

Archaeological, Artistic and Civilized Study for the Works of al-Amīr Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī (685 - 731 H. / 1286 - 1330 A.D.)

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Abstract

The reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn* is characterized by a great prosperity and progress in all fields of life, especially the architectural and artistic ones. These were accomplished due to the considerable efforts and achievements of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* himself and of his *Amīrs* and *Mamluks*. Among these *Amīrs*, is *Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī* who was considered as one of the well-known and active *Amīrs* during the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*. So, the overall aim of this research is to study the archaeological and artistic life of *al-Amīr Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī*, as well as, demonstrates his notable contributions in political, social, economic and cultural sides for the *Mamluk* state. This research is ended by a number of important results that proved his significant role in all fields at the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*.

Key words: Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī, Mamluk, al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammed, orchard, enameled mosque lamp.

Introduction

The reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn* (709 – 741 H. / 1309 – 1341 A.D.) is considered one of the most stable and flourished ages during the *Mamluk* era, as it witnessed a significant development in different fields, such as policy, economy, and administration. The great and notable progress in this age is happened in the fields of Islamic architecture and arts, as *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* in co-operation with his *Amīrs* had founded a large number of various Islamic archaeological buildings in Egypt and Syria¹. Also, they restored several mosques that was dating back to the previous eras, such as: early Islamic, Tulunid and Fatimid eras². Besides, *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* with his *Amīrs* had manufactured a great and very beautiful collection of Islamic masterpieces varied between glass, metal, pottery, ceramic and wooden products. These masterpieces are widespread and exhibited in different museums of arts all over the world, which interprets the greatness and prosperity of this period³.

¹ al-Ḥajī, Ḥayāt Nāṣṣir, *al-Amīr Qūṣūn. Šūra Ḥaya l-Nizām al-Ḥukm fī Šalṭanat al-Mamālīk*, in “al-Maḡala al-‘Arabiyya l-al-‘Ulūm al-‘Insāniyya, No.32, vol. 8, 6-55, Kuwait, 1988”, p.7.

² Zakī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *Bunāt al-Qāhira fī Alf ‘Am*, al-Hay’a al-Maṣriyya al-‘Ama l-al-Kitāb, (Cairo, 1986), p.43-52.

³ Atil, Esin, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks*, (Washington, 1981), p.197.

It is worth mentioning that the *Mamluk Amīrs* had played a very important role in the progress and development that happened in all fields at the reign of *al-Nāssir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*, particularly in the architectural and artistic life⁴. *al-Amīr Arġūn al-Nassirī* is considered one of the famous and dependable *Amīrs* during this age, because of his considerable contributions in internal and external affairs⁵. As a result, he was nicknamed with many titles demonstrating his great role and considerable effect in supporting and strengthening the *Mamluk* state. Therefore, the current research aims at exploring the political, historical, archaeological and artistic sides of *al-Amīr Arġūn al-Nassirī*.

The research is divided into 4 parts followed by a conclusion including results of the research. The first part studies life and history of *Arġūn al-Nassirī*, as well as, his role in the political life, his characteristics and his sons. The second focuses on his positions during the reign of *al-Nāssir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*. The third highlights his archeological and artistic works. The fourth part identifies and analyzes his various titles. Finally, the research is followed by a conclusion including the results.

Life and History *al-Amīr Arġūn al-Nāssirī*

He is *al-Amīr al-Kabīr Sayf al-Dīn 'Ibn 'Abdallah Arġūn*⁶ *al-Nāssirī al-Dawadār* (known as *Arġūn al-Nā'ib*). He was born in the Turkic countries of central Asia at (685 H. / 1356 A.D.), then he came to Egypt at a young age with a slave dealer. He was bought by *al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn*⁷, who had presented him as a gift to his son *al-Nāssir Muḥammad* to be one of his *Mamluks*⁸.

He grew up and lived in the service of *al-Nāssir Muḥammad* and became one of his close and beloved *Mamluks*, so he was one of the *Mamluks* who accompanied *al-Nāssir Muḥammad* during his residence in *al-Karak* (708 - 709 H. / 1308 - 1309 A.D.). When *al-Nāssir Muḥammad* returned back and became the sultan of Egypt for the third time, he set him free and gave him the title of an "*Amīr*" in (709 H. / 1309 A.D.)⁹.

⁴ **al-'Aṣqar, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ġanī, Nā'ib al-Salṭanah al-Mamlūkiyya fī Miṣr**, al-Hay'a al-Maṣriyya al-'Ama l-al-Kitāb, (Cairo, 1999), p. 269, 281.

⁵ **al-Maqrīzī, al-Muqqafa al-Kabīr**, 8 Volumes, ed. Muḥammed al-Ba'alawī, Dār al-Ġarb al-'Islāmī, (Cairo, 1991), vol. 2, p. 19-23.

⁶ *Arġūn* is a Turkish word means "The speed horse". It must be mentioned that this name was popular during the *Bahārī Mamluk* era, that there are 7 *Amīrs* were named with this name.

⁷ **'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ, 'Abdallah 'Attiya, Mu'aḡam 'Asmāa Ṣalāṭin wa 'Umarāa al-Mamālīk b-Miṣr wa al-Ṣām**, in "the 11th Conference of al-'Ittiḥād al-'Am l-al-'Aṭāriyīn al-'Arab, vol. 2, 649-725, Cairo, October 2008", p. 665.

⁸ **'Ibn Taġrī Bardī, al-Manhal al-Sāfi wa al-Mustawfa ba'd al-Wāfi**, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn, al-Hay'a al-Maṣriyya al-'Ama l-al-Kitāb, (Cairo, 1984), vol. 2, p. 306.

⁹ **Al-Ṣafadī, al-Wāfi b-al-Wafiyāt**, 29 Volumes, ed. Aḡmad al-Arnā'ūṭ & Turkī Muṣṭafa, Dār 'Iḥyā' al-Turāṭ al-'Arabī, (Beirut, 2000), vol. 8, p. 232.

⁹ **al-Maqrīzī, al-Muqqafa al-Kabīr**, vol. 2, p. 19.

Afterwards, *Argūn* had occupied a number of important jobs in the Mamluk state, because of his considerable skill and distinction. Firstly, he occupied the position of a *Ġamadār* (709 H. / 1309 A.D.), then he became a *Dawadār* (709 - 712 H. / 1309 - 1312 A.D.), and finally he has been promoted to be the vice of the Sultanate (*Nā'ib al-Salṭanah*) in (712 H. / 1312 A.D.)¹⁰. He had continued as the vice of *al-Sultān al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn* for about 16 years from (712 H. / 1312 A.D.) to (727 H. / 1326 A.D.)¹¹. During this long time, he was a sincere consultant to the sultan and disobeyed any of his orders except some few times. Besides, he had a special status among *Mamluk Amīrs*, who was showing a great respect for him and listening his advices, so he had a considerable role in calming them down some times during this period¹². For example, when *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* redistributed the agricultural lands on his *Amīrs* in (715 H. / 1315 A.D.)¹³, this caused a kind of anger for some of them, especially for those who felt with injustice. So, they dissatisfied about this new distribution and decided to write a complaint for the sultan expressing their objection, but *Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī* had contributed in calming them down and convinced them to execute the sultan orders¹⁴.

In (719 H. / 1319 A.D.) *Argūn* became a temporary sultan for few months when *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* went to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage¹⁵. Moreover, he played a very important role in facing some disasters that occurred in Egypt during this time, for example the fire that happened in Cairo at (721 H. / 1321 A.D.). He gathered all princes of the sultan with their camels and went to extinguish the fire by himself. He also ordered the sommeliers to participate in the firefighting process¹⁶.

As a result of his cleverness and experience, he was assigned with some vital tasks and important works, such as being the supervisor of digging *al-Nāṣṣirī* Gulf in (725 H. / 1324 A.D.)¹⁷.

¹⁰ **Ibn Iyās**, *Badā'i al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i al-Duhūr*, 4 Volumes, Maṭābi' al-Ša'b, (Cairo, 1960), vol. 1, p. 131.

¹¹ **Ibn Taġrī Bardī**, *al-Nuġūm al-Zāhirah fī Milūk Mišr wa al-Qāhira*, ed. Muḥammad Ramzī, 16 Volumes, Nuṣṣah Mušawarah min Dār al-Kutub al-Mašriyya, al-M'ussa al-Mašriyya l-al-Ta'līf wa al-Našr, (Cairo, 1963), vol. 9, p. 210.

¹² **al-'Ašqar**, *Nā'ib al-Salṭanah*, p. 187.

