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**ISTABL QAWSUN : THE HISTORY
AND RECONSTRUCTION OF AN
ABANDONED PALACE**

**MENNAT ALLAH MOHAMMED EL MAHY
2018**

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The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Istabl Qawsun: The History and Reconstruction of an Abandoned Palace

A Thesis Submitted to

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

By

Mennat-Allah Mohammed El Mahy

Under the supervision of **Dr. Bernard O'Kane**

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ABSTRACT

During the third reign of al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, some of the high-ranking emirs became part of the Mamluk society through different scenerios than conventional means of purchase and recruitment. Al-Nasir Muhammad discarded the patterns of training and advancement that were carried out during the reigns of Baybars and Qalawun. As a result, these emirs did not go through periods of apprenticeship at Mamluk schools nor served as regular mamluk soldiers prior to being awarded an *iqta'* and military command.¹ Al-Nasir Muhammad was trying to win the unconditional loyalty of his mamluks, dreading from being dethroned for a third time.² Accordingly, he favored some of those emirs greatly, privileged them with ranks, *iqta's* and properties, and allowed them to marry into the royal family believing that "when the mamluk sees riches with his eyes and in his heart, he forgets his country and follows his master."³

Emir Sayf al-Din Qawsun al-Sayfi al-Maliki al-Nasiri al-Saqi was one of those fortunate emirs, if not the most fortunate of them all. Emir Qawsun, initially a Mongol non-mamluk, attained more power and admiration from his master than any emir in his time. Therefore, it came as no surprise that in 738/1337-8 when al-Nasir Muhammad decided to revisit the area beneath the Citadel and urbanize the space overlooking the ancient Qara Maydan and Rumayla square that he included a lavish palace for his *saqi*, Commander of One Thousand and both son-in-law and brother-in-law. While there are four partially surviving

¹ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 35.

² Ibid., 34.

³ Ibid., 32; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:525.

Bahri Mamluk princely palaces in Cairo, the only surviving example of this metropolitan project is that of Emir Qawsun near Rumayla, known after several names of Qasr, Dar, Bayt or Istabl Qawsun.

In the study of Islamic residential architecture, the terms *qasr*, *qa'a*, *dar*, *bayt* and *istabl* were commonly used by chroniclers, historians and travelers. While some terminologies survived with the same connotation throughout different periods, others changed to signify different architectural compositions than those indicated in earlier periods. Nevertheless, this evolution in terminologies is perfectly comprehensible given the influence of foreign language of the ruling dynasty and its fusion and application to the local elements of architecture.

Preceding the Mamluk period, al-Maqrizi's accounts of the Fatimid palaces use the terms *qasr* and *qa'as* in describing the Great Eastern and Western Palaces in Bayn al-Qasrayn. From his *Khitat*, we know that the Great Eastern Palace was not a single structure but a series of gates, pavilions, belvederes (*manzaras*), a dynastic mausoleum, kitchens and suites of rooms arranged around courtyards behind high walls⁴ and that its internal structures were not a product of a single year or ruler.⁵ We also know that it consisted of ten (maybe

⁴ Bloom, *Arts of the City Victorious*, 66.

⁵ Raymond, *Cairo*, 50. He compares a compact palace structure like that of Palais de Versailles to the Great Eastern Palace founded in different phases by different patrons.

twelve) individual pavilions (*qusur*) that were square in plan and attached to each other⁶ with *qa'as* and *manzaras* while the royal stables and storehouses were separate structures.⁷

