

Mamluks and Venetians: An Intercultural Perspective on Fourteenth-Century Material Culture in the Mediterranean

Catherine Harding et Nancy Micklewright

Volume 24, numéro 2, 1997

Breaking the Boundaries: Intercultural Perspectives in Medieval Art
Entamer les frontières : perspectives interculturelles dans l'art du Moyen-Âge

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1071666ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1071666ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (imprimé)

1918-4778 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Harding, C. & Micklewright, N. (1997). Mamluks and Venetians: An Intercultural Perspective on Fourteenth-Century Material Culture in the Mediterranean. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 24(2), 47-66. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1071666ar>

Résumé de l'article

Cet article examine deux regroupements d'objets et quelques sites architecturaux du quatorzième siècle, conçus et produits par deux groupes culturels distincts : les Vénitiens et les Mameluks, pour lesquels conquêtes, croisades et idéologies de la Guerre Sainte faisaient partie intégrante de la vie. Il attire l'attention non seulement sur les liens unissant les communautés du Bassin méditerranéen à la fin du Moyen Âge, mais aussi sur la nature dissemblable de ces communautés. Cette analyse se propose aussi de montrer la richesse des échanges interdisciplinaires. En comparant deux manuscrits, l'un vénitien sur les croisades et l'autre, un *furusiyya*, c'est-à-dire un traité d'équitation produit par les Mameluks, nous explorons la manière selon laquelle chacun d'eux rend compte implicitement ou explicitement des contacts entre les deux cultures. Dans un second temps, en juxtaposant deux épisodes concernant la façon dont le vainqueur (chrétien ou musulman) expose des « trophées de guerre » dans des lieux importants de Venise et du Caire, nous montrons comment ces sculptures rappellent des associations culturelles et géographiques, réelles et imaginaires, et comment ces dernières sont beaucoup plus complexes que ce qu'on avait admis jusqu'ici.

Mamluks and Venetians: An Intercultural Perspective on Fourteenth-Century Material Culture in the Mediterranean

CATHERINE HARDING AND NANCY MICKLEWRIGHT, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Résumé

Cet article examine deux regroupements d'objets et quelques sites architecturaux du quatorzième siècle, conçus et produits par deux groupes culturels distincts : les Vénitiens et les Mameluks, pour lesquels conquêtes, croisades et idéologies de la Guerre Sainte faisaient partie intégrante de la vie. Il attire l'attention non seulement sur les liens unissant les communautés du Bassin méditerranéen à la fin du Moyen Âge, mais aussi sur la nature dissemblable de ces communautés. Cette analyse se propose aussi de montrer la richesse des échanges interdisciplinaires. En comparant deux manuscrits, l'un vénitien sur les croisades et l'autre, un

furusiyya, c'est-à-dire un traité d'équitation produit par les Mameluks, nous explorons la manière selon laquelle chacun d'eux rend compte implicitement ou explicitement des contacts entre les deux cultures. Dans un second temps, en juxtaposant deux épisodes concernant la façon dont le vainqueur (chrétien ou musulman) expose des « trophées de guerre » dans des lieux importants de Venise et du Caire, nous montrons comment ces sculptures rappellent des associations culturelles et géographiques, réelles et imaginaires, et comment ces dernières sont beaucoup plus complexes que ce qu'on avait admis jusqu'ici.

In an important book that attempts to challenge the traditional paradigm of European Renaissance studies by focussing on intercultural perspectives in art history, Claire Farago notes that the individual studies in the book emphasize the “heterogenous character” of art; she urges scholars to study the asymmetrical process of cultural exchange.¹ Her approach echoes the call by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak to “not find unity in diversity,” to prefer confrontation rather than integration in cultural studies.² With this recent work in mind, we investigate two bodies of evidence from two interconnected yet dissimilar societies: firstly, the illustrated crusading or military books produced by Venetians and Mamluks during the fourteenth century, and secondly, the use of *spolia* and other works of sculpture at the entrances to two important buildings, the Madrasa and Mausoleum of an-Nasir Muhammad in Cairo and the exterior of the state church of San Marco in Venice. We chose these objects because they provide us with a rich source of diverse, comparative material and cultural practices experienced by Muslims and Christians during the fourteenth century, when crusading, conquest and the ideology of holy war remained vital forces for both cultures.

From the Venetian perspective, we will be looking at the crusading manuscripts of Marino Sanudo, from the Mamluk side, the *furusiyya* manuscripts on horsemanship, one of which was apparently produced after the 1365 sacking of Alexandria by Peter I of Cyprus. As recent studies of his manuscripts suggest, Marino Sanudo, who both wrote the text and closely supervised the illuminated format of the manuscripts, drew on a variety of text-image relations, such as the use of allegory, narrative and ornament, to represent the Muslims as “other” and justify the proposed warfare to recover the Holy Land for Christians, whom he considered to be the spiritual elect.³ There was no direct visual equivalent in terms of the use of imagery in Mamluk manuscripts because the text-image relationship and

painting traditions in Muslim book production are different in this period. As recent studies on the social history of books suggest, the factors influencing book production are enormously complex, and we are reminded of the value of conducting microhistories for each one of the books surveyed.⁴ However, as we discovered in the writing of this article, we need also to expand our knowledge of the history of books by crossing and recrossing geographical and cultural boundaries, to enrich our comprehension of the complex social, religious and political functioning of these texts, as well as further refine our art historical methodologies.

The evidence suggests that the two sets of manuscripts are not exact parallels to each other. Indeed, given the significant cultural differences between Mamluks and Venetians, it is not reasonable to expect parallel productions. Each manuscript group embodies a recognition, implicit or explicit, of contact with outsiders. Both the text and the visual imagery in the Sanudo manuscripts seemed extremely polemical in intention, with the pictures serving to represent the external threat of the Muslims in explicit terms. On the other hand, the Mamluk *furusiyya* manuscripts, while not explicit in their depiction of an enemy, none the less, provide a detailed recounting of the obligations of holy war in the text of the preface, only implicitly constructing an enemy who is not visualized anywhere in the manuscript. As we shall see below, one possible explanation for the heightened polemical nature of the Venetian manuscripts may reflect Sanudo's need to convince the divided powers of Europe of the importance and efficacy of his plan, often across great distances and political differences, whereas the Mamluk examples appear to have been produced for a much more culturally and politically unified audience.

We also examine the heterodox use of sculpture in two different architectural contexts. Here, we juxtapose two moments when the victor (Muslim or Christian) displayed suitable

"trophies of war" in prominent urban locations. We examine the incorporation of spoils from a vanquished crusader site by Muslims at an important architectural site in Cairo, which we compare to the Venetian combination of diverse sculptural materials, either influenced by Western European, Byzantine or Islamic models, or actually produced in these geographic locations, on the exterior of San Marco. Initially, we considered these two examples to be linked by their real or putative association with Acre, and by extension with Palestine. Gradually, it emerged that each of these sites was a referent to a complex set of cultural and geographic associations, both real and imaginary. In both cases, our examination of the state of research points to the need for a more detailed consideration of the role that the sculpture played in communicating meaning, hopefully from the vantage point of an interdisciplinary and crossdisciplinary community of scholars.⁵ We also explored the possibility that works of sculpture might have been used in both locations as "found objects," fulfilling an important need for available building materials.

Before examining the monuments, we want to "set the stage" by highlighting the complexity of forces that both united and separated these people across the Mediterranean. Despite significant divergences in a variety of social customs, difference between Mamluks and Venetians was constructed and understood on both sides of the Mediterranean primarily in terms of religion. The crusades, and the Mamluk response, although no doubt motivated to some extent by the desire for political power and economic gain, were framed in the first instance as religious necessity. Aspects of material production which are directly linked to the crusades thus seem to be a particularly rich basis for investigation, addressing as they do the most central aspects of identity by which each culture defined itself, as Muslim or Christian.

The dominant aspect of the relationship between the Venetians and the Mamluks may appear to be one of military conflict, in the context of control of the Holy Land. Yet, despite the presence of crusaders in Palestine from 1099 until their final defeat in 1291, and the ever-present threat of a new crusade, the Mamluks and their predecessors in Egypt also maintained contact with their neighbours across the Mediterranean through trade of both raw materials and manufactured goods, as well as through diplomacy.⁶ While there was ongoing military conflict, that was not the only, or even at times necessarily the primary means of interaction between the European and Mamluk worlds.

Evidence of the Mamluk awareness of and interaction with the Venetians and the crusades occurs in various contexts. For example, in addition to the trade which took place in raw materials, finished goods moved back and forth between Italy and Egypt. Thus, Mamluk silks were highly valued in Italy, and

striped silks incorporating pseudo-Arabic scripts inspired by Mamluk imports were produced during the fourteenth century.⁷ Similarly, Italian textiles were imported into Egypt and Syria, although they do not seem to have exerted much influence on the design of silk in these regions.⁸ Examples of exchange and intercultural contact in other areas of material production, such as enamelled glass and pottery, could be multiplied endlessly; they all embody evidence of intercultural awareness between the Mamluks and Venetians, but it was impossible to investigate all of them in a single article.⁹

One final observation: as we worked, we became aware that it is often normative for individual scholars to publish essays or articles in a volume, with the work of confrontation, interpretation and exchange of ideas belonging to an editor or editorial team, as in the volume by Farago. It is far rarer for scholars to come together in the same research and writing process to focus on the heterogeneous nature of visual culture. It is our hope that this preliminary attempt at developing an intercultural perspective will both demonstrate the value of such work and reveal the need for more of it.

Marino Sanudo Torsello and his *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis*

Although some work has been done on intercultural connections as revealed in monumental painting in Italian Trecento art, much remains to be done on smaller-scale imagery that represents and constructs national, racial or ethnic identity in the late Middle Ages across Europe.¹⁰ In this section of our essay, we want to examine the evidence from a particular instance of exchange, to highlight some of the complexities of developing an intercultural perspective across social, economic and religious boundaries. To that end, we look at the career of a Venetian merchant, Marino Sanudo Torsello, and his commissions for illuminated manuscripts, which he circulated across Europe so that he might gain support for a new crusade to retake the Holy Land.

In terms of western European perceptions of the crusading movement during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, this period was once seen as a time of "sterile projects and abortive attempts" to retake the Holy Land, as a time of relentless propaganda that generated no concrete results.¹¹ Recent scholarship on the later period now emphasizes that crusading "enthusiasts [were] being presented with the same variety of options their ancestors had had in the thirteenth century," highlighting for us the continued vibrancy and potency of these ideas among European thinkers.¹² The papacy, for instance, continued to demonstrate great concern for the crusade well into the fourteenth century; the intricacies of their involvement in crusading plans have been well documented by Purcell, Housley, Schein

and, most recently, Leopold.¹³ As Tyerman reminds us, the crusading tradition was also kept alive in literary works such as romances, poetry and chronicles.¹⁴ As we shall see, this literary environment had an impact on the programme of illuminations conceived by Marino Sanudo.