¹³ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Sulūk l-Ma'rifat al-Milūk*, 8 Volumes, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭṭā, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, (Beirut, 1997), vol. 2, p. 504.; **Ibn Iyās**, *Badā'i al-Zuhūr*, vol. 1, p. 135.

¹⁴ **Marzūq, Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz**, *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*, al-M'ussa al-Mašriyya al-'Ama, (Cairo, 1964), p. 265, 268.

¹⁵ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Muqqafa al-Kabīr*, vol. 2, p. 19.

¹⁶ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Sulūk*, vol. 3, p. 40.

¹⁷ **Ibn Iyās**, *Badā'i al-Zuhūr*, vol. 1, p. 136.

Argūn gathered a number of engineers and contractors to choose the starting place and determine the digging way¹⁸. After that, he had distributed the work on the *Mamluk Amīrs* and ordered them to get the farmers and workers from their agricultural lands to start the digging works that lasted only two months, from *Ġamāda 1st* to *Ġamāda 2nd*¹⁹.

This gulf was running from a place on the River Nile called “*Mawardat al-Balāṭ*” (the area that occupied now with *al-Qaṣr al-‘Aynī*) to the Egyptian Gulf²⁰, passing through the old site of *al-Zāhirī Square* (known as *al-Lūq Square*), *Qarmūt* pond²¹, *Bāb al-Bahr*²² and some orchards of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad’s Amīrs*. *Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī* also built a number of bridges to connect between the two banks of the gulf, one at the beginning of it, one at the middle in the site that was occupied by *al-Zāhirī Square*, and one at the end that known as “*al-Qanāṭir al-Amīriya*”²³. After finishing the digging works, the water was running in the gulf, which caused a great happiness to *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*. Then, people started to live on the two sides of the gulf, and founded their houses, markets, mosques, public baths, etc²⁴.

In (726 H. / 1326 A.D.) *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* knew that *Mihana ‘Ibn ‘Īssa*²⁵ - prince of the Arab (*Amīr al-‘Arab*) - decided to perform his pilgrimage, so that he asked his vice (*Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī*) to went to pilgrimage and arrested *Mihana ‘Ibn ‘Īssa*²⁶. Nevertheless, *Argūn* sent a warning message to *Mihana* and advised him to postpone his pilgrimage this year. Unfortunately for *Argūn*, the sultan knew his

¹⁸ **‘Ibn Taġrī Bardī**, *al-Nuġūm al-Zāhirah*, vol. 9, p. 67.; **‘Atṭā**, **‘Uṭmān ‘Alī**, *Maġālis al-Šūrā fī ‘Aṣr Ṣalāṭin al-Mamālīk*, al-Dār al-Ṭāqāfiya l-al-Našr, (Cairo, 1999), p. 169.

¹⁹ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Mawā‘iz wa-al-I’tibār fī Dīkr al-Ḥiṭaṭ wa al-‘Āṭār*, 3 Volumes, ed. Muḥammad Zinḥum, Madiḥa Elšrqawī, Maktabat Madbūlī, (Cairo, 1998), vol. 2, p. 704.

²⁰ **Al-Šištāwī, Muḥammad**, *Mutanazhāt al-Qāhira fī al-‘Aṣrayn al-Mamlūkī wa al-‘Uṭmānī*, Dār al-‘Āfāq al-‘Arabiyya, (Cairo, 1999), p. 213-214.

²¹ This pond was dug by *Amin al-Din Qarmūt*, who was the treasurer of the Sultanate. It was a part of *‘Ibn Ṭa‘lab* orchard. After digging *al-Nāṣṣirī Gulf*, the area surrounding this pond was occupied by well-designed and beautiful houses.

al-Maqrīzī, *al-Ḥiṭaṭ*, vol. 2, p. 755.

²² One of the gates of the Fatimid Cairo, which was later known as “*Bāb al-Ḥādīd*”

‘Ibn Taġrī Bardī, *al-Nuġūm al-Zāhirah*, vol. 9, p. 67.

²³ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Sulūk*, vol. 3, p. 80.

²⁴ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Ḥiṭaṭ*, vol. 2, p. 705.

²⁵ He is *Mihana ‘Ibn ‘Īssa ‘Ibn Mihana ‘Ibn Māni*, who was born after (650 H. / 1252 A.D.) and died in (735 H. / 1335 A.D.). He belonged to the tribe of *Benī Ṭay* in the north of the Arab Island. He became the price of the Arab in al-Šām during the reign of *al-Mansūr Qalāwūn*, and remained in this position till the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*. After that, he was one of the rebels against *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* who sacked him and tried to arrest him more than one time, but all these attempts were failed. In (733 H. / 1333 A.D.) he came to Egypt and asked *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* to forgive him. As a result, the sultan forgave him and returned him back to his position as the price of the Arab. For further information, see:

‘Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāminah fī ‘A’yān al-Mā‘ah al-Ṭāminah*, 4 Volumes, ed. Sālīm al-Karankawī, Dār al-Jīl, (Beirut, 1992), vol. 4, p. 368.

²⁶ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Sulūk*, vol. 3, p. 92.

deception, when he was told by one of his *Amīrs* that *Argūn* didn't execute his order²⁷. As a result, *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* had sacked him and ordered to arrest him with his son *Nāṣṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad* - who accompanied his father- after being return from pilgrimage journey in (727 H. / 1326 A.D.)²⁸. After that, the sultan decided to forgive him due to the intercession of some *Mamluk Amīrs*, and assigned him as the deputy of the sultan in *Ḥalab (Nā'ib Ḥalab)*²⁹.

Argūn travelled to *Ḥalab* in (727 H. / 1326 A.D.) to assume the tasks of his new position. He had remained there for about 4 years till he died in (731 H. / 1330 A.D.) at the age of forty and six³⁰. He has been buried in a tomb was prepared for him in *Ḥalab*³¹. During this time, he accomplished a number of achievements such as completing the digging works of *al-Sāḡūr* River in (731 H. / 1330 A.D.) to supply *Ḥalab* with fresh water. This river measures 108 km. long, and runs starting from *Intāb* in the south of Turkey, then passing the Syrian borders through a village called *'Ayn 'Azza* in *Ḥalab*, till it pours its water in the western bank of *Euphrates River*³².

He also had connected this river with another river called *Ḥalab River* -also known as *Quwaiq*³³ River- which helped in providing *Ḥalab* with more fresh water. It must be mentioned that *Ḥalab River* measures 129 km. long, and begins from *Sīnāb* in the south of Turkey, then it runs through *Ḥalab* from north to south till it ends at a village called *Ġizrāyā* in the south of *Ḥalab*³⁴. Historically, these two rivers are considered the main sources for water in *Ḥalab*.

His Characteristics

As for his personal characteristics, he was Turkish, handsome and good-looking, well-spoken, intelligent and observant³⁵. He also was kindly and merciful that he didn't kill any one or punish any robber when he was occupying the position of *Nā'ib Ḥalab*. Besides, he had good ethics and behavior, so the historians described him as the most distinctive and noblest among *Amīrs* and *Mamluks* of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*. In addition, he had a considerable status in the Sultan's residence, and was a great master for a large number of *Mamluks*³⁶.

²⁷ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Muqqafa al-Kabīr*, vol. 2, p. 20-21.

²⁸ **'Ibn Taḡrī Bardī**, *al-Manhal al-Sāfī*, vol. 2, p. 307.

²⁹ **'Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī**, *al-Durar al-Kāminah*, vol. 1, p. 352.

³⁰ **Al-Ṣafadī**, *al-Wāfī b-al-Wafiyāt*, vol. 8, p. 233.

³¹ **al-Ġazī**, *Nahr al-Dahab fī Tārīḥ Ḥalab*, (Ḥalab, 1952), p. 50.

³² **'Ibn al-Ṣaḥna**, *al-Dur al-Muntaḥab fī Tārīḥ Mamlakat Ḥalab*, ed. 'Abdallah Muḥammad al-Darwīš, 1st Edition, Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, (Damascus, 1984), p. 169.; **'Ibn Taḡrī Bardī**, *al-Nuḡūm al-Zāhirah*, vol. 9, p. 210.

³³ This name is derived from the Turkish word "*Quwāq*" which means the poplar trees. The reason of this name is represented in that the poplar trees were profusely planted on the two banks of the river.

al-Ġazī, *Nahr al-Dahab fī Tārīḥ Ḥalab*, p. 51.

³⁴ **'Ibn al-Ṣaḥna**, *al-Dur al-Muntaḥab fī Tārīḥ Mamlakat Ḥalab*, p. 134-136.

³⁵ **'Ibn Taḡrī Bardī**, *al-Nuḡūm al-Zāhirah*, vol. 9, p. 210.

