is a system of using assigned emblems to designate the military rank of *amirs* and Sultans in the Mamluk Empire, using dress, dietary, musical and ceremonial codes. Rabbat, *Mamluk History through Architecture*, 60. Blazons would also often appear on ceremonial clothing items and artifacts, especially those of glass and metal work. Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 38.

variations. The first has a lozenge, a cup between two horns, and another cup. The second has a lozenge, geometric shapes in the middle framed with horns, and another cup (Fig. 23). The lozenge is also known as the napkin and it refers to the *jamdar* (a wardrobe master), the cup refers to a *saqi* (cupbearer), and the pen box (in the form of geometric shapes) is representative of the rank of *dawadar* (secretary)¹³⁶. All these positions Mamay seems to have held before becoming *muqaddim alf* (amir of a thousand). Mamay's positions will be further elaborated on in chapter five, though it is worthy to note that his promotion from second *dawadar* in 897/1491 to commander of a thousand in 901/1495 is indicative to his receiving of a new blazon. This might explain the variation in the use of two blazons.

The placement of blazons in the spandrels appears on the *maq'ad* of Qaytbay where the spandrels of the arcade have double blazons but not on the entrance portal. Another notable comparison to the repetition of the blazon appears a 10th/16th century painting titled "The Reception of the Venetian Ambassadors in Damascus," displaying multiple blazons on the façade.¹³⁷ Damascus is a place where Mamay frequented as an ambassador, therefore it is possible to consider it not only as a parallel but as a monument Mamay might look at for inspiration (see Fig. 31).

The Ceiling

Besides the arcaded façade, the ceiling of the *maq'ad* is considered its most striking decoration.¹³⁸ Timber has occupied a significant place in the ceiling architecture in Cairo despite its limited availability.¹³⁹ The use of timber in the ceiling at the *maq'ad* is not a novelty but the decoration is quite elaborate. The rectangular ceiling of the

Nasser Rabbat, "Rank" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, second edition, ed. Peri J. Bearman et al. 2012. Accessed 30 April 2017. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6221

This painting was created by unknown artist and is in acquisition of the Musée de Louvre in Paris.

Revault and Maury, *Palais et Maisons du Caire*, 1:20.¹³⁸
Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 68.¹³⁹

loggia is comprised of horizontal coffered ribs. Each rib alternates between a cylindrical shape and a rectangular one, with a transition of miniature stalactites that are painted and not carved (Fig. 24). The whole ceiling is painted in flat geometric and vegetal designs of predominantly dark blue and gold colors with mahogany colored borders. The design employs a range of medallions, geometric stars as well as vegetal scrolls. The ribs have connected medallions filled with vegetal motifs lined with a pale cream color. The recesses beneath the ribs have frames on top of a dark blue background with some vegetal motifs. Within the frames, more vegetal and geometric patterns are painting in gold. The geometric motifs are of eight-pointed stars painted in gold and cream. It is not known if the ceiling was originally gilded or not. At the base of the wooden ceiling, an elongated *thuluth* inscription band surrounds the four sides. The ceiling of the *sabil-kuttab* of Qaytbay in Saliba is very similar to Mamay's. The lavish decoration of painted ceiling in public Mamluk buildings, such as in a *sabil*, is typical as they were constantly viewed by the public. Unlike the ceiling of the loggia, which is a private residence, unless Mamay had other aspirations, as suggested earlier. The ceiling of the *sabil-kuttab* is in the same colors of dark red, blue and gold.¹⁴⁰ The extensive use of the gold color in the ceiling at the *maq'ad* along with the fluidity of the patterns makes it more visually appealing, confirming Briggs statement about Mamay's decoration being the most elaborate.

The interior corridor leading to the loggia and the annex room has a coffered wooden ceiling similar to that of the *maq'ad*. The ribs are cylindrical and are decorated using the same blue and gold colors filling in intricate vegetal patterns. The ceiling of the annex is of modern wooden beams confirming that this space has undergone much intervention, and thus lost all of its original decoration if it had any.

Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 95.¹⁴⁰

The bands surrounding the portal, known as the foundation inscription, are of elongated *thuluth* script. The *thuluth* style of calligraphy was commonly used throughout the Mamluk period and it was especially dominant during the period of Qaytbay.¹⁴¹ In 1319/1902, Max Van Berchem attempted to read the inscriptions on the façade but he could only read the foundation inscription on the portal. Most of the decoration and inscriptions on the façade of the *maq'ad* were whitewashed when the *Comité* published their supplement on the monument the same year.¹⁴²

Today the inscriptions on the façade are disintegrating within the stone and are barely readable (Fig. 21). The inscription bands in the spandrels begin with the *basmala* and then read as follows:

بسملة، أمر بإنشاء هذا المقعد المبارك المقر الكريم العالي
السيفي ماماي عين مقدمين الألوفا بالديار المصرية الملكي الأشرفي
عن نصره بتاريخ شهر ذي القعدة الحرام سنة إحدى وتسعمائة.

