knowledge and the veneration of the holy law.°" Physically, madrasas and mosques were often indistinguishable, and madrasas invariably included those architectural features commonly associated with private and public prayer. Indeed, when in the early sixteenth century a woman with the unusual name of Khadija bint al-Dhirham wa Nisf decided to convert her house into a "madrasa," she added to it those architectural features necessary for the holding of private worship and congregational prayers: a prayer-niche, a minaret, and a pulpit.°” She understood clearly what men and women of the post-Enlightenment world may easily forget: that education, and the very process of transmitting religious knowledge, was above all a way to worship God.

Sufi Convents as Centers of Education

In refurbishing her house for use as a madrasa, Khadija added one other architectural feature besides those necessary for public prayer: cells for the residence and private worship of Sufis. The particular forms of worship associated with Sufi mystics, like the communal prayers and public sermons of Friday gatherings, were increasingly common features of educational institutions over the Manuluk period, a trend reflected in the gradual breakdown of any meaningful distinction between the terms madrasa and khânqâh. The Ashrafiyya, which Ibn Iyâs had described as a madrasa "in a khânqâh, is only the most glaring instance of the frequent inability of late medieval writers positively to identify particular institutions as belonging to one category or the other.

This is not to say that, in all cases, institutions called madrasas and khânqâhs were identical. Especially in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, a khânqâh was primarily, if not exclusively, an institution providing accommodations, meals, and cash stipends to Sufi mystics to support their daily performance of ritual Sufi worship (budâr); prayers, the union chanting of portions of the Quran, and the recitation of mystical poems. The great khânqâh established by Salâdîn known as Sa’îd al-Su’âdâ, the large complex constructed by the order of Sultan al-Nâzîr Muhammad at Sîrīyâs north of Cairo, and that established in the heart of the city by al-Nâzîr’s rival Baybars al-Jâshnakîr, for example, all fall into this category: built before the first quarter of the fourteenth century, they included no organized and endowed classes among their devotional activities.° Nor were these institutions ever known as madrasas. Simi-

larly, early Manuluk madrasas such as those built by Sultans Baybars al-Bunduqdârî, al-Manṣûr Qâlûwîn, and Qâlûwîn’s son al-Nâzîr Mûhâmmâd were exclusively devoted to educational concerns, and made no provisions for Sufi exercises.

Such clear distinctions, of course, soon began to break down. Particular institutions, whether known as madrasas or khânqâhs, increasingly made provisions for the support of both formal instruction and Sufi worship.°” An early example was the institution founded by Mughrîlîyâ al-Jâmâli in the third decade of the fourteenth century. Clearly labeled a khânqâh in its deed of endowment, its principal beneficiaries were a shaykh and twenty Sufis who were also "students of the religious sciences," all of them specifically of the Hânîfî school of law.” Increasingly over the years of Manuluk rule, institutions were established in which Sufi and student not only functioned side by side, but were in fact one and the same. An institution established in the middle of the fifteenth century by Zayn al-Dîn al-Ustâdâr, made provisions for twenty Sufis and their shaykh, with the stipulation that the Sufis were to receive instruction in Shâﬁ’î jurisprudence.° The famous khânqâh of Jamal al-Dîn Yûsuf al-Ustâdâr, an early fifteenth-century establishment, provided a much greater array of courses—in jurisprudence according to all four of the Sunni rites, budîth, exegesis, and the variant Qura n readings—but again, almost all the students were required to be Sufis and the professor of Shâﬁ’î law was responsible also for leading the Sufi devotional exercises.°

One measure of the change may be gleaned from a comparison of a series of royal institutions constructed over the course of the Manuluk period. Sultan al-Nâzîr Mûhâmmâd, of course, in the early fourteenth century established two separate institutions, a madrasa in Bayn al-Qas rayn providing classes in all four rites of jurisprudence, and a khânqâh

° Ibn Iyâs, Baddîl al-zahhâr, 5:388.
° On these institutions and their activities, see Fernandes, The Khânqâh, 16–32; 54–58. Baybars al-Jâshnahîr did stipulate that an instructor in budîth be appointed to give classes in the qûdûb (the domed burial chamber) attached to his khânqâh, but there is no indication that this class necessarily involved any of the institution’s Sufis. Al-Mâzârafî, Khâtât, 2:417.
° A phenomenon first noticed by Muhammad Amîn, see his al-Ala‘îf, 236; cf. Fernandes, The Khânqâh, passim, although the meaning of his comment that “it is not clear whether (the institution founded by Sanjar al-Jâshnî) was a khânqâh-madrasa or a khânqâh and a madrasa grouped in the same complex” is not entirely clear.
° Wâqfîyat Mughîlîyâ al-Jâmâlî, Wâzîrat al-Ala‘îf, o.s. No. 1066, II, 378–85; cf. Fernandes, The Khânqâh, 34–35. Several other institutions dating to the early decades of the fourteenth century were clearly both madrasas and khânqâhs: for example, the Asphâhal-wiya, the Jâshnhîyâ, and the Mûhanndishnîyâ, each is listed by al-Mâzârafî both in that section of his Khâtât dealing with madrasas and that dealing with khânqâhs.
° Wâqfîyat Jamal al-Dîn Yûsuf al-Ustâdâr, Dirî al-Wâthâqi’un No. 100, II, 1–49; cf. Fernandes, The Khânqâh, 38–39. From the terms of the endowment, it would appear that, for an unexplained reason, the students of Qura nic exercises were not required to be Sufis.
for Sufis outside of Cairo in Sirýqâs. By contrast, al-Zâhir Barqûq established only one institution, the Zâhirîyya, in 1386, and provided therein for sixty Sufis in addition to a large number of students of jurisprudence, hadith, and the variant Quran readings. Slightly more than a generation later, the Ashrafîyya not only combined madrasa and khânqâh functions in the same institution, but, as we have seen, combined them in the same people: Sufis and students were identical, and the school’s Ḥanafî professor was also the shaykh of the Sufis. 30

But Sufism in the later Middle Ages was a diverse and polymorphic phenomenon. The formal institutional structure of khânqâhs could hardly contain the activity and energy of the growing numbers of men and women who identified themselves in some way as Sufis. Informal groups of Sufis and their shaykhz would often gather in institutions known as zâwiyas. The term “zâwiya” was especially flexible—it could mean, as we have seen, a particular corner of a large mosque, but it often referred to small mosques providing forums for the performance of popular Sufi worship and rituals. al-Maqâriz’s description of the zâwiyas of Cairo in the early fifteenth century makes it clear that the zâwiyas themselves by no means conformed to a single pattern: some were especially endowed, some were not; some were established by Mamluk sultans or amirs, some by the shaykhz who presided over them; some housed mostly Sufis from foreign lands, some attracted principally local Muslims. Consequently, we would do well not to insist that the zâwiya was a distinct type of institution, but rather to see it as one end of a continuous institutional spectrum that included khânqâhs, madrasas, and mosques. Some housed men revered by the masses for the outrageousness of their religious practices, but the shaykhz of others were pious, sober, and learned men. The term “shaykh” of course meant teacher as well as Sufi master, and the shaykhz of the zâwiyas listed by al-Maqâriz sometimes taught hadith, jurisprudence, and other subjects in those very institutions. A zâwiya might even provide stipends for students of the religious sciences, much as did more formal institutions such as madrasas and khânqâhs. Through institutions known as zâwiyas, education and the transmission of knowledge reached ever deeper into the Muslim population of Cairo. 31


31 On the zâwiya, see al-Maqâriz, Khidr, 2:430-38; Leclerc Fernandes, “Some Aspects of the Zâwiyâs in Egypt at the Eve of the Ottoman Conquest,” Annales Islamologiques 19 (1993), 9–17. The zâwiyas of Zayn al-Dîn âd Dâqqa provided stipends for four Shâ‘î students; to gather with the Sufi students [al-ṣâʿâra] each day in the qâbîl twîn [the covered hall, facing the direction of Mecca] of this khânqâh, in the middle of which is the prayer-niche, after morning prayers, and distribute pages from the holy book to them. They are to read from it, and to pray after their reading for the founder [of the khânqâh] and for Muslims [generally], and [then the shaykh] is to recite to them a lesson from the holy sciences . . .

The gradual blending of educational and Sufi activities in the same institutions reflected a deeper transformation, the social and intellectual assimilation of Sufis and Sufism into the mainstream of Muslim intellectual life. 32 Although the establishment of endowed institutions—khânqâhs—may have relieved the initial suspicion of some elements of the educated elite regarding the orthodoxy of Sufism and its adherents, the unease felt by men such as the strict Ḥanbalî jurist Ibn Taymiyya lingered well into the Mamluk period. Taj al-Dîn al-Subkî, himself a scholar and judge of the Shâ‘î rite, writing in the fourteenth century, still found reason to criticize those who “mock the Sufis and who do not believe in them.” 33 But the growing respectability of Sufism proved irresistible. Even Ibn Taymiyya, for all the scorn he poured onto certain excesses of mystical enthusiasm, was himself a member of a Sufi order. In the course of the fifteenth century, most institutions of higher learning established in Cairo made provisions for their students and teachers to perform Sufi rites as well as carry out their lessons in legal or traditional subjects.

But the rapprochement between madrasa and Sufi convent, or more precisely between their educational and devotional functions, may also have reflected a fundamental similarity between the mystical and intellectual approaches to religious texts. Consider, for example, the striking description of the class in Ḥanafî law in the endowment deed of the convent of Muḥammad al-Janâlî, and the way in which it was to blend naturally and almost imperceptibly into the devotional exercises that preceded it. The shaykh was


According to their preferences or means. Since there was no church responsible for supporting education or building the institutions in which it transpired, the Mamluk period saw, in the words of one scholar, a "broadening of the base of architectural patronage." Educational and religious institutions were established not by the state, but by individuals—Mamluks, merchants, bureaucrats, or scholars—who paid for their construction and created endowments to meet the salaries of their beneficiaries and provide for their maintenance.

The Mamluk elite, possessing as it did enormous resources of wealth and significant sources of income, undertook the construction and endowment of the lion's share of religious and educational institutions. At least twenty-two Mamluk-period institutions of higher learning owed their existence to the munificence of sultans or their families, including those older mosques restored and provided with lessons. The first Mamluk sultan, al-Mu'izz Aybak, established in al-Fustat a madrasa about which little is known. It was al-Zahir Baybars, however, who ascended the throne in 1260, who established a pattern emulated by later sultans by building an imposing madrasa in the main street of Cairo, Bayn al-Qasrayn. Because its deed of endowment has not survived we do not know the number of teachers, students, and other stipendiaries provided for in this institution; clearly, however, the Zahiriyah was a significant institution, with endowed courses in jurisprudence according to the Shafi'i and Hanafi rites, hadith, and the science of reciting the seven variant Quran readings (qir'at). Until the fall of Cairo to the Ottomans in 1517, most important Mamluk sultans—including al-Mansur Qalawun (d. 1290), his son al-Nasir Muhammed (d. 1340) and grandson al-Nasir al-Hasan (d. 1361), al-Zahir Barqiq (d. 1399), al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (d. 1421), and al-Ashraf Qansuh al-Chawri (d. 1516)—continued to build and endow major establishments of religious education.

In physical size and in the breadth of the activities they supported, institutions

The Organization of Schools of Higher Education

Instruction in the religious sciences and the transmission of knowledge was thus not limited to institutions known as madrasas, nor did it occur in isolation from other religious activities. Indeed, the institutional structure of higher education was extraordinarily diverse, its lack of uniformity brought on by several factors. In the first place, of course, it resulted from the complete absence of any overarching state or ecclesiastical authority responsible for shaping Islamic education, or indeed any aspect of Islamic religious culture. Norms might be established, in practice as in belief, by consensus within the Muslim community. After the death of the Prophet, however, Islamic law, custom, and doctrine grew and developed without either the practical advantages or potential liabilities of a central authority, personal or institutional, capable of imposing definitive rules to guide either the thoughts or practice of individual Muslims.

