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Amir ‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujā‘ī: His Illustrious Life and Dramatic Demise

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Her recent publications include:

- “A Tribute to Dr. George T. Scanlon,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt (JARCE)* 51 (2015), 1-4.
- “Relics of the Prophet and Practices of His Veneration in Medieval Cairo,” *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 1 (2014), 75-105.
- “Das Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo – Revisited,” in *Experimentierfeld Museum: Internationale Perspektiven auf Museum, Islam und Inklusion*, ed. Susan Kamel and Christine Gerbich (transcript Verlag: Berlin, 2014), 253-263.
- Co-author (with Mamdouh M. Sakr): “Glass Mosaics in a Royal Mamluk Qa‘a: Context, Content and Interpretation” in *Arts of the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria – Evolution and Impact*, ed. Doris Behrens-Abouseif (Bonn: Bonn University Press by V&R Press, 2012), 203-221.

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Abstract

Amir ‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujā‘ī (d. 693/1294) was a very influential and powerful amir, perhaps most recognized for his appointments to the vizierate in Egypt and for his role in the military campaigns against the Crusaders. Throughout his career he also acquired a great deal of experience supervising royal constructions for sultans Qalāwūn and al-Ashraf Khalīl. Consequently, he supervised over a dozen new constructions and renovations in Cairo and Greater Syria. The overwhelming majority of these buildings no longer survive and are only available to us in the sources. In this Working Paper the trajectory of Sanjar al-Shujā‘ī’s life is traced from his upbringing in Damascus to his death at the hands of al-‘Ādil Kitbughā, integrating his architectural activity along the way. While the most famous building project that Sanjar al-Shujā‘ī supervised was the funerary complex of Sultan al-Mansūr Qalāwūn (683/1284-1285), the objective of this paper is profile his career more fully in order to identify patterns and insights into his style and its evolution, which can be used as a tool in the future to link him to projects that are not explicitly linked to him in the sources.

1. Introduction

This working paper is an integral part of a larger initiative to write a doctoral dissertation on the funerary complex of Sultan al-Mansūr Qalāwūn in Cairo (r. 678-689/1279-1290), one of the most splendid and grandiose buildings erected during the Mamluk period (648-923/1250-1517) and one of the finest examples of medieval Islamic architecture (Figure 1). Construction of the complex (683/1284-1285) was supervised by ‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujā‘ī (d. 693/1294), an ambitious amir whose *oeuvre* in Cairo were known for their architectural and decorative ingenuity, such as the mausoleum Qalāwūn ordered built a year prior (682/1283-1284) for his wife Fāṭima Khātūn (Figure 2).¹ Al-Shujā‘ī’s biography and work is a sub-section of the second chapter of my dissertation, where I will discuss him in the context of Qalāwūn’s patronage of architecture and the political circumstances under which the complex was built. He was appointed Supervisor of Royal Constructions (*shadd al-‘amā’ir*) early in Qalāwūn’s career with his prime duties being the management of the sultan’s building programs, and perhaps even functioning as chief architect and engineer. In addition to Cairo, al-Shujā‘ī was directly involved in new constructions and restoration projects elsewhere in the Mamluk realm through the reign of Qalāwūn’s son and successor, al-Ashraf Khalīl (r. 689-693/1290-1293).²

In the pages which follow, I will look closely at both the career of this powerful amir and the constructions and renovations he is known to have supervised as revealed in the primary sources, with the aim of identifying patterns and insights into his style and its evolution. Concentrating on major themes and events in his life, a corpus of pre-modern sources were consulted to reconstruct his biography, from chronicles to biographies of sultans, biographical dictionaries and topographical tracts. These texts focus on various events and happenings that occurred during the early Mamluk period, which allows us to see the sultanate in a more connected world.

Such a profile is important for several reasons. Firstly, one can use al-Shujā‘ī’s political career, mobility and social capital to help identify building activities not explicitly attributed to him in the sources, but reflect the echoes of his known work. Secondly, this is a fitting chance to move away from the monolithic conversations about a building’s decorative program to focus more on personal agency, specifically al-Shujā‘ī’s efficacy, which can only be gleaned if one has insight into his career. Moreover, the role of greater Syria during this period, with a few exceptions, is often reduced to the fringe as part of a center vs. periphery binary; however, during the late 7th/13th century this region had more of a central role as the setting of social and political tensions. This is, therefore, an opportunity to a) integrate Bilād al-Shām more into the historiography of Mamluk architecture and b) look at the architectural activity of the overall period – through the lens of a single protagonist – when Cairo was solidifying its position as the imperial capital. In many respects al-Shujā‘ī’s professional trajectory and eventual demise provide a dramatic backdrop.³

¹ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 236-237; and al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/2:585.

² Mention of some of al-Shujā‘ī’s building activities can be found in Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 148-149 and 169.

³ Consideration for Syria was prompted by a July 2015 conference hosted by the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg

2. Biography of ‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujā‘ī

What do we know about al-Shujā‘ī and how is he characterized in the different sources? One can follow his career in the most detail by consulting the biographical sketches composed by Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (620-692/1223-1292),⁴ al-Ṣafadī (696-764/1297-1363),⁵ and Ibn Taghrībirdī (ca. 812-874/1409-1470).⁶ In his biography of Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 658-675-1260-1277), Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, head of the royal chancery in Cairo and secretary for state correspondences under sultans Baybars, Qalāwūn and al-Ashraf Khalīl, dedicated eight pages to al-Shujā‘ī and his political rise and fall. His full name is given as Sanjar b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Turkī al-Shujā‘ī, a first-generation *mamluk* whose title is ‘Alam al-Dīn.⁷ While the epithet “*al-turkī*” (the Turk) implies that he was of Turkish origin, Ibn Iyās specifically stated that he was Rūmī (*rūmī al-jins*).⁸ “‘Alam al-Dīn,” as David Ayalon explained in his article on Mamluk names, was one of the most important titles assigned to amirs during the early Mamluk period, and it was always paired with the proper name “Sanjar.”⁹ The occurrence of this title without an amir’s full name(s) and *nisba*(s) can, therefore, lead to confusion as there were several contemporary amirs who appear in the sources called “‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar”.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir continued to describe al-Shujā‘ī’s physical appearance as follows: he was fair in complexion with a blonde beard and large nose; he had a rather commanding presence that was enhanced by the fact that he was tall and broad. This grand persona was certainly accentuated by his acclaimed wisdom, intelligence, acute experience in politics and architecture, and an inclination to men of letters, religion and Islam. As for his character, he was equally portrayed as vicious, vindictive, tyrannical, and a person who had a lust for luxury befitting the sultan.¹⁰

Al-Shujā‘ī was raised in Damascus under the care of a woman by the name of Sitt Qujja, who lived near al-Madrasa al-Mankilā’iyya in the Qaymariyya district.¹¹ He relocated to Cairo and put himself in the service of *mushidd al-dawāwīn* (Financial Supervisor) Amir ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Shujā‘ī, after whom he took his first *nisba* (the brave). In Cairo, where he next surfaced, he endeavored to learn calligraphy (*al-khaṭṭ*) and literature (*qirā‘at al-adab*) and, perhaps, this is where his scholarly interests were cultivated.¹² Al-Shujā‘ī goes into the service of Qalāwūn

entitled “Between Saladin and Selim the Grim: Syria under the Ayyubid and Mamluk Rule.”

⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyam*, 274-281.

⁵ Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, 15: 475-478.

⁶ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Dalīl*, 1: 325-326; Idem, *Manhal al-ṣāfi*, 6: 80-83; and Idem, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 8: 50-54.

⁷ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyam*, 274.