“Ordered the construction of this blessed *maq'ad* his Excellency, the eminent, the lofty, Saif al-Din Mamay, commander of the thousand of the Egyptian Lands, the royal, the noble, may his victory be glorified in the month of Dhu'l-Qa'ada the holy the year nine hundred and one.”¹⁴³

The inscription band at base of ceiling is considered the most beautiful. The elongated *thuluth* inscription is painted in gold on top of a dark blue background. The calligraphy is complemented by vegetal scrolls painted in a cream color behind the elongated letters and occasionally wrapping them (see Fig. 25). The inscription begins

Shahin, *Qaytbay Decoration*, 85.¹⁴¹
Comité, 19:151.¹⁴²
Abou-Khatwa, *Inscription programs*, 48.¹⁴³

with the *basmala* and *ayat al-kursi* (2:255), and then reads:

بسملة وآية الكرسي، أمر بإنشاء هذا المقعد المبارك
المقر الأشرف العالي المولوي الأميري ماماي عين مقدمين
الألوف الملكي الأشرفي.

“Ordered the construction of this blessed *maq’ad* his
Excellency, the noble, the lofty, the lordly emir Sayf al-din
Mamay, commander of the thousand, (the *mamluk* of) al-Malik
al-Ashraf (Qaytbay).”¹⁴⁴

Only a few domestic residences have *quranic* inscriptions namely the Ayyubid *qa’at* al-Dardir and Mamluk residence of Qaytbay, where the inscriptions are in reference to paradise and not *ayat al-kursi*.¹⁴⁵ Coffered wooden ceilings first appeared in religious architecture and the first identified used of it in domestic architecture is in the palace of Bashtak. The lack of survival of pre-existing domestic architecture makes it difficult to determine if the influence was from religious to domestic or vice versa.¹⁴⁶

The wooden eaves

Today the façade of the loggia is slightly shaded using wooden eaves (Fig. 26). This eave is only present above the arcaded area. It does not appear in a photograph from the bulletin of the *Comité* in 1320/1902 (Fig. 27) as it was reconstructed during the restoration in the early 14th/20th century. It appears clearly in a photograph taken by Creswell after the renovation. The eave is carried over a simple truss and it seems like it was part of the original design as evidenced by the knotted bands that frame the areas where the wooden truss meets the stone façade. For the reconstruction, the *Comité*’s

Ibid, 48 and Van Berchem, *Materiaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, 541.¹⁴⁴

O’Kane, “Domestic and Religious Architecture,” 152.¹⁴⁵

Ibid, 172-173.¹⁴⁶

used Qaytbay's *maq'ad* as a reference as it had a similar, if not typical, eave.¹⁴⁷ All of the wood used in forming the eave has geometric cutouts.

The palace

As for the vanished palace, fewer descriptions have been made in reference to the architecture or the decorative program. The only known reference to the decoration in the rest of the palace was reported by the *Comité*. They recorded fragments of decoration in the ruins of the western wing.¹⁴⁸ The exterior perimeters of most Islamic residences were typically not decorated but merely plastered and whitewashed,¹⁴⁹ with the exception of entrance portals and the wooden screening on the exterior walls. Entrance vestibules were most likely decorated because *amirs* would ride through these portals before dismounting from their horses in the courtyard. It was also where visitors entered, whether on foot or horseback.¹⁵⁰ It is impossible to analyze any of the palace of Mamay's exterior walls because they have either been demolished or built over, centuries ago. The vanished palace was surrounded with narrow streets; hence it is safe to assume that the outer walls of the palace had no decoration, with the possible exception of *mashrabiyyas*.¹⁵¹

The photograph produced by the *Comité* dating to 1320/1902 shows the façade overlooking the courtyard to the left of the *maq'ad*. Windows with shutters are very clear in the photograph, yet it cannot be determined whether they were rebuilt along with the additions to the *maq'ad* or whether they are part of the original structure. If the *haramlik* was located on that side of the palace, then it is very likely that *mashrabiyyas*

More information is provided on the eaves in chapter 6.¹⁴⁷

Comité, 19:150.¹⁴⁸

Ibrahim, *Residential Architecture*, 52.¹⁴⁹

Ibid, 55.¹⁵⁰

I have not found any source speaking of the exterior walls or parameters of the palace.¹⁵¹

were used on both façades; the one facing the main road, al-Jamaliyya, and the one facing the courtyard, given that the courtyard is wide and lacks privacy.¹⁵²

The beauty of the elaborate decoration might bring up some questions about the nature of the courtyard facing the loggia. The repetition of the blazons and the use of marble voussoirs for a door lintel seem excessive for an architectural element that is oriented inwards. Was the *maq'ad* originally only the *amir*'s summer sitting room or was it more accessible to visitors and members of the public? All evidence points toward the exposure of the *maq'ad* to a large crowd of users. The military and social status of Mamay at the time might provide some insight on this inquiry.

Due to the lack of information concerning the decoration of the entire palace, I chose to¹⁵² dedicate this chapter to the decorative program of the *maq'ad*, only mentioning speculations on the rest of the palace when possible.