³⁶ **Al-Ṣafadī**, *al-Wāfī b-al-Wafiyāt*, vol. 8, p. 232-233.

He was famous for his love to science and knowledge, so he gave a great interest for collecting and reading books, as well as, encouraging scientists and meeting them³⁷. He also had a considerable skill in writing the *Naskhi* inscription, so he wrote the book of *Saḥīḥ al-Buḥārī* by his precise and pretty script³⁸. Furthermore, he was a devout man, that he usually gathered the Qur'an reciters in his house every Friday for reading the Holly Qur'an³⁹. In addition, he excelled in learning Islamic *Fiqh* with its principles, especially the doctrine of *Abi Ḥanīfah*, so he had been permitted to answer the religious issues and questions of people⁴⁰. It must be mentioned that he had performed the pilgrimage three times, the first time was in (715 H. / 1315 A.D.), while the second was in (720 H. / 1320 A.D.), when he showed a notable asceticism and piousness, that he performed rituals of the pilgrimage in the form of poor people, and went from Mecca to 'Arafa walking on his feet. Finally, the third time was in (726 H. / 1325 A.D.)⁴¹.

His Sons

Although he had five sons⁴², but the historical sources didn't introduce a biography for them except: *al-Amīr Nāṣṣir al-Dīn 'Abī Bakr Muḥammad* and *al-Amīr Rukn al-Dīn 'Umar*.

Nāṣṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad 'Ibn Arḡūn was one of the princes who had a great status in the *Mamluk* state during the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*. As a result, he married *Ḥawand*⁴³ *Zeinab*, daughter of the sultan, in (723 H. / 1323 A.D.)⁴⁴. He also had occupied the position of *Amīr Ṭablḥānah*⁴⁵ during this period⁴⁶.

³⁷ 'Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāminah*, vol. 1, p. 352.; 'Ibn Taḡrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Sāfi*, vol. 2, p. 307.

³⁸ Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi b-al-Wafiyāt*, vol. 8, p. 232.

³⁹ al-Maqrīzī, *al-Muqqafa al-Kabīr*, vol. 2, p. 23.

⁴⁰ 'Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāminah*, vol. 1, p. 352.

⁴¹ al-Maqrīzī, *al-Muqqafa al-Kabīr*, vol. 2, p. 19, 23.

⁴² al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. 3, p. 148.

⁴³ It's a Persian term means the lady or the princess. For further information, see:

al-Qalqaṣandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'šā fī Ṣinā'at al-'Inšā*, 14 Volumes, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, (Cairo, 1914), vol. 6, p. 78.; al-Bāša, Ḥassan, *al-'Alqāb al-'Islāmiyya fī al-Tārīḥ wa al-Waṭā'iq wa al-'Atār*, Dār al-Nahḍa al-'Arabiyya, (Cairo, 1978), p. 280.

⁴⁴ al-Hādī, al-Sayyid Ṣalāḥ Muḥammad, *Awlād al-Nās fī 'Aṣr Ṣalāṭin al-Mamālīk*, (M.Sc., Faculty of Arts, Zaqaq University, 2016), p. 129.

⁴⁵ This job is considered one of the high ranking military positions at the *Mamluk* era. It is also called *Amīr Arbi'īn*, because it was used to describe the prince who was responsible for supervising and educating forty knights, as well as, leading seventy or eighty warriors in wars. It must be mentioned that the word *Ṭablḥānah* is a Persian term means "the drums house" or "the store of drums". As one of the functions of *Amīr Arbi'īn* was to bang drums during festivals and wars, so each one of them was called *Amīr Ṭablḥānah*. For further information, see:

al-Qalqaṣandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'šā*, vol. 4, p. 13.; al-Bāša, Ḥassan, *al-Funūn al-'Islāmiyya wa al-Waṭā'if 'alā al-'Atār al-'Arabiyya*, Dār al-Nahḍa al-'Arabiyya, (Cairo, 1966), vol. 1, p. 231.

⁴⁶ 'Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāminah*, vol. 3, p. 379.

It worth mentioning that he was very close to his father *-Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī-*, so he had accompanied him in his journey to pilgrimage in (726 H./ 1325 A.D.), as well as, he was arrested with him and imprisoned by the orders of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad* in (727 H./ 1326 A.D.)⁴⁷. He died during the life of his father in (727 H. / 1326 A.D.)⁴⁸.

Rukn al-Dīn 'Umar 'Ibn Argūn was born in Cairo when his father was the vice (*Nā'ib*) of *al-Sultān al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*, and died during the reign of *al-Aṣraf Ṣā'bān* in (773 H./ 1371 A.D.)⁴⁹. He has been promoted to a number of high positions during the *Bahārī Mamluk* period till he became *Amīr Mā'ah Muqadam Alf*⁵⁰. He also had occupied the position of vice (*Nā'ib*) of the sultanate in some provinces of the *Mamluk State* during the reign of *al-Aṣraf Ṣā'bān*, such as: *Safad* in (764 H. / 1362 A.D.) and (766 H. / 1364 A.D.)⁵¹, *al-Karak* in (769 H. / 1367 A.D.)⁵² and *Gaza* in (773 H. / 1371 A.D.)⁵³.

His Jobs

As mentioned before, *al-Amīr Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī* had occupied a number of considerable jobs during the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*, such as: a *Ġamadār* (709 H. / 1309 A.D.), a *Dawadār* (709-712 H. / 1309-1312 A.D.), vice of the Sultanate (*Nā'ib al-Saltanah*) (712-727 H. / 1312-1326 A.D.) and vice of the Sultan in *Halab (Nā'ib Halab)* (727-731 H. / 1326-1330 A.D.).

The Ġamadār

It was considered as one of the important positions at both Ayyubid and Mamluk eras. This term consists of two parts: the first “*Ġama*” is derived from a Turkish origin and means (dress or cloth), while the second “*Dār*” is derived from a Persian origin and means (the holder). So the term *Ġamadār* was used to describe

⁴⁷ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Muqqafa al-Kabīr*, vol. 2, p. 21.

⁴⁸ **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Sulūk*, vol. 3, p. 55.

⁴⁹ **'Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī**, *al-Durar al-Kāminah*, vol. 3, p. 154.

⁵⁰ This job is considered one of the high military positions at the Mamluk era, as it was the highest rank in the Mamluk Army. It was used to describe the prince who was responsible for supervising and educating one hundred knights, as well as, leading one thousand warriors in wars. For further information, see:

al-Qalqaṣandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aṣā*, vol. 4, p. 14.; **'Ibn Ṣāhīm al-Zāhirī (Ġars al-Dīn Ḥalīl, d. 873/1468)**, *Zubdat Kaṣf al-Mamālik wa Bayān al-Ṭuruq wa al-Masālik*, ed. Būlis Rāwis, , *Dār al-'Arab l-al-Bustānī*, (Cairo, 1988), p. 114.; **Van Berchem, (M.)**, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, Égypte, (Paris, 1903), p. 544.; **al-Bāša**, *al-Funūn al-'Islāmiyya*, vol. 1, p. 249.

⁵¹ **'Ibn Taġrī Bardī**, *al-Nuġūm al-Zāhirah*, vol. 11, p. 22.

⁵² **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Sulūk*, vol. 4, p. 317.

⁵³ **'Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī**, *'Inbāa al-Ġumur b-'Anbāa al-'Umr*, 4 Volumes, ed. Ḥassan Ḥabaṣī, *al-Maġlis al-'Alā l-al-Ṣu'ūn al-'Islāmiyya*, (Cairo, 2009), vol. 1, p. 27.

the prince who is responsible for the Sultan's clothes or the personal assistant of the Sultan that was helping him to wear his clothes. Besides, the *Ġamadār* had a secondary task which represented in protecting and guarding the Sultan, because he always accompanied the Sultan till he went to bed. It must be mentioned that the *Ġamadār* was usually chosen from young and handsome *Mamluks*⁵⁴.

The *Dawadār*

It was considered as one of the higher ranking jobs at the *Mamluk* period, as it had qualified its occupant to directly be a vice of the Sultan. Furthermore, it was used to symbolize the executive secretary of the sultan or his confidential advisor. The term "*Dawadār*" consists of two sections: the first "*Dawāh*" which is an Arabic word means (the ink bottle), while the second "*Dār*" is derived from a Persian origin and means (the holder), so the whole term gives the meaning of "Holder of Sultan's ink bottle". The *Dawadār* was responsible for the official decrees and correspondences of the Sultan, and he was mostly chosen from the military people. Sometimes, the sultan had more than one *Dawadār* in his entourage, as their number may be reached ten, and the head of them was called "*al-Dawadār al-Kabīr*"⁵⁵.