As a young man, Marino Sanudo travelled extensively throughout the East on family business; we see him, for instance, in 1293–96 entering into negotiations on his father's behalf with his noble relatives on Naxos.¹⁵ Around the age of thirty, he became attached to the household of Cardinal Riccardo Petroni of Siena; even as late as the 1330s he acknowledged his indebtedness to the cardinal, calling him “patron mio.”¹⁶ It seems likely that Petroni's lifelong interest in the state of the Holy Land influenced Sanudo's vision as an author. Sanudo worked first on the *Conditiones Terrae Sanctae*; this work, written between 1306 and 1309, provided a detailed analysis of the conditions required for an economic blockade of Egypt, which would break the political and economic power of the Mamluk sultan's empire.¹⁷

From 1306 to 1321, Sanudo continued to travel in the Mediterranean and make influential contacts across Europe, with the result that he produced a new, more detailed work that drew on the *Conditiones*. There are two redactions to the *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis*, or Book of the Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross, the first datable to 1321–22, the second, from 1322 onwards.¹⁸ Sanudo seems to have devoted hours of painstaking thought and preparation to assessing every detail of the economic and commercial blockade, the *passagium generale*, and he even drew up a comprehensive history of the Holy Land. He migrated to Avignon in the spring of 1322, where he made contact with various French ambassadors and Robert, king of Naples. Thus began a campaign of book production that saw Sanudo ordering approximately eleven copies of illuminated manuscripts, which were sent to influential recipients like King Robert, Louis of Clermont, and the King of England.¹⁹ Some people received only the rubrics of the *Liber Secretorum*, while King Philip IV was sent a brief compendium of its contents.²⁰

Although the miniatures in the various copies of his work have been analysed by authors such as Gualdi, Degenhart and Schmitt, insufficient attention has been paid to the fact that the illuminations must have functioned at one level as rhetorical images to support the text.²¹ In line with current research on late medieval book production across Europe, it seems obvious that the images in each of the manuscripts do not merely illustrate the author's text but that they also help to make the experience of reading more accessible, more appealing, and more persuasive. According to Alexander, images “intervene to structure particular readings of ... texts, and many images act as conscious visual propaganda in specifiable ways.”²² Much more work needs to be done, on both the textual and visual devices

adopted by Sanudo throughout the book. Tyerman, for example, suggests that the author decided to include the third book of the *Liber Secretorum*, the history of the Holy Land, because “history was popular ... [it] could teach and edify, as well as entertain” prospective readers.²³

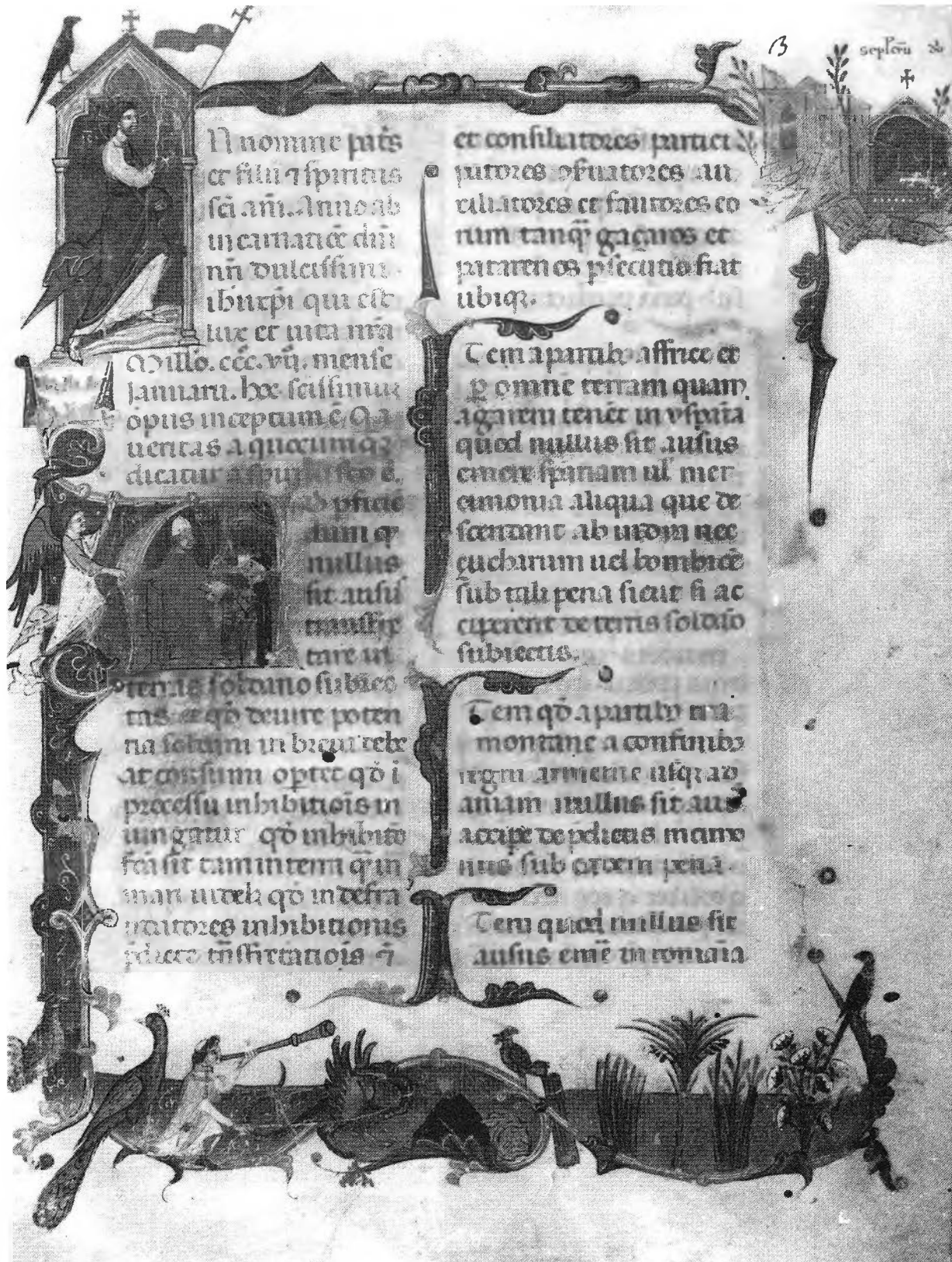
In terms of the images, Curzi argues that they were planned to appear at significant places in relation to the text throughout the body of the manuscript.²⁴ A more detailed study of the manuscripts might trace the role of other types of books in moulding the final format of his text, an approach that is being usefully employed in studies of French manuscripts of Vincent of Beauvais and Brunetto Latini.²⁵ It might also be asked how the imagery worked to shape a reader's experience? Scholars are increasingly aware of how images in books serve to “open up” a text in manifold ways.²⁶ We can only briefly suggest here some potential avenues for further research.

In this paper, we focus on Add. MS 27376 and Add. MS 27376*, in the British Library, a work now in two parts that belongs to the second redaction of the *Liber Secretorum* and includes the main text, a collection of letters relating to the crusade written by Sanudo, and a series of maps, city plans, and a calendar, all of which were once bound together. Scholars generally agree that this manuscript dates from 1330.²⁷

It is worthwhile stating at the outset that Sanudo, perhaps in consultation with a chief scribe or a learned adviser or, as seems less likely, the artists, decided to concentrate the imagery at the beginning of each new part of the three books (each part of the different books has some kind of image),²⁸ perhaps to draw attention to a change in material, as well as to maintain interest in a text of this length and complexity.²⁹ This fits in general with trends in late medieval book production in Europe, where we see authors, scribes, artists and possibly even the patrons themselves providing (or asking for?) more visual and textual aids, such as indexes, to facilitate the reading process.³⁰

As Leopold suggests, authors of crusading proposals in this period differ from earlier writers on the crusades, in that they relied heavily on providing practical, pragmatic solutions to the problem of the recovery of the Holy Land, while at the same time invoking the important spiritual dimensions of such a venture.³¹ Here, the visual evidence lends reinforcement to his view. In the one extant illustrated manuscript of the *Conditiones*,³² which focuses in particular on the economic and military conditions to be faced by crusaders in Mamluk Egypt, Sanudo was careful to open and close the text with a series of prayers, and to provide reminders of traditional Christian iconography to frame this new material.³³ On folio 3r we find marginal images framing two columns of text (fig. 1).³⁴ The top of the page shows a resolute figure of Christ as redeemer who seems to stride towards his tomb, located in the opposite righthand corner of the page. The bas-de-page image also fea-

Figure 1. Christ and the tomb; author's dedication of book to the pope; and cleric issuing the call-to-arms. Marino Sanudo, *Conditiones Terrae Sanctae*, 1309. Venice, Marciana Library, MS lat. 547 (=1924), f. 3r (Photo: Courtesy of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana).



tures an important and complex allegorical image. On the left is the figure of a kneeling cleric who restrains a dragon and blows a horn, in a call to arms, presumably to incite Christians to regain the Holy Land. As the text speaks at length about the various goods that will be affected by the economic blockade, the reader might note that the righthand compartment is occupied by birds, palms and other plant life, such as a bundle of reeds and papyrus. Evidence of Sanudo's intention to present this work to the pope is seen in the letter "A" where we find a diminutive group of pope and kneeling portrait of the author.

Sanudo's ideas about the visual presentation of these ideas seem to have tightened considerably by the time of the production of the *Liber Secretorum*. The earlier imagery of the *Conditiones* has been expanded across two pages. On folio 2v of the British Library manuscript, in the top lefthand corner, framed within the initial "A," we see an image of Christ as the *agnus dei*, triumphant over a group of three Muslims, an image with a clear didactic purpose that affirms the superiority of Christianity over Islam (fig. 2). In the left bas-de-page is a diminutive figure of a rider who shoots at a bird, further underscoring the idea of fighting and conflict. The middle part of the composition features the cleric blowing the trumpet and holding the chain of a prancing leopard (referring here to the Sultan);³⁵ goods from Egypt, including wood and plants, close off the bas-de-page to the right. The image of Christ and empty tomb are shifted to folio 3r of the manuscript (fig. 3). It also includes an initial "Q" that displays a Muslim leader addressing two smaller figures; Muslims are normally characterized by turbans throughout the manuscript.