Chapter 5: From *al-Dar al-Mu'athama* to *Bayt al-Qadi*

It is clear at this point that the ownership of the palace was not limited to Mamay al-Sayfi but was pre-owned prior to his acquisition of it. The Ottoman authorities in Egypt also used the palace after their conquest of the Egyptian lands in 923/1517. Based on the site history narrated in chapter 2, it seems that the palace was in ruins before Mamay bought and renovated it. This would explain why chroniclers like al-Maqrizi did not make any mention of a grand residence in such a prime and central location. This also explains why the palace was only known as Mamay's and not by the name of its previous owner.

In this chapter, I will attempt to construct a biography for Mamay al-Sayfi based on the available information. Chroniclers make only a few mentions of Mamay, yet whatever fragments found of his encounters are important to understand the nature of the daily use of the palace as well as architectural influences, if any.

Mamay al-Sayfi's Biography

Mamay al-Sayfi was one of seven Mamluk *amirs* carrying the first name of Mamay during the reigns of Qaytbay and al-Ghawri, according to Ibn Iyas.¹⁵³ Mamay ibn Khadad al-Sayfi started his career as a *mamluk* of Qaytbay. He was praised for his wit and courage, qualities that inspired Qaytbay to frequently send him as an emissary to the Ottoman court. Ibn Iyas states that Mamay was the main representative of the Mamluk Empire, in charge of negotiations with the Ottomans and was the Mamluk ambassador in the Ottoman court.¹⁵⁴

Mamay was given the title of second *dawadar* in 897/1491 and subsequently Commander of a Thousand in *Safar* 901/1495.¹⁵⁵ Some of the earliest mentions of

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:12.¹⁵³

Ibid, 1:12.¹⁵⁴

Ibid, 1:12. A *dawadar* is an executive secretary, Source: Hampikian and Ibrashy, ¹⁵⁵

Mamay were by Ibn Tulun. In his writing, it is unclear if the *amir* he refers to as Mamay is Mamay al-Sayfi, but most mentions are relevant enough. Some mark his arrival and departure from Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo, and one significant statement marks his arrival at “*al-qasr* (the palace) *bi al-maydan*.”¹⁵⁶ All references to him state that he was living and working mainly between Cairo and Damascus from the year 895/1489 until 902/1496 when he was beheaded.¹⁵⁷

During the last years of Qaytbay’s rule, factional feuds were taking place within the Mamluk court, where the *amirs* were in disagreement about the successor and appointed sultan. In 901/1495 Sultan Qaytbay got gravely ill and during his bed rest, the *amirs* agreed that his reign had ended and passed on the rule to his son Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir Muhammad. The years after Qaytbay’s death were known for recurrent factional wars mostly under the leadership of *amir* Qunsuwah and *amir* Aq bardi, and largely a result of Sultan Muahmmad’s repositioning of Qunsuwah who was gradually gaining control of the Mamluk realm. Qunsuwah’s *amirs*, most likely including Mamay, declared him Sultan and besieged The Citadel for 11 days. However, in 902/1496, the same year in which the construction and renovation of the palace was completed, Qunsuwah and his Mamluks were defeated by Aq Bardi who took Mamay hostage and beheaded him shortly after.¹⁵⁸

Inspiring *al-Dar al-Mu’athama*

The Mamluks built palaces to display their wealth. They also built civic structures to support social and religious activities and to demonstrate their piety, and mausoleums to commemorate their lives and aggrandize their deeds.¹⁵⁹ Mamay did not

“Archival Photography,” 122.
Ibn Tulun, *Mufakahat al-Khilan*, 58 and 60.¹⁵⁶
Ibid, 129-168.¹⁵⁷
Mubarak, *Al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 1:48.¹⁵⁸
Rabbat, “In Search of a Triumphant Image,” 22.¹⁵⁹

build a mausoleum that we know of. Perhaps this is because he barely had any power in Cairo as he was usually abroad or jailed while in Egypt. It also seems likely that he did not expect his death to arrive so soon. Whether or not he had any heirs, remains unclear to this day.

As discussed earlier, accurate information about the palace prior to Mamay's acquisition of it does not exist. Ibn Iyas mentions that Mamay was the one who renewed, or *jadad*, the building of the great palace, *al-dar al-mu'athama*, in Bayn al-Qasrayn and spent a significant amount of money on the project.¹⁶⁰ He also mentions the palace as *al-Dar al-Mu'athamma*, either confirming that the palace, or part of it, was still intact and obviously grand when Mamay first held ownership of it, or that the palace was great enough to be referred to in such grandeur even when in ruins.¹⁶¹

Mamay's constant travels beyond the Egyptian lands meant that he was exposed to different architectural styles and decorative programs. One might expect foreign influences to appear in his palace but all the elements discussed in the previous chapters do not reveal significantly unfamiliar features. One striking statement was by Hillenbrand in his description of the domestic palatial architecture in Egypt. He suggests that the architecture of the *maq'ad* of Mamay has much in common with Persian palaces.¹⁶² Mamay was known to frequent Syria and Anatolia, but his exact travels are not known to us today and thus any comparisons made between his palace and the palatial architecture in Syria, Persia or Anatolia are not guaranteed to give any clue as to whether there are mutual influences.

