

The Golden Age of The Mamluks :



The Basin of Al Nassir Muhammad Ibn
Qalaun
from the Islamic Gallery



MAMLUK DYNASTY (1250-1517 AD)

The Mamluk sultans established a formidable empire ruling Egypt, Syria and Palestine for more than 250 years.

It was a period of stability and economic power.

Nowadays we can still admire many architectural remains, like mosques, houses, schools and other buildings from this period.

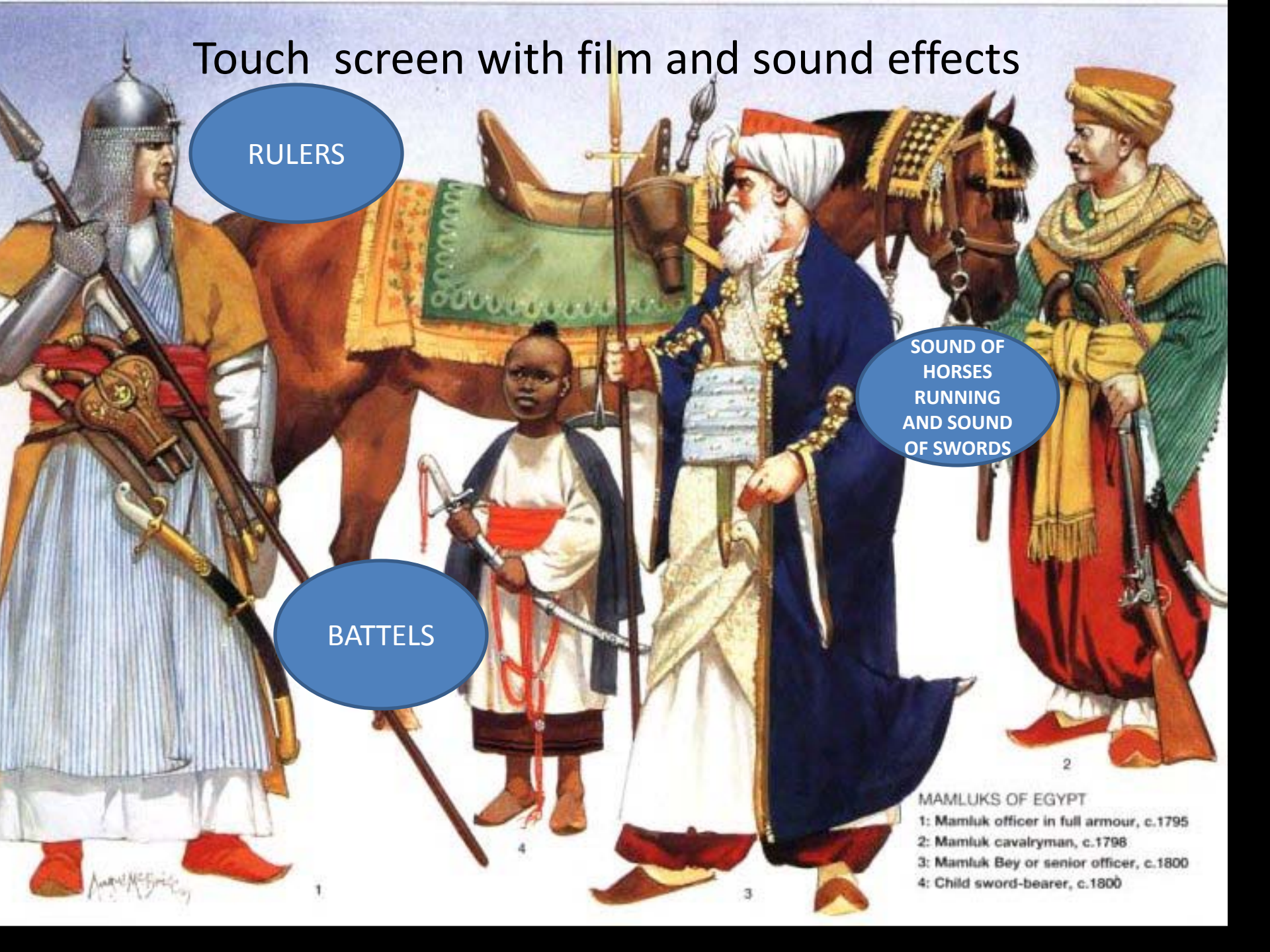
The term Mamluk meaning slave comes from the Arabic (to own). They were brought to Egypt to serve as bodyguards for the sultan.