Of the royal secular architecture dating from the Bahri Mamluk period, four palaces have survived partially, those of Alin Aq (1293), Bashtak (1334-39), Qawsun (or Yashbak – as it is widely known) (1335-7), and Emir Taz (1352) (Fig. 0.1). The palaces were named after their original builders; however, succeeding them, each palace was occupied by several emirs and residents throughout the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. One of these palaces was mentioned in three *waqf* documents over different periods. In these *waqfs*, the architectural terms and descriptions of the components of this palace shows the evolution of terminologies of Islamic residential architecture over successive periods. In al-Maqrizi's *Khitat*, the terms *qasr*, *qa'a*, *dar*, *bayt* and *istabl* sometimes alternate in use within a single entry when describing a Bahri Mamluk princely residence. The terms *qasr* and *istabl* appear often in primary sources and *waqfs* which would help conclude the concept of a Bahri Mamluk palace, derived probably from the royal archetype of al-Nasir Muhammad's Qasr al-Ablaq in the Citadel which is known from various accounts to have contained *qa'as* and a separate royal *istabl* structure located close to Bab al-Silsila.

⁶ Bloom, *Arts of the City Victorious*, 66. Bloom reports that in his narrative, Nasir Khusraw mentions that the Great Eastern Palace consisted of twelve separate buildings.

⁷ Raymond, *Cairo*, 53; al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:242, 287. We know that the stables of the Western Palace occupied two buildings; *Istabl al-Tarma* located to the north of al-Azhar mosque and *Istabl al-Jimayza* next to the Western Palace.

The Qasr, Dar, Bayt or Istabl⁸ of Qawsun (or Yashbak as it is sometimes known) (No. 266) is an edifice with a rich and staggering history that started before its expansion by Emir Qawsun in the Bahri Mamluk period. Not only did it serve as the residence of this prominent emir of al-Nasir Muhammad and a venue for ceremonial receptions and their customs; after Qawsun's death, the palace continued to serve as the residence of *atabak al-'asakir* (Commander General of the Mamluk army).⁹ During the Circassian Mamluk period, the palace remained the residence of high ranking emirs such as Yashbak who refurbished it and after whose name the palace is sometimes attributed. After Emir Yashbak's death, the palace became the residence of the *dawadar* while the *atabaks* resided the new lush district of Azbakiyya.¹⁰ A third widely known contributor to the palace was Emir Aqbardi min 'Ali Bay al-Dawadar, one of the mamluks of Sultan Qaytbay, to whom the fifteenth century structures of the palace are sometimes attributed. Ibn Iyas, a historian who lived during the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of Ottoman rule, accounts on these two great fifteenth century emirs who were part of Qaytbay's intimate entourage. Nonetheless, he never gives a precise description of the residence which they inhabited; it was simply referred to as "the palace of Yashbak"¹¹ or "the palace of Aqbardi".¹² Despite that the chronicles of Ibn Iyas did not present any description of the palace, but from time to time an indication of its geographical position would surface; the historian reports that the palace "was near Hadrat

⁸Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:72. These terms were used by al-Maqrizi in his entry of *Istabl* Qawsun.

⁹ El Behnasi, *Mamluk Art*, 88.

¹⁰ Petry, *Cambridge History*, 1:310; Garcin, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 182-185.

¹¹ Ghaly, *The Saliba Street*, 13; MacKenzie, *Ayyubid Cairo*, 81.

¹² MacKenzie, *Ayyubid Cairo*, 84.

al-Baqar and at the same time close to the Complex of Sultan Hasan and al-Madrasa al-Bunduqdariyya."¹³

This thesis intends to study the Palace of Qawsun within its historical and geographical context, tracing its architecture from pre-existing buildings and before the expansion done by Qawsun. It also traces the residents of the palace and their possible restorations and additions. Given its proximity to the ancient Qara Maydan and Rumayla Square, the area of Birkit al-Fil, the Complex of Sultan Hasan and the Madrasa of Sunqur Sa'di, it was possible to extract the history of the palace through the entries that documented these quarters and buildings. And since the palace was a designated residence of certain ranks within the Mamluk army and society, it was possible to cull some of its residents from historians' accounts. This study also aims to reconstruct the palace based on available narratives and archeological traces at different periods ending with possibly its complete layout that might augment or correct previously published plans.