As early as 1973, Degenhart and Schmitt drew our attention to the allegorical imagery on folio 13r, where a decorated initial in the top lefthand corner of the page connects down the left-hand margin to a bas-de-page divided in two parts (fig. 4).³⁶ On the left we see a boat filled with Muslims and Mongols, who hold menacing spears. There follows a composite image that relates directly to an allegorical passage in the text, chapters one and two of Book One, Part 5. Here we see the King of Armenia surrounded by hostile forces, which are personified as: the lion, which represent the Tartars; the leopard for the Sultan; wolf for the Turks; and the serpent for the Cursors.³⁷ A group of captives may be seen on the right, their necks joined by a rope that leads back to the leopard, signifying the power of the ruler of Islam.

An earlier crusading enthusiast, Fidenzo of Padua, had also used this type of animal symbolism in his *Liber Clementis*.³⁸ He wrote that the Tartars, the *catulis leonis*, would help to free the Christian world from the Saracens, or *filiu lupi*, who would be forced back to the desert whence they came. Marino made use of three vivid allegorical verbal images to support his ideas. The first focuses on the beleaguered state of Armenia. We have both

the image of the king of Armenia surrounded by hostile forces and a passage which describes the king in the teeth of four wild beasts.³⁹ Sanudo continued to argue for the protection of Armenia, long after other crusading theorists had dropped this particular angle.⁴⁰

Later on, in Book Two, Part 2, chapters 5 and 6, he invokes two images of a mighty fortified castle and a tree. The latter involves an image of the Muslims as a mighty bush, whose branches might be cut off but who will persist until the root is exterminated.⁴¹ It is not surprising that both Fidenzo and Marino would make use of such vivid allegorical imagery, in terms of both pictures and verbal play, to reinforce the strong eschatological ideas that lay behind European justification of the "just war."

Other folios throughout the text have scenes of battles, showing Christians pitted against Muslim forces. The connection with chronicles and stories such as the History of Troy is evident, with artists from the same scriptoria illustrating these very different types of book.⁴² Book Three features historical figures of importance, such as Peter the Hermit, who was praised by later medieval crusading theorists for his much-vaunted role in the First Crusade; similarly, other great crusading heroes who were essential to the story (both in terms of what to do and what not to do) seen here are: Frederick Barbarossa, Balduin, first Christian king of Jerusalem, the great Salah al-Din, and St Louis.

Although much work has been done on the maps found in Sanudo's manuscripts, it is worth re-stating here that they are regarded as some of the finest cartographic products dating from the fourteenth century, and they reveal a very complete and up-to-date knowledge of the sites of the Holy Land.⁴³ Sanudo commissioned the maps from Pietro Vesconte, who, on another occasion, also provided him with a collection of maps bound separately in the form of an atlas; there are indications that Sanudo showed the cartographers how the maps should be drawn, as in the city plans of Acre and Jerusalem.⁴⁴ The British Library manuscript, for instance, included the following collection of maps and charts, for a potential reader: a world map, with the area of the Mediterranean seen in relatively accurate detail; four nautical charts showing i) western Europe and the western part of north Africa; ii) southern France, Italy, Greece, central north Africa; iii) Greece, Turkey and eastern north Africa; iv) the eastern Mediterranean; and a scaled map of Palestine, as well as two city plans of Acre and Jerusalem.⁴⁵

In sum, Marino Sanudo demonstrates a clear vision of what would make his books most effective for potential readers. He had his manuscripts outfitted with traditional Christian imagery in places, to remind a reader of the continued need to effect spiritual and material re-possession of the Holy Land, in preparation for the Day of Judgement. Readers would no doubt

Figure 2. Initial "A" with Christ as Lamb above Muslim people; cleric issuing the call for a European crusade. Marino Sanudo, *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis*, 1330. London, British Library, Add. MS 27376, f. 2v (Photo: Courtesy of the British Library).



Figure 3. The Risen Christ; Initial "Q" with Muslims. Marino Sanudo, *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis*, 1330. London, British Library, Add. MS 27376, f. 3r (Photo: Courtesy of the British Library).



Figure 4. Allegory of the King of Armenia. Marino Sanudo, *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis*, 1330. London, British Library, Add. MS 27376, f. 13r (Photo: Courtesy of the British Library).



have remembered the powerful visual and verbal allegories fashioned by Sanudo, when he relied on the voice of prophecy (speaking in signs) to spur readers on to the task of recovering the Holy Land, as was fashionable in some crusading circles of the day. They might also have been urged on, in terms of the memories of those historical personages who had gone before them, to their personal glory: Philip IV, for instance, might have felt the need to join his illustrious ancestor, St Louis, hopefully on a more successful crusading venture. The evidence from literary history, chronicles and such would have reinforced the military message displayed in the various bas-de-page miniatures of fighting and so on. Finally, the various maps would have formed the crowning glory of his project, a magnificent informational and persuasive tool, calculated to win respect at the papal court and various courts of Europe. What emerges here is a picture of an Italian merchant with a clear sense of what a manuscript could accomplish, at a time when books were becoming more and more accessible to wider levels of society.

In the end, Sanudo's efforts were in vain. The impetus for another crusade in the 1330s fell away; there were more menacing forces looming on the horizon, namely the Turks, who began to dominate European minds.⁴⁶ Ever hopeful of a new crusade, and mindful of the enormous value of the legacy he had built up over the years, Sanudo left an atlas and a copy of his manuscript to the Venetian state.⁴⁷ It is up to us to assess his contribution anew, this time taking into account the sense of what happens when East was confronted with a hostile West, so that the equation is not lopsided, so that we might begin to articulate more precisely the terms of difference that comparative studies such as this can offer.

Text-image relations had an important role to play in this forum. Sanudo was firmly convinced of his right to represent Muslim forces as the "other," who needed to be not merely subdued but, if need be, exterminated, the root cut out and destroyed. It is the persistence of long-standing Western attitudes such as these that formed a fundamental part of European consciousness, that helped to validate other, later chapters in the history of racial violence and cultural domination.⁴⁸

The Mamluk *furusiyya* manuscripts

When we turn our attention to the Mamluk examples we find, not surprisingly, that there is no exact equivalent to the Sanudo manuscripts.⁴⁹ In this context it is essential to remember that Palestine had a different role in the Mamluk empire than it did for Europeans. Apart from the religious importance of Jerusalem for Muslims, Palestine was a part of their empire, a source of income in its own right and a crucial link to the rich agricul-

tural lands of Syria.⁵⁰ For European supporters of the crusades, the Holy Land was a distant, almost mythical site peopled with alien infidels, but for the Mamluks, the crusades were close to home, and the armies of the crusaders, with their foreign dress and customs, quickly became all too familiar. The Mamluk *furusiyya* manuscripts to be considered here describe techniques of war; while the enemy is not specifically represented or described, he is present in different parts of the text, especially in the preface and in sections describing the treatment of the enemy.

The texts of treatises on *furusiyya*, roughly translated as horsemanship,⁵¹ were generally divided into lessons, or chapters, each devoted to a specific topic, typically, archery, the use of the lance, the bow, the shield, the mace, hunting, weapons generally, battle formations, incendiary devices, and other useful information.⁵² Intended as instructional manuals for high-ranking members of the Mamluk military elite, *furusiyya* manuscripts often began with a preface reminding the reader of the importance of these skills in the conduct of the holy war against the infidels, or even specific instructions about how to prepare oneself to be a holy warrior.⁵³ The close relationship between this genre of manuscript and the ongoing conflict with crusaders is indicated by the fact that a number of *furusiyya* manuscripts, with illustrations, were produced to coincide with the military buildup undertaken by the emir Yalbugha al-Khassaki following the 1365 sacking of Alexandria by Peter I of Cyprus.⁵⁴ Yalbugha's plans for a counter-attack came to nothing,⁵⁵ but survival of at least four carefully illustrated manuscripts testifies to the strong desire for military action among some elements of the Mamluk elite.

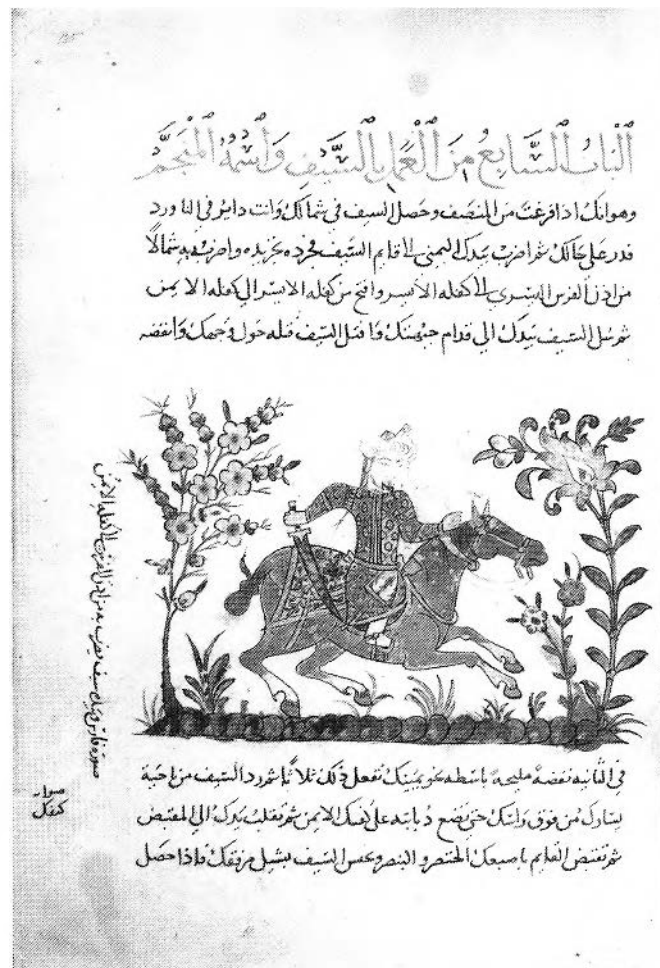
The most popular *furusiyya* treatise in the second half of the fourteenth century,⁵⁶ was entitled *Nihayat al-Su'l wa'l Umniyya fi Ta'lim Amal al-Furusiyya*, or (roughly translated), All that one needs to know about the exercises of horsemanship, written by Muhammad ibn Isa ibn Ismail al-Hanafi al-Aqsarai (d. Damascus, 1348). In the preface of his work, al-Aqsarai writes that his purpose in compiling the text was to remind Muslims of their duty of *jihad*. Subheadings in this section include such topics as "Inciting (others) to take part in the Holy War," "The excellence of the Holy War," "Seeking martyrdom," and "Spending one's wealth for God's cause," with numerous quotations from the *Hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad and the words of other famous leaders. This kind of polemic, about the Muslim obligation to carry out *jihad*, is so familiar to readers and scholars of this literature that the passages are usually not even specifically translated, just generally described.⁵⁷

The twelve lessons or chapters which follow include such subjects as exercises in the use of the bow and arrow, military tactics, and Islamic law regarding the treatment of the enemy.