⁸ Ibn Iyās describes al-Shujā‘ī’s appearance in the context of his execution during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s first reign, see *Badā’i‘ al-zuhūr*, 1:384. While al-Ṣafadī’s second collection of biographical works contains no entry on al-Shujā‘ī, we do learn from one of a handful of comments that al-Shujā‘ī spoke Turkish, see *A yān al-‘aṣr*, 4:197.

⁹ Ayalon, “Names, Titles and ‘nisbas’ of the Mamluks,” 191

¹⁰ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyam*, 274; Ibn Taghrībirdī writes that he had a dark beard, see *Manhal al-ṣāfi*, 6: 80-81; Idem, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 8:51; and Ibn Iyās mentions that he had blue eyes, see *Badā’i‘ al-zuhūr*, 1:384.

¹¹ This extant *madrasa* is located in the Qaymariyya area and is named after Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh al-Mankilānī who is buried there, see al-Nu‘aymī, *al-Dāris fī tārikh al-madāris*, 1:459, no. 84 and note 1.

¹² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Manhal*, 80.

during his amirate and becomes one of his *mamluks*,¹³ hence the second *nisba* “al-Manṣūrī” that appears in some of the primary sources. Al-Shujā‘ī might have been a young man during his training as a Manṣūrī *mamluk* considering that he was close to 50 years old at the time of his death in 693/1294.¹⁴ Al-Shujā‘ī underwent a long period of service before Qalāwūn made him an amir,¹⁵ which, in a way, mirrored the sultan’s own ascension since he, too, was an amir for several decades before claiming the sultanate, during which time he was mastering the political landscape.¹⁶

Throughout his career al-Shujā‘ī held several important positions linked to the financial administration of the sultanate, starting as Financial Supervisor (*mushidd/shādd al-dawāwīn*) in 678/1279¹⁷ like his former master; intermittently as vizier in Egypt (*wazīr al-diyār al-miṣriyya*); and governor of Damascus (*nā’ib dimashq*).¹⁸ The exact dates surrounding some of these appointments, dismissals and re-appointments are not always clear in the sources, however, an attempt has been made to provide an accurate timeline of his career and activities at the end of this working paper.

Shādd al-dawāwīn is an amir who assisted the vizier in the financial administration of the *dīwān* and in collecting financial revenue (taxes).¹⁹ Since the holders of this position were recruited from the military ranks, there was a high turnover rate due to their lack of financial experience. During al-Shujā‘ī’s tenure in this position he was notorious for his severe treatment of taxpayers and *dīwān* officials, including resorting to extortion and torture to investigate discredited officials.²⁰ It was not uncommon for the *shādd al-dawāwīn* to be promoted to the vizierate in the early Mamluk period, which was al-Shujā‘ī’s next appointment.

During the Fatimid period, viziers had full authority at times surpassing that of the Caliph. The position was severely controlled under the Mamluk sultans when viziers were only entrusted with financial administration of the state, their main function being the management of the central financial *dīwāns*.²¹ Despite these changes the vizier was second only to the sultan in administering and maintaining the treasuries and financial welfare of the sultanate.²² To formally regulate the position even further, largely to steer it from corruption, Qalāwūn started appointing military amirs instead of civilian officials.²³ Thus, while al-Shujā‘ī served as vizier in Egypt (*wazīr al-diyār al-miṣriyya*) in charge of the financial administration

¹³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 176.

¹⁴ Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, 15: 477.

¹⁵ Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 16 and 25.

¹⁶ Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 136.

¹⁷ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 180; and Ibn ‘Asākir, *Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 296 n. 15.

¹⁸ Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:119; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal al-ṣāfi*, 6:80-81; Idem, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 8:51; Idem, *al-Dalīl*, 1:325-326; and al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, 15:475.

¹⁹ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 180; al-Bāshā, *al-Funūn al-islāmiyya*, 2:611-616; and Rabie, *Financial System of Egypt*, 151.

²⁰ Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:96; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:755; Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 114; and Rabie, *Financial System of Egypt*, 142.

²¹ Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt*, 138-139

²² Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan*, 216-221.

²³ Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt*, 141.

several times between 683-689/1283-1290, he was the first amir appointed to this position.²⁴ Consequently, he was an amir with great authority who was trusted by the sultan. Perhaps this degree of authority and trust explains why on 1st Dhū al-Hijja 679/ 23rd March 1281, when Qalāwūn set out on a military campaign in Syria against the Mongols, he appointed his son al-Sāliḥ ‘Alī to rule during his absence and appointed al-Shujā‘ī as *mudabbir al-mamlaka* (Administrator of the Kingdom).²⁵ Presumably, al-Shujā‘ī’s authority and controversial character is also why Qalāwūn was unpopular at times during his reign, the reason for the antipathy of many towards him being al-Shujā‘ī’s unsavory practices of confiscating property, unjust imprisonment of malcontents, as well as his complicity in the misappropriation of *waqfs*.

On 17th Rabī‘ I 687/20th April 1288, he was discharged from the vizirate after a long service on account of accusations of extortion and taking bribes.²⁶ He was also implicated and convicted in a scandal of selling weapons to the Franks that were removed from the royal arsenals (*al-dhakhā’ir al-sulṭāniyya*); for his defense he argued that the weapons were old and degraded, and that he sold them at a huge profit. Ultimately, his objective, so he claimed, was to send the Franks a message: the degraded weapons were sold to them at a profit out of disdain. His punishment? A large sum of his gold was seized, his assets (animals and weapons) frozen, he was physically tortured, and served some prison time before being pardoned with a considerable fine on 19 Rabī‘ II 687/21 May 1288. This scandal encouraged people to complain more openly about al-Shujā‘ī’s treacherous behavior and how he unjustly imprisoned a lot of people.²⁷ Perhaps a testament to his sagacity and the enormous power that he exercised, despite his obstinance, we read that al-Shujā‘ī was reappointed vizier in Shawwāl 689/October 1290.²⁸

He was later appointed Governor of Damascus (*nā’ib dimashq*) by Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl in Jamādā II 690/June 1291, only to be recalled to Egypt on 6 Shawwāl 691/20 September 1292 because both the chief tax collector and chief religious judges of Damascus complained about his corrupt practices and fraudulent behavior.²⁹ In the interim period, he assisted in sacking Acre, the Franks main port in the Eastern Mediterranean. After the city’s walls were successfully demolished, Khalīl ordered al-Shujā‘ī to assume command of the expeditionary forces that seized the rest of the coast. Although the crusading movement continued through the 9th/15th century, when Acre fell the Franks subsequently lost their last major stronghold in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. After Acre, al-Shujā‘ī led his army to conquer Sidon, which was easily captured because the inhabitants fled having heard news of al-Shujā‘ī and

²⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyam*, 274; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:802; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 59, note 41; and Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages*, 70.

²⁵ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 190; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 296-297; and Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 7:195-196. In his capacity as *mudabbir al-mamlaka*, al-Shujā‘ī would have assumed both executive and financial control of the state: see Popper, *History of Egypt*, 1:90.

²⁶ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 262-263; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:741; and Levanoni, *A Turning Point*, 25.

²⁷ Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:63; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:739-741; and al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 31:153-155. He was supposed to have a prison in his home, see al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:666.

²⁸ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 270 and 273.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 283; and Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:119 and 144. In fact, many of al-Ashraf Khalīl’s appointments were drawn from the Manṣūrīyya *mamluks*.

his army's advance. The city and fortifications were destroyed on 15th Rajab 690/14th July 1291. This was followed by the systematic attack of other coastal cities and the eventual fall of Haifa, Beirut and Tartus, and with these conquests the whole coast was under Mamluk control.³⁰ Al-Shujā'ī was, therefore, one of the forces behind the expulsion of the last of the Crusaders from Bilād al-Shām at the end of the 7th/13th century. The story of this rather nebulous and vile character who epitomized power and abuse does not end here, for he had greater aspirations.