Vice of the Sultanate (*Nā'ib al-Saltanah*)

This job was considered as the highest ranking position at the *Mamluk* period, as its occupant was the most important person after the sultan, and was acting on behalf of the sultan in managing the state's affairs. This job had a notable effect and authority in the state administration either in the presence of the Sultan or in his absence, and sometimes his authority and power was greater than that of the Sultan himself. *Nā'ib al-Saltanah* had a number of considerable administrative and judicial tasks, such as: signing on official decrees, appointing princes and granting the title of "*Amīr*", nominating high officials of the state and supervising their appointment, digging gulfs, maintaining and constructing bridges, as well as, listening to people's complaints and solving their problems. It worth mentioning that *Nā'ib al-Saltanah* was chosen from the military people, and was called: the second Sultan, *Nā'ib al-Saltanah b-al-Ḥadrah* (the vice in the attendance of the Sultan), and *Kāfil al-Mamālik* (supporter and guarantor of the Islamic countries)⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ **al-Qalqašandī**, *Ṣubḥ al-A'sā*, vol. 5, p. 459.; **'Ibn Šāhīn al-Zāhirī**, *Zubdat Kašf al-Mamālik*, p. 116.; **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p. 390.; **al-Bāša**, *al-Funūn al-'Islāmiyya*, vol. 1, p. 356.

⁵⁵ **al-'Imarī**, *Masālik al-Absār fī Mamālik al-Amsār*, ed. Kāmil Suliamān al-Ḥabūrī, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, (Beirut, 2010), vol. 3, p. 309.; **al-Qalqašandī**, *Ṣubḥ al-A'sā*, vol. 5, p. 462.; **'Ibn Šāhīn al-Zāhirī**, *Zubdat Kašf al-Mamālik*, p. 116.; **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p. 363.; **al-Bāša**, *al-Funūn al-'Islāmiyya*, vol. 2, p. 519.

⁵⁶ **al-'Imarī**, *Masālik al-Absār*, vol. 3, p. 55-56.; **al-Qalqašandī**, *Ṣubḥ al-A'sā*, vol. 4, p. 26, vol. 12, p. 461.; **'Ibn Šāhīn al-Zāhirī**, *Zubdat Kašf al-Mamālik*, p. 112.; **al-Bāša**, *al-Funūn al-'Islāmiyya*, vol. 3, p. 1230.; **al-'Ašqar**, *Nā'ib al-Saltanah al-Mamlūkiyya fī Misr*, p. 67-72.

Vice of the Sultan in Halab (Nā'ib Halab)

Each of the *Mamluk* Sultans usually had appointed a deputy for himself in some important regions and provinces of the state, such as: Alexandria, Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt, *al-Šām*, *Halab*, *Safad*, *al-Karak*, *Gaza*, *Hamāh*, *Ṭarabuls*, etc⁵⁷. *Halab* was considered one of the famous and significant Syrian provinces at the *Mamluk* era, so it was called “a small sultanate”. Besides, its location on the northern borders gave it a special importance, because it represented a pivotal in many turbulent events and relations between the *Mamluks* and their neighbors, such as: the Mongols, Turkmen and Ottomans⁵⁸. Due to this importance, the vice of the sultan in *Halab* had an outstanding status in the state, that it was considered a small Sultan. Furthermore, he had his own entourage, followers, and administrative structure that helped him in controlling *Halab* and its surroundings⁵⁹.

His Monuments

The reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn* is characterized by founding a great number of Islamic architectural buildings by himself and his *Amīrs*. These buildings are mainly varied between religious and civil buildings. The religious buildings include Mosque, *Madrasa*, *Khānqāa*, Mausoleum and *Ribāt*, while the civil ones include Palace, House, Caravansary “*Khān*”, *Wikāla*, Market “*Qīsāriyya*”, Orchard “*Bustān*” and Public Bath “*Ḥammām*”⁶⁰.

It's noticeable that *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn* gave a considerable interest to establish and develop orchards, so he donated and distributed a large number of gardens and orchards to his *Amīrs*⁶¹. Among these orchards, is *al-Amīr Arḡūn al-Nāṣṣirī*'s orchard, who was one of his famous *Amīrs* and vice of the sultanate in (712-727 H. / 1312-1326 A.D.).

Orchard “Bustān” of Arḡūn al-Nāṣṣirī

Unfortunately, this orchard doesn't exist now and is replaced by modern buildings. According to *al-Maqrīzī*⁶², this orchard was located at the northern side of *Qarmūṭ* pond and overlooking *al-Nāṣṣirī* Gulf, which was passing through this orchard and other neighboring orchards of the *Mamluk Amīrs* from the south to the north⁶³.

⁵⁷ **al-'Ašqar**, *Nā'ib al-Salṭanah al-Mamlūkiyya fī Misr*, p. 67.; **al-Hādī**, *Awlād al-Nās fī 'Aṣr Ṣalāṭin al-Mamālīk*, p. 74, 82.

⁵⁸ **Āṣūr, Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fatāḥ**, *al-'Aṣr al-Mamālīkī fī Misr wa al-Šām*, Anglo-Egyptian, (Cairo, 1994), p. 212.

⁵⁹ **al-Hādī**, *Awlād al-Nās fī 'Aṣr Ṣalāṭin al-Mamālīk*, p. 82.

For further information, see:

'Ādil, al-Ḥāfiẓ Ḥamza, *Niyābat Halab fī 'Aṣr Ṣalāṭin al-Mamālīk*, al-Hay'a al-Maṣriyya al-'Ama li-al-Kitāb, (Cairo, 2000).

⁶⁰ **Zakī**, *Bunāt al-Qāhira fī Alf 'Am*, p.43-52.

⁶¹ **Al-Šištāwī**, *Mutanazhāt al-Qāhira*, p. 7-8.

⁶² **al-Maqrīzī**, *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-I'tibār*, vol. 2, p. 704.

⁶³ **Ibn Taḡrī Bardī**, *al-Nuḡūm al-Zāhirah*, vol. 9, p. 67.

Now, this site is replaced by the area located between *Muhammad Farīd* Street at the east, *Dubree* Street at the north, *'Urābī* Street at the west and *Alfī Bek* Street at the south⁶⁴. Originally, the site of this orchard was a part of the large orchard of *'Ibn Ta'lab*⁶⁵ which dated back to the Ayyubid era. It was measuring 75 acres and was planted with various kinds of trees and flowers such as palm trees, lemon, sycamore, jasmine, chrome, peach, pear, olive, pomegranate, Egyptian and Syrian mulberry.

His Artistic Works

The *Mamluk Amīrs* played a very important and prominent role in the artistic life at the *Mamluk* era, through producing a large number of masterpieces such as metal, glass, wooden and ceramic works, as well as, *Qur'an* manuscripts. These beautiful masterpieces symbolize a clear evidence on the richness of *Mamluk Amīrs* and their great love for architecture and art⁶⁶.

Enameled Mosque Lamp of *Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī* (fig.1, pl. 1)

The mosque lamp or "*al-Miškāh*" is considered one of the most famous and beautiful masterpieces that used for lighting mosques and mausoleums in Egypt and Syria, especially at the *Mamluk* era⁶⁷. The *Mamluk* Sultans gave their great interest to make glass mosque lamps with enamel decoration, and donated it to mosques and mausoleums. The *Mamluk Amīrs* imitated their Sultans and gave a great consideration to produce enameled mosque lamps carrying their names and titles⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ **Zakī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān**, *Mawsū'at Madīnat al-Qāhira fī Alf 'Am*, Anglo-Egyptian, (Cairo, 1987) p. 31.

⁶⁵ He is *Faḥr al-Dīn 'Ibn Ta'lab al-Ġa'farī*, one of the famous *Amīrs* during the reign of *al-Sultan al-Adel al-Ayyūbī*. His orchard "*Bustān*" was a part of *al-Lūq* Land, which was a good articulated land because of its rich and fertile soil that was created as a result of the Nile inundation, so that it was called "*al-Lūq*" which meaning the wet land. This orchard was measuring 75 acres was planted with various kinds of trees and flowers. After the death of *'Ibn Ta'lab*, his son sold the orchard to *al-Sultan al-Sāliḥ Naḡm al-Dīn Ayyūb*, who established a large square in this area, known as "*al-Sāliḥī* Square". After that, this square was replaced by "*al-Zāhirī* Square" during the reign of *al-Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars*, who built a large wall surrounding it with a huge gate called "*Bab al-Lūq*". At the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*, the soil of this land became more solid as a result of the decline of the Nile flood, the large orchard of *'Ibn Ta'lab* was replaced by different buildings, except a small area was occupied by the orchard of *Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī*.

al-Maqrīzī, *al-Ḥiṭaṭ*, vol. 2, p. 635-639.; **Mubārak, 'Alī Pasha**, *al-Ḥiṭaṭ al-Tawfīqiyya al-Ġadīda l-Miṣr al-Qāhira wa Muduniha wa Bilādiha al-Qadīma*, Būlāq, (Cairo, 1887), vol. 3, p. 58-61.