Figure 5. Illustration of a number of horsemen taking part in a contest. *Nihayat al-Su'l wa'l Umniyya fi Ta'lim A'mal al-Furusiyya*, 1371. London, British Library, Add. MS 18866, f. 99a (Photo: Courtesy of the British Library).



Figure 6. Illustration of a horseman with a sword in his hand. *Nihayat al-Su'l wa'l Umniyya fi Ta'lim A'mal al-Furusiyya*, 1371. London, British Library, Add. MS 18866, f. 125a (Photo: Courtesy of the British Library).



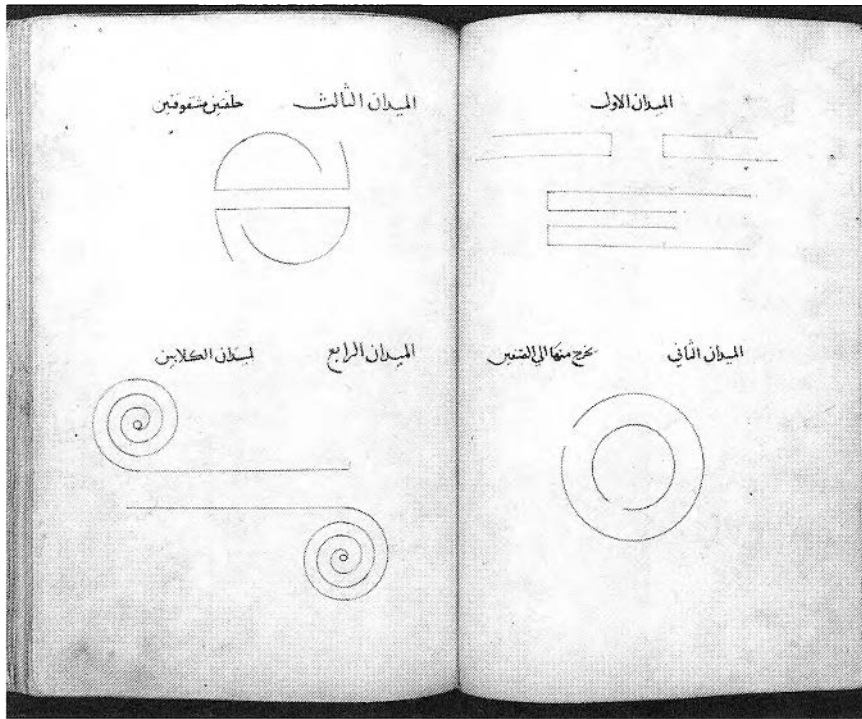
Al-Aqsarai's text is a compendium of information from a variety of sources, including Greek military texts and his own first-hand experience. While his work does not necessarily represent the contemporary state of Mamluk military practice, it is an important source for documenting the discourse in a central aspect of Mamluk culture. The most recent scholarship on al-Aqsarai's manuscript counts ten surviving manuscripts,⁵⁸ of which the best known are the two beautifully illustrated copies in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, Ar. 5655 (formerly Add. Cat. MS 1), and the British Library, Add. MS 18866.

According to its colophon, the British Library copy of *Nihayat al-Su'l* was copied by a scribe named Ahmad b. 'Umar b. Ahmad al-Misri al-Adami, who completed his work on the tenth of Muharram, 773 (25 July 1371).⁵⁹ There is no information in the manuscript about the artist(s) responsible for the eighteen illustrations, or other aspects of the production of the manuscript (figs. 5 and 6). The illustrations all depict mounted riders, either one, two or four, engaged in some aspect of training. With the exception of the two paintings with four

riders circling a pond (fig. 5), the largest and most elaborate of the illustrations, the images generally occupy about one-half of the page, with text above and/or below them. All have captions describing their content written vertically along one edge of the image, as for example, on folio 125a (recto), whose caption reads "Illustration of a horseman with a sword in his hand with which he strikes from the horse's ear as far back as its right croup." (fig. 6) While there are no lines separating text and image, fourteen of the images have clearly delineated ground lines, with stylized foliage of various shapes and colours serving to frame the central figure(s). The illustrations are in good condition and are of high quality, with careful attention to details of horse colouring and trappings, the riders' costumes and weapons, and the posture and position of the riders. Although these images display the interest in pattern and abstraction which characterize most of Mamluk painting, they are perfectly legible in terms of their depiction of actual objects and figures.

The eighteen illustrations are not spaced evenly among the 292 folios of the manuscript, but occur mostly between folios

Figure 7. Four different *maidan* plans. *Nihayat al-Su'l wa'l Umniyya fi Ta'lim A'mal al-Furusiyya*, 1371. London, British Library, Add. MS 18866, fols. 90b-91a (Photo: Courtesy of the British Library).



121 and 140, with five appearing between folios 97 and 113. In fact, all of the images are placed within two chapters, or lessons of the manuscript, five in the lesson on the lance, and thirteen in the lesson on the sword.⁶⁰ However, other parts of the text are illustrated with different sorts of images which were apparently intended to clarify the information provided in the text. Thus, folios 90b (verso) through 93a contain a series of precise linear diagrams, demonstrating different configurations for the public squares or *maidans* in which military training and exercises took place (fig. 7). Each of these pages has two designs, drawn mostly with black lines, labelled in red "The first *maidan*," "The second *maidan*," and so on, with additional information given in a secondary label done in black ink. For example, the lower image on folio 91a is labelled "*al-maidan al-rabi*" / the fourth *maidan*" in red, and "*al-maidan al-kullabayn* / the double-hook *maidan*" in black (fig. 7). Five of the folios between 214b and 218b contain linear designs in red set among the lines of text which illustrate a variety of shapes (crescent, diamond and triangle, among others) used for troop formations. The same lesson (battle lines) includes a series of smaller diagrams of red dots and lines (fols. 224b, 225a and 227a) which also indicate certain types of battle formations. Finally, there are two double-page diagrams (fols. 93b–94a, 209b–210a), elaborate geometric designs drawn in red ink with extensive labelling primarily in black, detailing the essential elements of complex troop formations, the placement of trenches, observation posts, foot soldiers, those armed with shields, mounted soldiers, and so on.⁶¹

The variety of textual illustration in the 1371 British Library manuscript indicates an awareness of the value of including such material in a written text, as well as of the different roles illustration may take.⁶² There are sixty or so illustrated manuscripts which can be associated with the Mamluk period, from various works of science to literature in a variety of formats.⁶³ Their illustrations display a similar variety. A treatise on astronomy contains diagrams of constellations, while a popular work of literature, the animal fables of *Kalila and Dimna*, for example, is illustrated with narrative paintings closely tied to the story line of the text. Interestingly, *Kalila and Dimna*, an Arabic translation of fables which came originally from Sanskrit, contains a forward by the eighth-century translator, Ibn al-Muqaffa, which "notes that illustrations in various colours were said to have been used to increase the pleasure of the reader and to make the morals of the stories more effective."⁶⁴

In our manuscript, the eighteen paintings certainly enliven the pages on which they appear, and their careful attention to details, colour and pattern demonstrates a recognition of their formal, decorative value. Yet that same attention to detail also allows these paintings to function as didactic diagrams, indicating correct posture, hand position and other aspects of using the lance and the sword in a variety of situations. The various drawings in the manuscript would also serve to clarify the information presented in the text, an important role particularly since it includes long passages translated from a classical Greek treatise on war, the information in which would have been unfamiliar to readers.

While the manuscript paintings are obviously related to other Mamluk book illustrations in their style, the combination of paintings and diagrams is less usual (or at least has not been often noted). Illustrated manuscripts from the Islamic world have generally been divided by scholars as scientific or literary in subject matter, with corresponding differences in illustrative practices. The Mamluk *furusiyya* manuscripts fall into the first category, but with their paintings, are examples of the "fluid exchange of imagery between the scientific and literary branches of Islamic manuscript illustration" which has been noted in this period by Hoffman.⁶⁵ However, apart from brief mentions of these manuscripts in art historical texts, their illustrative strategies have remained largely unexamined. They have not yet been subjected to the close analysis of text-image relationship and rhetorical structure currently taking place in the study of West-

ern European manuscripts. Attention to these matters and related ones may prove extremely useful in understanding better how these manuscripts functioned. Examining the manuscripts in order to discover why illustrations and diagrams were placed as they were in order to learn how these devices shaped the reader's experience of the text would be a particularly useful project for a body of manuscripts such as these, which were commissioned by patrons who are generally assumed to be nearly illiterate in Arabic, the language in which the manuscripts are written.⁶⁶

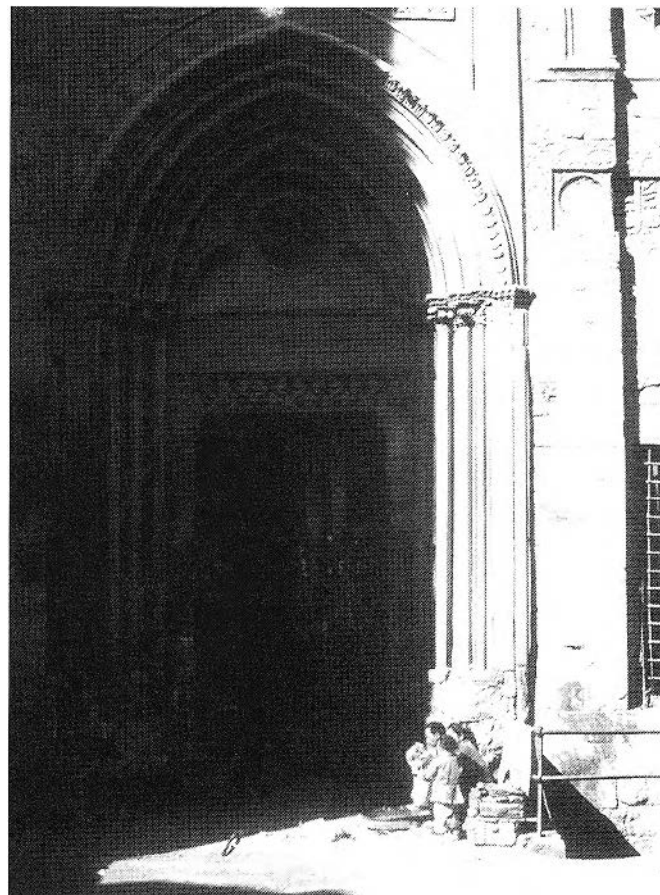
Whatever difficulties their owners may have had in reading the text, the Mamluk *furusiyya* manuscripts, as contemporary re-workings of a genre which dated from several centuries earlier, were clearly an important part of their response to a military threat from outside. Invoking, but not actually illustrating an enemy, they remind their audience of the Muslim obligation to carry on a holy war and instruct readers in the skills necessary to do so. Certainly these manuscripts, together with the Sanudo manuscripts, invite further study, both in terms of the function of the images in the text and for what they reveal about the contemporary construction of social identities in military/political contexts.