Touch screen with film and sound effects

RULERS

SOUND OF HORSES RUNNING AND SOUND OF SWORDS

BATTELS



MAMLUKS OF EGYPT

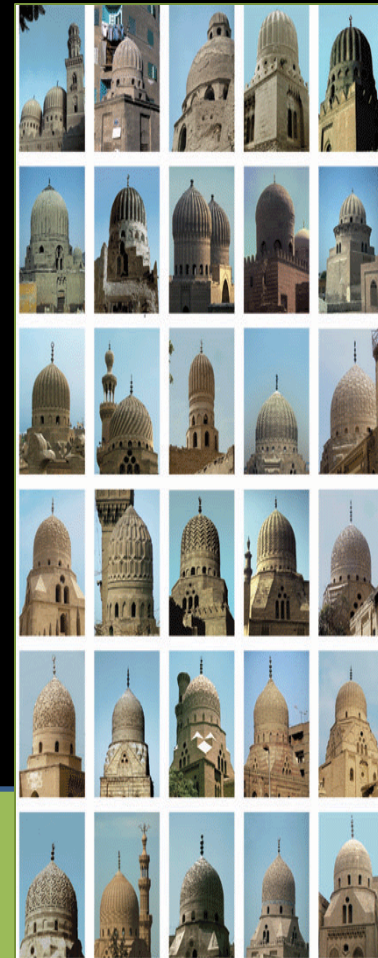
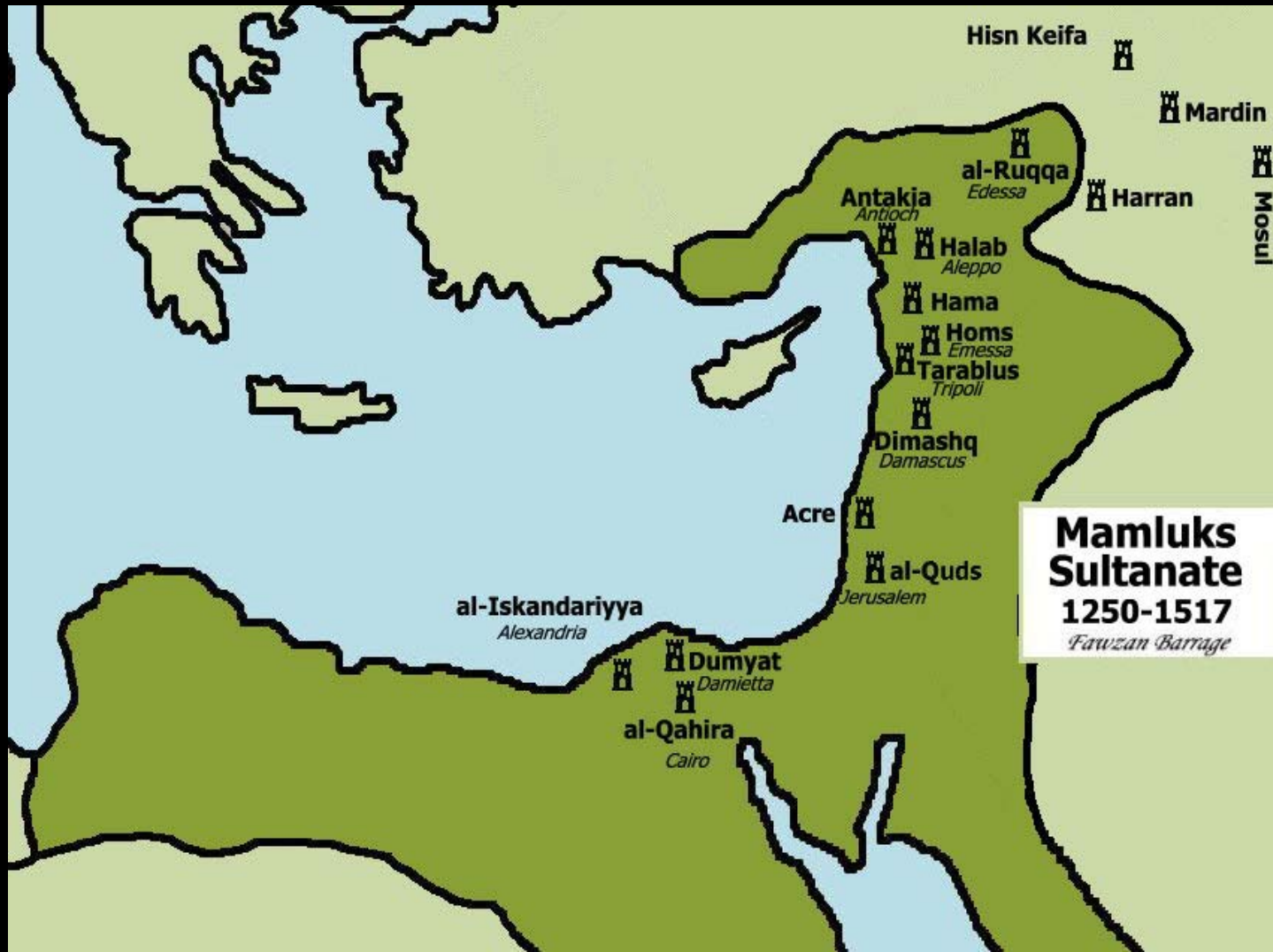
- 1: Mamluk officer in full armour, c.1795
- 2: Mamluk cavalryman, c.1798
- 3: Mamluk Bey or senior officer, c.1800
- 4: Child sword-bearer, c.1800

The Golden Age of Mamluk Art and Architecture was in the reign of Nassir Al Din Muhammad Ibn Qalaun (1293-1341 A.D.)