⁶⁶ **Atil, Esin**, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks*, (Washington, 1981), p.197.

⁶⁷ **Hassan, Zakī Muḥammad**, *Funūn al-'Islām*, (Cairo, 1948), p. 599.; **al-Bāša, Ḥassan**, *al-Miškāh fī al-Fan al-'Islāmī*, in "Maḡalat Minbar al-'Islām, No.3, Egypt, June 1967", p.124-125.; **Behrens-Abouseif, Doris**, *Mamluk and Post-Mamluk Metal Lamps*, Institut Français d'archéologie Orientale, Cairo, 1995.

⁶⁸ **al-Bāša**, *al-Miškāh Fī al-Fan al-'Islāmī*, p.125.; **'Utmān, Maḡdī 'Abd al-Ġawād**, *'Idāfa Ḡadīda 'Ilā Miškāwāt al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, in "Maḡalat al-Funūn al-Ša'biyya, No. 65, 83-95, Egypt, March 2003", p.3.

Among these lamps, is a very beautiful mosque lamp carrying the name of *al-Amīr Arġūn al-Nāṣṣirī*⁶⁹. It dated back to (727 H. / 1326 A.D.) and is preserved now in Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris⁷⁰.

This mosque lamp is looking like a vase with short circular base and short neck. Its height is 27 cm. and diameter is 25 cm. It made out of blown glass and has three handles for hanging it. This mosque lamp is colored with blue enamel and decorated with various gilded ornaments such as Arabic inscriptions, geometrical decorations, floral decorations and rank⁷¹ of *al-Amīr Arġūn* (fig.1, pl. 1).

Surrounding the upper part of the lamp's body - directly under its neck- is an inscription band written with gilded *Mamluk Thuluth* inscription interlaced with floral decorations on blue background. This band contains a construction text carrying the name and titles of *al-Amīr Arġūn*⁷², in addition to his job as the vice of the Sultanate (*Nā'ib al-Salṭanah*) (fig.2). The text says:

(In Arabic)

”المقر الأشرف الكريم العالي المولوى المشيدي المالكي الممهدي السندي العوني الغياثي الهمامي
السيفي أرغون الناصري نائب السلطنة المعظمه“

(In English)

”*al-Maqar al-Ašraf al-Karīm al-‘Ālī al-Mawlawī al-Muṣaydī al-Malikī al-Mumahadī al-Sanadī al-‘Awnī al-Ġayāfī al-Hammāmī al-Sayfī Arġūn al-Nāṣṣirī Nā'ib al-Salṭanah al-Mu‘aṣamah*”

⁶⁹ It must be mentioned that, there is another mosque lamp of *al-Amīr Arġūn al-Nāṣṣirī* was preserved in the Palace of *al-Amīr Youssef Kamāl* in Naġ‘ *Ḥamādy*. Unfortunately, this mosque lamp was damaged, then a replica was made for it and preserved also in Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris.

Dāwūd, Maysa Maḥmūd, *al-Miškāwāt al-Zuġāġiyya fī al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, (M.Sc., Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, 1971), p. 84.; **al-‘Ašqar**, *Nā'ib al-Salṭanah*, p. 271.

⁷⁰ **Wiet, Gaston**, *Lampes et Bouteilles en Verre Emaille*, Catalogue General du Musee Arabe au Caire, (Le Caire, 1929), p.159.

⁷¹ This word is derived from the Persian term “*Ranġ*” which means the color. In Islamic architecture and arts, the word rank used to signify blazons or slogans of the sultans and their princes during the middle ages. Rank is considered one of the most important and famous decorative elements at the Mamluk era. It's used by the *Mamluk Sultans* to prove their property for their architectural buildings, while used by the *Mamluk Amīrs* to indicate their high positions. For further information, see:

Muṣṭafa, Muḥammad, *al-Rūnūk fī ‘Aṣr al-Mamālīk*, in “Maġalat al-Risāla, no. 400, 268-271, Egypt, 1941”, p. 268-271.; **al-Bāša**, *al-Funūn al-‘Islāmiyya*, vol. 1, p.170.; **‘Abd al-Rāziq, Aḥmad**, *al-Rūnūk ‘alā ‘Aṣr Ṣalāṭin al-Mamālīk*, in “al-Maġala al-Tārīḥiyya al-Maṣriyya, no. 21, 67-116, Egypt, 1974”, p.67.; **Dāwūd, Maysa Maḥmūd**, *al-Rūnūk al-‘Islāmiyya*, in “Maġalat al-Dārah, no. 3, vol. 7, 26-41, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1982”, p.26.; **Omar, Radwa M.**, *Le Blason du Calice sur les Tapis Mameloukes*, in “Journal of the Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality, no. 2, vol. 12, 41-51, Egypt, December 2015”, p. 41.

⁷²**al-Bāša**, *al-Funūn al-‘Islāmiyya*, vol. 3, p.1233.

This construction text is surrounded by two decorative bands of various floral ornaments (fig.1, pl. 1). The upper one is decorated with shapes of triple leaves and calyx (fig.3), while the lower one is decorated with Arabesque interlaced with flowers (fig.4). These two bands include different shapes of geometrical decorations, such as: triangles, rectangles and squares that are interlaced with the floral ornaments.

Moreover, there are floral ornaments on the lower parts of the lamp's body, as well as, on its base and head (pl. 1).

Furthermore, the lamp's neck is decorated with *al-Baqġa Blazon*⁷³ which is designed as a circle divided into three horizontal parts, the upper and lower ones are plain and colored with red enamel, while the middle one is decorated with the shape of *al-Baqġa* (folded cloth) on gilded background (fig.5, 6). This blazon is surrounded with circular band of floral decorations. This blazon indicates the previous position of *al-Amīr Argūn* as a *Ġamadār*, although the mosque lamp was made when he occupied the position of *Nā'ib al-Salṭanah*⁷⁴. This means that he was very proud of bearing the blazon of his previous position even after his promotion to a higher position.

It must be mentioned that the functional blazons played a considerable role in decorating different Islamic masterpieces of the *Mamluk Amīrs*, especially glass and metal works. In addition to the mosque lamp of *Argūn*, other mosque lamps of *al-Nāṣṣir Mohammed's Amīrs* are decorated by blazons denoting their posts such as: *al-Baqġa Blazon*, *al-Ka's Blazon* (fig.7) or *al-Šarābdār Rank*⁷⁵ and the Polo Stick Blazon (fig.8) or *al-Ġukindār Rank*⁷⁶. For example:

⁷³ This Blazon or rank is considered one of the famous functional blazons at the Mamluk era. It formed as circle divided into 3 parts, the middle one is decorated with square or diamond shape of folded textile cloth. This rank is used to indicate the position of *al-Ġamadār*, the prince who is responsible for the Sultan's clothes.

Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, (Oxford, 1933), pl. XI, figs. 9-10.; **'Abd al-Rāziq**, *al-Rūnūk 'alā 'Aṣr Ṣalāṭin al-Mamālīk*, p.71.; **Dāwūd**, *al-Rūnūk al-'Islāmiyya*, p.32.

⁷⁴ **Dāwūd**, *al-Miškāwāt al-Zuġāġiyya*, p. 435.

⁷⁵ This Blazon or rank was related to the prince who is responsible for offering drinks to the Sultan, so it was one of the most important jobs at the Mamluk era. This Amir was called "*al-Šarābdār*" which is a Persian term consists of two parts: "*Šarāb*" meaning (drink) and "*Dār*" meaning (the holder). This blazon is formed as circle divided into 3 parts, the middle one is decorated with the image of a drinking cup.

Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, pl. VI.; **Hassan, Zakī Muḥammad**, *Aṭlaṣ al-Funūn al-Zuḥrufiyya wa al-Taṣāwīr al-'Islāmiyya*, (Cairo, 1956), p. 169.; **'Abd al-Rāziq**, *al-Rūnūk 'alā 'Aṣr Ṣalāṭin al-Mamālīk*, p.71.; **Dāwūd**, *al-Rūnūk al-'Islāmiyya*, p.31.