Architecture: Cairo

In the Mamluk world, large scale artistic patronage was confined primarily to the sultans and other members of the military elite. The construction of major architectural complexes both in Cairo and other cities of the empire as a means of establishing political legitimacy guaranteed the importance of architectural patronage. The nearly three centuries of Mamluk rule (1250–1517) were characterized by an ongoing series of building campaigns which had a major impact on the lives of the empire's inhabitants,⁶⁷ as well as on the physical fabric of the major cities. Cairo, in particular, during this period rivalled the great cities of Europe in terms of both size and standard of living.⁶⁸

The building materials necessary to carry out the ambitious plans of the Mamluk patrons were always hard to come by. By the thirteenth century, Cairo had long since exhausted its meagre supply of wood, as well as the stone quarries along the Nile which had supplied the builders of ancient Egypt. The nearby pyramids of Giza and ruined buildings within the city were important sources of re-used materials but could not provide all that was needed.⁶⁹ Contemporary historians sometimes accused over-eager builders of tearing down the structures of their predecessors to obtain wooden beams and panelling, metal fittings and marble columns or revetment. Searching farther afield for building materials was commonplace in this period, as when Baybars wrote to the provinces of his empire directing his officials to send marble columns, iron and wood for the con-

Figure 8. Madrasa and Mausoleum of Sultan an-Nasir Muhammad, Cairo, 1295–1304, portal (Photo: Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom).



struction of his congregational mosque (1266–1269).⁷⁰ Similarly, in 1268 when Baybars and his forces captured the town of Jaffa from the crusaders, the sultan oversaw the demolition of the town and its citadel, sending the marble and wood from the citadel back to Cairo by ship, to be used in his new mosque.⁷¹

In this context, we should examine the most frequently cited example of the use of crusader *spolia* in Mamluk architecture, the marble portal generally ascribed to the church of St Andrew in Acre,⁷² re-used as the entrance portal in the Madrasa of an-Nasir Muhammad, completed in 1304 (fig. 8). The following passage is typical of how the portal in an-Nasir's building has often been presented:

This doorway was taken from the Crusaders' church of St. John⁷³ at Acre, or Akka (captured by the Saracens in 1291) and was brought to Cairo as a trophy of victory. It would be rash to assume that one solitary relic of this sort could have influenced the architecture of the mamelukes very seriously, but it is one more very tangible link of evidence that Crusader influence was at this time permeating Egypt from Palestine.⁷⁴

Briggs, writing in 1924, identifies the portal as a victory trophy apparently on the basis of his intuition, since the portal does not have a prominent mention in the building inscriptions, nor is it described as a victory trophy by contemporary historians. Other scholars, both Western and Egyptian, have interpreted the portal, and the one-way relationship between crusader and Mamluk architecture, along similar lines.⁷⁵ Yet, both the portal and an-Nasir's building have a complex history. A careful examination of their relationship indicates the shifting, contingent nature of architectural symbols, as well as the pitfalls inherent in reconstructing symbolic meaning from a distance of nearly seven centuries. The implications of Sherif's convincing alternative reading of this example of so-called crusader influence in Mamluk architecture, which foregrounds the extent to which scholarship is shaped by implicit assumptions about East-West relationships, have not yet been acknowledged.⁷⁶

The construction of what eventually became the Madrasa of an-Nasir began in 1295 when one of an-Nasir's predecessors, Sultan al-Malik al-Adil Kitbugha al-Mansuri, purchased a number of small buildings adjacent to the complex of Qala'un and had them torn down to clear the site. He began the construction of a madrasa and a domed structure, which was probably intended for his mausoleum. Upon his abdication in 1295, the building had been completed up to the level of the inscription band on the exterior, and included the marble portal which had been brought from Acre. Work on the building stopped until 1298 when an-Nasir Muhammad, in his second period as sultan, purchased the unfinished structure from Kitbugha and ordered work to resume on the site. The building was completed in 1304 and began operation as a madrasa, or school, teaching the four different branches of Islamic jurisprudence. an-Nasir Muhammad's mother is buried in the mausoleum, along with two of his children, although he himself was buried in the mausoleum in his father Qala'un's complex, just to the south along the same street.⁷⁷

The marble portal was removed from the Church of St Andrew in 1291 on the orders of Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil, the Mamluk leader responsible for the final defeat of the crusaders at Acre, and along with other architectural supplies, transported back to Cairo. There it was appropriated by a government official, the amir Baidara, who was involved in the assassination of al-Ashraf Khalil in 1293, and was himself then killed in retaliation by the mamluks of Khalil.⁷⁸ The portal was apparently put in storage and ignored until 1295 when, according to Maqrizi, it was brought to the attention of Sultan Kitbugha al-Mansuri.⁷⁹ Kitbugha came to power in 1294, and within a few months had begun preparations for the construction of his madrasa and mausoleum on the site adjacent to the monumental madrasa, mausoleum and hospital of his former master al-Mansur Qala'un (1280–90).

The building entrance is the decorative focus of the facade, with the portal used as the centrepiece of the entrance composition. The white marble portal, with its three pairs of slender colonnettes, foliate capitals and pointed arch, is set into an elaborate framework. The portal arch is outlined by a band of marble stones in bluish-green and white, and set in a rectangular frame ornamented in the corners with two half circles with floral motifs in relief. Within the portal, the builder inserted a doorway with a lintel of joggled voussoirs in two colours, an inscription panel and masonry door jambs. A low bench was added on either side of the door, replacing the original base of the portal. Thus, the Gothic portal was treated in this composition as one element in the familiar Mamluk assemblage of a monumental entrance facade, along with coloured marble, a rectangular framing element, decorative masonry and inscription panels, all of which may be found on the monumental structures of this period and in the environs of this building.

Kitbugha's choice of location for his building, on the main street of the old Fatimid city and next to the monumental complex of his former master, the powerful sultan, Qala'un, seems to be a clear signal that he regarded himself as Qala'un's rightful successor.⁸⁰ His use of the portal, until then hidden away unused, is an equally adroit exploitation of architectural symbolism. On the one hand, it was a valuable and beautiful "found" object, which Kitbugha could appropriate at no cost and use to create the monumental decorative facade which was an essential component of a major architectural project in this period. Additionally, to those in the ruling elite and others who were well informed on such matters, the portal had a unique history, associated with the Mamluk victory in Acre.⁸¹ As Sherif writes, "The portal and the site were used as a symbolic link associating Kitbugha with the soldiers of Islam, in order to support his position at the head of the empire. The portal acted for Kitbugha, with his choice of the site next to Qala'un, as one more link to the great soldiers of Islam."⁸²

While Kitbugha al-Mansuri, the first patron associated with our building, may have regarded himself as Qala'un's rightful political heir, an-Nasir Muhammad was the actual son of Qala'un. Thus, it is not surprising that the unfinished building next to his father's complex would have seemed a good choice for an-Nasir's own family mausoleum. When he acquired the site in 1298, an-Nasir Muhammad was on the throne for the second time, but still only fourteen years old and under the tight control of powerful amirs. He had little money at his disposal (he actually traded property of his own in Damascus for the Cairo site) and a half-completed building in a prominent location would have been appropriate for the young sultan. The portal, acquired through the military exploits of an-Nasir's older brother, would have been an important reference to his illustrious and powerful family, as the madrasa which he founded

served to advertise his role as the provider of such services to Cairo's populace, an essential aspect of royal patronage in the Mamluk system. an-Nasir returned to the throne in 1309 and ruled for an additional 31 years. As a powerful sultan, he commissioned other, much grander architectural projects (including a new mausoleum), in keeping with his altered status. In the end he was not buried in his first, more modest mausoleum, or in the grander one, but in the tomb of his father, Qala'un.

When the marble portal from Acre reached Cairo, it was not paraded through the city with other booty or mentioned in the subsequent celebrations held to mark the end of the crusader presence in Palestine, but ended up in storage. Four years later, the portal was chosen by Kitbugha for his new building, as a symbolic link to the military might of his predecessors, al-Ashraf Khalil and his father, Qala'un. When an-Nasir Muhammad acquired the site, the portal, for those who knew its history, was a direct link to his powerful family. For both patrons, the portal was also important as a "ready-made," a beautiful and valuable means of creating a memorable entrance composition at little cost which fulfilled both practical and aesthetic concerns. Combined with familiar elements of Mamluk architectural ornamentation, the portal became the central piece of a monumental entrance typical of buildings of this period. Given the complex history of both the building and the portal, it is easy to understand how its role in the building could be oversimplified to be read merely as evidence of crusader influence in Mamluk architecture, or as a victory symbol. Yet such an oversimplification, by failing to locate an analysis of the portal in a detailed reading of the specific historic context of the building, misses both the intricate and shifting role of symbols in architecture.