Secondly, and more instrumentally, the Islamic law of charitable endowments (waqf, pl. waqif) allowed individual benefactors to fashion schools

on other texts—works of exegesis, legal commentaries—but there, too, the oral element was, as we have seen, paramount: instruction and learning made the actual pronunciation of texts and their committal to memory. Lessons, not altogether unlike Sufi ritual, provided an opportunity to worship God, and so routinely began with prayers for the Prophet and others, and with group readings of portions of the Quran. In this the prescriptive deeds of endowment reflected carefully the guidelines established by Ibn Jam'a, who wrote a long treatise outlining the forms and processes of education. But increasingly, it was stipulated that the students and their teacher begin by chanting particular surat (chapters) of the Quran frequently associated with worship in the Sufi convents. Ibn Jam'a may have revealed more than he intended when he urged students, when preparing their teacher's prayer carpet, to fold back its left rear edge "in the manner of the Sufis."
these royal institutions generally dwarfed all others. Certainly al-Hasan’s was the largest, providing within its immense physical structure endowed professorships in a variety of religious and legal subjects, as well as scholarships for 506 students, not to mention support for a wide variety of greater and lesser religious functionaries. Yet it was not wholly atypical of these royal institutions. Sultan Lajin, for instance, established in the restored mosque of Ibn Tulun endowed professorships in the four rites of law, exegesis, hadith, and even medicine, and provided stipends for a total of 150 students. The madrasas or teaching mosques of al-Nasir Muhammad, al-Zahir Barquq, al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh, and al-Ashraf Barsbay all boasting endowed courses in Shafi’i, Hanafi, Malik, and Hanbali jurisprudence, to which Barquq’s and al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh’s added courses in hadith and the variant Quran readings, the latter offering a class in exegesis as well.

But sultans and their families by no means established all, or ever most of the schools built in Cairo between 1250 and 1517. From the origin of the Mamluk sultunate to its fall, more than sixty institutions of learning (or endowments providing for classes in previously established institutions) have been identified that owe their creation to Mamluk amirs, army officers, and government officials who were not themselves sultans, or to members of their immediate families. These amirial institutions included a number of important centers of religious learning, such as the Mankitiyya, Sharqitishiya, and Aqbughawiyya madrasas, the Shaykhaniyya khanaqah, and the mosque of Sudun min Zada. Another fifty or more were founded by non-Mamluk government bureaucrats and administrators, scholars, doctors, or merchants. Most of these institutions were smaller, less prestigious, and less well-endowed than those built by Mamluks, although there were exceptions, such as the great khanaqah of Janal al-Din al-Ustadar, one of the leading civilian bureaucrats of the early fifteenth century.

The schools established by such men (and several women) were multifaceted institutions: educational forums, centers of public worship, tombs for their founders, and often wealthy establishments providing housing, food, and cash stipends for large numbers of teachers and pupils. But although instruction may have been their principal function, teachers and students made up only a fraction, albeit a large one, of the community of individuals they employed. At the huge teaching mosque established by Sultan al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh in the early fifteenth century just inside Bāb Zuwayla, for example, teachers and students constituted just under half of the institution’s four hundred stipendiaries. Not all Cairene schools were so large, even those established by sultans, but they all provided employment for large numbers of men in educational, religious, administrative, and support positions.

In particular, it is important to recall that virtually every school was also a center of worship. Consequently, schools of higher education provided for a host of religious functionaries of varying degrees of importance, among them, very often, a preacher to deliver a sermon on Friday. Almost every institution included among its stipendiaries a prayer leader as well as a number of muezzins to summon the faithful to prayer. Frequently the schools’ founders felt strongly enough to require that the imām, although serving a diverse community, belong to a particular rite: occasionally the Shafi’i, as at the mosque of Ibn Tulun; more commonly the Hanafi, as at the madrasas of Sarghitish and Barquq and the mosque of Barsbay. An exceptionally large institution might require the services of several imams—the mosque of al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh employed four, one for each rite—while complexes that included domed chambers (qubbā) for the burial of the founder and his family often provided that space with a separate prayer leader. The presence of an imam and preachers helped to transform the school into a center of prayer and worship for the broader Muslim community, since Muslims other than those receiving stipends from the institution’s endowments came to the schools to pray and to hear the Friday sermon.

Indeed, great attention was paid to the spiritual as well as intellectual needs of an institution’s stipendiaries and others who frequented it. Founders provided for virtually every aspect of corporate religious life, in practice, for the public recitation of the Quran, hadith, and other pious works. The mosque of Barsbay in Bayn al-Qasrayn was by no means unusual in supporting fifteen Quran readers, organized into five groups (jauqātā) to read from the holy book after each of the five daily prayers, and to pray for Muhammad, and then for the founder and his family. Especially where the complex included a burial chamber for the interment of the founder and members of his family, the public recitation of the Quran took on a special significance, as at the madrasa of the amir Sarghitish. There, under the dome covering the burial spot of the madrasa’s founder, forty-eight men (muqta’īn) read continually from the Quran, day and night, in groups of four. Recitation of the Quran and communal acts of worship provided one of the links that bound schools to the urban community around them. At the khanaqah of Janal al-Din al-Ustadar, twelve Qur’āni shahāb were hired to read portions of the Quran from the window in the eastern wall overlooking the street outside so that the recitation might be heard by passersby, and “refresh whoever hears..."
it, and soften his heart.\(^{46}\) At the mosque of Sultan al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh, a total of fifty-seven readers were hired to recite passages from the Quran and pray for the Prophet, the sultan and his descendants, and for Muslims generally, twenty-four hours a day.

But institutions of the size and complexity of many of these schools required a considerable support staff as well. Some held jobs that directly supported educational and devotional pursuits. Any school that housed a library, for example, had to provide for a librarian (khāzīn al-kutub) to supervise the distribution of books and ensure that they were safely returned. Larger schools, such as the madrasa of Sultan al-Ghawri, housed extensive collections in books of "Quranic exegesis, hadith, jurisprudence, language, rhetoric, the roots of jurisprudence and religion, logic, and other [sciences] such as grammar and morphology and others.\(^{46}\) The duties of others, though of importance to the schools' religious functions, were more menial. Virtually all schools hired at least one, and often several ṣawqāqids, men in charge of cleaning, lighting, and extinguishing the lamps and candles in the building and on its minaret. A few late Mamluk schools in which Friday services were held also hired a muwakkhir to burn incense. An important figure in every school was the gatekeeper (būncalī), whose job it was to "prevent the entry of suspicious and iniquitous men.\(^{46}\) His duties may have included a general supervision over at least the younger students, since endowment deeds sometimes required the gatekeeper to be "chaste" (dīhā ‘if‘a), a requirement made explicit only in another stipulation except the primary school instructor (mu‘addīb).\(^ {47}\) Other employees undertook the supervision and maintenance of the institution's physical plant: a farrāsh to handle a variety of tasks, a kunāsī to sweep the floors, even a rashīdshī to sprinkle water on the street in front of the building to keep down the dust. An exceptionally large institution such as al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh’s might even provide employment for a doctor (tābib) and eye specialist (kahhāl), and for men to maintain the building itself (e.g., its marble and plumbing).

In a second category were those who administered the properties forming the endowment that supported the complex and who distributed its income. General supervision of the institution was of course in the hands of the general financial and administrative controller, the nāẓarī. Supporting his work, at least in those large institutions the supervision of whose properties required considerable attention, was an array of administrative officials. Consider, for example, the mosque of Sultan Barsbay.

\(^{46}\) See, for example, Waqfīyat al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh, Wiṣarat al-Aqṣafiyya s.s. No. 52, p. 184-88.

\(^{46}\) Amin, al-Aqṣafiyya, 117-18.

\(^{46}\) Waqfīyat al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh, Wiṣarat al-Aqṣafiyya s.s. No. 939. The two officers to be appointed to assist in the controllership were the khātīb al-ṣirr and the dwārīdar kāhīr, in the later Mamluk period one of the highest offices to which a Mamluk amir could aspire. On the office of the dwārīdar, see David Ayalon, "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army—111," Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 16 (1954), 62-63.

\(^{46}\) Waqfīyat al-Aṣraf Barsbay, Dir al-Walīha‘ūq No. 173, fol. 125b-131b. On the work of the controller and his assistants, see Amin, al-Aqṣafiyya, 309-20, and Fernández, The Khansah, 60-64.

the duration of his life, allowing him to keep a watchful eye on his most significant charitable endeavor. After his death, his children—more precisely, the "most rightly guided" of his male children and descendants—were to undertake the supervision of the school and its endowments in return for a monthly payment of 400 dirhams. Should they for any reason no longer be able or competent to hold the post, it became the joint responsibility of three men. The first was to be a powerful Mamluk official, whose participation was secured by a payment of 300 dirhams per month, although of that sum he was to pay "whatever [amount] he thinks proper" to a prominent and reputable Hanafi scholar to assist him, or substitute for him in his duties. Both the secretary of the chancery (kāthib al-sirr), a prominent government official and advisor to the sultan, often appointed from among the learned elite, and the institution's own Hanafi shaykh were to share in the controllership in association with the amir, in exchange for payments of one hundred dirhams and thirty dirhams respectively. The overriding concern in this case, as in others, seems to have been to associate with the administration of the school some combination of powerful men who might, in times of need, rise to the institution's defense, plus those who by virtue of their training and office might be relied upon to understand and respond to the institution's educational and religious needs.

The Range of Institutional Size and Academic Program

Those who founded institutions of higher education, such as the sultans Barquq and al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, wisely devoted careful attention to the appointment of men to supervise the administration and financial opera-

42 The amir to be chosen was to be in one of three powerful political positions: either the dāwūdīlār, or the hājišāb kāhir, the amir responsible for justice among the Mamluks, or the rā's nāṣṣāb al-'ammīrāl-jamādrīzāfī. It is difficult to know exactly which office this last phrase refers to, unless it is the rā's nāṣṣāb al-'ammīrāl-jamādrīzāfī mentioned by Aydun, "Studies—III," 66, 70. Presumably his responsibilities involved in some way the supervision of the royal Mamluks; certainly the position was one of authority and power.

43 Waqifāt al-Zahir Barquq, Dir al-Walda'īq No. 51, B. 19066. Should the participation of the amir become impossible, "for any legal reason," the kāthib al-sirr and the Hanafi shaykh were to hold the controllership themselves, in conjunction with one of the founder's 'āqilī (free) slaves, should any be available and suitable. A later document, however, the last in a series on the verso side of the scroll and which has no date, but immediately follows one dated 3 Shāhīz, a.h. 797, made two amendments to these terms. First, it rescinded the preliminary interest of the founder's children and descendants in the controllership, and vested it directly in the "committee of three." Second, it altered the list of Mamluk amirs from among whom the principal controller was to be drawn, adding to it the amrī ṣahīr (the supervisor of the royal stables) and the amrī māyiš (who guarded and arranged the sultan's audiences), a political office of increasing importance from the reign of Barquq. On the amrī ṣahīr and the amrī māyiš, see Aydun, "Studies—III," 59, 63, 69.

jurisprudence, the Arabic language, medicine, and even—it was a small class, with only six students—the science of determining the times of prayer. Its formal academic program was supplemented by a full range of religious and devotional activities. Individual imams led prayers in the main sanctuary, in the tomb chamber, and in the smaller mosques attached to each separate madrasa. A preacher delivered the Friday sermon to the assembled congregation from the mimbar (pulpit) at the back of the ghibl īwan. And no fewer than 120 Quran readers kept up a constant recitation of the Muslim holy book.

Impressive as it was, the madrasa of Sultan Hasan corresponded in its essentials to a group of large and prominent schools. These schools at the top of the educational pyramid of the Mamluk period typically provided endowed stipends for professors to lead courses in jurisprudence according to all four rites, stressing thereby the supremacy of the study of the holy law. The other religious sciences were not forgotten, however, and larger schools often boasted separate courses in subjects such as Quranic exegesis, hadith, and the variant Quran readings as well. While none were as large as that of Sultan Hasan, several institutions supported sizable populations of students: 145 at the madrasa of Sultan Barquq, and 175 at the mosques of al-Mu’ayyad Shāykh and (as renovated by Sultan Lājin) Ibn Tulun.67

Naturally, larger institutions required more substantial endowments to fund their diverse programs. A full analysis of the financial assets and economic impact of the endowed madrasas, teaching mosques, and khānqāhs of Mamluk Cairo lies beyond the scope of this work, but it may be useful to convey some sense of the size of their incomes and expenditures. Among larger schools, total monthly expenses ranged from 6,500 dinars at the madrasa of Sultan Barquq, established at the end of the fourteenth century, to 36,000 at the Hasaniyya, built and endowed several decades earlier.68 Consequently, most of these larger institutions were established by sultans, including: al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (reigned

67 In addition to the institutions mentioned in the text, the larger schools included the Nāṣirīyya of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the madrasa of al-Fakhru ’Abd al-Qādir, the mosque of al-Asīf Barqūṣ, and the khānqāhs of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ustādār. These schools are by no means the only examples that might be mentioned. They are meant rather as models, chosen in large part simply because their deeds of endowment survive, so that we possess considerably more detailed information on their internal constitutional arrangements than for other institutions.