⁷⁶ This Blazon is formed as circle divided into 3 parts, the middle one is decorated with the polo stick shape. This rank is related to the post of *al-Ġukindār*, which is a Persian word consists of two parts: "*Ġukīn*" meaning (polo stick) and "*Dār*" meaning (the holder), so the term *al-Ġukindār* was used to describe the prince who is responsible for the Polo game. This rank reflects

- *al-Baqġa* Blazon appears on the mosque lamp of *al-Amīr Sayf al-Dīn Aqbuġa* in Kingston Museum in London.
- *al-Ka's* Blazon appears on the mosque lamps of *al-Amīr Qūsūn* in the Metropolitan Museum in New York and *al-Amīr 'Alāa al-Dīn al-Ṭanbaġa al-Mardāni* in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, in addition to, the collection of mosque lamps of *al-Amīr Šayġu al-Nāšširī* in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, the Metropolitan Museum, Louvre Museum and the British Museum in London.
- The Polo Stick Blazon is used to decorate the mosque lamp of *al-Amīr 'Aāl Malik al-Ġukindār* in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.

His Titles

Argūn al-Nāšširī had several titles that are inscribed on his mosque lamp (*Miškāh*), such as:

al-Maqar

It was one of the main titles at the Mamluk era, and appeared in the texts of both Mamluk Sultans and their great *Amīrs*. The linguistic origin of this title means “stability”, so it was used to indicate the greatness and magnificence of the person⁷⁷. Like *Argūn al-Nāšširī*, this title appeared on masterpieces of some *Amīrs* of *al-Nāssir Muġammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*, such as: mosque lamp of *al-Amīr Qūsūn* in the Metropolitan Museum (730 H. / 1329 A.D.)⁷⁸ and his metal lantern (*Tannūr*) in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (730 H. / 1329 A.D.)⁷⁹, as well as, mosque lamp of *al-Amīr 'Aāl Malik al-Ġukindār* in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (741 H. / 1340 A.D.)⁸⁰. Besides, this title is written also on some texts of the architectural buildings that belong to *al-Nāššir Muġammad's Amīrs*, such as: Mosque of *al-Amīr Qūsūn* at *Muġammad 'Ali* Street (727 H. / 1326 A.D.)⁸¹ and *Madrasa* of *al-Amīr Aqbuġa 'Abd al-Wāġid* that attached to *al-Azhar* Mosque (740 H. / 1339 A.D.)⁸².

the wealthy and luxury life at the Mamluk era, which shown in the considerable interest for various sports and games by the Mamluk Sultans.

'**Abd al-Rāziq**, *al-Rūnūk 'alā 'Ašr Šalāṭin al-Mamālīk*, p.71.; **Dāwūd**, *al-Rūnūk al-'Islāmiyya*, p. 35.

⁷⁷ **al-Bāša, Hassan**, *al-'Alqāb al-'Islāmiyya*, p.489.

⁷⁸ **Mayer**, *Saracenic Heraldry*, p. 186-187.; **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p.657.

⁷⁹ **Wiet, Gaston**, *Objets en Cuivres*, Catalogue General du Musee Arabe au Caire, (Le Caire, 1932), p. 40-41.

⁸⁰ **Wiet**, *Lampes*, p.67.; **Mayer**, *Saracenic Heraldry*, p. 61.

⁸¹ **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p. 121.; **al-Bāša**, *al-'Alqāb al-'Islāmiyya*, p. 490.

⁸² **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p. 185.; **al-Bāša**, *al-'Alqāb al-'Islāmiyya*, p. 491.

al-Ašraf

In the Arabic language, this title is an overstatement formula from the adjective “*Šarīf*” that means noble or honorable⁸³. It was one of the most important and high ranking titles during the *Mamluk* era, so that many Sultans were nicknamed with it⁸⁴, like *al-Ašraf Ḥalīl ‘Ibn Qalāwūn* (689-693 H. / 1290-1293 A.D.), *al-Ašraf Bersbāy* (825-841 H. / 1422-1438 A.D.), *al-Ašraf Qaitbāy* (872-901 H. / 1468-1496 A.D.) etc. It was one of the secondary titles at the Mamluk era, which usually used to describe the main titles such as *al-Maqar* and *al-Maqām*⁸⁵.

al-Karīm

It means a generous person, and it was an honorary title used by both military and civilians. It was one of the secondary titles at the Mamluk era, which directly following the main titles such as: *al-Maqar* and *al-Ġanāb*⁸⁶.

al-‘Ālī

It’s an adjective derived from the name “*al-‘Alāa*” that gives the meaning of highness and notability. It was one of the secondary titles at the Mamluk era, which usually used to describe one of the main titles such as: *al-Maqar*, *al-Maqām*, *al-Maġlis* and *al-Ġanab*. It was one of the honorary titles that were written in texts and formal correspondences of *Mamluk* Sultans and their deputies of the Sultanate, in addition to high officials and the clergy⁸⁷. Other *Amīrs* of *al-Nāššir Muḥammad* deployed this title in their texts, like *al-Amīr Silār* on the *Mihrab* he added to ‘*Amr ‘Ibn al-‘Ās* mosque (702 H. / 1303 A.D.)⁸⁸, as well as, *al-Amīr Qūsūn* on his mosque lamp in the Metropolitan Museum (730 H. / 1329 A.D.)⁸⁹ and his metal lantern (*Tannūr*) in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (730 H. / 1329 A.D.)⁹⁰.

⁸³ **al-Qalqašandī**, *Šubḥ al-A ‘šā*, vol. 6, p. 98.

⁸⁴ **Lane-Poole, (Stanely)**, *The Mohammadan Dynasties*, (Paris, 1925), p. 81-83.

⁸⁵ **al-Bāša**, *al- ‘Alqāb al- ‘Islāmiyya*, p. 160.

⁸⁶ **al-Bāša**, *al- ‘Alqāb al- ‘Islāmiyya*, p. 437.

⁸⁷ **al-Qalqašandī**, *Šubḥ al-A ‘šā*, vol. 6, p. 115-116.; **al-Bāša**, *al- ‘Alqāb al- ‘Islāmiyya*, p. 437.; **al- ‘Ašqar**, *Nā ‘ib al-Salṭanah*, p. 108.

⁸⁸ **Mayer**, *Saracenic Heraldry*, p.196.; **al-Bāša**, **Ḥassan**, *al-Qāhira. Tārīḥaha Funūnaha ‘Atāraha*, (Cairo, 1975), p. 425.

⁸⁹ **Mayer**, *Saracenic Heraldry*, p. 186-187.; **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p.657.

⁹⁰ **Wiet**, *objets en cuivres*, p. 40-41.

al-Mawlawī

This title is used to give the meaning of “the lordship” or “sense of belonging”. It is mentioned within texts of the *Mamluk* Sultans and their deputies of the sultanate, as well as, high military and civilian officials⁹¹. During the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*, this title is inscribed also in texts of *al-Amīr Qūsūn* on his mosque lamp in the Metropolitan Museum (730 H. / 1329 A.D.)⁹² and his metal lantern (*Tannūr*) in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (730 H. / 1329 A.D.)⁹³.

al-Muṣaydī

It was one of the high ranking titles at the *Mamluk* era that dedicated to the high *Amīrs*, and it was used to indicate the meaning of “establishing and strengthening the state”⁹⁴.

al-Malikī

This title was used by deputies of the sultanate and high military officials at the *Mamluk* era to give the meaning of “the ownership or possession”. In addition to the mosque lamp of *al-Amīr Argūn*, this title is also appeared on the mosque lamp of *al-Amīr Qūsūn* in the Metropolitan Museum (730 H. / 1329 A.D.)⁹⁵ during the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*.

al-Mumahadī

It was one of the high ranking titles at the *Mamluk* era, so it is mentioned in texts and official letters of the high military *Amīrs*. This title was used to indicate the meaning of “developing and reinforcement of the state”⁹⁶.

al-Sanadī

It was one the honorary titles that dedicated to deputies of the sultanate during the *Mamluk* era, and it was utilized to give the meaning of “supporting of the state”⁹⁷.

⁹¹ **al-Qalqaṣandī**, *Ṣubḥ al-A‘šā*, vol. 6, p. 31.; **al-Bāša**, *al-‘Alqāb al-‘Islāmiyya*, p. 518.

⁹² **Mayer**, *Saracenic Heraldry*, p. 186-187.; **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p.657.

⁹³ **Wiet**, *Objets en Cuivres*, p. 40-41.

⁹⁴ **al-Qalqaṣandī**, *Ṣubḥ al-A‘šā*, vol. 6, p. 28.; **al-Bāša**, *al-‘Alqāb al-‘Islāmiyya*, p. 471.