Architecture: San Marco

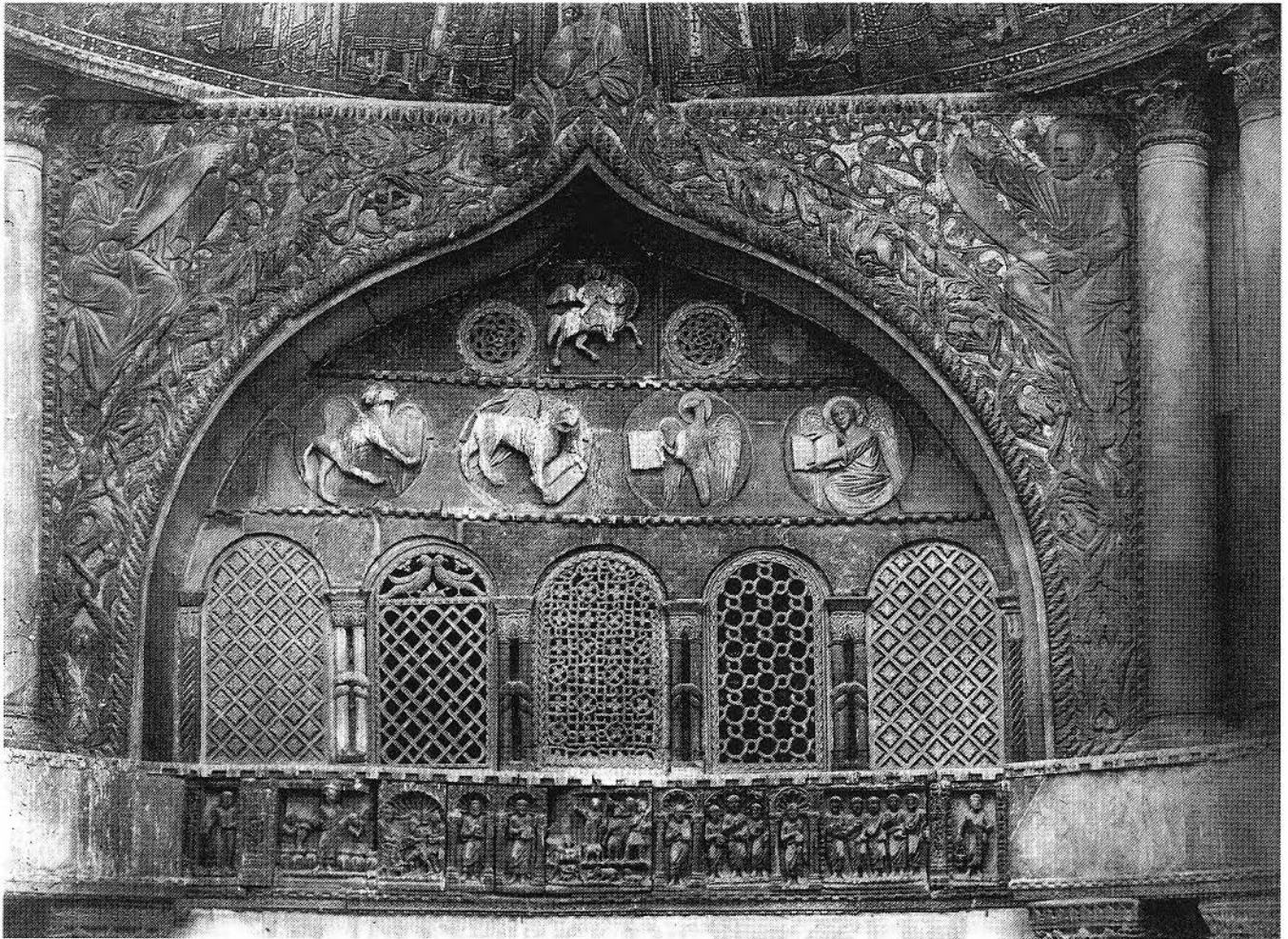
We can study the evidence of a parallel use of architectural spoils within an Italian context in the case of the state church of San Marco in Venice. As is well known, Venetians had played a key role in the Fourth Crusade, which was diverted from its original goal in the Holy Land to the Latin conquest and occupation of the capital of Byzantium.⁸³ The south and west facades of San Marco in particular were refashioned during the course of the thirteenth century, in part as a response to the conquest of Constantinople in 1204. The dominant trend in the art historical literature is to stress that the adornment of the facades of the church was conceived as a triumphant declaration of Venice's status as a great power in the Mediterranean, despite the fact there are also specific sculptural details that appear to have been inspired by Islamic art forms present in this ensemble. The complexities of the interrelationship between Western

European, Byzantine and Islamic models may be seen in the Porta Sant' Alipio on the west facade (fig. 9). Given the present state of research, which does not address these complexities, it is not clear how the Islamic-inspired material fits into the ideological programme of the facades.⁸⁴ Demus reminds us that at least some of the sculptural details may have been used merely to enrich the surface of the building, without any specific representational meaning, but it seems clear that we now need to assess the question anew, to consider what exactly we mean by the terms: "spoils," "decoration," "appropriation," and "assimilation," all of which are the usual analytical categories employed in relation to the sculpture.⁸⁵

For example, the Venetian facades incorporate numerous spoils, described by Demus as "victory trophies" carried off from Constantinople, and the south facade has a pair of piers standing before it known as the *pilastrì acritani*. Since the late fifteenth century it was believed that the pillars were *spolia* taken from the Genoese stronghold of the Castello San Saba at Acre, and erected here as a memorial to a Venetian victory of 1258.⁸⁶ We now know that this attribution is wrong, as the result of recent archeological excavations: they once formed part of the early sixth-century church of St Polyeuktos (the Sarachane) in Constantinople (Istanbul).⁸⁷ It seems, too, that some of the capitals on the west front of San Marco came from this building site. Apparently, the Byzantine church had already been abandoned by the thirteenth century, and crusaders stripped this building of its precious marble fittings.

Other crusading prizes from Constantinople, which would be "spoils" or "victory trophies," included: the two porphyry reliefs of the emperors, forming part of the group known as the Tetrarchs; at least one of a group of three Byzantine reliefs, which are now displayed in the spandrels of the arches of the west facade; and a porphyry head of an emperor located on the railing of the southwest corner of the loggia. The most spectacular prize of all was the bronze group of the four horses, set now above the central portal of the west facade. As Jacoff argues, the location of the horses as a crowning element of the west facade was intended: to underscore the association of the building, which stood for the greatness of Venice; to assimilate the Venetian success of 1204 to the triumphs of the ancient caesars; and to lend a claim to the legacy of Imperial Rome, which may also have appealed to rising ambitions in some Venetian circles.⁸⁸ The case of the horses and other sculptures demonstrates how thoroughly the religious and political aspects of the decorative programme of the facade and church precinct area are fused, but we would now ask: how would the inclusion of the Islamic-inspired sculptural detail fit this interpretation? Demus has described these works as being "Veneto-Saracenic," or "orientalizing" – although there is little doubt that labels such as these are ripe for re-evaluation.⁸⁹ Perhaps, as in the case of the

Figure 9. Sant'Alipio portal, west facade, San Marco, Venice, 1270s. (Photo: Alinari/Art Resource, NY).



Gothic portal used in the facade of an-Nasir Muhammad's Madrasa, the use of spoils and sculptural details in general at San Marco should be re-examined to consider the importance of factors such as the purely practical, the aesthetic value of objects ("mere decoration" versus the symbolic), or whether the object is seen as an appropriation, with ideological overtones, versus a (possibly more neutral) assimilation, of a particular cultural form.

Despite the challenges raised by intercultural research, we remain convinced of the potential of dialectical, collaborative scholarship. As our study of manuscript production suggests, each of the examples raises complex issues, such as our understanding of how the books were positioned in relation to their intended audiences, or how they invoke an experience of others/outside within a particular dominant culture; each manuscript group exhibits culturally-specific text-image relationships. The use of architectural spoils, on the other hand, appears to

involve a complex process of contact, communication and decision-making that is similarly shaped by specific historic events. In the course of this research, we were struck by the extent to which current scholarship is still shaped by implicit assumptions about East and West. This essay, however preliminary in its findings, demonstrated for us the difficult task of questioning these notions, and the amount of work remaining to be done in this domain. The resultant histories contribute to our understanding of an ongoing conversation, fragmentary, often discordant and discontinuous, but ultimately revealing of the interconnected nature of cultures around the Mediterranean.⁹⁰

Notes

- 1 Claire Farago, ed., *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450–1650* (New Haven, 1995), 2.
- 2 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Explanation and Culture: Marginalia,"

- reprinted in *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York, 1987), as cited in Farago, *Reframing the Renaissance*, xi.
- 3 See below, note 17.
- 4 Sandra Hindman, *Printing the Written Word* (Ithaca, 1991), 7; and Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?," *Books and Society in History*, ed. Kenneth Carpenter (New York, 1983), 3–26.
- 5 In this context, we hope to signal the importance of crossdisciplinary study, with art historians studying contemporary material in different geographic locations, as well as communication with scholars in other disciplines.
- 6 During the period of the crusader presence in Palestine, diplomatic treaties between the Islamic rulers of Egypt and Europeans were concluded on several occasions. For example, Baybars (1260–77) had trade treaties with James I of Aragon and Charles of Anjou, the ruler of Sicily. For histories of the Muslim Mediterranean during this period, see Robert Irwin, "Islam and the Crusades, 1096–1699," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades* (Oxford, 1995), 217–59; Peter M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades, The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986); and Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe* (London, 1975).
- 7 For the impact on painters' work, see Cathleen Hoeniger, "Cloth of Gold and Silver: Simone Martini's Techniques for Representing Luxury Textiles," *Gesta*, XXX, 2 (1991), 154–62, with relevant bibliography.
- 8 Louise Mackie, "Toward an Understanding of Mamluk Silks: National and International Consequences," *Mugarnas*, II (1984), 140.
- 9 There are numerous examples of Ayyubid (1170–1250) or Mamluk enamelled glass and other portable objects which indicate that they were made for Christian patrons, in either Egypt or Syria, or in lands controlled by the crusaders. See Avinoam Shalam, *Islam Christianized. Islamic Portable Objects in the Medieval Church Treasures of the Latin West* (Berlin, 1996). See also Sylvia Auld, "The Mamluks and the Venetians, Commercial Interchange: The Visual Evidence," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, CXXIII (1991), 84–102. For overviews of Mamluk art, see Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, "The Arts in Egypt and Syria under the Mamluks," in their *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250–1800* (New Haven, 1994), 97–114; Esin Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, D.C., 1981); and Oleg Grabar, ed., "The Art of the Mamluks," *Mugarnas*, II (1984).
- 10 See, for instance, Maria Grazia Chiappori, "Riflessi figurativi dei contatti Oriente-Occidente e dell'opera poliana nell'arte medievale italiana," in *Marco Polo: Venezia e l'Oriente*, ed. Alvise Zorzi (Milan, 1981), 281–88; and Anne Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 1996), for monumental imagery. We are grateful to the reviewer who pointed out the contributions made by Rebecca Corrie, as cited in Derbes, *Picturing the Passion*, 250. For studies that look specifically at text-image relations in Marco Polo's book, see in particular: Rudolf Wittkower, *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols* (London, 1977); Marcello Ciccuto, "Codici, testi miniati e artisti fra Gotico e Rinascimento," *Italianistica*, XV, 2–3 (1986), 339–56; *idem*, "Fra testo e immagine," *Italianistica*, XVIII, 1 (1989), 187–223; *idem*, "La Crociata Immaginata di Marco Polo," in *L'Immagine del Testo. Episodi di cultura figurativa nella letteratura italiana* (Rome, 1990), 41–62; Marino Zorzi, "Venezia e i paesi lungo la via della seta nelle raccolte della Biblioteca Marciana," in *Le Vie della Seta a Venezia*, Giovanni Curatola and Maria Teresa Cervin, eds (Rome, 1990), 57–78. The most recent work by John Lerner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New Haven, 1999), briefly examines the visual tradition for the manuscripts.
- 11 Joseph Delaville le Roulx, *France en Orient au XIV^e siècle* (Paris, 1885–86), 110, as quoted in Sylvia Schein, *Fideles Crucis, The Papacy, the West, and the Recovery of the Holy Land 1274–1314* (Oxford, 1991), 266. See also the negative comments by Aziz S. Atiya, *Crusade in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1938), 10, 127.
- 12 See, for example, Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades. A Short History* (New Haven and London, 1987), 208–09.
- 13 Maureen Purcell, *Papal Crusading Policy: The Chief Instruments of Papal Policy and Crusade to the Holy Land from the Final Loss of Jerusalem to the Fall of Acre 1244–1291*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, II (Leiden, 1975); Norman J. Housley, *Italian Crusades: The Papal-Angevin Alliance and the Crusades against Christian Lay Powers, 1254–1343* (Oxford, 1982); Schein, *Fideles Crucis*; Anthony Leopold, "Crusading Proposals of the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries," Ph.D. diss., Durham University, 1998.
- 14 Christopher J. Tyerman, "Marino Sanudo Torsello and the Lost Crusade: Lobbying in the Fourteenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, series V, 32 (1982), 57–73.
- 15 *Gesta Dei per Francos*, ed. Jacob Bongars (Hanover, 1611); reprinted as *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis*, with an introduction by Joshua Prawer (Toronto, 1972), v–xix, who provides a useful bibliography of Sanudo.
- 16 Tyerman, "Marino Sanudo," 59.
- 17 Important discussions of the manuscripts are found in Arturo Magnocavallo, "I codici del Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis," *Rendiconti del Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere*, XXXI, 1, ser. 2 (1898), 115–18; Fausta Gualdi, "Marin Sanudo Illustrato," *Commentari*, XX (1969), 162–98; Bernard Degenhart and Annegritt Schmitt, "Marino Sanudo und Paolino Veneto. Zwei Literaten des 14. Jahrhunderts in ihrer Wirkung auf Buchillustration und Kartographie in Venedig, Avignon und Neapel," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, XIV (1973), 3–137; *idem*, *Corpus der Italienischen Zeichnungen 1300–1500, Teil II. Venedig, Addenda zu Süd- und Mittelitalien*, 1 (Berlin, 1980), 3–47, with relevant bibliography; and more recently, Gaetano Curzi, "Allegoria dell'embargo e propaganda per la crociata nelle opere di Marin Sanudo il Vecchio," *Storia dell'arte*, LXXXIX (1997), 5–26, with bibliography to 1995.
- 18 Degenhart and Schmitt, *Corpus, Addenda*, 12–20.
- 19 Degenhart and Schmitt, *Corpus, Addenda*, 16–20; Tyerman, "Marino Sanudo," 65, notes the elevated political status of each of the recipients.
- 20 Tyerman, "Marino Sanudo," 67.
- 21 As in note 17 above.
- 22 Jonathan J.G. Alexander, "Art History, Literary History, and the