In Muḥarram 693/December 1293, Baydarā al-Manṣūrī, al-Ashraf Khalīl's vice-regent (*nā'ib al-saltana*) in Egypt, the highest ranking amir and administrative position under the sultan, and al-Shujā'ī's son-in-law, conspired with fellow dissenters to kill the sultan because of his perceived mistreatment, imprisonment and execution of some of his father's most prominent amirs. Despite his claim of wanting to ameliorate the ruling apparatus and accusing the sultan of treachery, the Ashrafiyya and Manūriyya *mamluks* vilified Baydarā al-Manṣūrī for his rouse behavior and for instigating disorder. They immediately sought revenge for their slain master, and Baydarā al-Manṣūrī was killed by amir Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā al-Manṣūrī. What does this specific case of court intrigue have to do with al-Shujā'ī? Well, he is said to have initially prevented the Ashrafiyya from returning to the Citadel of Cairo after Baydarā al-Manṣūrī's murder.³¹ Although the sources do not explicitly say so, my interpretation is that as Baydarā al-Manṣūrī's step-father al-Shujā'ī was aware of the plot to kill the sultan, and by stalling the Ashrafiyya he could have been buying time for himself.

When al-Ashraf Khalīl's reign was brought to a disastrous end by regicide, largely due to his inability to suppress the powerful amirs cultivated by his father, Kitbughā was made vice-regent in Egypt and al-Shujā'ī was re-appointed vizier during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's first installment as sultan (693-694/1293-1294).³² Because of al-Shujā'ī's ambition, lust for power and proximity to the sultanate, he became directly embroiled in a plot to foment a coup to overthrow the young al-Nāṣir Muḥammad who was sultan in name only. True power was in the hands of the oligarchy of amirs who competed for control, Kitbughā and al-Shujā'ī.³³ During this period, Kitbughā's poor relationship with al-Shujā'ī was firmly cemented: al-Shujā'ī, with the support of the Burjī elements of the Manṣūriyya, planned to arrest Kitbughā and assassinate his amirs on accusations that the latter was concealing amir Lajīn al-Manṣūrī, the governor of Damascus and Baydarā al-Manṣūrī's co-conspirator in the assassination of al-Ashraf Khalīl. However, Kitbughā learned of al-Shujā'ī's plot.³⁴

As al-Shujā'ī's influence and following waned, he fell into the hands of Kitbughā's supporters, was detained and executed on 17th Ṣafar 693/16th January 1294. Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir provides a detailed description and vivid details of the events that led to his demise:

³⁰ Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:110-113; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*, 3:435 and 4:178; and Sāliḥ b. Yahyā, *Kitāb Ta'rīkh Bayrūt*, 42-43.

³¹ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 295-298; Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:165-171; and Clifford, *State Formation*, 144-149.

³² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manḥal al-ṣāfi*, 6:81; and Idem, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 5:52.

³³ Ibid., 5:50; and Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr*, 1:378-379.

³⁴ Clifford, *State Formation*, 154-157.

“The amirs tried to trick al-Shujā‘ī in order to kill him, so a group of them, including Bahā’ al-Dīn al-Aqqūsh al-Mansūrī, told him that the Sultan wanted to consult him on a matter. When al-Shujā‘ī entered the Sultan asked, ‘What are you doing here?’ as he was unaware of the meeting. Al-Shujā‘ī replied, ‘To see you.’ To which the Sultan answered, ‘Let me do something to make you comfortable while you are in my presence. Go, ‘Alam al-Dīn, to the Citadel and send the amirs, and after a few days we will reconcile the problem between you. We will give you a fort in Bilād al-Sham and you will be relieved of them.’

The attending amirs arrested and bound al-Shujā‘ī, and sent him to a place where he was taken by Bahā’ al-Dīn al-Aqqūsh. On the way there Bahā’ al-Dīn killed al-Shujā‘ī, beheaded him and cut off his hands. He proceeded to the horse market where the Burjiyya *mamluks* were surrounding the Citadel. They questioned Bahā’ al-Dīn on what was in his possession. He answered, ‘hot bread that was given to me by the Sultan for the amirs.’ They left him. If they knew what was really with him they would have cut him to small pieces. Bahā’ al-Dīn al-Aqqūsh gave the head to the amirs and they were consoled. It was said that they threw the head of al-Shujā‘ī in a bag and took it to amir Zayn al-Dīn Kitbughā.

On the day of al-Shujā‘ī’s execution all the doors to the city of Cairo were closed, except Bāb Zuwayla, and the markets were empty because everything was at a complete standstill. Kitbughā told the people that all was safe and fine. They put al-Shujā‘ī’s head on a spear and paraded it through the city to the cheers of the population. They announced his execution in all the streets of Cairo and Fustat. It is said that some citizen of Cairo paid in silver to take al-Shujā‘ī’s head to their home in order to beat it with their shoes. Some people even beat the head as it was being paraded. The head was paraded down every single street in Cairo. They were shouting, ‘this is the head of the accursed al-Shujā‘ī,’ among other insults. It is said that people were not united on the killing of anyone like al-Shujā‘ī, ever. The reason for their hatred of al-Shujā‘ī is due to his terrible behavior and tyranny.”³⁵

Kitbughā eventually deposed the young al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, usurped the throne and ruled for two years from 694-696/1294-1296.

3. Architectural Works

While all three positions held by al-Shujā‘ī were important, his role as the Supervisor of Royal Constructions (*shadd al-‘amā’ir*) is the one that is of primary interest as it sheds light on the buildings whose construction he supervised or restored during his career. The Supervisor of Royal Constructions was an amir, initially an officer of ten *mamluk* horsemen (*amīr ‘ashara*) until the position was no longer recruited from the military class. Al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418) stated that the Supervisor of Royal Constructions was responsible for repairing the sultan’s palaces, dwellings, walls, as well as all new constructions and renovations/rebuilding (*tajdīd*). He supervised the architects and craftsmen involved in a royal construction and would have been accompanied by an assistant (*nāzir al-‘imāra*) who supervised the builders, engineers and masons.³⁶ The Supervisor of Royal Constructions was also responsible for financial matters so he, presumably, could have dealt with “... the feasibility of the projects under his supervision and estimation of costs involved.”³⁷ In

³⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyam*, 274-75. Other accounts of al-Shujā‘ī’s murder can be found in Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ al-zuhūr*, 1:382-383; and Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 8:51-52.

³⁶ Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-‘shā*, 4:22; al-Bāshā, *al-Funūn al-islāmiyya*, 2:616-617; and al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 4/1:70-72. In his notes to *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, Popper translated this position as Superintendent of Constructions, while later scholars have suggested Superintendent of Royal Buildings or Supervisor of Constructions: Popper, *History of Egypt*, 1:95; Rabbat, “Architects and Artists,” 32.

³⁷ Behrens-Abouseif, “Muhandis, Shādd, Mu‘allim,” 295.

contemporary terms this position is probably most equivalent to a contractor who represented the interests of the patron. Despite the supervisory nature of this position, there are clues to suggest that al-Shujā'ī was instrumental in a project's design *and* execution.

It is difficult to say precisely when he first began to supervise architectural projects. Throughout his career, roughly from 682/1283 until his demise in 693/1294, al-Shujā'ī supervised approximately eleven new constructions, three renovations, and three demolitions throughout the Mamluk realm. Most of these buildings are either in a poor state of preservation or no longer extant and only survive in the sources, which is why Qalāwūn's funerary complex in Cairo is so important. What follows is a working list of these buildings based on Michael Meinecke's chronological survey of Mamluk architecture in Egypt and Syria,³⁸ although a couple of constructions were culled from other sources. Since the goal of my dissertation is to revisit Qalāwūn's important complex within the context of several lines of inquiry, such as the sultan's overall patronage of architecture, an examination of al-Shujā'ī's professional career here is fitting considering how closely he worked with Qalāwūn and the number of architectural projects that the amir supervised for the sultan. The three buildings prefaced by an asterisk (*) are not attributed to him in the sources, but given the patron, the building types, the duties of the *shadd*, and similarities they share with al-Shujā'ī's known projects, it would be worthwhile to seriously consider his involvement in their construction.