68 These sums refer only to the monthly stipends paid to the endowment’s beneficiaries; they do not, therefore, take into account various daily, monthly, seasonal, and annual expenses (not always delineated precisely) for clothing, water, oil, candles, soap, bread, sweets, and sacrifices for the Islamic holidays provided to some or all of the arbāb al-ṣawāf (the institution’s employees and students), let alone the original costs of constructing the buildings.
1280–90), founder of an important madrasa-hospital complex on Ibn al-Qayyim in the heart of the city; al-Manṣūr Lājin (1257–99), who restored the mosque of Ibn Tulun; al-Nāṣir Muhammad (reigned intermittently between 1294 and 1340), whose madrasa dates to the early years of the fourteenth century; al-Mu’ayyad Shāykh (1412–21), who constructed a teaching mosque in 1420; and al-Ashraf Barsbay (1422–37), whose mosque in Ibn al-Qayyim was established in 1424. Occasionally, however, other individuals acquired the means necessary to endow a substantial institution, such as the Jamā’iyah khāgāh, built in the early fifteenth century by Janāl al-Dīn al-Ustādīr, a wealthy bureaucrat who, according to the chroniclers, grew so powerful that he lacked only the title of Sultan.87 Nonetheless, the importance of large institutions in the history of education in late medieval Cairo should not obscure the fact that many smaller schools also existed and flourished during the two and a half centuries of Mamluk rule. In many respects these schools resembled their larger cousins: both, for example, routinely included tombs for the burial of their founders and their descendents. Yet in other characteristics they differed from the schools we have, until now, been reviewing. The number and structure of the classes these institutions provided, and by extension their role in the broader system of education, sometimes suggest that, in certain cases, the quality of the instruction they supported was inferior to that in the larger schools. In an intermediary category fall a number of institutions that, although perhaps devoted to scholars of a particular rite, still provided prestigious teaching posts and supported a large number of students. Among them was the madrasa or mosque of the amīr Sīdīn min Zāda,88 located on a street leading from the square in front of the Ḥasanīyā to Bāb Zuwayla, the southern gate of the city of Cairo (see Figure 2).89 Architecturally, this institution, built around an open central courtyard (A) somewhat smaller than that at the Ḥasanīyā, and lacking the tall recessed iwans of the latter, was clearly a jāmi‘, a congregational mosque. A mihrāb, the prayer-niche indicating the direction of Mecca (B), was constructed in the southern wall, while in front of it was a roofed area (C), measuring approximately thirteen by twenty meters, in which the institution’s Ḥanafī and Shāfī‘i professors and their students were to hold their classes. A tomb (D) to the left of the entrance was built for the burial of the founder’s children. Across the street, another complex housed a primary school (maktub) for orphans and a public fountain (nābil), increasingly

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87 Al-Manṣūr, al-Sulṭān, 4:129.
88 The deed of endowment refers to the institution as a jāmi‘, but contemporary historians routinely called it a madrasa. See, for example, al-Sakhāwī, al-Daw‘, 1:150, 3:96, 4:233, 6:302, and Ibn Ilyas, Bawdu‘ al-daw‘, 2:47, 5:287.
89 Information concerning this mosque is taken from its deed of endowment, Wāqiyat Sīdīn min Zāda, Dīr al-Wāqiyā, No. 58. Little remains of the mosque today. In the late nineteenth century, the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l’Art Arabe recorded its plan (see Figure 2); see its report in Rapport de la deuxième commission. Exercice 1903, vol. 20. See also Essai Nouryang’s architectural reconstruction of the mosque, based largely on its waqfiyya, Madrasat jarkaniyya ‘alā namat al-masjid al-jāmi‘a: Madrasat al-āmar sīdīn min zāda bi-naq al-nābil (Cairo, 1965).
common appendages to schools of higher education in the Mamluk period. Unlike the Ḥasaniyā and some other madrasas, there is nothing in the deed of endowment to indicate that this school provided accommodations for its forty students of Ḥanafī and Shāfīʿī law, although a residence in the mosque building was set aside for housing one of the school’s two professors or its imām.

Like larger institutions such as the Ḥasaniyā, the mosque of Sūdīn min Zāda employed a full complement of religious functionaries—a preacher, imām, Quran and ḫāṣīḥ readers, a number of muezzins—but it clearly operated as an academic institution. Its two professors of jurisprudence and their assistants and students collectively received almost as much in monthly salaries as all the religious functionaries associated with the tomb and mosque, the primary-school teacher and his pupils, the service personnel, and the administrative staff combined. In this it resembled a number of other medium-sized academic institutions. Architecturally, the madrasa of the amir Sarghitnīsh resembled more closely the Ḥasaniyā, with its four recessed iwāns and accommodations for most of its students.60 The Sarghitnīshiyā, however, was devoted to students of only one Sunnī rite, supporting a professor of Ḥanafī jurisprudence and sixty pupils, as well as an instructor of ḫāṣīḥ and fifteen students of the Prophetic traditions. Despite their more limited focus, both the Sūdīn-i-iyā and Sarghitnīshiyā were important institutions, and over the last century and a half of Mamluk rule both of these schools included a number of prominent jurists and traditionists on their staffs.

Not all institutions, however, were even as large as the Sarghitnīshiyā or the mosque of Sūdīn min Zāda. We have already encountered the khānqāh of Mughalīyā al-Jamālī, established in 1329 and providing stipends for only twenty Ḥanafī students and their shaykh. Similarly, the Sufi students at the mosque61 of Zayn al-Dīn al-Ustadār (established in 1451) were limited in number to twenty.62 Other institutions were positively minute. The madrasa of Jawhar al-Lālā (Figure 3), established in 1430, occupies a prominent spot on the hill below the Citadel overlooking the madrasa of Sultan Ḥasan.63 Its central courtyard (A)—covered,


61 The institution’s waqfīya generally refers to it as a jāmiʿ; the terms khānqāh and madrasa, however, also appear.

62 Information on the endowment and constitution of these smaller schools is drawn primarily from a sample of those whose waqfīyas have survived: Waqfīyat Mughalīyā al-Jamālī, Wizārat al-Awqāf o.s. No. 1661; Waqfīyat Zayn al-Dīn al-Ustadār, Dir al-Wawīṣiq No. 110.

63 Information is drawn from the institution’s deed of endowment, Waqfīyat Jawhar al-

Figure 3. The madrasa of Jawhar al-Lālā, ground plan (from Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l’Art Arabe, Rapport de la deuxième commission. Exercice 1902, Pl. 7).

Unlike those at the Ḥasaniyā or the mosque of Sūdīn—measures barely twenty-five square meters. The principal qiblī iwan (B), with its mihrāb and pulpit, is even smaller. The complex included a tomb (C) for the
burial of the founder, as well as a public fountain (D) and, above it, a primary school (E), but there is no indication that permanent residences were provided for any of the madrasa's stipendiaries. Not surprisingly, the staff of this madrasa was also considerably reduced. The students enrolled in the school doubled as Sufis, but they numbered only fifteen. One man acted as both Sufi shaykh and professor in Hanafi law; if possible, he was also to serve as librarian. This school, like others, was also a mosque, and an imam was hired to lead daily prayers. Religious functionaries executed the other devotional tasks: three muezzins issued the call to prayer from the school's minaret; a hafiz (one who had memorized the Quran) recited selected sections of the holy book following noon prayers; and a traditionalist read particular collections of hadith during the months of Rajab, Shawwāl, and Dhu al-Ηadhīr. But the tiny burial chamber could not accommodate nearly as many Quran readers as the large domed tomb at the Ḥassaniyya, and so they were limited here to five separate troops of three readers each, to read continually from the Quran and to pray for the soul of the institution's founder.

From the level of the Jawhariyya, the number of religious and academic functionaries hired by the institutions, tapered to a handful. At a khânqāh established in the large cemetery outside Cairo (the Qarâ'ī) by Zayn al-Dīn Ṣi̇dqa, the Sufi students numbered only ten. Five Hanafis comprised the entire student body at the madrasa of Qalâmtāyj, and five Shâfi'is at the mosque of al-Shâfi'i Khârûn. As few as four Shâfi'i students were provided with stipends at a separate zāwiya established by al-Sa'īdī. In these smaller schools, restrictions on the endowments' income resulted in a corresponding reduction in the number of nonacademics hired to supplement the institutions' educational functions. Of the smaller schools whose endowment deeds survive, only the mosque of Zayn al-Dīn al-USTâdâr, established in the mid-twelfth century by a wealthy and powerful bureaucrat, provided for a full complement of religious, administrative, and service positions: an imam, preacher, and twelve muezzins; Quran readers, a reciter of hadith, and another to recite poems in praise of the Prophet; bawwâb, farrâš, waqîdîs, and a mubâkhkhîr; and several others to administer the endowment's properties. At smaller institutions, certain employees naturally undertook responsibilities that, at larger establishments, fell to a more specialized work force. Thus, for example, the bawwâb of the madrasa of Qalâmtâyj also cleaned the building, supervised the provision of water, and acted as kâtib al-ṣaḥāba—recording, that is, unexcused absences on the part of the five Hanafî students and the six Quran readers assigned to the tombs of Qalâmtâyj and his children. At the zāwiya of Zayn al-Dīn Ṣi̇dqa, the imām not only led those assembled for daily prayers, but first issued the call to prayer. Every day of the week except Friday, he taught Quran and writing to the orphans in the primary school attached to the zāwiya, and after both the morning and evening prayers, he led the zāwiya's four Shâfi'i students in reciting Quranic passages, chanting the words "there is no god but God," and praying for the soul of the zāwiya's founder. At the madrasa of Jawhâr al-Lâlî the imām was required, if possible, to supervise the library, and for his pains received a supplement of one hundred dirhams to his monthly salary. The madrasa of al-Sa'īdī Baybars hired a separate librarian, but also delegated to him the task of reciting, during the months of Rajab, Shâbâb, and Dhu al-Ηadhîr, the famous collection of hadith, the Saḥîḥ of al-Bukhârî.46

A Hierarchy of Educational Institutions

It should be clear, then, that organized legal and religious education flourished in a variety of settings in Mamlûk Cairo, and that if terms such as madrasa, khâniqâh, and jami' be themselves tell us increasingly little about the character of particular institutions, we can identify a wide range of schools differentiated by size and the number of classes they supported. It remains to be seen, however, whether these distinctions correspond to meaningful criteria by which we can map out a hierarchy of institutions of higher education. Not surprisingly, as we shall see, not all Mamlûk schools were created equal.

Studies of Caferie society in the later Middle Ages have recognized the dominance of a group of large and wealthy schools, founded primarily by sultans and wealthy amirs, corresponding to the larger institutions, and others like them, described above. It was these schools, one researcher suggested, that "trained the majority of those persons who became entrenched within the civilian elite." While the assertion is correct in stressing that these institutions loomed large in the minds of late medieval students and educators, it is also, in the strictest sense, problematic. By itself, it is virtually impossible to prove, since the biographical sources on which a study of medieval Islamic education must largely be based provide almost no details about the venue of a given scholar's

46 Waqfûqat Qalâmtâyj, Dîr al-Wâlî'î No. 68; Waqfûqat Zayn al-Din Si̇dqa, Dîr al-Wâlî'î No. 59; Waqfûqat Qalâmtâyj, Dîr al-Wâlî'î No. 68; and Waqfûqat al-Shâfi'i Khârûn, Dîr al-Wâlî'î No. 76. See his biographical sketch in al-Sukkârî, al-Dîrî, 12:233-34.