- Study of Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts," *Studies in Iconography*, XVIII (1997), 51–66, esp. 56.
- 23 Tyerman, "Marino Sanudo," 70.
- 24 Curzi, "Allegoria dell'embargo," 6–23.
- 25 Alison Stones, "Prolegomena to a Corpus of Vincent of Beauvais Illustrations," in *Vincent de Beauvais: intentions et réceptions d'une oeuvre encyclopédique au Moyen Age*, ed. Monique Paulmier-Foucart et al. (Montréal, 1990), 301–44, esp. 312–13.
- 26 As discussed by Suzanne Lewis, *Reading Images: Narrative Discourse and Reception in the Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge, 1995), 1–16.
- 27 Degenhart and Schmitt, *Corpus, Addenda*, 19.
- 28 These parts are subdivided into chapters: Book One has five parts (I=6; II=2; III=2; IV=7; V=3 chapters respectively); Book Two has 4 parts (I=4; II=10; III=4; IV=29 chapters respectively); and Book Three has 15 parts (I=14; II=4; III=8; IV=14; V=8; VI=24; VII=3; VIII=6; IX=8; X=9; XI=16; XII=22; XIII=11; XIV=12; XV=25 chapters respectively).
- 29 For a discussion of scribes who helped to shape the production of new books, see Francesca Flores d'Arcais, "L'organizzazione del lavoro negli <scriptoria> laici del primo Trecento a Bologna," in *La miniatura italiana in età romanica e gotica*, ed. G. Vailati Schoenberg-Waldenburg (Florence, 1979), 357–69, esp. 367–68; and Luisa Miglio, "Considerazioni ed ipotesi sul libro 'borghese' italiano del Trecento. (A proposito di un'edizione critica dello 'Specchio umano' di Domenico Lenzi)," *Scrittura e civiltà*, III (1979), 309–27.
- 30 As discussed by Bernard Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'occident médiéval* (Paris, 1980), 227–48, in relation to the development of the writing of history in the later Middle Ages.
- 31 Leopold, "Crusading Proposals," 113–44.
- 32 This is: Venice, Biblioteca Marciana MS Lat. Z.547 (=1924).
- 33 There is a second manuscript of the *Conditiones*, which is unillustrated: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 14621. It dates from 1314; Degenhart and Schmitt, "Marino Sanudo," 21.
- 34 For the role of marginalia in this period, see Lucy F. Sandler, "The Study of Marginal Imagery: Past, Present and Future," *Studies in Iconography*, XVIII (1997), 1–49.
- 35 Degenhart and Schmitt, *Corpus, Addenda*, 3, argue that it refers to the Sultan.
- 36 Degenhart and Schmitt, "Marino Sanudo and Paolino Veneto," 3–137.
- 37 As discussed by Curzi, "Allegoria dell'embargo," 9–11.
- 38 Leopold, "Crusading Proposals," 127.
- 39 London, British Library, Add. MS 27376, f. 13–14: "Et habere ... ad regnum vestrorum fidelium Armenorum quod in dentibus quattuor ferarum iacet. Ab una parte infra terram habet leonem scilicet Tartaros quibus Rex Armeniae reddit magnum tributum. Ab alia parte habet pardum videlicet soldanum qui quotidie dissipat Christianos et regnum. A tertia parte habet lupum scilicet turchos qui destruunt dominium et regnum. A quarta parte habet serpentem videlicet cursarios maris nostri qui quotidie rodunt ossa ipsorum christianorum de Armenia"
- 40 For Sanudo's concern with Armenia, see Leopold, "Crusading Proposals," 145–89.
- 41 As discussed by Leopold, "Crusading Proposals," 218.
- 42 Degenhart and Schmitt, *Corpus, Addenda*, 26–32.
- 43 For the maps, see Degenhart and Schmitt, "Marino Sanudo."
- 44 *Liber Secretorum*, ed. Praver, xvii.
- 45 For illustrations of these maps, see Degenhart and Schmitt, "Marino Sanudo;" and *idem*, *Corpus, Addenda*.
- 46 For this issue and its impact on Marino Sanudo's ideas, see Angeliki Laiou, "Marino Sanudo Torsello, Byzantium and the Turks: The Background to the Anti-Turkish League of 1332–1334," *Speculum*, XLV (1970), 374–92.
- 47 As discussed by Degenhart and Schmitt, "Marino Sanudo," 16, n. 17.
- 48 For an introduction to encounters between Islam and the West in the period immediately following ours, see Bernard Lewis, *Cultures in Conflict, Christians, Muslims and Jews in the Age of Discovery* (Oxford, 1995); his bibliography is particularly useful.
- 49 The Mamluks came to power in 1250 with the short-lived reign of Shajar ad-Dur, one of the very few women ever to hold power in her own name in the Islamic world. With their defeat of the Mongols at the decisive battle of Ayn Jalut in 1260 and their successful efforts to rid Palestine of the last remnants of the crusaders, the Mamluks gained a great deal of respect within the Islamic world and became the most important Islamic power in the Mediterranean. The Mamluks controlled Egypt, Palestine and Syria until their defeat in 1517 at the hands of the Ottomans. In the period under consideration here, there were thirteen Mamluk sultans, whose reigns lasted from a few months to many years. Major rulers in this period include Baybars (1260–77), Qala'un (1280–90) and an-Nasir Muhammad (1294, 1299–1309, 1309–40).
- 50 The following passage from the first sermon preached in the al-Aqsa Mosque in 1187 by Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-Zaki, following the reconquest of Jerusalem by Salah al-Din, gives a good idea of how Muslims regarded Jerusalem in this period: "Jerusalem is the residence of your father Abraham, the place of ascension of your prophet, the burial ground of the messengers, and the place of the descent of the revelations. It is in this land where men will be resurrected and it is in the Holy Land, to which God has referred in His clear book [the Qur'an]. It is the farthest place of worship, where the prophet prayed, and the place to which God sent His servant and messenger and the word which He caused to descend upon Mary and His spirit Jesus, whom He honoured with that mission and ennobled with the gift of prophecy without removing him from the rank he held as one of His creatures." Quoted in Hadia Dajani-Shakeel, "Some Medieval Accounts of Salah al-Din's Recovery of Jerusalem (Al-Quds)," in *Studia Palaestina: Studies in honour of Constantine K. Zurayk*, ed. Hisham Nashabe (Beirut, 1988), as cited on: www.fordham.edu/halsall/med/salahdin.html.
- 51 The exact meaning of the word *furusiyya* has been discussed by several authors. According to al-Sarraf, the term *furus* (*furusiyya* is an adjectival form of the noun *furus*) came into use in the eighth century, when it had two aspects: noble or courtly, and military. Courtly *furusiyya*, or *furusiyya al-nabila*, was concerned with chiv-