Mausoleum of Fātima Khātūn, Cairo

This mausoleum was commissioned by Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn in 682/1283-1284 for his wife Fātima Khātūn (d. ca. 16th Shawwāl 682/6th January 1284),³⁹ the deceased mother of his eldest and favorite son, al-Ṣāliḥ 'Alī (Figure 2). More specifically, it was not built in her memory by Qalāwūn but at her request, making her the first female patron of the earliest surviving Mamluk building attributed to a woman.⁴⁰ For our purposes this mausoleum is significant because it is the first verifiable construction that was supervised by al-Shujā'ī.⁴¹ The sources differ regarding the date of construction, and the extant legible inscription located on the exterior of the mausoleum is undated and incomplete; yet the mausoleum must have been completed when the sultan visited on 29th Rabī' I 683/15th June 1284, giving us a *terminus ante quem*.⁴²

It is located in proximity of the shrine of Sayyida Nafisa, the commemorative vision mausoleum built in memory of the great-granddaughter of the Prophet Muḥammad. Attached to the tomb was a *madrasa*, so it is a prototype of the large integrated funerary complexes that would later change the Cairene landscape. Al-Maqrīzī adds that it was built on the grounds of an orchard near the Mausoleum of al-Ashraf Khalīl (687/1288) and refers to it as

³⁸ Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 2:57-77.

³⁹ The date given for her death is not consistent in the sources: see Creswell, *MAE*, 2:184.

⁴⁰ Al-Harithi, "Female Patronage," 324.

⁴¹ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 236-237; Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 129; Creswell, *MAE*, 2:184; and al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/2:585.

⁴² *RCEA*, 13:23, No. 4834; *CIA*, 19:140-141, No. 94; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 59-60, No.18; and Creswell, *MAE*, 2:184.

the Mausoleum of Sāliḥ ‘Alī, presumably because he was buried there in 687/1288 before being transferred to Qalāwūn’s mausoleum;⁴³ but this is also a possible indication of the complex’s importance.

Unfortunately, this complex is currently in a poor state of preservation (Figure 3), thus it is virtually impossible to inspect the interior. When Creswell carried out his survey of Islamic architecture in Egypt (ca. 1920-1956), there was not a single decorative stone found in its interior, although he noted several empty niches that contained at least 12 marble columns.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, there are extant features that we will see in two other buildings on this list, making Fāṭima Khātūn an important foundation for al-Shujā‘ī’s future undertakings.

Complex of Qalāwūn, Cairo

Any discussion on al-Shujā‘ī’s career in this regard must feature prominently one of Cairo’s most commanding monuments, the funerary complex of Qalāwūn (Figure 1). The massive complex consisted of a hospital (*bīmāristān*), a *madrasa*, and mausoleum.⁴⁵ For the longest time it was an unequaled charitable institution in Cairo. This campus of buildings was completed in an unprecedented 14 months during 683-684/1284-1285, as confirmed by the inscription band above the lintel of the main entrance.⁴⁶ Building of the complex began with the hospital in Rabī‘ II 683/June 1284 and concluded with the *madrasa* in Jumādā I 684/August 1285.⁴⁷

The remarkable speed of construction is the manifestation of several critical decisions made by al-Shujā‘ī: the reuse of marble taken from the ruins of Qal‘at al-Baḥr, the now-vanished citadel on Roda Island that was built by the Ayyubid Sultan al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn in 638/1240;⁴⁸ the integration of spolia from the Fatimid Western Palace on which the foundation of the complex was built; his use of Mongol prisoners of war as *corvée* labor; and his demand that all of the workmen of Cairo and Fustat dedicate their efforts to the complex only.⁴⁹

The Complex of Qalāwūn is recognized as the first Cairene monument to combine pious, charitable, and civic functions within a single edifice from its inception, a feature that we first saw in its nascency at the Mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn. While there are several stories accounting for the motivation behind the complex’s construction, Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir made it clear that Qalāwūn was inspired by the beauty and monumentality of Fāṭima Khātūn’s mausoleum, the magnificence of which had never been seen before.⁵⁰

⁴³ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 236; Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf*, 289; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujum al-zāhira*, 7:272-273; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/2:585; and Idem, *Sulūk*, 1/3:744.

⁴⁴ Creswell, *MAE*, 2:180-185.

⁴⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/1:516.

⁴⁶ *RCEA*, 13: 33-34, No. 4849; and al-Haddād, *al-Sultān al-Mansūr Qalawūn*, 112-113

⁴⁷ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 134

⁴⁸ This included but was not limited to granite columns and marble: al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 3:581-582; and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, “‘Aṣr al-Mamālīk al-Baḥriyyah,” 87

⁴⁹ Al-Khazindaārī, *Tārīkh majmū‘ al-nawādir*, 294-295; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/1:698; Creswell, *MAE*, 2:205; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 61, No. 25; Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 134; and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, “‘Aṣr al-Mamālīk al-Baḥriyyah,” 85.

⁵⁰ Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyām*, 55.

In his biography on Qalāwūn, *Kitāb al-Faḍl al-ma'thūr min sīrat al-Sulṭān al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn*, Shāfi' b. 'Alī Ibn 'Asākir (649-730/1252-1330) claimed that Qalāwūn did not order the inclusion of a *madrasa* and only wanted the hospital as part of his funerary complex; the addition of a *madrasa*, he further stated, was made by al-Shujā'ī.⁵¹ This claim will be the subject of a future article that will focus on al-Shujā'ī's precise role in the construction of the complex, and raises questions about the traditional concept of architectural patronage.

This spectacular funerary complex is also known for its profusion of ornament, the experimental nature of the decoration, and for incorporating features that were unprecedented in Cairo. For example, the cosmatesque decoration in the mausoleum (Figure 4), presumably an appropriation from Norman Sicilian architecture (Figure 5); and the use of glass mosaics decorating the *madrasa*'s *miḥrāb* (Figure 6) – both features that would become hallmarks of Mamluk architecture.

Bridge over al-Khalīj al-Miṣrī, Cairo

Qalāwūn ordered the construction of this bridge over al-Khalīj al-Miṣrī, or the Great Canal that connected the Nile with the Red Sea since antiquity, to relieve people from having to walk great distances in order to access the plots of land (*al-ahkār*) that today are to the west such as Abdīn and Bab al-Lūq. Al-Shujā'ī built this bridge between Bāb al-Qantara and Bāb al-Khukha rather quickly in Jumādā II 683/August 1284.⁵²

Al-Qubba al-Mansūriyya, Citadel of Cairo

This throne hall was built on the site of al-Qubba al-Zāhiriyya, which Qalāwūn ordered demolished in Rajab 685/September 1286. Its second incarnation was supervised by al-Shujā'ī between Sha'bān 685-Shawāl 685/20th November 1286-18th December 1286. While this throne hall no longer exists, the sources describe the grandiose domed space as marble clad, supported by 94 different-sized colored and gilt columns, and with landscape scenery on the arcaded porticoes (*riwaqāt*) that were possibly executed in mosaics.⁵³

*Mausoleum of al-Ashraf Khalīl, Cairo

Al-Ashraf Khalīl built his mausoleum during 687/1288, sometime after he was appointment co-regent on 11th Sha'bān 687/10th September 1288 (Figure 7); this is based on the honorific and royal titlature that is preserved in the inscription on the exterior of the mausoleum.⁵⁴ Like the neighboring Mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn, it is currently in a poor state of preservation (Figure 8), so the interior is impossible to enter today due to the unnavigable rising ground water.