47 Petry, Civilization Elite, 180 and passim; emphasis added.
education. Moreover, of course, the institutions themselves did no real training: that was left to individual instructors. As we have seen, despite the proliferation of endowed institutions of learning, venue remained at best a secondary issue in the fundamentally personal system of late medieval Islamic education. But the larger schools, whether called madrasas, mosques, or khanqahs, blessed with larger endowments and the increased visibility of having a sultan or prominent amir as patron, clearly surpassed smaller and less wealthy schools, both in terms of the quality of their teaching talent and the guidelines by which their classes were conducted.

In the first place, founders of the larger and more prominent schools, while leaving teachers a relatively free hand in shaping the curriculum of individual classes, might structure the provisions of their endowments so as to ensure (or so they hoped) the excellence of those chosen as the schools’ professors. The deed establishing al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh’s school, for example, delineated in general but forceful terms the requisite qualifications of the institution’s academic staff. The Hanafi professor of law, for example, was to be

expert [lit. "one who knows by heart," ba‘id] in the writings of the legal scholars, interpretation of the ulama, the difference[s] in the schools of law, and the texts of the inam Abū Hanifa, may God be pleased with him, and of his companions who followed him, may God be pleased with them, knowledgeable too of all the books of the Hanafi [scholars] and of [how to] elucidate their issues and make clear their questions . . . competent to teach and issue legal opinions, equal to the best of the scholars and teachers devoted to instruction in holy knowledge.

Sensitive to the peculiar demands of particular subjects, that same document expressed a special concern that the institution’s professor of Qur’anic exegesis be expert and fluent in “the language of the Arabs” to ensure his capacity to understand and explain the archaic language of the Qur’an, and that the professor of hadith be “knowledgeable of the names of the men of the Prophetic tradition[s] and their transmitters, a grammarian, holder of a strong chain of authority [i.e., for the traditions that he recited].” Amir Şarglımish went further and stipulated that the

controller of the madrasa that bore his name was to appoint as professor “the Hanafi in Egypt [who is] most learned in the law.”

If the laws of competitive markets applied, the Şarglımishya may well have attracted the premier teaching talent in the country, since the 300 dirhams the Hanafi professor was paid was perhaps the highest monthly salary available to a teacher in Egypt at the time of the madrasa’s construction and endowment in the middle of the fourteenth century. Fulfilling the endowment’s stipulation may have soon become more difficult, since within a few years the madrasa of Sultan Hasan was offering its Hanafi professor an equivalent sum, and by the start of the next century other schools paid even more. But in general the larger institutions offered their students and especially teachers a level of remuneration beyond the reach of smaller, less well-endowed schools, and so probably retained a qualitative edge. Al-Sakkāwī recognized as much in his description of Barsbay’s madrasa which, he candidly noted, was in his day “the most splendid place [of instruction] in terms of [its] remuneration [of its stipendiaries].”

Against such wealth, smaller schools simply could not compete. Comprehensive comparisons are of course difficult, given three interrelated problems: stipends are set in different deeds of endowment using different currency units—silver dirhams (dirham muqra), copper dirhams (dirham fulus), half dirhams (nif); both currency values and prices fluctuated over time; that in most cases we cannot determine whether and by how much stipends were raised to compensate for inflation, or lowered to reflect a decline in the revenue of an endowment. But in cases where direct comparisons can be made—for example, between schools established within a few years of each other—the evidence suggests, not surprisingly, that the same institutions that limited the number of their students and other stipendiaries paid those they did support considerably less.

Consider three telling comparisons. At the khānqāh of Muḥarrar al-Jamālī, established in 1329, the Hanafi shaykh received a total of 100 silver dirhams per month, only half the salary of the four professors of law at the madrasa of al-Nāṣir Muhammad constructed only a few years

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68 While the medieval biographers did in fact provide comprehensive information on the institutions in which scholars held endowed teaching posts, their accounts are considerably scantier in relation to the places in which individuals received their education. Indeed, Petry’s own results reflect this discrepancy. Consider his figures 3 through 8, note the paucity of references on the background of the sources to “educational sites” in comparison to “occupational sites.”


70 By contrast, the Hanafi professor at the mosque of Ibn Tulun, endowed by Sultan Lājin at the end of the thirteenth century, received 300 dirhams per month, as did his counterpart at the madrasa of al-Nāṣir Muhammad. Instructors at smaller, less well-endowed institutions were paid considerably less.

71 On currencies and prices, see Élie du Tronchet, Histoire des prix et des salaires dans l’orient médiéval (Paris, 1909), 287–301, esp. 274–82.
before. The Shafi'i shaykh at the khanaqah of Zayn al-Din Shidqa (dating from the first years of the fifteenth century) might have received as much as 120 dinhams per month, depending upon his qualifications; yet the Hanafi and Shafi'i professors at the mosque of Siddim min' Zada, built and endowed in the same period (the deed dates from 1402), were paid 250 dinhams each. By the fifteenth century, copper dirhams had become the principal currency in circulation, and the Hanafi shaykh at the madrasa of Jawhar al-Lala received 500 copper dirhams (worth approximately 25 silver dirhams) for his services, according to the deed of endowment dated 1431. His colleague at the grand mosque of Sultan Barsbay, however, was from 1424 paid 3,000 copper dirhams, six times the salary paid to the shaykh of the smaller institution. Out of these isolated comparisons a pattern emerges suggesting a noticeable discrepancy between salaries in large and small institutions of learning, and which must have affected the ability of the smaller schools to attract the most prominent and highly respected teachers.

Salaries may have reinforced a hierarchy, but other provisions in the deeds of endowment may also have ensured that the quality of education would vary considerably from one school to another. For example, stipulations in the deeds of the larger schools regarding the academic classes demonstrate that they formed the schools' primary activity, and reflect the concern of the founders to guarantee a stable environment and quality instruction. In some cases, this involving ensuring that the rite to which the founder himself adhered was given pride of place. In madrasas of the so-called cruciform shape, in which four recessed iwans surrounded an open courtyard, the iwan oriented in the direction of Mecca was routinely reserved for the classes of the rite to which the founder wished to grant special honors. In most Madrassah schools, the rite of iwan favored was, at Sultan Barqiuq, the Hanafi, but a preference for others was not unheard of. At al-Naṣir Muhammed' madrasa, the Malikis were favored; at Jamāl al-Din al-Ustādār's, the Shafi'is. 56

54 As iwans and shaykhs of the khanaqah, which was the principal object of the original document in Zayn al-Din's waqfyya (dating from 1399 al-Awäl, the year, however, is obscure), he received 120 dirhams per month. A second document (dated 3 Muhammad, a.h. 903) provided 30 dirhams for a Shafi'i professor to give a daily class, presumably in the Shafi'i jurisprudence; the document further stipulates that the shaykh was to hold this post if he was competent to do so. He was also to receive another 30 dirhams provided by a third document (dated 5 Rabi' al-Awäl 807) in compensation for teaching a course in a separate iwan, established outside Bahr al-Zawya.

55 The founder of a school had several other means at his disposal by which he might favor one rite over another, and given the frequent adherence of the Mamluks to the Hanafi rite, it was usually Hanafi scholars and students who reaped the benefits. At the madrasa of Barqiuq and the mosques of Barsbay and al-Mu'ayyad Shahk, the Hanafi professor was also appointed Shafi'i shaykh, a position from which he exercised greater responsibility, and

More generally and more importantly, the founders of these larger and ultimately more prestigious institutions left precise instructions as to when, and for how long, class sessions should be held. Writers on educational matters, such as Burhān al-Din al-Zarnūjī, the author of a treatise on education that circulated widely in the Mamluk period, felt that the most suitable time for instruction was the period after dawn. 59 According to Baqī al-Din Muhammed Ibn Jami'a, the entire day was to be devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, but early morning was especially appropriate for organized study (al-bahth); the period before daybreak was better suited to memorization, the middle of the day to writing, and the nighttime to reading and group study (al-matāla' wa 'ul-mudākhara). 60 Most endowments therefore stipulated that teachers and students meet for their classes between sunrise and noon. 61 The early morning must have been filled with the sound of students reciting and teachers correcting their lessons, especially at those institutions that offered multiple classes, such as the khanaqah of Janāl al-Din al-Ustādār where the professors of all four rites were to hold their classes at "any time between the rising of the sun and the call to noon prayers." 62 But whenever they were held, sufficient time was allocated to them. Thus, at the madrasah of Sultan Barqiuq, while the class in Hanafi jurisprudence met for three and a half hours after sunrise, those of the Shafi'i, Malikī, and Hanbali professors met for an equivalent time between noon and the afternoon prayers. 63 At most of these schools, classes were held at least five times in which he earned considerably more: at the mosque of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, for example, he received 500 dinhams mjf compared to 150 for the Shafi'i professor, and 100 each for those of Malikī and Hanbali law.

Burhān al-Din al-Zarnūjī, Tārist al-matāla'ā, tarīq al-'utūlām (Cairo, 1977), 47, trans. G. E. von Grunebaum and Theokora M. Abol, Instruction of the Student, the Method of Learning (New York, 1947), 58; al-Zarnūjī added this to the period between iwan and the evening prayers (al-'uhā).

Baqī al-Din Muhammed Ibn Jami'a, Tadhkira al-atmi' wa'l-mata'ul al-dīn wa'l-matāla' al-dīn (Hyderabad, a.h. 1353), 72-73.

59 For example, Waqīfāt al-Musrīr Lāţīn, Dir al-Wathiqq No. 17, II, 33-49, where these hours are specified for the four classes in jurisprudence, the classes in hadith and exegesis were similarly assigned to "the start of the day" (nasr al-nawā'id). See also: Waqīfāt al-Musrīr Lāţīn, Dir al-Wathiqq o.s. No. 3185, p. 27, and Abd al-Latif Bihārī "Ahl 'Nasr al-nawā'id," pt. 1, 145, where the class in Hanafi law met from sunrise to noon, while the appointed hours for the class in hadith were between noon and afternoon prayers. At the Mu'ayyad mosque, the precise times of the classes were left to the discretion of the controller; morning seems to have been the most likely hour, however, since the Sufi exercises, which all were required to attend, were to take place after afternoon prayers.


Waqīfāt Jamāl al-Din al-Ustādār, Dir al-Wathiqq No. 106, II, 54-55f, here the class in exegesis met at a different time, from noon prayers until the call to afternoon prayers.

Waqīfāt al-Zihār Bārīq, Dir al-Wathiqq No. 51. No particular times were set aside.
per week, with Tuesdays and Fridays as holidays, although occasionally students were excused from formal instruction on Mondays as well. By contrast, formal stipulations in smaller schools' deeds of endowment often allotted considerably less time to organized study than did those of larger institutions. At the mosque of al-Shibili Kāfir, for example, the Shāfiʿi students gathered with their shaikh on Sundays and Wednesdays only. To be sure, it was not always the case that students at smaller and less prestigious schools received an abbreviated education, at least in terms of formal instruction. The endowment deed for the madrasa of Qalāmīyā stipulated that the institution's five Ḥanafi students were to gather with their shaikh "on those days on which instruction customarily takes place"—which, as we have seen, may have included every day except Tuesday and Friday. But the usual pattern was for smaller, less well-endowed schools to make less stringent demands on their students. At the madrasa of Jawhar al-Lālā they met on Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays. The Shāfiʿi professor and his students gathered at the zāwiya of Ṣayn al-Dīn Ṣūdqa on four days of the week, but for only "thirty minutes of a sandglass." Instruction, and the hours of reading and memorization that students required to prepare for their classes, may have been taken more seriously at the larger schools. Consider, for example, the somewhat idiosyncratic stipulation at the madrasa of Barqūq and the Jamāliyya khānqāh that none of the institution's stipendaries be appointed from among the shuʿābīs (sing., shuʿābīs), the notaries who sat in shops (al-bawānī) transacting minor legal affairs. Employment as a shāhid was one means by which an advanced but impercipient student might finance his continuing education. Muhammad b. Ḍaʿī b. Muhammad al-Qūyāṭi al-Shāfiʿi (d. 1446), for example, who eventually held prestigious and well-paid teaching posts in the Zāhirīyya (Barqūq) and Ashrafīyya (Barsbāy) madrasas, worked as a shāhid in the mosque of al-Sāliḥ outside Bāb Zuwayla before his appointment as a paid student in the Muʿayyad mosque. Such emolument, however, might also distract a student from his studies, and was consequently frowned upon by Islamic theorists of education. It was best to pursue one's studies without a break, and to submit only to the most urgent necessities: eating, drinking, sleep, severe pain, short rests, and "the discharge of conjugal duties." Thus, again, the endowment deeds bowed to the advice of the ulama and insisted that a shāhid give up his outside employment before being appointed to a position in a school, so that, as one document put it, external obligations would not encroach on the time to be devoted to study and Sufi exercises.