Comité, 19:150.¹⁶⁰

Ibn Iyas, *Badai' al-Zuhur*, 3:345.¹⁶¹

The case of the governor's palace in Damascus (as mentioned in chapter four) as ¹⁶² Mamay was certainly exposed to such a prominent building during his travels as an ambassador. Hillenbrand also compares the palaces of Mamay and Sultan Qaytbay to the palace of Sitt Tunshuq (709/1388) in Jerusalem in terms of its first floor stone-vaulted *qa'a* and stables. His argument is not baseless but I found it inconclusive so I have chosen to not to emphasize it for this paper. For more information: Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, 418-130 and 436.

Becoming Bayt al-Qadi

Thirteen years after Mamay's death, the Ottomans occupied Egypt and gained control of most of the Mamluk properties. Initially, they set up the Higher Court of Justice within al-Salihiyya *madrassa*, only to move it to the palace of Mamay about 50 years later, in order to make use of the vast space that was needed to accommodate a growing number of cases. The judge then relocated his own residence to the palace, reserving the block of the *maq'ad* for the court sessions and the gatherings of the jury. It was then that the public started referring to the *maq'ad* of Mamay as Bayt al-Qadi, a name that the authorities picked up and started using officially.¹⁶³ The courtyard was easily accessible for the public at the time. Al-Jabarti writes of murder cases and street fights taken directly to the courtyard for trials.¹⁶⁴

One of the last written references to the palace was by Arthur Rhoné, reporting: "Bayt al-Qadi looks like an old grand residency, a closed yard embellished with *mashrabiyyas*. In the middle of the yard, there is a big tree with branches looming like arabesque; in the background there are arcades and columns that decorate the terrace of the palace. Under the tree, a community of peaceful people are slowly drinking their coffee or looking with envy to the food that is always distributed, thanks to a charitable bequest, to the cats of the neighborhood by the guardian of the districts' mosque. It is also here that fake witnesses are hired before going inside the loggia of the *Qadi*; where justice is served in open air and a patriarchal manner."¹⁶⁵ Rhoné's statement along with al-Jabarti's shed light on the state of accessibility and the use of the courtyard by the public. It seems like the courtyard was no longer a private entity but part of the public realm.

Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, 87.¹⁶³
Al-Jabarti, *'Aja'ib al-Athar*, 2:181-182 and 502.¹⁶⁴
Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:14.¹⁶⁵

It was not unusual for residences to be subject to adaptive reuse. In many cases throughout history, houses were converted into mosques.¹⁶⁶ Bayt al-Qadi was used as a mosque for a few years during the 20th century. During its transition from being Bayt al-Qadi to becoming a mosque, all the details of the palace structure were lost. Repeated mentions that cite the *maq'ad* as the headquarters of the Ottoman court where Muhammad Ali Pasha was appointed as a leader are the only clues we have as to what was happening from the Ottoman years onwards.¹⁶⁷

O'Kane, "Domestic and Religious Architecture," 149.¹⁶⁶
Al-Hadidi, *Dirasat*, 116-117.¹⁶⁷

Chapter 6: Building conservation at the site of the *maq'ad*

The building conservation of the palace of Mamay perhaps precedes the *maq'ad* construction but the greater wave of restoration was carried out by the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* starting 1319/1902. Fortunately, the *Comité* documented all their work on the *maq'ad* in their publications, especially between the years 1319/1901 and 1326/1908 when the majority of the work was taking place. In this chapter, all the restoration work will be represented chronologically and analyzed in order to draw conclusions on the surroundings of the *maq'ad* whenever possible.

The restoration by Mamay al-Sayfi and the Ottoman Court

According to a sales document cited by Rizk, Mamay purchased the palace, or the land on which it sits, in 861/1457.¹⁶⁸ Although the accuracy of this date is questionable, if the document does in fact refer to Mamay al-Sayfi, this means that Mamay purchased the palace nearly two centuries after Cairo was hit by one of Egypt's strongest earthquakes. Nothing had been recorded about the palace grounds between the earthquake and his purchase, except for a few mentions about the ruins of the Fatimid palaces by al-Maqrizi.¹⁶⁹ The earthquake had done a great deal of damage in Cairo. The damage resulted in large-scale restorations by al-Nasir Muhammad.¹⁷⁰ Two scenarios appear plausible at this point. While it is likely that a palace of such grandeur and a prestigious location was subject to restoration after the earthquake, it is also possible that the earthquake only added to its ruined state and the first restoration of the palace was in fact by Mamay.

In 748/1348, only a few decades later, another crisis hit Cairo; the plague. The

Rizk, *Atlas al-Imara al-Islamiyyah*, 3:1579.¹⁶⁸

Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:154.¹⁶⁹

Lane-Poole, *A history of Egypt*, 301-302.¹⁷⁰

change in dynasties, from Bahari to Circassian did not improve the situation, especially since the Mongols attempted to conquer Egypt. A flood followed by famine hit Egypt in the early years of the fifteenth century, which led to Cairo's rapid declining. In his description, al-Maqrizi describes his beloved city with grief, mentioning areas like the usually bustling Bayn al-Qasrayn and Bab al-Futuh as quiet and bare of merchandise.¹⁷¹