The exterior is rather plain but has features seen in Fāṭima Khātūn, from the near identical

⁵¹ Ibn 'Asakir, *Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 408-410.

⁵² Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyām*, 116

⁵³ Ibid., 139; Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:38; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 64, No. 40; and Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 143-146.

⁵⁴ *RCEA*, 13:65-66, No. 4895; *CIA*, 19:141-147; and Creswell, *MAE*, 2:217.

size of the respective dome chambers, the existence of a narthex leading to the mausolea,⁵⁵ to the motifs and *kufic* inscriptions in stucco decorating the windows, which are also present on the facade of Qalāwūn's complex (Cf. Figures 9 and 10).⁵⁶ According to Creswell, the interior was originally richly adorned with decorative stones, marble wall panels up to three meters in height, and marble columns flanking the *mihrāb* and doorways. At the time *Muslim Architecture of Egypt* was first published (1952 and 1959), three pieces of marble paneling remained in the *mihrāb*.⁵⁷

Al-Shujā'ī is not listed in the Arabic sources as having supervised this building; however, Laila Ali Ibrahim documented another similarity that Ashraf Khalīl's mausoleum shares with the nearby mausoleum of his step-mother Fātima Khātūn. She was specifically referring to "... the near identical profile of transitional zones from the exterior ...,"⁵⁸ (Cf. Figures 2 and 7) which is not unlike the exterior transition zone of Qalāwūn's dome. This suggested to her that both mausolea were built by the same architect. But what if these similarities are because they were overseen by the same *shadd* since one of his duties was to supervise a royal building's craftsmen. Creswell also cited that the lost dome of Khātūn was probably similar to al-Ashraf Khalīl's, and the geometric patterns in stucco of some of the window grilles resemble those at Qalāwūn.⁵⁹ This is besides the fact that when the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe rebuilt Qalāwūn's dome in 1901,⁶⁰ they chose that of al-Ashraf Khalīl as a model.⁶¹ Considering these similarities, it is safe to assert that the construction of al-Ashraf Khalīl's mausoleum was also supervised by al-Shujā'ī for he was certainly present in Cairo at the time.

* Husam al-Din Turuntāy al-Mansūrī, Cairo

This amir was Qalāwūn's viceroy (*nā'ib al-salṭana*) who acted as the sultan's agent (*wakīl*) in the purchase of the land on which his funerary complex was built, besides being one of the closest to the sultan.⁶² He commissioned his mausoleum in 689/1290, which still stands today not far from Port Said Street (al-Khalīj al-Miṣrī). That the mausoleum of one of the most important amirs is dated to Qalāwūn's reign warrants some consideration as to whether al-Shujā'ī might have been involved in its construction, especially when one compares the near identical arrangement of the stalactite squinches in the transition zone to that of al-Ashraf Khalīl's mausoleum (Cf. Figures 11 and 12). If it is possible, as suggested above, that al-Shujā'ī supervised the construction of al-Ashraf Khalīl's mausoleum, then he also might have been involved here given Turuntāy's importance. One way of resolving this matter is to look at the relationship between the two amirs, a task that time did not allow for this working

⁵⁵ Creswell, *MAE*, 2: 181 and 215: Cf. figs. 106 and 126.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:182 and 216.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:217.

⁵⁸ Ibrahim, "Transitional Zones of Domes in Cairene Architecture," 9

⁵⁹ Creswell, *MAE* 2: 183 and 214-217.

⁶⁰ The Comité was committee established in 1881 by Khedive Tawfiq (r. 1296-1309/1879-1892) under the auspices of the Ministry of Endowments (*Awqāf*) to oversee the preservation of Egypt's Islamic and Coptic monuments.

⁶¹ Bulletin du Comité, Fascicule XIX (1901), 148-149.

⁶² Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrif al-ayyām*, 56; Baybars al-Mansūrī, *Zubdat*, 236.

paper but will be taken into consideration in the future.

Transfer of Gothic portal from Acre to Cairo

Spolia sourced from historic monuments and reused in later buildings is not a novelty in the architectural landscape of Egypt. While ancient columns, capitals and jambs from despoliated monuments served as building materials in newer ones, visually impressive pieces of spolia were used as trophies to commemorate a significant event such as military victory. Impressive monuments in the Crusader Kingdom were no exception. The Fall of Acre in 690/1291 not only resulted in the loss of the Crusader-controlled port city to the Mamluks, we also read about the transfer of large quantities of marble to both Egypt and Syria. This remarkable marble Gothic portal, the largest piece of Christian spolia used in an Islamic context in Cairo, is one example of such transfer (Figure 13).⁶³

In his description of the *madrassa* of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (694-703/1295-1303), al-Maqrīzī (ca. 766-845/1364-1442) stated that during the Siege of Acre Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl assigned al-Shujā'ī with the task of demolishing the city walls and destroying its churches. As the city was being razed al-Shujā'ī is said to have found a marble portal at the entrance to one of the city's churches and carried it off to Cairo where it remained in his possession until his death. When al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā became sultan in 694/1294 by toppling the young Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, he took the house of amir Balbān al-Rashīdī, abutting the Complex of Qalāwūn, and converted it into a *madrassa*. Simultaneously, Kitbughā learned about the portal that was in the possession of the heirs of amir Badr al-Dīn Baydarā al-Manṣūrī and took it for his *madrassa*.⁶⁴ Al-Maqrīzī does not explain the circumstances of its acquisition by Baydarā al-Manṣūrī's heirs in *Khiṭaṭ*, but this can easily be explained by the fact that al-Shujā'ī married Baydarā al-Manṣūrī's widowed mother.⁶⁵

In al-Maqrīzī's account of the transfer of the gothic portal to Cairo in *al-Sulūk*, the story is slightly different. Firstly, al-Maqrīzī stated that Kitbughā purchased the house of amir Balbān al-Rashīdī. He then conflated the name of ʿAlam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Dawadārī, an amir based in Bilād al-Shām, with that of ʿAlam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujā'ī. He further stated that the portal was seized by amir Baydarā al-Manṣūrī who was then killed while he still had the portal in his possession. It is after this incident that Kitbughā had the portal installed in the facade of his *madrassa*, which was still under construction. Kitbughā was removed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 696/1296, marking the start of his second reign (r. 698-708/1299-1309), before the *madrassa*'s completion. Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad subsequently and surreptitiously acquired the *madrassa* from the chief *qadī* Zayn al-Dīn Alī b. Makhlūf and decreed its completion with

⁶³ Mayer, "The Madrasa of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad," 95.

⁶⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 4/2:528; Creswell, *MAE* 2:234-235; Hunt, "Churches," 43-45; Pringle, *Churches*, 4:24-25; and Plaginieux, "Le portail d'Acre transporté au Caire," 61-62. Baydarā al-Manṣūrī was a very influential amir. He succeeded Sanjar al-Shujā'ī's as vizier after the latter was dismissed from the vizierate by Qalāwūn on 17th Rabī' I 687/20th April 1288. His influence continued during the reign of al-Ashraf Khalīl when he replaced Turuntāy as vice-regent in Egypt in 689/1290. Baydarā al-Manṣūrī was also one of the amirs who conspired to kill al-Ashraf Khalīl and was briefly appointed the new sultan until he was executed by amir al-ʿĀdil Kitbughā in 693/1293: Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 262-263, 275 and 295-297; Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir, *Tashrif al-ayyām*, 270; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1/3:741; and Rabie, *Financial System of Egypt*, 142.