Literature Review

Despite its extended history, Istabl Qawsun near Rumayla lacks comprehensive research. Given its saddening poor state of preservation, the single part of the building that continues to receive attention is its portal, being one of the most beautiful in Cairo.¹⁴

Although the three most famous patrons and contributors to the palace (Qawsun, Yashbak

¹³ Ibn Iyas, *Histoire des Mamlouks Circassiens*, 2:412.

¹⁴ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 35; Lezine, "Les salles nobles", 105-106.

and Aqbardi) were frequently mentioned by historians through the course of historical narration and documentation, their contributions to the edifice needed to be sought out from histories of various historical events. Another weak point regarding the available sources on this palace is that the succession of *atabaks* and *dawadars* who occupied the palace after Qawsun and between Yashbak and Aqbardi were never mentioned clearly.

Despite the numerous historians' accounts that mention Istabl Qawsun, none of them provide a detailed description of the architecture of the palace neither at the time of Qawsun nor during the residency of any of the palace's successive owners. The entry found in al-Maqrizi's *Khitat* remains the most detailed account that depicts a sense of its luxuriousness. Within the course of historical events, the entry includes a description of the furnishings and treasures of the palace that Aydughmish Amir Akhur thought "were suited for the Sultan."¹⁵

Modern sources usually offer brief entries on the palace, focusing mostly on its portal and the monumentality of the palace and the monumental scale of its upper hall. The most comprehensive source on the palace to-date is the twentieth century publication of *Palais et maisons du Caire* by Revault and Maury and Jean-Claude Garcin's *Palais et maisons du Caire, Tome I: L'architecture domestique au Caire à l'époque mamelouke (XIII^e-XVI^e siècles)*. While they tackle briefly on the historical background of the palace and its contextual location,

¹⁵Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:42. In his narrative, Ibn Taghribirdi recites that while his palace was being robbed, Qawsun was watching from a window in the Citadel. In attempt to save the treasures of his palace, he called out to the people, "Oh Muslims, save this money, either for me or the Sultan". Aydughmish Amir Akhur then replied, "This is for the people, what you have of jewels and treasures are enough for the Sultan!"

و هو (قوصون) يرى من الشباك (بالقلعة) فيقول: يا مسلمين ما تحفظوني، هذا المال إما أن يكون لي أو يكون للسلطان. فقال أيذغمش: هذا شكران للناس والذي عندك فوق من الجوهر يكفي السلطان.

they provide a detailed description of the architecture and decoration found on site at the time of the publication (1977). No other publication matches the richness of this chapter on the palace of Qawsun.

In 1979 the *sama'khana* of the Mevlevi Complex, the Mausoleum of Hasan Sadaqa and the Madrasa of Sunqur Sa'di underwent conservation and restoration by Professor Giuseppe Fanfoni, the director of the Italian-Egyptian Center for Restoration and Archeology. Their reports tackled briefly on the background of the palace and its history since it stood near the scope of their conservation works and overlapped in some parts with the Mevlevi Complex. Decades later, in 2004, Professor Cinzia Tavernari¹⁶ presented an archeological study as her thesis to the Sorbonne University of Paris on Istabl Qawsun, tracing its development from an *istabl* to a palace by analyzing the construction materials and methods applied throughout the different fragments of the palace. I came across her significant work right before submitting this thesis yet decided that it was too valuable not to be benefited from.

Sources and Methodology

Among all the historical genres, the *khitat* is one of the most useful for the study of Islamic urbanism and architecture. In the fifteenth century the word *khitat* indicated a

¹⁶ Professor of Islamic Art and Archeology. MA and PhD, Sorbonne University in Paris.

planned urban district.¹⁷ The term later developed to include texts of urban and architectural descriptions of a city. While the *khitat* covered urban and architectural descriptions of monuments, streets and neighborhoods, other literary typologies rather focused on sociological, anthropological and historical descriptions of different regions of Islam. Al-Maqrizi's *Kitab al-mawa'iz wa'l-i'tibar bi-dhikr al-khitat wa'l-athar*, written between 817-27/1415-24 was an essential historical source used for this study of Istabl Qawsun; other historical chronicles consulted were those by Ibn Taghribirdi, Ibn Iyas, al-Nuwayri and al-Jabarti and 'Ali Mubarak's *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*.