⁹⁵ **Mayer**, *Saracenic Heraldry*, p. 186-187.; **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p.657.

⁹⁶ **al-Qalqaṣandī**, *Ṣubḥ al-A‘šā*, vol. 6, p. 30.; **al-Bāša**, *al-‘Alqāb al-‘Islāmiyya*, p. 509.

⁹⁷ **al-‘Aṣqar**, *Nā‘ib al-Salṭanah*, p. 120.

al-‘Awnī

This honorary title was dedicated to the high military officials at the Mamluk era, and it was used to indicate the meaning of “aiding the state and improving its affairs”⁹⁸.

al-Ġayāfī

It was one of the honorary titles that used at the *Mamluk* era to give the meaning of “offering help and support to the state”. This title is mentioned in texts and official correspondences of the *Mamluk* Sultans and their high *Amīrs*⁹⁹.

al-Hammāmī

It means “the brave or the gallant”. It was one of the honorary titles that dedicated to the high military officials at the Mamluk era¹⁰⁰. In addition to *al-Amīr Argūn*, this title is also appeared on texts dedicated to *al-Amīr Qūsūn* during the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*, such as the inscription on his mosque lamp in the Metropolitan Museum (730 H. / 1329 A.D)¹⁰¹, and the construction text of his mosque at *Muḥammad ‘Ali Street* (727 H. / 1326 A.D.)¹⁰².

al-Sayfī

This title is derived from *Sayf al-Dīn* -the first name of *al-Amīr Argūn* - which interpreted the meaning of “the power and domination”. This title is considered one of the most famous and wide spread titles at the *Mamluk* era, especially among Sultans and their high military *Amīrs*¹⁰³.

al-Nāṣṣirī

This title was dedicated to *Amīrs* and *Mamluks* of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*, and it means the “victorious”¹⁰⁴.

⁹⁸ **al-Qalqaṣandī**, *Ṣubḥ al-A ‘šā*, vol. 6, p. 21.; **al-Bāša**, *al- ‘Alqāb al- ‘Islāmiyya*, p. 410.

⁹⁹ **al-Qalqaṣandī**, *Ṣubḥ al-A ‘šā*, vol. 6, p. 21.; **al-Bāša**, *al- ‘Alqāb al- ‘Islāmiyya*, p. 413.

¹⁰⁰ **al-Bāša**, *al- ‘Alqāb al- ‘Islāmiyya*, p. 537.

¹⁰¹ **Mayer**, *Saracenic Heraldry*, p. 186-187.; **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p.657.

¹⁰² **Van Berchem**, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, p. 121.

¹⁰³ **al-Qalqaṣandī**, *Ṣubḥ al-A ‘šā*, vol. 5, p. 488.; **al-Bāša**, *al- ‘Alqāb al- ‘Islāmiyya*, p. 343.

¹⁰⁴ **‘Abd al-Raḥīm (‘Abd Al-Raḥīm Ḥalaf)**, *Dirāsa fī al-Funūn al-Mamlūkiyya min Ḥilāl Munša ‘āt wa Tuḥaf al-Amīr Tuquzdumūr al-Ḥamawī*, in “Annales Islamologiques, No.42, 49-78, IFAO, Cairo, 2008”, p.63.

Conclusion

The current research is considered as an attempt to highlight the political, historical, archaeological and artistic sides of *al-Amīr Arġūn al-Nāṣṣirī*, who was considered as one of the most famous *Amīrs* at the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*. This research revealed a number of important results, as following:

- The *Mamluk Amīrs* played a very important role in all fields side by side with their Sultans during the *Mamluk* era, especially in the architectural and artistic lives. Among them is *al-Amīr Arġūn al-Nāṣṣirī*.
- *Arġūn al-Nāṣṣirī* has a significant role in the political life at the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*, and had been promoted to a number of high ranking positions, such as a *Ġamadār*, a *Dawādār*, vice of the sultanate (*Nā'ib al-Saltānah*) and finally the vice of the sultan in *Ḥalab* (*Nā'ib Ḥalab*).
- He occupied the position of vice of the sultanate (*Nā'ib al-Saltānah*) for about (16 years) from (712 H. / 1312 A.D.) to (727 H. / 1326 A.D.), and this was considered the longest period during the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*.
- He was one of the close and reliable *Amīrs* to *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad 'Ibn Qalāwūn*, so he assigned him with a number of difficult and important tasks, such as being the supervisor of digging *al-Nāṣṣirī* Gulf in (725 H. / 1324 A.D.) and completing the digging works of *al-Sāġūr* River in *Ḥalab* at (731 H. / 1330 A.D.). He also granted him an orchard (*Bustān*) that was located near the area of *Bab al-Lūq* and overlooking *al-Nāṣṣirī* Gulf.
- He contributed to extinguish the fire that happened in Cairo at the year of (715 H. / 1315 A.D.), and showed a great skill and activity in facing this disaster.
- He played a very important role in calming down the *Mamluk Amīrs* towards the sultan's policy and decisions, as well as, controlling them as a result of his great status among them.
- Like most of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad's Amīrs*, *Arġūn* had his own contributions in the field of Islamic arts, such as producing a very beautiful enameled mosque lamp (*Miškāh*) preserved in Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris. This mosque lamp is decorated with various topics of Islamic ornaments such as: inscriptions, floral motifs, geometrical decorations and functional blazon. The inscriptions are represented in a foundation text written with *Thuluth* script and contains the name of *Arġūn al-Nāṣṣirī*, as well as, his titles and job as a vice of the sultanate. The floral motifs encompasses various patterns such as arabesque, triple leaves, calyx and flowers, while the geometrical decorations includes few shapes of triangles, squares and rectangles.

- The research studied and analyzed the several titles of *Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī*, which proved his outstanding position and significant role at the reign of *al-Nāṣṣir Muḥammad*. These titles are varied between high ranking, honorary, military, main and secondary titles, such as: *al-Maqar*, *al-Ašraf*, *al-Karīm*, *al-‘Ālī*, *al-Mawlawī*, *al-Muṣaydī*, *al-Malikī*, *al-Mumahadī*, *al-Sanadī*, *al-‘Awnī*, *al-Ġayātī*, *al-Hammāmī*, *al-Sayfī* and *al-Nāṣṣirī*.
- *Argūn al-Nāṣṣirī* utilized *al-Baqḡa* blazon or *al-Ġamadār* Rank to decorate his mosque lamp, although it was made when he occupied the position of *Nā’ib al-Salṭanah*. This means that he was very proud of keeping the blazon of his previous position even after was being promoted to higher positions as a *Dawādār* then vice of the sultanate.

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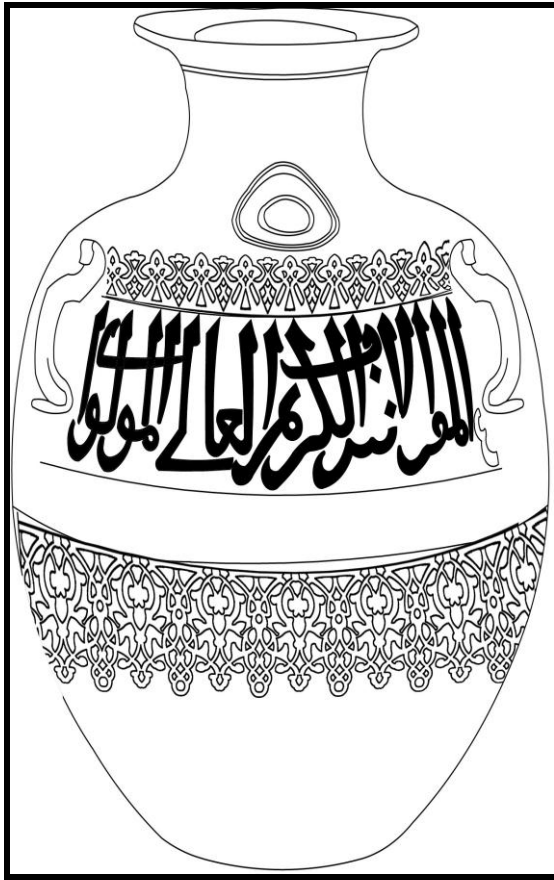