⁶⁵ Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi*, 15:477.

the addition of a mausoleum.⁶⁶

It is not precisely known from which church the portal was taken. Some have suggested that it was taken as trophy from the Church of St. Andrew,⁶⁷ while others suspected the source to be the Church of St. Agnes.⁶⁸ Regardless of the provenance this monumental portal is more than just a doorway of a church in Acre for there are other implications. It was war booty when seized by al-Shujā'ī to commemorate the final Mamluk annihilation of the Franks which he actively participated in. When Kitbughā acquired the portal it had already passed on to Badr al-Dīn Baydarā al-Manṣūrī, al-Shujā'ī's son-in-law, and symbolized Kitbughā's victory over al-Shujā'ī. By the time al-Nāṣir Muḥammad usurped the *madrassa* that was started by Kitbughā, the portal like the *madrassa* represented the sultan's eventual triumph over the amir who deposed him as a child.

Tower in Sidon

After Sidon was attacked by the Mamluk forces al-Shujā'ī was ordered by al-Ashraf Khalīl on 4 Rajab 690/2 July 1291 to destroy a tower that was left standing in the coastal city.⁶⁹

Bridge over al-Dāmūr River

After the conquest of Beirut on 23 Rajab 690/22 July 1291, al-Shujā'ī built a bridge across al-Dāmūr River.⁷⁰

Walls and Citadel of Beirut

Around the same time he ordered the demolition of the citadel and walls of Beirut.⁷¹

Great Mosque, Beirut

The Crusader Church of St. John the Baptist (6th century/12th century) was converted into the Great Mosque (al-'Umarī) in Rajab 690/July 1291, most probably directly after the conquest of the harbor city. The basilica was converted into a mosque with the addition of a *miḥrāb* and a minaret under the direction of al-Shujā'ī.⁷²

Damascus

The area to the west of the Citadel in Damascus was cleared from buildings and the Maydān al-Akhḍar (hippodrome) was enlarged between 11th-13th Dhū al-Ḥijja 690/6th-8th December 1291 on the order of Governor al-Shujā'ī.⁷³

While governor of Damascus (Jumādā II 690 - 6th Shawwāl 691/June 1290 - 20th September

⁶⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1/3: 951; and Plaginieus, "Le portail d'Acre transporté au Caire," 61-62.

⁶⁷ Pringle, *Churches*, 4:63-68.

⁶⁸ Mayer, "The Madrasa of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad," 95.

⁶⁹ Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:121.

⁷⁰ Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 71, No. 10.

⁷¹ Sāliḥ b. Yaḥyā, *Kitāb Ta'rikh Bayrūt*, 43.

⁷² Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 71, No. 6.

⁷³ Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:129; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 72, No. 13.

1292) al-Shujā'ī is known to have built several decorated structures in the city, primarily palaces and other secular buildings on the grounds of the Citadel. They were executed on orders from al-Ashraf Khalīl between Shawwāl 690 - Rabī' II 691/October 1291 - April 1292. The names assigned to the corresponding buildings are quite elaborate suggesting that they were richly ornamented, not unlike the ceremonial spaces associated with al-Shujā'ī in the Citadel of Cairo. For example, there is the Qubbat al-Zarqā' (Blue Dome), named so because it was surmounted by a dome clad with blue tiles; and there was a second ceremonial hall called Qā'at al-Dhahab (Hall of Gold) which had gilded plaques covering the ceiling.⁷⁴

Qal'at al-Rum

Mamluk forces from Egypt and Syria gathered in Damascus in late Rabī' II 691/April 1292, and proceeded to arrive at the Armenian fortress of Qal'at al-Rūm on 9th Jumādā II/27th May of the same year. Qal'at al-Rūm was effectively conquered on 11th Rajab 691/28th June 1292 by al-Shujā'ī on orders from al-Ashraf Khalīl. To do so, the fortress walls were battered and mines were dug up to undermine them further. A chain was subsequently assembled to connect the ground with the battlement of the fortress, which enabled the Mamluks officers to climb up and take it over. The fortress was immediately rebuilt after it was greatly damaged by Mamluk artillery and completed under the direction of al-Shujā'ī on 6th Shawwāl 691/20th September 1292: he was charged with the extensive refortification of the fortress largely due to his decisive role in conquering the fortress and his prowess as a construction supervisor.⁷⁵

*Al-Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya at the Citadel of Cairo

This is the first of two structures that Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl sponsored at the Citadel of Cairo. The *qā'a*, a grand ceremonial hall consisting of two *īwāns* of unequal size on opposite ends of a slightly lower *durqā'a*, was built in the Southern Enclosure in 692/1292. It had several uses, including serving as the sultan's private throne room.⁷⁶ Very little intact decoration survives from this once elaborately adorned hall besides fragments of white marble carved with arabesque patterns and solid marble in different colors that would have formed the dado; further up on the walls are the remains of an arcade consisting of a series of colonettes that alternate with trilobed niches filled with geometric patterns; some stucco decoration; and an octagonal fountain in the sunken central part of the hall, or the *durqā'a*.⁷⁷ The *qā'a* is of particular interest because it once contained a mosaic frieze with architectural and vegetal scenes that can be compared to the mosaics in al-Qubba al-Zāhiriyya in Damascus (676-679/1277-1281). The frieze once decorated the walls high above its dado and

⁷⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Manhal al-ṣāfi*, 6:82; Idem, *al-Nujūm al-zāhirah*, 8:52; Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 8/11, 72; Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 148-149; and al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:775.

⁷⁵ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat*, 288-289; Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:136-137, 142 and 145; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 1:778; Stewart, *Armenian Kingdom*, 73-83 Idem, "Qal'at al-Rūm", 276-279; and Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 73, No. 17.

⁷⁶ Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 8:169; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr*, 1:376; and al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, 3:676.

⁷⁷ For more on the remains of the remains of the *qā'a*, see Abdulfattah and Sakr, "Glass Mosaics in a Royal Mamluk Hall," 207-209.

only fragments remain today (Figure 14).⁷⁸

Considering how elaborately decorated and embellished this *qā‘a* appears to have been, like al-Shujā‘ī’s earlier projects (the mausolea of Fāṭima Khatūn and al-Ashraf Khalīl, the Complex of Qalāwūn, the ceremonial halls in the Citadel of Damascus) and the contemporaneous al-Īwān al-Ashrafī in the use of visually striking ornament like glass mosaics, gilt decoration and polychrome marble, we should consider al-Shujā‘ī’s involvement here as well. After all, this *qā‘a* was executed after his return to Cairo from Damascus on 6th Shawwāl 691/20th September 1292.

Al-Īwān al-Ashrafī at the Citadel of Cairo

This *īwān* was built and renovated on the site of an older ceremonial hall commissioned by Qalāwūn under the direction of al-Shujā‘ī in 685/1286. According to Ibn al-Dawadārī, the renovation was also carried out under the direction of al-Shujā‘ī in 693/1293. It served as a *majlis* (sitting place) for the sultan, with the first official gathering held in Muḥarram 693/2nd December 1293-1st January 1294. This *īwān* was known for the figural images (portraits) that decorated its walls, which Rabbat suggested were executed in mosaics. Ibn al-Dawadārī stated that the portraits were displayed in the Throne Room that was removed by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in 711/1311-1312.⁷⁹ While this *īwān* is no longer extant, Ibn Dāniyāl (647-710/1248-1310), the Cairo poet patronized by both Qalāwūn and al-Ashraf Khalīl, composed a panegyric about it in which he described it as being grander than even Taq-i Kisra, the Sasanian *Īwān* of Khusru in Ctesiphon.⁸⁰

4. Conclusion: The “al-Shujā‘ī” Style

Having surveyed the buildings attributed to al-Shujā‘ī as well as others that suggest his imprint, I would like to conclude this hagiographical account of his life by summarizing his architectural and aesthetic output and concentrating on a few points: the similarities between building types and their function, the use of spolia and lavish ornament, and the lacunae in data.

What connects these projects and is there enough evidence to suggest that al-Shujā‘ī had any input besides managing and supervising their construction? It appears that al-Shujā‘ī primarily coordinated a multitude of large-scale, richly decorated profane spaces with a ceremonial function.⁸¹ This comes as no surprise since he was in the service of the sultan and responsible for supervising the execution of the sultan’s foundations. Aside from these grandiose royal projects, he also supervised major renovations, the construction of bridges, but rarely pious foundations.