In his description of the Fatimid palaces (see chapter 2), al-Maqrizi mentions that the courtyard of Qasr al-Shawk was still in place with the ruins of the palace surrounding it.¹⁷² The courtyard was known at the time as *ruhbat*¹⁷³ al-Aydumari, in reference to a nearby *hammam*. In fact, Maqrizi states that there was a well and that the courtyard led to the "ancient *bimaristan*".¹⁷⁴ In 811/1408, *amir* Jamal al-Din al-Ustadar demolished what remained of Qasr al-Shawk to build his palace, only to die before ever constructing it.¹⁷⁵ If those ruins are the same as the ones purchased by Mamay, it is unknown how they fell in the hands of the seller, an individual mentioned as Shams al-Din Muhammad bin 'Abd al-'Al bin 'Umar.¹⁷⁶

As mentioned earlier, Ibn Iyas mentions the high cost of the restoration of the building at Bayn al-Qasrayn.¹⁷⁷ From then onward, no mention of the palace was made, until the entire dynasty fell and was replaced by the Ottomans who used the *maq'ad* for municipal purposes. Images show residences constructed within the loggia between the Ottoman dynasty and the years when the *Comité* took control of it.

The Restoration and Documentation by the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe*

Raymond, *Cairo: City of history*, 146-147.¹⁷¹

Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:154.¹⁷²

A *ruhba* or *rahba* is an open space usually including markets. Source: Behrens-Abouseif,¹⁷³ *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 320.

Maqrizi, *al-Khitat*, 2:222.¹⁷⁴

Ibid, 2:154.¹⁷⁵

Rizk, *Atlas al-Imara al-Islamiyyah*, 3:1579.¹⁷⁶

Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 1:12.¹⁷⁷

In 1319/1901, the technical team of the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* headed to the *maq'ad* for an inspection after calls for its renovation were heard. The team, which included Julius Franz, Max Herz and Ali Bahgat, suggested preparing drawings to highlight all the details of the structure and to estimate the required costs for renovation. Only the *maq'ad* was a registered monument at the time as the surrounding ruins were not properly surveyed.¹⁷⁸ The image published in the bulletin of 1320/1902 shows the Eastern wing of the palace intact. It also shows modern housing constructed within the loggia, which means that the *maq'ad* and possibly the whole structure were inhabited after the Ottoman occupation of the structures. In their report, the *Comité* confirm that the loggia is still inhabited.¹⁷⁹ On the façade, the entire western side of the façade is whitewashed and the door and three windows are blocked. During the first two years of inspection, the team had discovered that the original ceiling was covered and whitewashed. More cleanup work, in preparation for conservation, revealed the original painted woodwork of the ceiling.¹⁸⁰ The ceiling was found in an excellent condition to the extent that it did not require renovation.¹⁸¹

The technical team of the *Comité* was expecting two different categories of conservation post the inspections in 1319/1901 and 1320/1902. The first was to remove the whitewash and to attempt clearing out the façade from any additions that were made within the preceding century or two. The second was to remove the two rooms built at the far east side of the loggia, and to consolidate the structure of the whole monument and some of its architectural elements such as the lower band of the wooden ceiling within the loggia itself. The wooden eave on the façade required replacement as well.

Comité, 18:53.¹⁷⁸

Ibid, 18:53.¹⁷⁹

Comité, 19:105-106.¹⁸⁰

Ibid, 19:151.¹⁸¹

Nothing had remained of it, at the time, except for the cantilevered structural frames. The team replicated the wooden eave of the *maq'ad* of Qaytbay. According to their research, they were similar, if not identical.¹⁸² The eave replaced by the *Comité* is probably the one that appears in Creswell's photograph of the *maq'ad* in the early 14th/20th century.

In the supplement published along with the 1320/1902 bulletin, they mentioned that they were expecting that once conservation is complete and the monument is restored to its former glory it would be considered the most important of its kind, as its survival in such a good condition is a rare incident.¹⁸³ More inspection revealed ruins around the western wing of the courtyard that include walls and some fragments of architectural decoration.¹⁸⁴

In 1322/1904, consolidation works on the structure of the building were already taking place and the technical team had removed a thick vertical wall used to block the original façade of the ground floor. At that point, no explanation was provided as to when the wall was built or by whom. Four doors and multiple windows were found within arches behind the wall. The doors lead to the storage rooms described in chapter 3. By revealing the façade of the ground floor a difference in the street level was created,¹⁸⁵ and in response to that recent find, a decision was made for leveling and fencing part of the *maydan* right in front of the monument to reveal the whole façade, a procedure that seemed common in mosques at the time.¹⁸⁶ After tearing down the wall and removing the whitewash on the façade, three more windows were also revealed on

Ibid, 19:151.¹⁸²

Ibid, 19:151.¹⁸³

Ibid, 150.¹⁸⁴

As no explanation was made for it, the most logical conclusion would be that during the ¹⁸⁵ opening of Bayt al-Qadi Street, the wall was built to protect the façade of the *maq'ad* from the construction of the elevated modern street. For more information: *Comité*, 24:91.