Fig. 1 : Mosque Lamp of Argün al-Nāṣṣirī

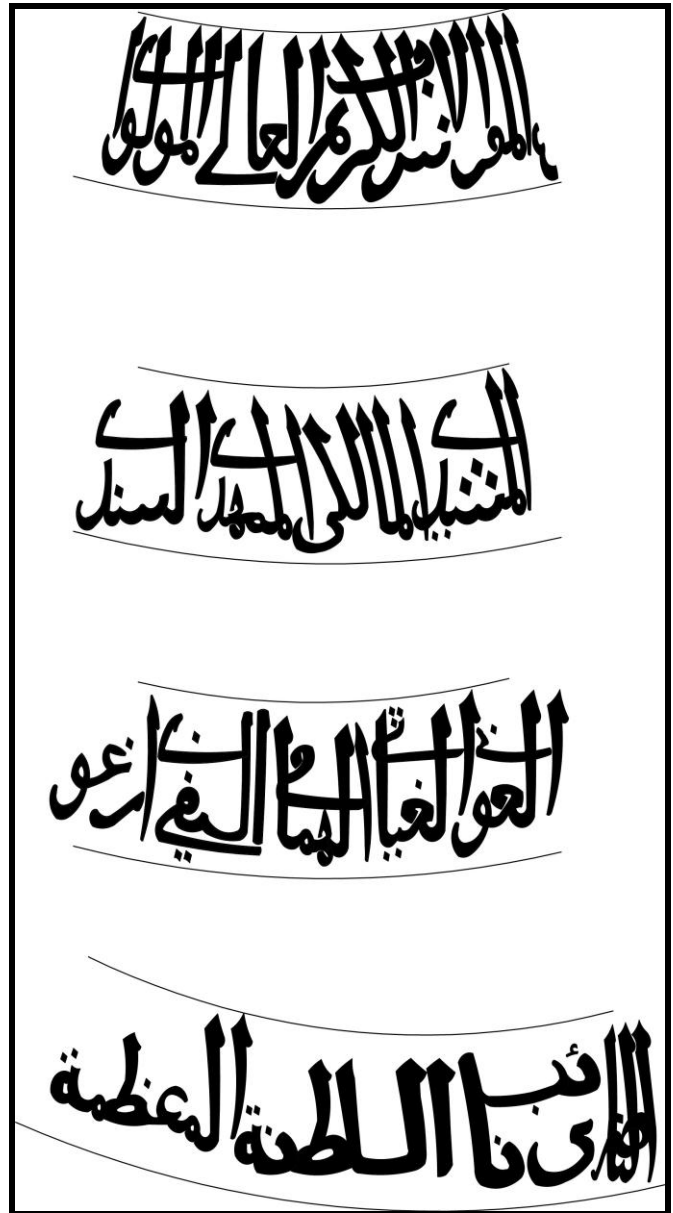


Fig. 2 : The Construction Text on Mosque Lamp of Argün al-Nāṣṣirī



Fig. 3 : The Floral Ornaments on Mosque Lamp of Argün al-Nāşşiri

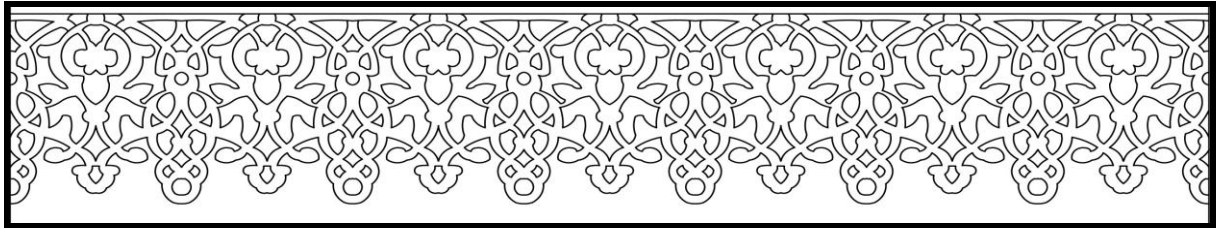


Fig. 4 : The Floral Ornaments on Mosque Lamp of Argün al-Nāşşiri

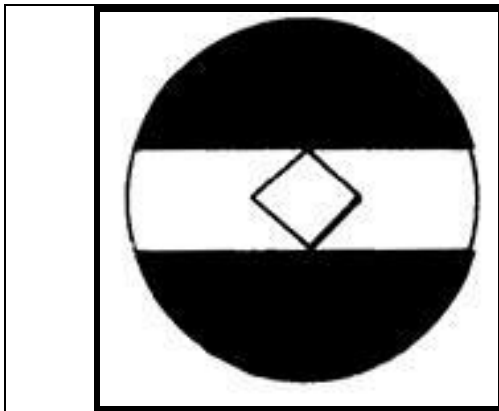


Fig. 5 : *al-Baqğa* Blazon

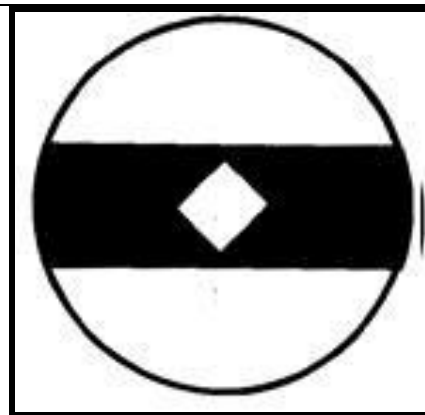


Fig. 6 : *al-Baqğa* Blazon



Fig. 7 : *al-Baqqa* Blazon

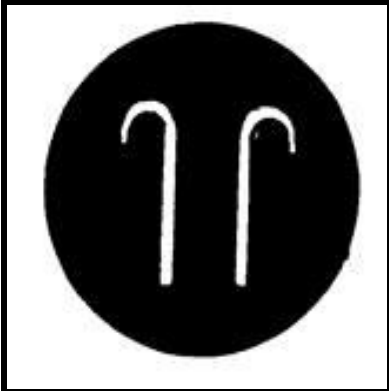
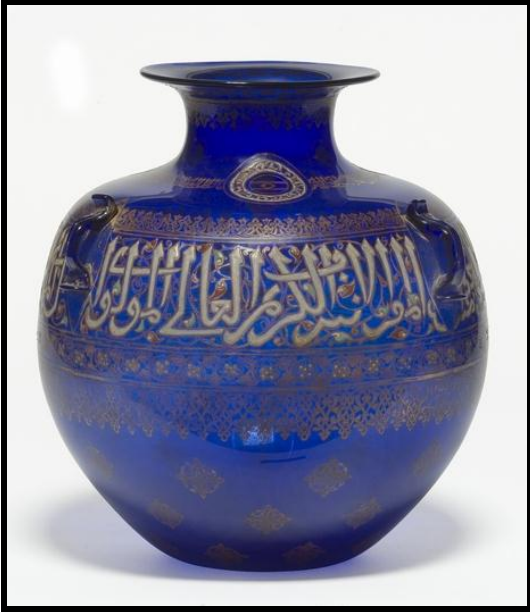


Fig. 8 : The Polo Stick Blazon



pl. 1: Mosque Lamp of Argün al-Nāşşiri

دراسة آثارية فنية حضارية لأعمال الأمير أرغون الناصري

(٦٨٥-٧٣١ هـ / ١٢٨٦-١٣٣٠ م)

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الملخص العربي

تميز عصر السلطان الناصر محمد بن قلاوون بازدهار وتقدم عظيمين في شتى مجالات الحياة، وخاصة في مجالي العمارة والفنون الاسلامية، وقد تحقق ذلك بفضل الجهود والإنجازات الكبيرة التي بذلها الناصر محمد بالإضافة الى أمرائه ومماليكه، ومن بينهم الأمير الكبير أرغون الناصري (المعروف بأرغون النائب) الذي يعتبر أحد أشهر الأمراء في تلك الفترة وأكثرهم نشاطاً وتأثيراً في الحياة السياسية داخليا وخارجيا، حيث كان من جملة الأمراء الذين يعتمد عليهم السلطان الناصر محمد في انجاز الكثير من المهام والتغلب على الصعاب التي تواجه الدولة، ولذلك فقد شغل منصب نائب السلطنة (والذي يعد أهم المناصب وأرفعها في العصر المملوكي) لمدة ستة عشر عاما وهي فترة طويلة مقارنة بسابقه، لذلك يهدف هذا البحث الى القاء الضوء على الحياة المعمارية والفنية للأمير أرغون شاه الناصري، الى جانب إظهار إسهاماته ومجهوداته البارزة في الجوانب السياسية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية والثقافية للدولة المملوكية خلال تلك الحقبة الهامة، وقد توصل البحث الحالى الى عدد من النتائج الهامة التي أثبتت الدور الحيوى لأرغون الناصري في شتى المجالات خلال عهد الناصر محمد بن قلاوون.

الكلمات الدالة: أرغون الناصري، مملوك، محمد الناصر.