⁷⁸ The mosaics were first discussed in Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 161-169 and one fragment was published on 163, Fig. 23. More of the fragments from the same frieze were published by Abdulfattah and Sakr, “Glass Mosaics in a Royal Mamluk Hall,” 209-216.

⁷⁹ Ibn al-Dawadārī, *Kanz al-durar*, 8:345; Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 169-173; and Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 73, No. 18.

⁸⁰ Guo, *The Performative Arts*, 56.

⁸¹ The domed mausoleum attached to Qalawūn’s complex in Cairo also served a ceremonial purpose, for it was the site of the ceremonies held for the investiture of new amirs: Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 138.

He seems to have had a great interest in selecting and salvaging artifacts from earlier buildings to incorporate them in to his own, judging from the variety and capaciousness of the spoliae integrated into the Complex of Qalāwūn alone. In this one building we find a combination of thoughtfully organized elements spoliated from other earlier Islamic buildings, as well as architectural element reused whole or material which had been cut down from even earlier structures for the pavement and possibly dado. Scholars of Islamic art and architecture have highlighted the 3rd/10th century carved Fatimid wooden panels that were reinstalled in the hospital in the reverse to the detriment of other interesting reused relics. In contrast to these now-famous wooden panels, the diversity of these other artifacts – columns, capitals, thresholds sills, etc. – unequivocally added to the beauty and magnificence of the complex’s perception over the *longue durée*, so their purpose was not only to facilitate the speed of construction. To avoid going off on an unnecessary tangent I will discuss my methodology, reasoning and designation parameters of the spoliae incorporated into the Complex of Qalāwūn in a future project. In the meantime, since al-Shujā’ī is the main figure identified in the sources associated with Qalāwūn’s complex, should we attribute the inclusion of rich spoliae directly to him? I will respond in the affirmative knowing that he ordered the transfer of marble and other stones from the ruins of the Ayyubid citadel on Roda Island. Furthermore, besides the impressive Gothic portal that he selected, salvaged and obviously prized from a church in Acre, al-Shujā’ī is also known to have sent marble from other churches in the city to both Cairo and Damascus, such as a plaque from a sarcophagus inscribed in Greek or Latin (*Rūmī*) that he had sent to Damascus for decipherment.⁸²

Al-Qubba al-Zāhiriyya in Damascus, completed by Qalāwūn in 679/1281 after the death of al-Zāhir Baybars, is considered to be the starting point of the much discussed revival of Umayyad architectural elements that resurfaced in Baḥrī Mamluk architecture. The name of the *qubba*’s architect, Ibrāhīm b. Ghanā’im, is carved into the *muqarnas* hood of the monumental entrance portal.⁸³ Al-Shujā’ī does not come up in the sources as having been in the city of his childhood during this period, so we cannot assume his involvement in the completion of the *qubba*, even though he was Supervisor of Royal Constructions at the time and worked outside of Cairo over the course of his career. But could he have heard about the *qubba*’s richly decorated interior using mosaics, polychrome marble, carved stucco and gilding, and requested that these techniques be replicated in Cairo? Perhaps a specific interest on the part of al-Shujā’ī in resonant Umayyad techniques and styles would explain why these modes of ornament permeated the buildings that he supervised, in addition to their arrival with the movement of craftsmen within the sultanate. The application and use of glass tesserae alone, for instance, decorated the walls of four of his projects: the no longer standing al-Qubba al-Mansūriyya of Qalāwūn at the Citadel of Cairo, the *miḥrāb* in Qalāwūn’s *madrasa*, al-Qā’ā al-Ashrafiyya, and al-Īwān al-Ashrafi.

Despite the plethora of information available to us about al-Shujā’ī’s life, there are some critical gaps. We don’t know, for example, exactly when he arrived in Cairo since Qalāwūn’s

⁸² Little, “The Fall of Akka in 690/1291,” 177.

⁸³ Rabbat, “Architects and Artists in Mamluk Society,” 33.

amirate spanned the transition from Ayyubid to Mamluk rule. Nor do we know precisely when his career in supervising architectural projects began? Was he immediately tasked with the responsibility of supervising court buildings, or did he previously work on building projects in another capacity? Was his role solely administrative and managerial, or was he also involved in design as I suspect? We know that he was certainly highly organized, efficient, an effective financial administrator and a capable decision-maker. Which brings us to three other buildings that were erected in the Citadel of Cairo during Qalāwūn's reign: a cistern completed in 681/1282-1283; Burj al-Manṣūrī completed between the end of 682/1284 to ca. Ṣafar 683/April-May 1284; and the renovation of Dār al-Niyāba (ceremonial hall) completed in 687/1288-1289.⁸⁴ When we consider the duties of the *shadd*, a position that al-Shujā'ī held at this time since he supervised major projects and was already active in the Citadel with the building of al-Qubba al-Manṣūriyya, should these projects also be attributed to al-Shujā'ī?

These are all questions that should be explored further so that we have a better understanding of the profound impact of this singular amir. A *mamluk* of Sultan Qalāwūn, he was in the eyes of the chroniclers hungry for wealth and power which led him to indulge in all sorts of abuses. While such behavior ultimately precipitated his decline, time after time his name resurfaces in the sources. Despite his major shortcomings, he was an educated professional and a member of the literati of his day. He was obviously multilingual, although I doubt there is much truth to Ibn Iyās' assertion that al-Shujā'ī was himself a *rūmī*. Ultimately, his professional career ended as it began – controversial, filled with ambition and in pursuit of grandeur.

⁸⁴ Meinecke, *Die mamlukische Architektur*, 59, No. 7 and 60, No. 7; and Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 140.

5. A Timeline of ‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Shujā’ī’s career and activities

The exact dates surrounding some of Sanjar al-Shujā’ī’s appointments, dismissals, promotions and building projects are not always clear or consistent in the sources, so an approximation is provided below:

Sultanate of al-Mansūr Qalāwūn: 21st Rajab 678- 6th Dhū al-Hijja 689/28th November 1279-10th December 1290

- Appointed *shadd al-dawāwīn* (Financial Supervisor) in Dhū al-Hijja 678/April 1280
- Dismissed several months later
- Appointed *mudabbir al-mamlaka* (Administrator of the Kingdom) on 1st Dhū al-Hijja 679/ 23rd March 1281
- Appointed *mudabbir al-mamlaka* in Rabī’ II 682/July 1283⁸⁵
- Appointed *wazīr al-diyār al-miṣriyya* (Vizier in Egypt) in 683/1283
 1. Mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn, Cairo: 6th Shawwāl 682 – 29th Rabī’/28th December 1283 - 15th June 1284
 2. Complex of Qalāwūn, Cairo: Rabī’ II 683 - Jumada 684/June 1284 - August 1285
 3. Bridge over al-Khalīj al-Miṣrī: Jumādā II 683/August 1284
 4. Al-Qubba al-Manṣūriyya/Īwān al-Manṣūrī, Citadel of Cairo: Sha‘bān 685 – Shawwāl 685/November 1286 - December 1286
- Dismissed from the Vizierate on 17th Rabī’ I 687/20th April 1288
- Released from prison on 19th Rabī’ II 687/21st May 1288
 1. *Mausoleum of Ashraf Khalīl, Cairo: 687/1288-1289
 2. * Ḥusām al-Dīn Turuntāy al-Manṣūrī, Cairo: 689/1290

Sultanate of al-Ashraf Khalīl: 17th Rajab 689-12th Muḥarram 693/16th July 1290-14th December 1293

- Reappointed vizier during the end of Shawwāl 689/October 1290
- Appointed *nā’ib al-salṭana* (Viceroy of the Sultan in Egypt) for a few days in Dhū al-Qa‘da 789/November 1290⁸⁶
- Participated in the Siege of Acre on 4th Rabī’ II/5th April 1291
- Fall of Acre on 17th Jumādā I 690/18th May 1291
 1. Salvaged marble portal from Crusader church, Acre: 690/1291
- Appointed *nā’ib dimashq* (Governor of Damascus) in Jumādā II 690/June 1291⁸⁷
 1. Destroys a tower in Sidon on 4th Rajab 690/2nd July 1291
- Sidon falls on 15th Rajab 690/14th July 1291
- Reconquest of Beirut on 23rd Rajab 690/22nd July 1291
 1. Build a Bridge over al-Dāmūr River, Beirut: 690/1291

⁸⁵ Ibn Furāt, *Tārīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, 7:273.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 8:102.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 8:119.