Comité, 21:97.¹⁸⁶

the right side of the portal. Through the windows, the neighboring land plot was clearly viewed. According to their analysis, they reported that it was used as a dumpster as well as a storage area for reed used in the adjacent *hammam*. The *Comité* did not refer to the name of the *hammam* but it was clearly owned and being used at the time.¹⁸⁷ Most likely the *hammam* is the one known as *hammam al-Affandi*.¹⁸⁸

In the 1323/1905 report, the portal of Bayt al-Qadi is the only element discussed. The team was considering future plans for the portal in order to preserve the fine stone used. The stone is said to be a collection from preceding monuments. The suggested relocation would be to the courtyard of al-Hakim mosque, where a lot of the larger historical fragments were kept.¹⁸⁹ This plan was never put into action, as it seems. By 1324/1906, the *Comité*'s team had repaired the wooden ceiling and retouched its painting, using almost one third of the budget set for the monument on it.¹⁹⁰ The technical team seemed to be confident enough with restorations on the monument, stating that they found a few similar *maq'ads* in Cairo.¹⁹¹ In the 1325/1907 report, it was announced that the entire area was under development, including the *maydan*.¹⁹²

In 1326/1908, the technical team confirmed all works complete at the *maq'ad* and that the scaffolding had been removed; yet some problems arose such as humidity creeping within the back walls of the loggia due to the presence of the *hammam*. They made no more mentions of the issue except for their efforts in assessing the situation. Later in the same year, the bulletin informs us that the fenced area in front of the monument was itself used as a dumpster, especially since it was lower than the *maydan*. In response to the problem a guard would be hired to be in charge of keeping the fenced

Ibid, 21:97.¹⁸⁷
Warner, *The Monuments of Historic Cairo*, 168.¹⁸⁸
Comité, 22:64 and 23:31.¹⁸⁹
Ibid, 23:19.¹⁹⁰
Ibid, 23:18.¹⁹¹
Ibid, 24:91.¹⁹²

area clean.¹⁹³ In 1327/1909, the guard pointed out that there was a stagnant well, left behind by the Ottoman court, polluting the area due to inappropriate usage. The *Comité* blocked the well and decided to move the animal transport cart area from the *maydan*.¹⁹⁴

The *Comité*'s work was heavily criticized from then onwards, even though they were certainly regarded as heroes of their time.¹⁹⁵ The Technical Commission, under the leadership of Julius Franz, regulated the framework of conservation and restoration projects. His own preference of order and symmetry in architecture was often reflected on the work carried out by the *Comité*, especially in their early days.¹⁹⁶ In 1305/1888, Max Herz replaced Franz. In his own statement defining the framework of the *Comité*'s projects, Herz only mentioned conservation as their mission, yet restoration was not rejected if the monument was not a single subject in a genre. Herz was then replaced by Achille Patricolo, who was rather wary of approaching the monuments and was always urging his team to carry out extensive research before any interventions. In 1341/1923, Patricolo left his position and was replaced by Ahmad al-Sayyid, along with the support of Edmond Pauty for his expertise.

From then and until 1372/1953, the *Comité* was working with different ideologies simultaneously, but from the start, they suffered a lot of disagreements with Ali Mubarak, the Minister of Public works and shortly a member of the *Comité*. The conflict began with his statement regarding conservation, mentioning that there is no need to conserve or restore such a large number of monuments. A sample of each type would be enough. This of course, was in favor of implementing his plans for the modernization of Cairo. In 1883, Mubarak addressed a letter to the President of the Council of ministries questioning the tasks of the *Comité* and complaining that their

Ibid, 25:43, 69 and 97.¹⁹³

Ibid, 26:29 and 76-77.¹⁹⁴

Bierman, "Urban memory," 4-7.¹⁹⁵

El-Habashi, *Athar to monuments*, 127-128.¹⁹⁶

work interferes with the work of the Ministry of Public Works.¹⁹⁷ The complexity of the relationship between those two entities as well as al-Awqaf and the Supreme council of Antiquities later on, helped shed some light on some unexplained events. A notable example of this is that in the photograph published in the 1319/1902 *Bulletin* of the *Comité*, you can see the entire façade. Later on they mention the wall build in front of the ground floor, blocking all the doors and windows. The question of why and when the wall was built is not an issue of incomplete reporting on the side of the *Comité* but it emphasizes on the miscommunication occurring between both entities at the time.

In an image published in 1425/2004, the monument's loggia is being used as a mosque (Fig. 16).¹⁹⁸ From the image, it is clear that the interior walls had been whitewashed yet again.¹⁹⁹ In 1426/2005, Warner mentions its use as a mosque.²⁰⁰ Today, the public is denied access to the monument and the *maq'ad* is administered by The Supreme Council of Antiquities, which is planning another conservation and adaptive reuse project.

Ibid, 149-150.¹⁹⁷

Yaghi, *Manazil al-Qahira*, plate 35.¹⁹⁸

Unfortunately, I have not found any mentions of the *maq'ad* being used as a mosque¹⁹⁹ before that. I also cannot tell for how long after the publication of the image was it used as a mosque. Cairo Heritage School provided me with images taken in 1427/2006. From the picture, it is still obvious that the furniture of the mosque was still in place. Whether the mosque was still in use or not is unknown.

