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978-1-107-62671-3 - The Mamluk City in the Middle East: History, Culture, and the Urban Landscape

Nimrod Luz

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The Mamluk City in the Middle East

The Mamluk City in the Middle East offers an interdisciplinary study of urban history, urban experience, and the nature of urbanism in the region under the rule of the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517). The book focuses on three less-explored but politically significant cities in the Syrian region – Jerusalem, Safad (now in Israel), and Tripoli (now in Lebanon) – and presents a new approach and methodology for understanding historical cities. Drawing on diverse textual sources and intensive field surveys, Nimrod Luz adroitly reveals the character of the Mamluk city as well as various aspects of urbanism in the region, establishing the premodern city of the Middle East as a valid and useful lens through which to study various themes such as architecture, art history, history, and politics of the built environment. As part of this approach, Luz considers the processes by which Mamluk discourses of urbanism were conceptualized and then inscribed in the urban environment as concrete expressions of architectural design, spatial planning, and public memorialization.

Dr. Nimrod Luz is a senior lecturer at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the Western Galilee College, Acre, Israel.

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This is to Ofri and Ido

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Preface

Every book is a voyage! And this has been a particularly long one. But now it has finally ended. I could not have done it without guides, companions, and fellow travelers, all of whom I was so very fortunate to encounter en route. Their constant support and help when I needed it has enabled me to conclude this endeavor.

First and foremost, I owe a debt of gratitude to my language editor Mr. Avi Aronsky who so graciously and professionally waved his magic wand on this otherwise very humble manuscript. Surely, the oft-repeated but ever-valid warning applies: I alone am responsible for the shortcomings of this book.

This book would have never seen the light of day without the constant encouragement (truthfully, there were times when more hard measures were needed) of two formidable ladies who, together and throughout my entire academic career, have been the most truthful and caring friends and supporters not just for my research but indeed for my well-being. I feel so privileged to acknowledge their efforts and energies taken on my part: Prof. Michal Biran and Dr. Nurit Stadler, indeed my most trustworthy of *kushdāshiyūn*.

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of Jerusalem for the wonderful illustrations that furnish this book. To my friend Prof. Warren Schultz, who read and commented on a few of the chapters, I will always remember that first ride from Chicago to Madison! To Prof. David Morgan for his encouragement and support of this project and good advices over many a years.

Throughout the various stages of this study, I enjoyed numerous intellectual encounters and professional conversations with scholars worldwide. I remember fondly my talks with Prof. Yi Fu Tuan, Prof. Bob Sack, and Prof. Jamie Peck at UW-Madison. My ongoing conversations with Prof. Don Mitchell of Syracuse University were always very beneficial, to me at least. I enjoyed the hospitality of Prof. Dominique Chevalier at the Sorbonne and, in particular, the concept of “space sociale.” The late Prof. Andre Raymond was always supportive and kind – I hope this book gives him due respect and acknowledges his enormous contribution to the field of Middle Eastern urbanism.

The last leg of this book was written while I was a research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Philosophy in Berlin. I wish to thank Prof. Dagmar Schaefer and the Alexander von Humboldt foundation for their support. It is also with great pleasure that I thank the Western Galilee College Research Authority for their financial support. Kudos are also due to my colleagues at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the Western Galilee College for their friendship and for their constant struggle, at times against all odds, to maintain a lively research agenda.

My most important words of acknowledgment are due to my family. To my father who should have been the first reader of this manuscript. To my mother. To Nitsan, for sustaining me and for always reminding me that there are things of greater importance outside the groves of academia. To Ofri and Ido for putting things in perspectives and for asking from time to time; “Daddy, are you done with the book”? To that I say:

Done at last, done at last!

N. L.

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Abbreviations

AAS	Asian and African Studies
BEO	Bulletin d'Etude Orientale
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
CIA	Van Berchem, M. <i>Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum</i> . Le Caire, 1922–1923. 3 vols.
EI ¹	Encyclopedia of Islam, 1st edition. Leiden and London, 1913–1936
EI ²	Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd edition. Leiden and London, 1954–2005
IC	Islamic Culture
IJMES	International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies
JAOS	Journal of African and Oriental Studies
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSAI	Jerusalem Studies in
MSR	Mamluk Studies Review
PEFQS	Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Studies
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
PPTS	Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society
RCEA	Combe, É. et al. Eds. <i>Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe</i> . Le Caire, 1931–1991. 18 vols.
SI	Studia Islamica