By contrast, the increased extracurricular demands imposed on students at the smaller schools must have diminished, if not the total number of hours spent in class, then the amount of time spent in private study, and consequently the effectiveness of formal instruction. To a certain extent, this was true at any institution that combined Sufi devotional exercises with educational functions, even at the mosque of Sultān Barsbāy, where the Sufi students held their academic classes in the morning and their Sufi worship in the late afternoon (baʿd ṣalāt al-ʿasr), and reflected simply the changing norms of piety that saw Sufism and academic instruction as complementary activities. The demands on a student's time could increase, however. The day entirely devoted to study, as envisioned by Ibn Jamāʿa, must have seemed a distant ideal to the Sufi students at the small khānqāh of Ṣayn al-Dīn Ṣūdqa. The ten of them received instruction in Shāfiʿi jurisprudence "every day of the week except Fridays" and the usual holidays, but the deed of endowment also saddled them with a variety of nonacademic responsibilities: one was to be the servant (khādīm) responsible for the prayer carpets; another doubled as instructor in the institution's primary school; others were to read and pray in the attached tomb and to act as muezzin and gatekeeper; still others held administrative positions.

...for that institution's classes in hadith, the variant Quran readings, and exegesis, although they were to be equivalent to the time between noon and the afternoon prayers.

...Classes were held five days per week at the khānqāh of Jamāʿ al-Dīn al-Uṣūlī and at the madrasa of Barqūq, and only four days at the mosque of Sīdīn and the madrasa of Ṣūgītīnīshī.

...Waṣūfīyat Qalāmīyā, Dīr al-Wathāʾiq No. 68, I, 343

...Waṣūfīyat al-Shibili Kāfir, Dīr al-Wathāʾiq No. 76, I, 75-77; Waṣūfīyat Jawhar al-Lālā, Dīr al-Wathāʾiq No. 98, I, 382-95; Waṣūfīyat Ṣayn al-Dīn Ṣūdqa, Dīr al-Wathāʾiq No. 59, the third document on the scroll (dated 25 Bāḥr al-Awwal, A.H. 807), II, 121-25, where the class was stipulated to last majāzīs khādīmūn durūs ṣalāhīn.


...Ibn Taḥṣīr Bīnī, al-Nujūm al-ṣalāma, 15:513; cf. al-Sakhāwī, al-Dāwaʿ, 8:213.
More importantly, the capacity of larger schools of higher religious and legal education to support endowed courses in separate subjects—the jurisprudence of a particular rite or of several rites, Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, or the variant Quran readings—provided a framework that encouraged, if it did not absolutely guarantee, a serious attention to the subject at hand. The science of jurisprudence remained the jewel in the crown of the madrasas and other religious schools—subjects such as exegesis, hadith, and grammar seem often to have held a secondary place, or to have played a supportive role. One measure of the prominence given to law may be seen in the range of salaries at those institutions hiring instructors in the different subjects. Frequently teachers of jurisprudence were paid as much as two times the salary of the teachers of hadith, as at the madrasas of Barqiq, where the four professors of law received 300 dirhams to 150 for the professor of hadith, and 100 for the professor of the variant Quran readings. At that same school, a special provision in the deed of endowment gave preference to students of the class in the variant Quran readings to advance to the class in jurisprudence according to their rite when they had completed their Quranic studies, as to emphasize both the distinct nature of the subjects and the more advanced character of the study of fiqh (jurisprudence). At the mosque of Ibn Tulun, Sultan Lqim's endowment deed provided, in addition to four professors of jurisprudence and one each of exegesis and hadith with between twenty and thirty students each, instructors in the Quran, its variant readings, and Arabic grammar, to work with students individually or in groups, clearly as an adjunct to their studies in the other subjects. But in many schools, the choice of subject for any particular class, let alone the text, was left to the discretion of the professor, even for those ostensibly devoted to the study of jurisprudence. Indeed, with regard to the internal arrangements of each particular class (as opposed to the formal guidelines under which schools were administered), the most striking aspect of the endowment deeds is their flexibility. Taj al-Din al-Suhki complained about professors who strayed in their lectures from the subjects stipulated in the deeds of endowment for the schools in which they taught, professors who, for example, held endowed teaching positions in jurisprudence according to one of the four rites but gave classes in Qur'anic exegesis or hadith or grammar or the foundations of law or some other subject because of their lack of comprehension of jurisprudence.

Teachers should teach the subject stipulated by the deed, he opined; otherwise they are "eaters of forbidden things" (akil al-haram). In fact, however, the deeds of endowment themselves left a good deal of latitude to the schools' professors. Often they left even the choice of subject matter to the teacher, even at the madrasa of Barqiq where, for example, the Hanafi professor was to teach "whatever he chooses from the jurisprudence of his rite and its foundations and Qur'anic exegesis and grammar and the foundations of religion [ushul al-din] and other subjects." But the "broadening of the base of architectural patronage"—the rush to construct schools by members of the military and political elites less wealthy than the sultans and the most powerful amirs—resulted in a bifurcation among institutions of learning that largely corresponded to distinctions of size and level of salary, but that was even more fundamental. While the larger and better-endowed schools attracted teaching staffs and students of a decidedly elite, cosmopolitan, international character, the comparative poverty of the smaller schools' endowments effectively prohibited them from restricting, even in theory, the choice of their instructors to "the most learned" ulama. While it is, of course, impossible to judge with absolute certainty the quality of classes from the guidelines set by the deeds of endowment, their terms make it more difficult to identify these smaller schools as institutions primarily devoted to serious study.

Consider, for example, the following. We noted a tendency even in some of the larger and better-endowed institutions, such as the madrasa of Barqiq, to leave the choice of subject for individual classes to the discretion of the professor. In the smaller schools, the financial considerations that made it impossible to hire separate teachers of jurisprudence, hadith, and Qur'anic exegesis only exacerbated the tendency. At the khānqāh of Mughaltā'ī al-Janālī, the Hanafi shaykh delivered lectures

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63 Al-Suhki, Mus'il al-al'am, 155.
65 Wargifat al-Zahir Barqiq, Dār al-Wathib'ī, No. 17, II, 319-22. The man hired to teach the Quran (tajrīs kāhin allāh 'alā 'aṡā) is "for whoever desires it [i.e., instruction];" and the instructor in the variant Quran readings and grammar is "to sit from the start of the day so that students may study with him the seven [variant Quran] readings, singly or as a group, and grammar." The endowment did not provide stipends for students in these subjects.
generally "from the sciences and hadith." The professor of the zawiyah of Zayn al-Din Shiqa instructed "from books of jurisprudence" according to the Shafi'i rite and from "other subjects of the legal sciences." Stipulations at the mosque of Zayn al-Din al-Ustadār were hardly more explicit; students were to read to the professor from books of jurisprudence, its foundations, Arabic morphology (taṣwīf), "and other subjects." This dilution in the structural framework of education may well have been an unrecognized consequence of the blending of an increasingly popular Sufism and organized higher education, a point discussed above. This is not to posit any intrinsic antithesis between the mystical nature of Sufi activities and the disciplined study of the Islamic sciences; as we have seen, several schools that were known as khānqāhs, or that combined Sufi and educational functions, were among the most prestigious and rigorous academic institutions of late Mamluk Cairo. Rather, it follows from the freedom allowed to Mamluks and others to construct and endow institutions—whether we identify them as madrasas, khānqāhs, or mosques—and to organize their activities in an idiosyncratic fashion. This it emerges from the deeds of endowment of several of these smaller institutions that the principal focus was on the Sufi exercises: a class in jurisprudence or another subject may have been added as an afterthought. At the khānqāh of Zayn al-Din Shiqa, for example, the original deed of endowment made provisions only for ten Sufis and their shaykh, whose duties included organized prayer for the founder, but not systematic instruction. Stipulations regarding a course in jurisprudence "and other subjects" were provided only in a later document, appended to the initial deed, although the later document did stipulate that the shaykh was also to function as the khānqāh’s professor, if he were capable of doing so.

Thus, the mixing of Sufism and higher education did not fuse the mystical and rational aspects of Islamic religion into a homogeneous, undifferentiated mass, at least as far as education is concerned. Mixed institutions such as the khānqāh of Janāl al-Din al-Uṣṭādār or the Mu’ayyadī mosque, where Sufis and students were identical, may well have maintained academic standards. On the other hand, a madrasa such as that of Jawhar al-

Lālà, where the Sufis’ principal duty consisted of reading the Quran and praying "for the Prophet, may God bless and protect him, and for his honor the [madrasa’s] founder and for his honorable brother al-Ṣafawī Jawhar al-Khāzīnādār, and for all the Muslims," could hardly have made stringent intellectual demands of them in their tri-weekly class in Hanafi jurisprudence.

But the wide disparity in the size, character, and focus of educational institutions, reflecting a broad spectrum within the world of organized education, should not be read simply as the cause or consequence of some ominous decline in academic standards; it had an important positive role to play. Instruction, worship, and Sufi devotional exercises were nonexclusive elements in a continuum, the relative weight given to each, as stipulated by the founders of the various institutions, helped to shape the nature of the comprehensive religious experience of those who lived or studied in them. If the base of architectural patronage expanded, so too did the number of those Muslims who could participate actively and in some sustained fashion in the educational process and the transmission of knowledge. The spread throughout the city of schools of varying size, wealth, and character must have served to expand the social horizons of higher education and draw into its world both individuals and groups of people who might otherwise have remained more marginal to it. Since, however, the fundamental educational factor was a personal relationship rather than a building or endowment, even this expanded circle of schools could not contain the full range of those committed, in one way or another, to knowledge and its transmission.

Teaching Unsupported by Institutional Endowments

The many and various schools established or endowed during the Mamluk period contributed significantly to the transmission of religious knowledge by providing income and, often, accommodations and meals for both students and teachers. But as we have seen, education in late medieval Cairo rested on an informal system of personal relationships rather than institutional reputation and affiliation. Not surprisingly, therefore, many sheikhs taught and many pupils studied in classes and venues outside the network of endowed schools. The network of institutions established in Cairo over the course of the later Middle Ages, varied as they were, still did not delineate the boundaries of higher religious
education. Here again, developments paralleled those in the contemporary Jewish communities of the Near East since Jewish scholars, too, frequently taught in homes, stores, or synagogues—scholars with no official status but who were nonetheless learned. 183

Before the rapid spread in the eleventh and twelfth centuries of institutions known as madrasas, endowed schools providing stipends and living accommodations for teachers and students, instruction in the Islamic religious sciences transpired on a more ad hoc basis. In some circumstances individuals were appointed to "official" teaching posts in important mosques, or received from Islamic rulers and wealthy notables some form of financial support. In general, however, teaching circles gathered less formally, with instructors routinely collecting fees from those students who attended their classes. 184 It has been recognized that this informal system survived the establishment and spread of madrasas providing structured forums for education, but the attention demanded by the prevalence of endowed institutions of learning in medieval Syria and Egypt has perhaps obscured the degree to which the Islamic teaching system remained informal and unaffected by its institutional framework down to the end of the Middle Ages. 185

Clearly, informal teaching circles built around individual teachers survived the growing popularity of madrasas and other institutions devoted by the terms of their endowment to higher Islamic education. Al-Maqārizī tells us that until the great plague of 1348 the ancient Mosque of 'Amr in al-Fustāṭ hosted more than forty teaching circles (ḥalqa) for the study of the religious sciences (iqāmat al-ḥilāl). 186 Some of these were certainly endowed, thereby providing stipends for teachers and students in the manner of the traditional madrasa, but very likely many more were private, in which teachers taught gratis or in exchange for payments from their students. At al-Azhar, too, several teaching circles were established and endowed by wealthy amirs and others. But Al-Maqārizī described that mosque as a thriving center for the educational activities of more than seven hundred men, for "reading the Qurān and studying it and teaching it, for the study of the different religious sciences, jurisprudence, hadith, Qurānic exegesis, and grammar," 187 much of which must have been or