Warner, *The Monuments of Historic Cairo*, 98.²⁰⁰

Chapter 7: Conclusion^[1]_[SEP]

In 562/1167, William of Tyre describes the areas he had seen in the Eastern Palace during a visit with the Franks to the last Fatimid Caliph al- 'Adid. The courtyard described was accessed through a series of narrow vaulted alleys. He does not refer to architectural specifics until they reached the courtyard:

“It was so beautiful, so pleasant to the eye, that the most preoccupied man would have stopped to look at it.

There was a fountain in the center, fed on all sides by gold and silver channels carrying water of admirable clarity.”

He then proceeds to mention columned porticos enclosing the courtyard and

beautiful marble of all various colors.²⁰¹

At this point in the research, it is clear that a grand palace existed prior to Mamay's construction of the *maq'ad* and that whatever Mamay had acquired was in ruins. There is no doubt that the site of the palace was part of the Eastern Fatimid palace. The Fatimid palaces were known for their loftiness and grandeur. Statements like that of William of Tyre were repeated throughout history. A palace built on the site of the Fatimid palaces would have been the talk of historians for centuries, yet no mention was ever made of a new construction on this specific site. This leaves us with one conclusion, that Mamay al-Sayfi acquired Fatimid remains.

Previous instances of Ayyubid and Mamluk reuse of Fatimid building sites has been interpreted as a show of power and control. Parts of the palace that were not purposely demolished quickly fell into ruins. Regardless, it is likely that this was viewed more loosely. After all, it had been more than 400 years since the Fatimids were

Raymond, *Cairo: City of History*, 51.²⁰¹

last in power and the Mamluks were well established by then. Admittedly, within all pieces of evidence that support this theory there are a few missing links. A major one is

the lack of any clear statements by any of the historians contemporary to Mamay mentioning that the renovated palace was in fact part of the Fatimid palaces. Bayn al-Qasrayn is not a remote area where historians can ignore certain happenings; therefore anything they omit must be well analyzed and questioned.

Based on the locations of the Fatimid palaces, as described by al-Maqrizi, and with the support of the maps reconstructing the palaces, I believe that the eastern wing of the palace of Mamay was of Fatimid origin, as was the courtyard. Based on

Ravaisse's reconstructions of the Fatimid palaces, the wing I am suggesting was the westernmost wing of Qasr al-Shawk, the exact center of the Eastern Fatimid Palace. The *maq'ad* and western wing could be Mamay's addition to the palace. The continuation of the *mushahhar* courses of stone is not enough evidence to support this. Regardless, the state in which the annex of the *maq'ad* was found points towards it being part of a structure and not just an attachment to one. I'm suggesting that along with the demolition of the western wing, the annex was damaged. As for the northern wing of the palace, only its northernmost parameter can be deduced. The *madrassa* of Mithqal and the mausoleum and *madrassa* of Tatar al-Hijaziyya set the boundaries as to how far the later palace would have extended.

On the map provided, I have used all the findings to suggest the parameters of the palace of Mamay (Fig. 29). Ghizwan Yaghi proposes a similar outline (Fig. 28), however I am not aware of the methodology he used to produce such a diagram. I also believe that other possibilities are worth exploring, including that the palace had double courtyards and that the northern wing was located much closer to the *maq'ad*. In order to investigate such possibilities, excavation work would be of use since I have not find

any written sources or visuals documenting the northern wing.

The palace of Mamay was comprised of at least three wings surrounding the courtyard in the eastern, northern and western directions. To the south of the courtyard

the *maq'ad* connects the eastern and western wings. The *maq'ad* block has storage spaces on the ground floor and only the loggia and an annex on the mezzanine floor. It

is possible that the *maq'ad* provided access to the eastern wing. A *hammam* used to stand right behind the loggia and no evidence whatsoever points to its affiliation with the palace of Mamay except for its location. Based on Ravaisse's reconstruction of the Fatimid palaces, the *hammam* cannot belong to the Fatimid period as Warner suggests. The portal of the Bayt al-Qadi does not belong to the original palace. In fact, it is likely that the palace was not accessed from the southeastern corner during the Mamluk period but only at the northeastern and northwestern corners of the courtyard (see Fig. 9). The well appearing in the courtyard in the *Comité's* reports and images could very well be of a Fatimid origin. In reusing the site, it would only be normal to make use of the existing water infrastructure in an already dug well.

The main *qa'a* of the palace of Mamay remains one of the most challenging elements to locate. If, as I suggest, the eastern wing was of Fatimid origin, then a *qa'a* inside it would have also been of Fatimid origin. A Mamluk *qa'a* would have been built by Mamay in the western wing otherwise. I suggest this based on two facts; the first is that the proximity of the *qa'a* to the *maq'ad* could not have been located further than either one of the adjacent wings. This is based on previously discussed examples in chapter three. The other piece of evidence was the finding of fragments of architectural decoration by the *Comité* on the site of the western wing. The service areas of the Mamluk residences were usually not decorated; therefore a space of higher function must have been located on that site.