Among the secondary sources, especially for information on the political role of the Emirs Qawsun, Yashbak and Aqbardi, I relied on some studies that focused on the reigns of the Sultans al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun (709-41/1310-41) and al-Ashraf Qaytbay (872-901/1468-96). Later sources include brief entries on the palace such as Creswell's *A Brief Chronology of Muhammadan Monuments*, the *Bulletins* of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (BIFAO). Other references include the *Bulletins* of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe, Revault and Maury's *Palais et maisons du Caire* and the volumes and articles by Jean-Claude Garcin along with a vast number of sources in which Istabl Qawsun was mentioned. To complement these, I have consulted more recent sources and studies concerned with the juxtaposition of Istabl Qawsun to the Citadel, Rumayla square, the Qara Maydan and Birkat al-Fil which address the surrounding spaces

¹⁷ Garcin, "Toponymie et topographie", 132; Rabbat, "Al-Maqrizi's Khitat", 17-22.

and monuments and are concerned with the urban fabric from the fourteenth century until modern times such as Dina Ghaly's thesis on al-Shari' al-'Azzam and Sherif Mansour's thesis on Maydan al-Rumayla.

A Note About the Naming of the Monument

It is crucial to point out that several names have been used to refer to this ancient palace, which is one of its puzzling aspects. The earliest historical accounts I have encountered that document that palace were al-Maqrizi's *Khitat* and *Suluk*. In his entries, al-Maqrizi names the palace "Istabl Qawsun" after its initial function and before its later conversion into a palace in 735-7/1335-7. While this could be interpreted as a typological categorization of the building on the basis of its architecture, it could also be translated into a title distinction.

Prior to Istabl Qawsun near Rumayla, Emir Qawsun is known to have occupied Dar al-Baysariyya in Bayn al-Qasrayn between 733/1332-3 and 735-7/1335-7 and afterwards owned what was formerly known as Qasr al-Zumurrud in 740/1340 to be then known as Qasr Qawsun. Therefore, labelling his new palace near Rumayla as Dar, Bayt or Qasr Qawsun would have created confusion. Historians after al-Maqrizi seem to have been aware of that mix-up as we find this palace documented in historical accounts as either "Dar (or Bayt) Qawsun towards Bab al-Silsila" or "Dar (or Bayt) Qawsun towards al-Rumayla". Nevertheless, this geographical distinction is not always available; therefore, in case of an

ambiguous narrative, the dates during which Qawsun resided his palace in Bayn al-Qasrayn (from 733/1332-3 until 735-7/1335-7) and later in the one near al-Rumayla (from 735-7/1335-7 until 742/1342) will help clarify which palace is being referred to.

Another aspect of confusion was realized after studying numerous narratives. In some sources, a description of a residence was sometimes reported as *baytahu alladhi bi-Qusun* (his house in Qusun). While this might mean that the person in the narrative resided the Palace of Qawsun, in fact, it intended to indicate the neighborhood and not the palace. In a map of Cairo during the Ottoman period after *Description de l’Egypte*, the area south of the Mosque of Qawsun was named after him (Fig. 0.2). This map’s zoning was used by Dr. Nelly Hanna for her analysis of the distribution of the residential spaces in Cairo during the Ottoman period between 1738 and 1744, which was at the time a wealthy residential quarter (Fig. 0.3).

After Emir Yashbak’s restorations and additions to the palace in Ramadan 880/January 1476, the palace became known as Qasr Yashbak. After his death, the palace was passed along to Emir Aqbardi who added and refurbished the palace to be later known as Bayt or Saray Aqbardi.