187 Al-Maqārizī, Khitāb, 2:256.
188 Al-Maqārizī, Khitāb, 2:276.
189 Ibn al-Ḥājī, Muhādh al-yāfi xukūlatan ma'd al-ṣulṭāt (Cairo, 1929), reprinted Beirut, 1981), 1:85-86. At this early date, Ibn al-Ḥāji was still able to conceive of a difference between a madrasa and a mosque. He preferred the latter for several reasons, most notably because the common people, to benefit whom is the principal purpose of Islamic education, were more likely to
a preference for instruction in mosques, and a positive distrust of education in private homes, "unless the scholar permits the entrance to his house of all who come." But his comment confirms that much instruction did transpire informally, in private teaching circles in homes or in the more public forum of a well-attended mosque. Moreover, his concern was that education in the law and other subjects be open to all; he made no distinction between the character or focus of classes given in a madrasa, mosque, or private home.\footnote{[110]}

It was a simple fact that the supply of individuals licensed to teach or to transmit the basic books on which learning rested exceeded the number of paying teaching posts available. The geographical dictionaries of the period are littered with references to men (and, under certain circumstances, women) who taught, but very often we are told nothing about teaching appointments. Some of the sources, such as Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī’s compilation of the biographies of famous personages who died during the eighth hījri century (corresponding roughly to the fourteenth century c.e.), al-Durr al-kāmina fi a‘yān al-niṣṣa al-thāmahīna (The Secret Pearls concerning the Notables of the Eighth Century), contain accounts that are comparatively cursory; it is impossible, therefore, to conclude from the silence of any particular biographical entry that the scholar in question never held an endowed teaching post. Other Mamluk-period historians, however, in particular al-Sakhāwī in his immense biographical dictionary al-Duwā‘ al-lāmi‘ li-‘insh al-qarn al-tāsi‘ (The Brilliant Light concerning the People of the Ninth Century), were scrupulous in including all available information regarding appointments to paying instructional posts. When, therefore, we are told that a man such as Shihāb al-Dīn Ahmad b. Ḥusayn al-Qarāfī (d. 1407) taught but were told nothing regarding any particular academic appointments, we are tempted to conclude that his teaching focused on informal teaching circles—perhaps, as his name suggests, in the al-Bahr al-Madhahib mosque. Al-Qarāfī was accomplished in Quranic studies, the Arabic language, and jurisprudence; he was "diligent in teaching [al-‘iqrā‘] from dawn to dusk"; and he counted among his students such later luminaries as Shams al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Umar al-Qarāfī (d. 1465), whom he instructed in Arabic grammar and the foundations of jurisprudence. Yet despite his active involvement in the transmission of learning, neither al-Sakhāwī nor any other contemporary historian indicates that he ever held a paying teaching post.\footnote{[111]}

The opportunity to teach informally, unsupported by any charitable endowment, allowed many to participate actively in the transmission of Muslim learning who for various reasons were unable to attain or unwilling to accept a paying position. Some, for example, taught informally while waiting for an appointment to a well-paid instructional post. This was especially true of those who, like īzz al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Salām b. ʿAbd al-Baghdādī, came to Cairo from a distant home. "ʿAbd al-Salām, a prominent Ḥanafī scholar from Iraq, arrived in the Egyptian capital in 1407-08. Eventually he became professor of jurisprudence at a number of prominent Cairoine schools, including the Aqḍābīyā, the Ashrafiyya, the Mālikīn, and the Ṣaḥiyya in Ba‘y al-Qayrawān. These appointments, however, were not immediately forthcoming, and although approaching the age of forty, he was installed as a student of Ja‘far al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Salām, however, had already made a name for himself in a variety of academic fields, including jurisprudence, exegesis, and the variant Quranic readings, and while still a student at the Jamāliyya "people drew near to him and studied with him."\footnote{[112]}

Alternatively, a prominent scholar might teach in one of these informal instructional circles at the end of his career. The famous legal scholar and transmitter of the Prophetic traditions Wali ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbd al-Ra‘ūfi had held teaching posts in hadith at the Zāhirīyya, the Qānūnīyya, the Qarānīyya, and the mosque of Ibn ʿUmar, then in Shā‘bī jurisprudence at the Fatḥiyya and the Jamāliyya.\footnote{[113] But after he resigned as pādī in 1422 he retired to his house, where he devoted himself to teaching and writing until his death the following year.\footnote{[114] In 1426, Kamāl al-Dīn Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, known as Ibn al-Humām, one of the leading ʿālīm scholars of his generation, was appointed shaykh al-Hanafī at the Ashrafīyya madrasa, one of the most visible and lucrative teaching posts in Cairo. Four years later, however, he resigned after a dispute with a leading Mamluk over the appointment of one of his pupils to a student fellowship in the institution. Hardly ready at the age of forty to end his teaching career, he retired to his house outside of Cairo and, in the words of one of his biographers, "continued to devote himself to teaching."\footnote{[115] By 1443, however, Ibn al-Humām began to lose the in-}
come of a formal teaching post, and went so far as to seek the assistance of two other scholars in securing for him the appointment as shaykh and professor at the Shaykhniiya khānqāh.

Others, while holding nonacademic jobs, managed nevertheless to participate actively in the transmission of Muslim learning. Shihāb al-Dīn ʿAlī Ahmad al-Qasīmī al-Qādirī (d. 1454), a Shāfiʿī scholar with an impressive list of teachers and demonstrated accomplishments in such fields as jurisprudence and Arabic, clearly taught, since we are given the names of several of his students. His biographer, however, states that he held only two posts: that of a Sufi stipendiary in the Fakhriyya, and of imām and Sufi shaykh in the Qūṭbiyya. Similarly, Zayn al-Dīn Khalīl al-Azhari al-Shāfiʿī (d. 1466), after a thorough education in jurisprudence and other subjects, eventually held the post of Sufi shaykh at the khānqāh Saʿīd al-Ṣūrāfī, a position that as far as we know involved no teaching responsibilities; yet he too "applied himself to being of use to students, and a number studied with him."115 In the late fourteenth century, a young student who had recently completed his primary studies at the naktab (primary school) associated with the Ṣarghitnīyya madrasa began to frequent the nearby Shaykhnīyya; there, he studied a little jurisprudence with the imām before joining the institution's formal class in the subject.116 Others earned an income from less lofty employment. Quite a few were employed as shahāds, notaries who acted as professional witnesses before the qādis and transacted various basic legal affairs, or in other low-ranking religious or legal employment, and yet "instructed students in jurisprudence and other subjects."117

The issue can also be approached, of course, from the opposite side. If teachers taught privately in their homes, or publicly in mosques or even madrasas without necessarily receiving stipends from established endowments, they did so because many students were eager to attend, even though these pupils would not necessarily receive payments or accommodations to reward their efforts. To be sure, most Cairene schools did provide financial support, residences, and board to groups of students of varying size, in accordance with the common understanding of the madrasa’s function. Consider, for example, the Asherīyya, the school established in Cairo by Sultan al-ʿAskarī Barsbāy (reigned 1422–37). Its stipendaries included professors of all four rites of law as well as sixty-five Sufi students of jurisprudence: twenty-five Ḥanafīs, twenty Shāfiʿis, ten Mālikis, and ten Ḥanbalis. Each was provided with a monthly stipend, as

115 Al-Sakhāwī, al-Dānī, 1, 320–21.
117 Al-Sakhāwī, al-Dānī, 4, 100.
118 Al-Sakhāwī, al-Dānī, 1, 159.

120 The monthly stipends varied considerably. The highest salary was paid to the Ḥanafī professor who also functioned as the institution’s Sufi shaykh; he was paid 3,000 copper dirhams per month. By contrast, the Shāfiʿī professor was paid 100 silver Dirhams per month, his Mālikī and Ḥanbalī colleagues 50 silver dirhams each. As for the students, the Ḥanafīs who received 300 copper dirhams each, the others 20 silver dirhams each. Waqfyyat al-ʿAskarī Barbsay, Dir al-Wathiqiq No. 173, fol. 116r–119v.
122 Waqfyyat Jamāʾ al-Dīn al-Ustāḏī, Dir al-Wathiqiq No. 106, f. 228f.
123 Petry, Civilians Elite, 78–90.

well as a daily ration of bread, thereby freeing both students and teachers from the necessity of pursuing outside employment to finance their studies.120 Just as important for our present purposes, the institution provided cells—khalīf—intended to be residences for its students. Such a setting provided the opportunity to establish a strict, rigorous, and isolated environment for instruction in the Islamic sciences, and it seems that some, at least, conceived of this as the specific role of the madrasa.

However, accommodations at many of these schools may have served principally as residences for students who came to Cairo from other cities or countries for their education. A number of schools provided residences specifically for those students who came to the Egyptian capital from distant homes, and who would not therefore have family residences in the city. This was most notable at the Ḥanafī madrasa established by Amīr Ṣarghitnī in the mid-fourteenth century; its endowment deed expressly restricted the school to "foreign Ḥanafī students."121 Similarly, of the 113 students of jurisprudence, exegesis, hadith, and the variant Quran readings at the khānqāh of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ustāḏī, only 20 were specifically given a place of residence (sakan) in the institution; those thus accommodated were to be "free of marital ties and worldly attachments, and foreign to the lands of Egypt."122

Cairo was, in fact, a cosmopolitan center of study and instruction in the Islamic sciences, attracting students and scholars from virtually every corner of the Muslim world.123 This situation is reflected in the endowment deeds of several of the more important schools that provided their students with leaves of absence to facilitate visits to their families in distant lands. At the madrasa of Sultan Barqūq, for example, it was stipulated that

if someone travels for reasons other than the bugh [the pilgrimage to Mecca], and if his journey is for [the purpose of] visiting his family or relatives, then a journey of three months' duration shall be allowed him, [although] during his absence he shall not receive his stipend; and when he returns, he shall
receive his stipend; but if he stays away longer than three months, he shall be dismissed and another appointed to his position. 124

While the original deed of endowment for the mosque of al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh included much more stringent provisions, a later document altered the terms governing excused absences for the institution’s staff and students, so that they would conform to those at Barqiq’s madrasa: that is, all of the school’s stipendiaries were granted three months’ unpaid leave per year to visit "family and relatives" (al-a‘lil wa l-a‘qarib). 125 It may be significant, however, that all those schools, the terms of whose endowments allowed absences for visiting family and relatives, were among the larger and more prominent schools of Cairo, such as the madrasas of Barqiq and Barsbay, the khānqāh of Jamali al-Dīn al-Ustādār, and the mosque of al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh. While less wealthy and less prestigious institutions routinely allowed their stipendiaries to perform the pilgrimages to Mecca or Jerusalem, they do not seem to have excused lengthy visits to distant relatives. This may suggest that their students were, primarily, local. 126

On the other hand, it is clear that even in madrasas that specifically provided stipends, daily food rations, and living accommodations for some number of students, many attended classes who did not live in the school, or who in some cases did not even receive a stipend from its endowments. This is largely obscured by our sources, by the apparent lack of concern of the biographical dictionaries to reveal where medieval Muslims studied, and by the natural preoccupation of the deeds with the situation at the madrasa of Sultan al-Zahir Barqiq may have been more typical. There, one particular residence hall (qa‘a) was set aside for the Hanafi professor and Sufi shaykh, but the rest of the school’s accommodations were to be assigned to stipendiaries at the discretion of the institution’s controller. Among them, 167 student residences (buwyd) were provided. The Zahiriyah’s endowment deed made provisions for stipends for 125 students—forty in Hanafi jurisprudence, twenty for each of the Shafi‘i, Maliki, and Hanbali rites, fifteen students of hadith, and ten of the seven variant Quran readings—in addition to sixty Sufis (who also lived in the student residences). The controller of the institution was specifically empowered to permit some students receiving stipends and entitled to accommodations to live outside the confines of the school. In addition, any student who wished to take the cash equivalent of his daily food rations could do so. More importantly, the endowment deed made explicit reference to students who regularly came to the madrasa but did not live there (called al-mutaraddidin). If one of those who lived in the madrasa wished to marry, the deed stipulated, "let him do so, and let his room [mabitiha] be given to an unmarried man from among those who frequent [al-mutaraddidin] this madrasa for the purposes of study.” 125