He was the ninth Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, who seized power three times (1293 to 1294), (1299 to 1309) (and from 1309 till his death in 1341).

Al-Nassir Muhammad's long reign marked the peak of Mamluk power and of culture in Egypt since Ptolemaic Alexandria. Extraordinary public works were set in motion. Once again he dug the canal connecting Alexandria with the Nile: it was opened to traffic in 1311 and required workforces on a Pharaonic scale. Some of his marvelous works in Cairo were the huge square called al-Midan al-Nassiri, Qasr al-Ablaq (al-Ablaq Palace) and the restructuring of the Iwan, which was built by his father Qalaun. In addition he built Madrasas, magnificent public baths and renovated more than thirty Mosques which belonged to the most splendid examples of Islamic architecture. His own Mosque in the Citadel, which stands until today, was decorated with stone, brought in triumph from the ruined cathedral of Acre. He also added to his father's complex of structures Cairo's first Sabil, a fountain for public use, especially in use for the poor who might not have had access to a well.

TOUCH SCREEN MAP AND PHOTOS



MOSQUES- MADRASAS- PALACES

Sultan al-Nassir Muhammad Ibn Qalaun Mosque , Cairo.



Brass basin inlaid with silver and gold

Egypt, Syria - made for the Sultan Muhammad Ibn Qalaun (1320-1341)



This is the bold Arabic Inscription in Thuluth script:

“GLORY TO OUR MASTER, THE SULTAN AL MALIK AL NASSIR, THE DEVOUT, THE CHAMPION (OF ISLAM) THE DEFENDER (OF THE FAITH) NASSIR AL DUNYA WA’L DIN MUHAMMAD IBN QALAUN”

In the center of each rondel is the band with his emblem

“GLORY TO OUR MASTER THE SULTAN”

Within the rondel are Chinese inspired lotuses. Scrolling leaves around the inscription are turned into heads of birds. In the inside the basin is decorated with swimming fish.

The Mamluks used this kind of basin for washings, to present meat and fish at big celebrations or even to collect money or gifts at weddings and other festivals.



"GLORY TO OUR MASTER THE SULTAN"



Chinese inspired lotuses

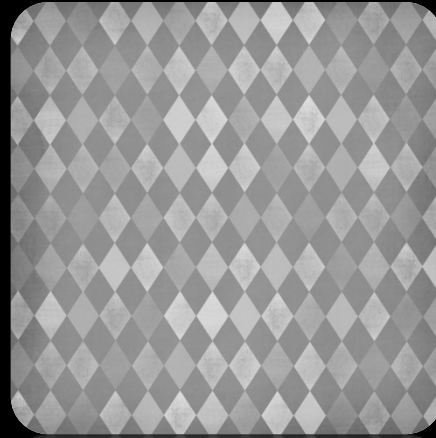


swimming fish.

INLAY PROCESS



GOLD



SILVER



BRASS

From remote antiquity Orientals were skilful metalworkers and mastered the process of inlaying metals with different stones or with other metals. Silver inlaid objects from the time of al-Nassir Muhammad Ibn Qalaun are mostly of brass, an alloy of copper and zinc, although a few objects are of bronze, an alloy of copper and tin. Objects of gold are very rare in this period, as the use of gold and silver for vessels was forbidden in the Koran.

THE INLAY PROCESS:

First, the surface of the design was cut away and the cavity deepened towards the edges. The edges themselves were slightly undercut in order to obtain a better hold on the silver inlay. A still better hold was obtained by serrating, a method by cutting edges into many small points of contact. This method was often used in the Mamluk period.

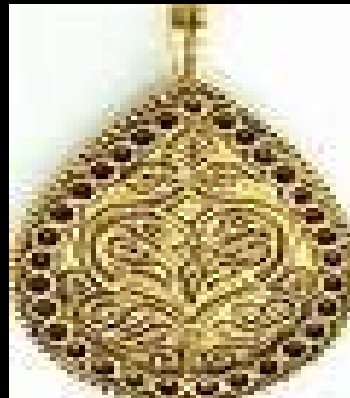
**FILM ABOUT HOW INLAYING MADE FROM THE PAST TO NOW?
TAKEN FROM KHAN EL KHALILI IN CAIRO-EGYPT**



Activities for visitors

- Workshops on script [Thuluth–Kufic]
- Gallery worksheets and trails for children
- Screening of films showing history and technique of Islamic metalwork
- Guided tours of the exhibitions

Objects for the museum shop



Thanks
FOR ALL THE
BRITISH MUSEUM
STUFF