2. Ordered the demolition of the citadel and walls of Beirut: 690/1291
 3. Converted the Crusader church of St. John to the Great Mosque of Beirut: Rajab 690/ July 1291
- Haifa surrenders on 3rd Sha‘bān 690/30th July 1291
 - Tartus surrenders on 7th Sha‘bān 690/3rd August 1291
 1. Enlarged the *maydān*, Damascus: 13th Dhū al-Hijja 690/8th December 1291
 2. Qubbat al-Zarqā’ (Blue Dome) and Qā‘at al-Dhahab (Hall of Gold), Citadel of Damascus: Shawwāl 690 - Rabī‘ II 691/September 1291 - April 1292
 - Led army against the Armenian-held fortress of Qal‘at al-Rūm:
 1. Conquered Qal‘at al-Rūm on 11th Rajab 691/28th June 1292
 2. Refurbished and fortified Qal‘at al-Rūm on 6th Shawwāl 691/20th September 1292
 - Recalled from Damascus back to Cairo on 6th Shawwāl 691/20th September 1292
 1. *Al-Qā‘a al-Ashrafiyya/Qaṣr al-Ashrafī, Citadel of Cairo: 692/1292
 2. Al-Īwān al-Ashrafī, Citadel of Cairo: 693/1292-1293
 - Appointed *nā‘ib al-ghayba* (Deputy of absence) in Muḥarram 693/December 1293⁸⁸

Sultanate of Badr al-Dīn Baydarā al-Manṣūrī 693/1293

First reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad: 18th Muḥarram 693-10th Muḥarram 694/19th December 1293 - 29th November 1294

- Re-appointed vizier in 693/1293
- Sanjar al-Shujā‘ī put to death on 17th Ṣafar 693/16th January 1294

Sultanate al-‘Ādil Kitbughā 11th Muḥarram 694 - 27th Muḥarram 696/30th November 1294 – 25th November 1296

- Kitbughā orders construction of his *madrassa* adjacent to the Complex of Qalāwūn in 695/1295

⁸⁸ Ibid., 8:171

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7. Appendix: Illustrations

Fig. 1: Complex of Qalāwūn, exterior (© Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo)

Fig. 2: Mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn, exterior (© Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo)

Fig. 3: Mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn, exterior (photo by author)

Fig. 4: Complex of Qalāwūn, interior of mausoleum (© Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo)

Fig. 5: Cappella Palatina, decorative panel (photo by author)

Fig. 6: Qalāwūn's *madrasa*, glass mosaics in the *miḥrāb* (photo by author)

Fig. 7: Mausoleum of al-Ashraf Khalīl, exterior (© Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo)

Fig. 8: Mausoleum of al-Ashraf Khalīl, exterior (photo by May al-Ibrashi)

Fig. 9: Mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn, window (© Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo)

Fig. 10: Complex of Qalāwūn, window (© Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo)

Fig. 11: Mausoleum of al-Ashraf Khalīl, zone of transition (© Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo)

Fig. 12: Mausoleum of Turuntāy al-Mansūrī, zone of transition (© Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo)

Fig. 13: Madrasa of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Gothic portal (photo by author)

Fig. 14: Al-Qā' a al-Ashrafiyya, glass mosaic band in southwest wall (photo by author)



Fig. 1: Complex of Qalawun, exterior



Fig. 2: Mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn, exterior



Fig. 3: Mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn, exterior



Fig. 4: Complex of Qalāwūn, interior of mausoleum



Fig. 5: Cappella Palatina, decorative panel



Fig. 6: Qalawun's *madrasa*, glass mosaics in the *mihrab*



Fig. 7: Mausoleum of al-Ashraf Khalil, exterior



Fig. 8: Mausoleum of al-Ashraf Khalil exterior



Fig. 9: Mausoleum of Fāṭima Khātūn, window



Fig. 10: Complex of Qalāwūn, window



Fig. 11: Mausoleum of al-Ashraf Khalīl, zone of transition

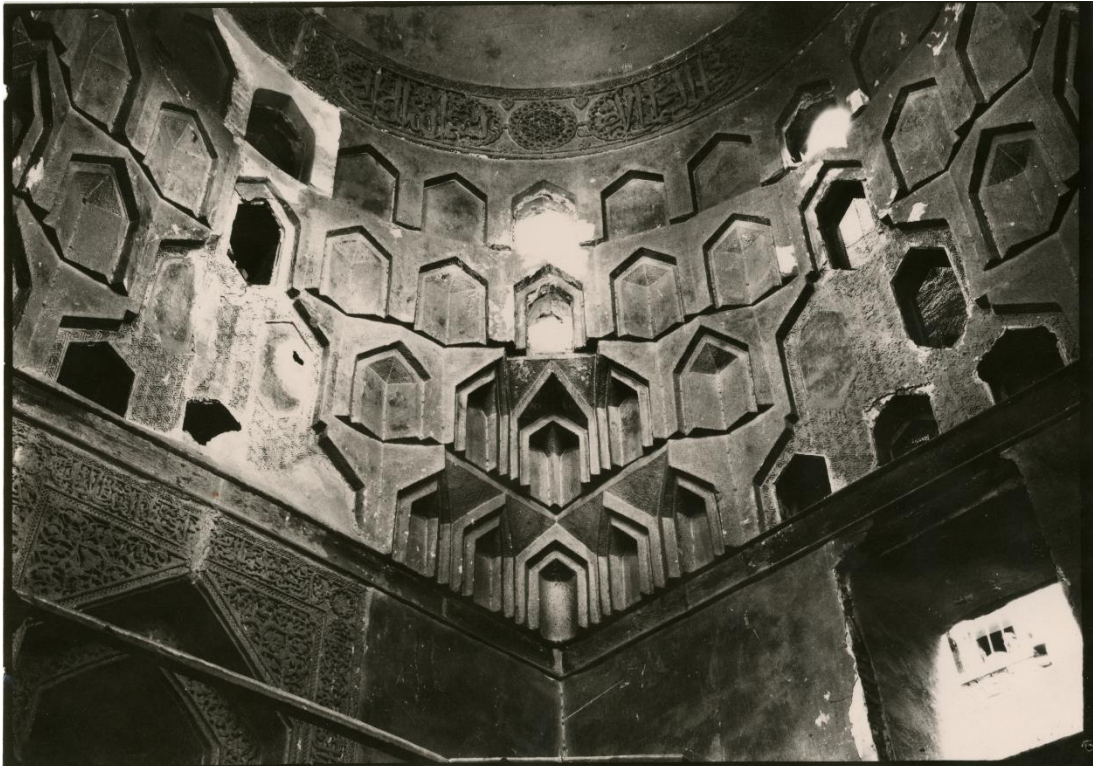


Fig. 12: Mausoleum of Turuntāy al-Mansūrī, zone of transition



Fig. 13: Madrasa of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Gothic portal



Fig. 14: Al-Qā'a al-Ashrafiyya, glass mosaic band in southwest wall