Other deeds of endowment, while understandably preoccupied with those actually living in the schools or receiving stipends from them, also indicated that students unaffiliated with the institutions themselves would regularly attend lessons. At the Jamaliyya, for example, the controller was to permit no one other than the institution’s stipendiaries to live in the school, unless that person was a Sufi and a student, and one who frequented the khānqāh (mutaraddidin al-khānqāh). Moreover, he was to be given the first stipendiary position that became available. 129

The mosque of al-Shibli Qafir provided stipends for only five Shafi‘i students, but the class that took place there on Sundays and Wednesdays was also for "those students who participate with them in the [class].” 130

The deed of Khushqadam al-Zimmān, too, acknowledged that "outsiders" would attend the classes that he endowed at al-Azhār, which he intended to move to a separate institution, apparently never built. 131

In a similar vein, it was also the case that some lived in the schools who were not regular, salaried students or professors. Ibn Jamā‘a was of the opinion that if the founder of an institution had stipulated that the inhabitants of his madrasa be restricted to those who received stipends (al-murarattabun), then his wishes should be respected. 132 In fact, however, the actual deeds suggest that founders did not routinely make such a stipulation. Recognizing this, Ibn Jamā‘a further opined that those who

125 Wāqifat al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh, Wāṣirat al-Awqāf o.s. No. 908, in a document in the margin at the bottom of the scroll.
126 Cf. Petry, Civilians Elite.
131 I am indebted to ’Abd al-Ghaffar Māhjūrī’s ‘Abd al-’Arī’i‘ī’s book, al-Ṭa‘līm bi ‘irād ‘amān al-aqābilīyyat wa l-marhabah (Cairo, 1994), 220, for this reference. By the time I myself read the document (Wāqifat Khushqadam al-Zimmān, Wāṣirat al-Awqāf n.s. No. 185), the critical passage was obscured by a piece of opaque tape; only later, through reading ‘Abd al-’Arī’i‘ī’s book, did I become aware of the full meaning of this comment in the waqfyya. 132 Ibn Jamā‘a, ‘Tadhkira al-sāhib’, 210.
lived in madrasas who were not stipendiaries should attend the institution's classes; if they did not, then they should leave the building during the time of instruction; if they would not leave, then they should not leave their rooms, or walk around the madrasa, or raise their voices, or lock or open their doors noisily. 134

Many of those who simply lived in the schools without regularly participating in the academic functions were no doubt serious scholars and students in their own right. Some were minor academics who, while having attained a minimal level of education, had not reached a rank from which they could expect preferments or paid instructional posts. Badr al-Din Husayn Ibn al-Nabhâl (d. 1443), for example, received a solid if unexceptional education in the Quran, jurisprudence, and other subjects, but as far as we can tell never held a teaching post, although he did transmit hadîth. Yet late in life, after being blinded by an eye disorder, he retired to a cell in the Sayfîyya madrasa, a relatively obscure school for Shâфи’îs. 135 Still others who resided in the schools had even more tenuous connections to the world of education. For example, Abû l-Abbâs al-Hîjâzî (d. 1436 or 1437) lived in the Zâhirîyya madrasa on Bayn al-Qâsrâyayn. He clearly never held any academic post there—his biographers tell us virtually nothing about his education, and do not even indicate to which Sunnî rîtû he belonged. On the contrary, his fame rested on his composition and recitation of poems in praise of local notables. 136

Clearly, then, the schools became magnets attracting a variety of intellectuals and hangers-on. Their most important gift to the Muslim community was the most basic one: a permanent forum for instruction and the transmission of knowledge. But human nature and the necessities of living being what they are, the academic community also came to value, and expect, the cash stipends and other forms of support provided by the schools. The establishment and endowment of institutions of learning over the course of the later Middle Ages did not transform the character of education, but it did introduce a new and somewhat disturbing element into the social relationship of teachers and students, as we shall see in the following chapter.

134 Ibid., 216.
135 Al-Sakhîwî, al-Daw‘, 3:154. Other nonacademics lived in this madrasa at other times. Gary Leiser identified a hadi qui lived (but apparently did not teach) here in the early thirteenth century, during the Ayyubid period; see "Restoration," 319.
136 Ibn Hajar, Isâb‘ al-a‘lamur, 8:434–35; al-Sakhîwî, al-Daw‘, 2:72–73. Cf. the case of Ibn al-Arâmîn al-Kâtîb (d. 1452) who, despite a decent education in the religious sciences, was best known for his poetic compositions in three languages (Arabic, Persian, and Turkish), a skill that brought him into close contact with several Mamlûks. When he died, in his sixth decade, he lived in a cell (khâla) in the Şarghîinîyya madrasa. Al-Sakhîwî, al-Daw‘, 2:72–73.

MUHAMMAD IBN AL-HAJJ, a jurist who died in 1336, composed a treatise that, in the words of his biographer, "exposed the vices and heretical innovations" in which the Muslim population of Cairo indulged. Always a fierce critic of contemporary standards and practices, he deplored what he perceived to be the increasing concern of the ulama for wealth and worldly status. Ibn al-Hajj summed up his criticism with the pithy observation that "whereas before, a man spent his money in order to acquire knowledge, now he acquires money through his knowledge." 137 Modern secular academics in the West, too, anxious to maintain the "purity" of intellectual activity, have from time to time maintained the ideal of a strict separation of learning from potentially corrupting financial reward, but to the eye of a pious medieval Muslim the matter was far more urgent. The mixing of lucrative learning rankled this fourteenth-century jurist (who was, admittedly, prone to rather vituperative complaining) because of the essential holiness of the task of acquiring and transmitting knowledge.

What bothered Ibn al-Hajj was not wealth per se. Not a few Muslim scholars, of course, earned or inherited fortunes through family business connections. Indeed, the medieval Islamic world generally avoided that radical division of intellectual and commercial labor that has at times impoverished both the academy and the corporation in the West. The overall attitude of Islamic law and culture to wealth and worldly comforts is more favorable, and less ambivalent, than that of the Christian West, in which the ascetic and monastic ideals were always available as powerful alternative models. In Islam, all the heavy weight of tradition served to extol the value of religious knowledge and encourage its acquisition and transmission—by and to all members of society. Consequently, Islam had never known a sharp social divide between men of religious learning and men of commerce, and Mamlûk Egypt produced no exception to that rule. Even Ibn Hajar al-Asqalânî, the famous Shâfi‘î jurist and possibly

the single most important scholar of the later Middle Ages, probably came from a merchant family, and may himself have participated in commercial activities. However, the phenomenon of the “merchant-scholar,” and more broadly of the social mixing of academic and commercial elites, does not concern us directly. Rather, the immediate issue is framed by the complaint of Ibn al-Hajj that religious scholars were now exploiting their knowledge to acquire wealth. Higher religious education had always aimed, at least in part, at forming a cadre of men qualified to discharge certain religious and legal duties, most notably as judges of the Islamic courts, and to this extent had always served as a means, at least for a few, to gainful employment. But it was not this limited phenomenon that annoyed Ibn al-Hajj. Rather, his complaint was a response to certain consequences of the proliferation since the twelfth century of endowed institutions that disbursed their substantial income to the academic elite in the form of salaries, stipends, meals, and accommodations. It was not that educated men performed new functions; rather, those functions became the obligation of hired functionaries in the multitude of new institutions. An education in the religious sciences now provided access to a whole host of regular employment opportunities: as professors and educators, assistants in instruction, Quran and hadith readers, and prayer leaders and preachers. The establishment of these institutions did not alter the process of instruction and the transmission of knowledge; by creating numerous new sources of employment, however, it did have profound consequences for the character of social relations among the ulama.

The Control of Appointments to Academic Posts

In the world of higher Islamic education in late medieval Cairo, a learned and well-placed man certainly could acquire a fair amount of money. Holding a single teaching appointment in one of the many schools of Mamluk Cairo by itself would not make a scholar rich. The stipends attached to professorships varied considerably from one institution to another, but a scholar might compensate for a comparatively small salary in one by holding more than one post. Siraj al-Din ‘Umar, known as Qarir al-Hidaya, the leading Haafizi jurist of the early fifteenth century, was professor of jurisprudence and hadith in over half a dozen of Cairo’s leading madrasas and teaching mosques, and “grew rich from the large num-


would not have bothered to note that a particular individual relinquished a number of his lesser teaching posts to a group of worthy scholars “free of charge” (mażāban). If teaching posts might be “sold,” appointments to them were necessarily a desirable commodity. Who actually controlled the appointment of scholars to teaching positions in the various schools of Mamluk Cairo? The question is certainly not an idle one, since some of the professorial “chairs” carried substantial endowments. To control appointments to them was to control a valuable form of patronage.

There is in fact no direct and definitive answer to the question. Even in theory, Islamic law did not provide an unequivocal response. In a fatawā, an authoritative but nonbinding legal opinion analogous to the Jewish responsa, Taqi ‘l-Din ‘Ali al-Suhbā (d. 1355) noted that some legal scholars held that, while the financial controller (nāṣir) of a madrasa and its endowments had authority over the building and its financial affairs, it was up to the hākim, here probably meaning the qāḍī, or, possibly, the ruler, to appoint the professors. Al-Suhbā and others disagreed, however, and confirmed the general right of the controller to make appointments to teaching posts, although he did believe that it was the prerogative of the hākim to determine who was fit to hold a teaching appointment, and to forbid the installation of incompetent Shaykhs.

The actual practice in Mamluk Cairo presents a confusing pattern of overlapping authority. From at least the time of Sultan al-Zahir Baybars (reigned 1260–77), pure khāyāl endowments—those, that is, of an exclusively charitable nature, such as endowments established to support the

Footnotes:


2. Taqi ‘l-Din ‘Ali al-Suhbā, Fatḥā‘ al-Suhbā (Cairo, a.d. 1356), repr. Beirut, n.d., 2:150–54. For a discussion of the legal literature surrounding the law of waqf (charitable endowments) as it related to institutions of learning, see Makdisi, Colleges, 55–74. Certain points emerge from Makdisi’s discussion—to which we shall have occasion to return—but even there, the picture is far from clear. The character of the institutions and their endowments, and the nature of the literary evidence, limit the possibility of making generalizations. The endowment deeds (waqfīyyas) themselves could differ significantly, and some might be more strictly adhered to than others, for social, economic, and political reasons, rather than legal ones. Moreover, the fatwās of medieval jurists on which much of Makdisi’s discussion is based, are, as he himself notes, nonbinding legal opinions, and therefore cannot necessarily be assumed consistently to reflect actual medieval practice. Particularly useful in the specific context of Mamluk Egypt, and a starting point for any study of the actual administration of endowments in late medieval Cairo, is the important work of Muhammad M. Amin, al-Awqaf wa al-qarā‘i‘ al-alwā‘ wa al-waqf al-mu‘min (Cairo, 1960), esp. 197–235.


5. On the stipulations providing for succession to the waqf (the controllership of the endowment), see Chapter Five.


9. On the stipulations providing for succession to the waqf (the controllership of the endowment), see Chapter Five.


11. Sultan al-Ashraf Barsibay (reigned 1422–37), for example, seems to have been a shykh of the Bāṣṭiya, ‘Irz al-Din ‘Abd al-Salām al-Qādī, left the position sometime before his death in 1446 to become shykh at the Bāṣṭiya in Jerusalem; upon his resignation, ‘Abd al-Razzāq appointed Shaf‘ūrā‘ al-Din Ahmad al-Ashraf to his Cairo deanery. Makdisi, Colleges, 55–57.

have taken a keen and continuing interest in the school he constructed. In 1424 he "bestowed a robe of honor [khâla'ı] on 'Ali al-Din 'Ali al-Rûmî al-Hanafî, [marking] his appointment as Sufi shaykh and professor of Hanafî law at the Ashrafiyya madrasa." Less than two years later, however, the Sultan was forced to demand the resignation of al-Rûmî because of the discovery that the shaykh had been appropriating to himself the stipends assigned to several of the institution's Sufi students who had died. Barsbây then appointed Kamâl al-Dîn Ibn al-Humâmî Hanafî shaykh. Ibn al-Humâmî's tenure, however, lasted only until 1430, when he resigned after a dispute over the appointment of one of his favored students as a stipendiary in the school. At this point Barsbây once again intervened, and after failing to persuade Ibn al-Humâmî to remain as shaykh and professor, appointed 'Amin al-Dîn al-Aqṣârî to the position.