The decorative program of the *maq'ad* is recognizable as belonging to the period of Qaytbay. Even without the dating inscribed on the façade, some elements give away the time period in which the *maq'ad* was constructed, such as the knotting of the bands framing the arches and doors as well as the black and white marble voussoirs. Architectural and decorative fragments found within the western wing could have carried a lot of evidence pointing towards the dating of that wing. Ironically, such determining moments for the monument were recorded as merely events and the findings were often treated as useless ruins, all adding to the difficulty of studying the site and the palace. The *maq'ad* of Mamay al-Sayfi is one of hundreds of monuments in Cairo that have undergone waves of attention and neglect. Proper studies and excavations could lead us to a better understanding of Fatimid and Mamluk architecture and could help bridge the gap in the development of domestic architecture from the Mamluk to the Ottoman periods.

The palace of Mamay was central, grand and elaborately decorated. He died within a year of the completion of the *maq'ad* and the renovation of the palace. His death was on the hand of Amir Aq Bardi, the enemy of Qunsuwah whom Mamay was affiliated with. Qunsuwah's ascension of controlling of the Mamluk realm implies that his *amirs* would acquire power and status. This is highly suggestive of Mamay's aspirations and possible motivation for completing the palace on such a grand scale. Perhaps Mamay intended the *maq'ad* to function as a space for social display during official purposes and not merely as a summer belvedere.

Epilogue: The future of the palace of Mamay

In early 1437/2016 the ministry of antiquities announced that the area of *Bayt al-Qadi* will be subject to a major conservation and rehabilitation project. The project includes reusing the *maq'ad* as a cultural theatre and a showroom for traditional

handicrafts and the building of *maslahit damgh al-masughat wal-mawzin* as a boutique hotel. The courtyard, police station and the surrounding streets are also included in the plan (Fig. 30). The kiosk in the middle of the courtyard will be used as a cafeteria. The project is said to be vital for the upkeep and protection of the monument, which had already been compromised recently. After the revolution of 1432/2011 in Egypt, unknown individuals broke into the *maq'ad* and started using it as a mosque, claiming that this had been its previous function. It is true that the *maq'ad* had been used as a mosque for several years in the 15th/21st century.²⁰²

Today, the *maq'ad* stands alone as a monument but the area of Bayt al-Qadi is a living artery within the heart of Cairo. The historical city of Cairo is inscribed as world heritage site for it includes more than 600 classified monuments. It is considered an outstanding example of living traditions and a witness to numerous historical milestones including political, intellectual and cultural events. Unfortunately, even with all the efforts made to conserve the city, Cairo is decaying fast and it is in a much worse condition than it was in 1399/1979 when it was first included on the world heritage list.²⁰³

Stefano Bianca stresses on the need for an integrative program when approaching historic cities. The recommendations prepared by Bianca are specifically tailored to the case of Cairo, most of which are applicable on the case of the palace of Mamay al-Sayfi.

The first recommendation is the documentation and interpretation of the historical site; a necessary step that includes “recording, analyzing and creatively interpreting” the monument in order to insure the formulation of a proper conservation policy. While the information on the *maq'ad* is abundant yet its common treatment as a

Gad, “Tatwir mantiqat Bayt al-Qadi”²⁰²
Rodenbeck, “The present situation of the historic city,” 335.²⁰³

freestanding structure and the improper interpretation of its history remains an obstacle to this day.

The second is appropriate planning technologies, which include the introduction of modern infrastructure and environmental protection of the city or monument. The introduction of modern infrastructure has taken action since the rise of groundwater caused massive damages in historic Cairo in the past few decades. The formulation and application of an environmental protection program of the monument and the city is not properly regulated and likely does not even exist. Vehicle access is out of control, so is waste management.

Public open space enhancement is the third recommendation. Public space is often regarded as a strictly visual matter in Cairo. The lack of sense of ownership in public space in the historic city is shocking, including vandalism and improper waste disposal.

The fourth recommendation is the conservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The continuous use of historic buildings insures an income and an interest in their upkeep. Occasionally, this also often includes interventions that are damaging to the monument. The use of the *maq'ad* as a cultural theatre exposes the monument to a number of threats, most notably, increased sound levels on a regular basis. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse are accepted, and in fact often encouraged, approaches to historic buildings.²⁰⁴ A number of the regulating organizations and charters around the world have produced detailed guidelines for the conservation of heritage sites.²⁰⁵ Unfortunately, the guidelines are often overlooked.

The palace of Mamay has been subjected to repetitive waves of abuse, ranging

²⁰⁴ The renowned Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz grew up the alley of Bayt al-Qadi, adding to its history through his narratives. An important fact that is part of the modern heritage of the site yet is not emphasized or known. Al-Hadidi, *Dirasat*, 115-117.

Bianca, "A new path to urban rehabilitation in Cairo," 72-75.²⁰⁵

from demolition to neglect. The challenges posed by the ever-growing population of Cairo in desperate need of resources and a government that discards “useless ruins” are decreasing the chances of the survival of the *maq‘ad*.²⁰⁶ Today, the *maq‘ad* is closed to the public and is barely noticed by the common observer. It stands as a shadow in its own home, another witness to a decaying city. It silently awaits its new fate with fragility and resilience.

Williams, “Islamic Cairo: endangered legacy,” 244.²⁰⁶

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