- alry and codes of behaviour. Military *furusiyya* included principles of riding, horsemanship, farriery, lance and sword techniques, archery, polo, the chase, and so on. By the Mamluk period, the two aspects of *furusiyya* seem to have come together, so that manuscripts typically included lessons in the use of specific weaponry and horsemanship, but also a general education in the arts of war and proper military conduct. Ibn Taghribirdi, a contemporary observer, describes the ideal horseman as follows: "one who handles his horse well in his charge and in his retreat and who knows what he needs in matters pertaining to his horse and his arms and the arrangement of all this in a manner that he may follow the rules known and established among the people of this art," as quoted in David Ayalon, "Notes on the *Furusiyya* exercises and games etc.," *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization, Scripta Hierosolymitana*, IX (Jerusalem, 1961), 31–62. See also Shihab al-Sarraf, "*Furusiyya* Literature of the Mamluk Period," in David Alexander, ed., *Furusiyya. The Horse in the Art of the Near East*, exh. cat. (Riyadh, 1996), 118–35.
- 52 The *furusiyya* manuscripts have been reasonably well studied, although there are no sources which provide a thorough discussion of both the text and the images with which the texts were often illustrated. The most extensive source on the subject of *furusiyya* generally, with an article, two catalogue entries and numerous illustrations devoted to the manuscripts, is the exhibition catalogue edited by Alexander, *Furusiyya*, which includes a complete bibliography. Other useful works include Atil, *Renaissance of Islam*; Duncan Haldane, *Mamluk Painting* (Warminster, 1978); David James, "Mamluke Painting at the Time of the 'Lusignan Crusade,' 1365–70: A Study of the Chester Beatty *Nihayat al-su'l wal'l-umniya* ... manuscript of 1366," *Humaniora Islamica*, II (1974), 73–87; Rex Smith, *Medieval Muslim Horsemanship: A Fourteenth Century Arabic Cavalry Manual* (London, 1979); and Geoffrey Tantom, "Muslim Warfare: A Study of a Medieval Muslim Treatise on the Art of War," in *Islamic Arms and Armour*, ed. Robert Elgood (London, 1979), 187–201.
 - 53 Irwin, "Islam and the Crusades," 241.
 - 54 Irwin, "Islam and the Crusades," 248.
 - 55 Cyprus, under foreign rule since 1191, had long plagued the Muslim side of the Mediterranean by serving as a base for both crusaders and pirates. Although Yalbugha's attempts to capture Cyprus were unsuccessful, the Mamluks did attack and capture the Cypriot king in 1426, forcing Cyprus to become a Mamluk tributary.
 - 56 Although the *furusiyya* genre dates from the eighth century, under the Abbasids, it experienced a new popularity during the Mamluk period.
 - 57 In attempting to understand better how the Mamluks constructed their enemies, Muslim or Christian, it will be essential to analyse such polemic, as opposed to dismissing it as being merely formulaic, which has been the case to date. Although it was not possible to carry out such analysis for this article, a further study of the *furusiyya* manuscripts would certainly require it.
 - 58 According to al-Sarraf. Tantom's count is similar, but James and Atil list a much smaller number, although they may only be referring to copies with illustrations. See Tantom, "Muslim Warfare;" Al-Sarraf, "*Furusiyya* Literature;" James, "Mamluke Painting;" and Atil, *Renaissance of Islam*.
 - 59 The Chester Beatty version of this text contains nineteen paintings which are close in style and subject to those of the British Library manuscript. The date of the Chester Beatty manuscript is a matter of debate, since the frontispiece has been painted over. James and Atil assume that the date in the colophon, January 1366, is correct, while David Alexander states that a later fifteenth-century date is the correct one, since the colophon could have been copied in its entirety from the prototype. This is a significant difference of opinion since James and Atil regard the Chester Beatty manuscript as the prototype for the later versions, including the British Library Add. MS 18866, an assessment which clearly depends on the earlier dating. One of the miniatures (fol. 149a) in the Chester Beatty copy has "the work of Ali" written on the saddle of the horse. Since very little information has come down to us about specific painters from the Mamluk period, this is an important observation, although one which so far stands unconnected to our knowledge of other painters or workshops.
 - 60 The Chester Beatty manuscript displays the same distribution of images, with all of them illustrating the use of the lance or the sword.
 - 61 The two double-page diagrams, as well as examples of other diagrams from the manuscript, are illustrated in Tantom, "Muslim Warfare."
 - 62 The Chester Beatty manuscript has a similar range of diagrams, apparently placed at the same places in the text. Dr Micklewright is very grateful to Dr Elaine Wright and her assistants at the Chester Beatty Library who kindly answered her numerous questions about the manuscript.
 - 63 For the sources which provide the best overviews of Mamluk painting, see Atil, *Renaissance of Islam*; Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Paris, 1962); and Haldane, *Mamluk Painting*.
 - 64 Quoted in Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 61. For a similar function in Western European book production, see Lewis, *Reading Images*, 1–16.
 - 65 See Eva Hoffman, "Islamic Art, § III, 4 (ii) (a): Painted Book Illustration: Subject Matter: Scientific and Technical Works," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, XVI (London, 1996), 297–300. Also, for a discussion of the role of illustration in Arabic books in an earlier period, see *idem*, "The Beginnings of the Illustrated Arabic Book: An Intersection Between Art and Scholarship," *Muqarnas*, XVII (2000), 37–54.
 - 66 In the Mamluk system, soldiers were recruited from outside of the empire, generally from the Turkic people of the Caucasus and elsewhere in Western Asia. They were thus not native speakers of Arabic, which they learned as young boys or teenagers. This fact is often used to explain the relative paucity of illustrated literary manuscripts in this period, when lavish commissions for illuminated manuscripts from the court were generally limited to Qur'ans. The large numbers of scientific manuscripts which date from this period would mostly have been commissioned by members of local Egyptian society. The *furusiyya* manuscripts are thus something of an anomaly, being written in Arabic but covering a subject of vital concern to the non-Arab military hierarchy of the empire,

- who shared the passion for horsemanship which was a part of Islamic society of this time.
- 67 In the Mamluk system, the large-scale architectural patronage of the ruling elite served to create essential links between the military rulers, usually of foreign origin, and the local, Egyptian population. By building architectural complexes which provided essential services free of charge to the residents of the cities (mosques, schools, hospitals and soup kitchens, for example) and created numerous jobs for the running of those institutions, the Mamluks ensured an adequate level of support for their regime among the tax-paying populace and the religious hierarchy.
- 68 Residents of the city had access to free medical care and education, through institutions constructed by the rulers and supported by charitable endowments. Public lavatories were included in mosque complexes, and public baths with hot and cold water were found in most neighborhoods, used by men and women at separate times of the week. For an excellent overview of the city of Cairo over a millenium of its history, see Janet Abu-Lughod, *Cairo 1001 Years of The City Victorious* (Princeton, 1971).
- 69 The tradition of using *spolia* in monumental architecture is not confined to Egypt, but dates back to the earliest examples of Islamic building, for example the Mosque of Damascus, completed in 706, and the Great Mosque of Cordoba, 785–988.
- 70 Lobna Sherif, "Layers of Meaning: An Interpretive Analysis of Three Early Mamluk Buildings," Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1988, 50.
- 71 Sherif, "Layers of Meaning," 50. The razing of crusader buildings in Palestine was no doubt also motivated to some extent by the motives commonly ascribed to military victors: a tactically prudent wish to prevent the easy return of the vanquished, and a more symbolic desire to eradicate any trace of their presence. However, it is our assertion here that in this case, these were not necessarily the most significant rationales for understanding how the building *spolia* were subsequently used by Muslim builders.
- 72 Although the association of the portal with the Church of St Andrew in Acre is often mentioned by historians of Islamic architecture and others, in her article, Lucy-Anne Hunt, "Churches of Old Cairo and Mosques of al-Qahira: A Case of Christian-Muslim Interchange," *Medieval Encounters*, II (1996), 43–66, asserts that there is no evidence to support this connection.
- 73 Briggs refers to the church from which the portal came as the Church of St John rather than St Andrew because a small Greek Orthodox church, the Church of St John, was built on the ruins of the earlier church in the early nineteenth century. The remains of the ruined Church of St Andrew were still standing in 1681 when they were drawn by a traveller, but had apparently vanished by the end of the eighteenth century. For a reproduction of the 1681 drawing, see Meron Benvenisti, *The Crusaders in the Holy Land* (London, 1970), 112.
- 74 Martin S. Briggs, *Muhammadian Architecture in Egypt and Palestine* (Oxford, 1924), 102–03. Briggs is not alone in seeing a crusader influence in much of Mamluk architecture. The desire to match up specific architectural features with a European or crusader source motivates much of the early scholarly assessment of Egyptian Islamic architecture, particularly in the work of Briggs and Keppel A.C. Creswell. In keeping with common assumptions about cultural relativity held by many western scholars, a Mamluk reliance on borrowed forms in their architecture is understood to be based on a lack of true creativity or an admiration for the borrowed forms, while a similar borrowing in European architectural tradition is much more likely to be constructed positively, attributed, for example, to "the West's curiosity and its passion for new experiences;" Vladimir Goss, writing in 1980, quoted in Sherif, "Layers of Meaning," 99.
- 75 See Sherif, "Layers of Meaning," 96–103.
- 76 See Sherif, "Layers of Meaning," 82–120, for a detailed investigation of the portal, its treatment by various scholars over the centuries, and an analysis of its symbolic function at different moments in the building's history.
- 77 The Madrasa of an-Nasir Muhammad is discussed in Doris Behrens Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo* (Leiden, 1989), 100–01; Keppel A.C. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1959), II, 234–39; Sherif, "Layers of Meaning," 82–120; and John Alden Williams, "Urbanization and Monument Construction in Mamluk Cairo," *Muqarnas*, II (1984), 33–46.
- 78 Hunt, "Churches of Old Cairo," 43, provides a slightly different account of the portal's early history in Cairo, based on Creswell.
- 79 Maqrizi, one of the foremost Mamluk historians, and a valuable source on matters associated with architecture, is quoted on this matter in Sherif, "Layers of Meaning," 89, n. 23.
- 80 As suggested by Williams, "Urbanization," 38.
- 81 Many aspects of the Mamluk world are well documented by the historians and travellers who described it, but an-Nasir's Madrasa and Mausoleum are described in detail by only two, Maqrizi and Nuwairi (Sherif, "Layers of Meaning," 96). Nuwairi provides a physical description of the building and a thorough account of its *waqfiyya* document, but does not mention the portal at all. Maqrizi (d. 1442), on the other hand, writes, "its doorway is one of the most marvelous things made by man, for it is of white marble of wonderful shape and of the highest quality of workmanship." (Creswell, *Muslim Architecture*, 234). He then goes on to describe its history, from being found in Acre, moved to Cairo, stored, and so on. Public reception of the portal at the time of the building's completion would no doubt have varied according to the degree to which viewers were acquainted with the details of the portal's origin. Maqrizi, of course, knew of its complex past, but concentrates on its physical beauty in his description rather than its symbolic value, which is not mentioned at all.
- 82 Sherif, "Layers of Meaning," 108.
- 83 For the conflict between Europe and Byzantium, see Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1988), 124–87.
- 84 As discussed most recently in Michael Jacoff, *The Horses of San Marco and the Quadriga of the Lord* (Princeton, 1993), 1–11; see also Otto Demus, *The Church of San Marco in Venice* (Washington, 1960), esp. 111–15, for the impact of the events of 1204.
- 85 Demus, *Church of San Marco*, 107–90, employs these terms to discuss the sculpture used across the facade.

- 86 See Demus, *Church of San Marco*, 29; and Jacoff, *Horses of San Marco*, 3.
- 87 See Friedrich W. Deichmann, "I pilastri acritani," *Rendiconti: Atti della Pontificia Accademia Roman di Archeologia*, 3rd ser., L (1977–78): 75–89. These, then, might be termed "spoils" rather than "victory trophies." For the excavation of this site, see R. Martin Harrison, *Excavations at Sarafane in Istanbul*, (Princeton and Washington, D.C., 1986); *idem*, *A Temple for Byzantium: The Discovery and Excavation of Anicia Juliana's Palace-Church in Istanbul* (Austin, 1989).
- 88 Jacoff, *Horses of San Marco*, 110.
- 89 For a brief discussion of the Islamic motives used at San Marco, see Demus, *Church of San Marco*, 115, 141, 147–48.
- 90 For an earlier discussion of an overarching concept that might facilitate this type of research, see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds (London, 1972–73); *idem*, *La Méditerranée. L'espace, l'histoire* (Paris, 1977).