The wealthy Mamulks and others who built and endowed institutions of learning often made certain that scholars to whom they were connected by personal ties received employment in their schools. Given the incomplete nature of the literary record, it is an open question as to whether most founders of educational institutions took an active personal interest in these appointments. It may well be that they responded to the suggestions of trusted advisors or influential scholars, who would of course have been in a better position to know who among the ulama was especially fitted for a given post. In particular cases, however, we can certainly discern specific ties of patronage between the wealthy benefactors of educational institutions, very often Mamuluk amirs or sultans, and those scholars holding academic appointments. The Hanafî qâdî Badr al-Dîn Mahmûd al-'Aynî's close relationship with Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (reigned 1412-21), for example, is well known. The Turkish-speaking jurist and historian was among the ruler's "intimate companions and friends," and was rewarded with an appointment as professor of the Prophetic traditions at the Mu'ayyadîyya when it first opened, a post that he held until his death in 1452. Humâmî al-Dîn al-Khâwârizmî (d. 1416), a Shâfi'i scholar who came to Cairo at the end of the fourteenth century, developed an equally close relationship with Jamâl al-Dîn Yusuf al-Ustâdâr, a powerful figure in the Mamuluk kingdom until his execution in late 1409. When the construction of Jamâl al-Dîn's khânqâh was completed in 1408, the founder appointed Humâmî al-Dîn to be the school's professor of Shâfi'i law, granting him a residence in the institution and bestowing on him stipends and gifts in addition to his official salary.\(^{13}\)


\(^{14}\) On Badr al-Dîn al-'Aynî, see al-Sâkhawî, al-Daw'a, 10:123-33. Badr al-Dîn was also an

Urban society in the Mamuluk period was characterized by a web of patronage that bound the ulama as a group to the military elite. In exchange for protection from external enemies and income from bureaucratic and legal appointments, the educated elite legitimized the Mamuluk regime by enjoining obedience on the local population, mediating the government's needs for tax revenues, and performing a host of tangible and intangible services to the state.\(^{14}\) Such patronage, however, like the transmission of knowledge itself, depended at least as much on personal relationships as on corporate identities and interests. The pattern of appointment to positions of academic employment in the schools suggests that such patronage was experienced by many as a personal tie between an individual Mamuluk and a particular scholar. There must, for example, have been some sort of strong personal connection between 'Amin al-Dîn al-Aqṣârî and the Mamuluk amir Jânîbak al-Zâhirî (d. 1463). According to al-Aqṣârî's biographer, not only did the Mamuluk himself appoint the scholar to the professorship of his madrasa, but "it is said that [Jânîbak] would not have built the madrasa were it not for [al-Aqṣârî]."\(^{15}\) The fact that several of the foundation deeds for Cairo's schools specified that particular scholars were to be appointed to teaching posts within the institution suggests that the benefactors had these scholars in mind when making the decision to undertake the massive expenditures that founding a school involved. Information in the deeds is by no means complete, however, so that the failure of any particular document to record the names of academic appointees did not mean that the founder remained indifferent as to who was to teach in his institution. The foundation deed for the Jamâlîyya khânqâh, for example, records the appointment of Humâmî al-Dîn al-Khâwârizmî as Shâfi'i professor, but neglects to mention that the founder, Jamâl al-Dîn Yûsuf, also appointed the institution's other original instructors.\(^{16}\) Whether or not most founders actually built and endowed their institutions for the benefit of particular scholars, most did take an active interest in the process of making appointments to academic positions in their schools.

\(^{15}\) The loci classicis of this argument are Lapidus, Muslim Cities, esp. 130-41.

\(^{16}\) Al-Sâkhawî, al-Daw'a, 10:241.

\(^{17}\) Taqî 'Dîn Ahmad al-Maqrîzî, al-Maqrîzî wa l-qâhîrâ bi-dhikr al-khâlîq wa l-shâhâdâh (Bâlîq, a.d. 1270), 2:401-2, in his account of the opening of the school, makes it clear that Jamâl al-Dîn "sâl" ( وقال) Humâmî al-Dîn down on a carpet representing his appointment as Shâfi'i professor and Sufi shaykh. For the other original appointees, al-Maqrîzî simply used the word qâlîrâ, "he appointed," which of course could be Qur'anic, "he [the professor] was appointed." Other accounts, however, specify that the founder actively appointed the others: for example, Jamâl al-Dîn appointed him [Badr al-Dîn Mahmûd Ibn al-Shaykh Zâhirî] as 'Umayyad professor in his madrasa. "Al-Sâkhawî, al-Daw'a, 10:136, cf. ibid., 7:46;
It is worth bearing in mind that the ties that bound the Mamluks and the ulama were concrete and intensely personal, and were subject to the strains and vicissitudes of any personal relationship. In one deed dating to the early sixteenth century, we can trace at least the outlines of the tempestuous course taken by the relationship between a Mamluk amir and the shaykh he had appointed to his madrasa. Al-Sayyfi Baybars, a high-ranking military and political officer in the last years of the Mamluk state, in the first of two documents, dated 3 Qumâda al-Awwal, A.H. 921 (June 1515), appointed someone named Shihâb al-Dîn Abû Tâlib Abâd Ahmad b. Ismâ'il al-Sâfî as the Sufi shaykh of his madrasa, as well as its prayer leader and preacher. According to the document, Shihâb al-Dîn’s son Badr al-Dîn Muhammad held the posts in tandem with his father. In the following document on the scroll, however, dated five months later, the founder altered somewhat the terms under which his madrasa was to be administered. Among other matters, he stripped Shihâb al-Dîn of all his posts except that of Suﬁ shaykh, and expelled (akhraja min waqfih) his son Badr al-Dîn altogether, forbidding him to hold any post within the institution, and stipulating that Shihâb al-Dîn’s children and descendants were permanently excluded from inheriting his position. Al-Sayyfi Baybars’ feelings toward Shihâb al-Dîn himself must have been degenerating rapidly, however, since later in the same document the founder stipulated that “the name of Shaykh Shihâb al-Dîn Ahmad al-Safî al-Mâlik be dropped,” and that, at least for the present, no one was to be appointed Suﬁ shaykh.

After the death of a founder, a controller was appointed to administer the endowment and the institutions it supported, according to stipulations laid down in the deed of endowment. Here, of course, like the founder, had particular responsibility for the hiring of an academic institution’s staff. The literary sources—the chronicles and biographical dictionaries—carefully, however, bother to record a scholar’s appointment at the hands of an institution’s controller. This lacuna may simply indicate that the practice was routine, and therefore unworthy of comment. But it is clear that in actual practice the situation was quite fluid. Despite a controller’s responsibilities for an institution, lines of authority were not always drawn precisely, and qâdîs, amirs, and sultans all had a hand in the appointment of the teaching staff of Cairo’s schools. In particular, the reigning sultan enjoyed a special prerogative in the appointment of professors to paid teaching positions. According to al-Qâqishandi’s encyclopedic guide to bureaucratic and chancery practice, Subûh al-‘âshâ, “the sultan does not make appointments to teaching posts, except in those [schools] of great importance and high prestige, [and] which are not [under the supervision] of a controller.” He then listed several schools in which the sultan did routinely make appointments, including the al-Salâhiyya madrasa next to the tomb of the imam al-Shâﬁ’i, the teaching circle (zâwiyya) in the mosque of ‘Amr known as the Khâshihâbiyya, the Mansûriyya madrasa established by al-Mansûr Qâlî-wân in the late thirteenth century, the “lesson” (dârs) in the mosque of Ibn Tûlûn, and “others like them.” Later in his administrative handbook, he gave examples of documents of appointment (tawqi‘, pl. ta’awqât) to teaching positions that were drafted by scribes in the royal chancellery; they included appointments to the zâwiyya of al-Shâﬁ’î in the mosque of ‘Amr, the al-Salâhiyya and the Qanûhiyya madrasas, the “Qubbat al-Sâlih” in the Mansûriyya complex, and the Hâkim mosque.

Al-Qâqishandi’s remarks notwithstanding, the exact parameters of the sultan’s authority in the distribution of academic posts is difficult to determine. Many royal “appointments” may have been purely formal, making official the naming of a candidate chosen in fact through some more informal mode of selection. On the other hand, the monarch was certainly privileged to make appointments to particular important schools. The chronicles and biographical dictionaries provide many examples of sultans assigning to scholars academic positions in the institutions listed by al-Qâqishandi, such as the al-Salâhiyya or Qanûhiyya madrasas, sometimes specifying that the appointments were made “by noble decree” (bi-

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16 It is difficult to know what this refers to. The most important courses in Ibn Tûlûn were those in jurisprudence according to the four madhhâb (Sunni rites), the traditional exegesis, and other subjects endowed by Sultan al-Mansûr Lâjûn at the end of the thirteenth century; clearly, however, these were more than one “lesson.” Moreover, the institution had its own controller, al-Maqrîzî, Khâtât, 2:206, listed a large number of Shâ‘î’s qâdîs and amirs who consecutively held the controller/ship of the institution from the late thirteenth until the early fifteenth century, and others after the time of al-Maqrîzî can be identified (for example, in al-Salâhiyya, al-Dâ‘î, 1:77-78, 4:229-23, 392-94). It is possible that the reference might be to a course in Hâkim jurisprudence endowed by the amir Yâhûqi al-‘Umarî in 1356; see al-Maqrîzî, Khâtât, 2:299.

17 Al-Qâqishandi refers to this institution simply as qubbat al-Sâlih. The reference, however, is presumed to refer to the course established in the qubbat (domed burial chamber) of the Mansûriyya madrasa and hospital complex on behalf of al-Mansûr Qâlî-wân’s grand-son al-Sâlih Ismâ‘îl; see al-Maqrîzî, Khâtât, 2:390. Al-Salâhiyya used the phrase “qubbat al-Sâlih” to refer to these courses; see, for example, al-Dâ‘î, 4:136, in which the historian Ibn KhalîluwÎn appointed to the Mâlikî professorship bi-qubbat al-Sâlih bi-l-basâruṭ.”
In the selection process, the sultan could even overrule the judgment of the chief qādi, as another dispute brought to the attention of Barsibay demonstrates. When al-Sirāj Qārī al-Hiyādī died, he held teaching posts in Ḥanafi law not only in the Shaykhānīya, but also at several other Cairo institutions. By his request, these positions passed upon his death to his son. Because the boy was too young to teach, or for some other reason, ’Izz al-Dīn Abī al-Salām al-Baghḍādī (d. 1435) taught for him as a substitute (maître). It happened, however, that while ’Izz al-Dīn was absent from Cairo, the son of Qārī al-Hiyādī died. The chief qādi ’Alam al-Dīn Sāliḥ al-Buğnūī almost seized the opportunity to appoint several other scholars to the posts that the deceased boy had, officially held, and thus the stage was set for an unpleasant confrontation.

When ’Izz al-Dīn al-Baghdādī returned from his journey and discovered that he had, in effect, been deprived of several valuable teaching positions, he "shouted and pleaded for help, and let it be known that he had no choice but to complain of the qādi’s actions to the sultan." As he was ascending to the Citadel for his audience with the sultan, ’Izz al-Dīn encountered the qādi, who inquired after his rival’s intentions. The deprived scholar confidently announced that he had in his sleeve a copy of al-Hāfiẓ, a popular treatise in Ḥanafi law, and that he would present it to the sultan and ask him to open it to any page. "From this," he said, "you and I will settle the matter," and thus my just claim will be exposed.

Whether ’Izz al-Dīn’s demonstration was intended to signify that the law was entirely on his side, or whether it represented some act of diplomacy, apparently it impressed the sultan, who ordered ’Izz al-Dīn to be reinstated to all the posts, which he then held in his own right for a number of years.

In an earlier case involving the professorship in hadith at the Maṣṣūriyya madrasa, the sultan intervened in a dispute involving the institution’s controller and the Shāfi’ī qādi, and in the process effectively...