During the Khedival period, ‘Ali Pasha Mubarak’s *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, which followed in the footsteps of al-Maqrizi’s *Khitat*, listing the palace under the same name of “Istabl Qawsun” while mentioning that at that time the palace and the area surrounding it were known as Hawsh Bardaq.

In 1310/1892, the earliest *Comité Bulletin* of the palace lists it under the name Saray Bardaq. Two years later, a *Bulletin* mentions it under the title Saray Emir *Yashak*, who was speculated to be an emir from the time of al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun. In the same year, another *Bulletin* cites 'Ali Pasha Mubarak's *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, concluding that the palace's founder was Emir Aqbardi. The following entry in 1318/1900 corrects the mistake made in the preceding *Bulletin* and reports the palace under "Saray Bardaq (or Yashbak)". In the following *Bulletins*, the name under which the palace is listed alternates between Saray Yashbak and Saray Bardaq; until 1323/1905, when it was discovered that Saray Bardaq was part of the *waqf* of Khushyar Kadin Affandi (20th Rajab 1321/11th October 1903), Khedive Isma'il's mother, probably among the properties she bought in the area for the construction of al-Rifai' and the structures built around it.¹⁸ That entry listed the palace under the name used in the *waqf*.

¹⁸ Dr. Nelly Hanna was consulted on the availability of this *waqf*; nonetheless, she is not sure if one exists.

CHAPTER ONE
THE CONCEPT OF THE BAHRI MAMLUK PRINCELY PALACE: A TERMINOLOGY
STUDY

The topic of Islamic residential architecture has been a subject of interest and research by many scholars in the fields of architecture and Islamic history. Their studies have tackled the subject from diverse angles; while some aimed for potential reconstructions of non-surviving buildings from literati and historians' narratives, others intended to prove that common features of architectural compositions have survived the succession of Islamic dynasties by proving that influences crossed boundaries of time and geography and that different elements witnessed survival and revival.

With the several types of Islamic monuments erected came a set of terminologies employed to describe them and indicate their different components. Some terminologies used by literary sources to describe residences have maintained their connotations throughout different periods, while others changed as many of the architectural features themselves disappeared. This chapter will highlight certain terminologies that showed survival from the earliest examples of Islamic residential architecture in Cairo from the seventh century settlement of Fustat until the Bahri Mamluk period, focusing on the topic of this thesis, *Istabl Qawsun* near *Maydan al-Rumayla*. This chapter is not a linguistics study, but an attempt to define some of the terms that were used flexibly and vaguely in historical documents. It also aims at tracing the influences and functions of different architectural components of *Istabl Qawsun* from preceding examples of Islamic residential architecture.

Generally, religious and pious institutions had a better survival chances than secular buildings because of their *waqfs* which provided the necessary funding for their

maintenance. Fortunately, with the high concentration of surviving Islamic monuments in Cairo, even with the scarcity of surviving examples of residential architecture, chronicles, historians' accounts and *waqfiyyas* compensate for this shortage and provide enough information that helps reconstruct a relatively comprehensive picture of this type of Islamic building.

The first major study of Mamluk architectural terminologies found in *waqf* documents was undertaken by Laila Ibrahim and Muhammad Amin in their book *al-Mustalahat al-mi'mariyya fi-l-watha'iq al-mamlukiyya*. Although it provides a clearer and more articulated definition of frequently-used terms, it does not trace the origins of each term nor does it go into the elimination of certain terms in later periods. This chapter will discuss the use of the terms *qasr* and *qa'a* and how in some cases they point to the same architectural space in a royal Islamic residence. It will also tackle the term *istabl* as a type of building commonly erected, especially during the Mamluk period, which was one of the components of the residence of a ruler or an emir.

Defining the *Qasr*, the *Qa'a*, the *Dar* and the *Bayt*

In his *Khitat*, al-Maqrizi lists nine residences under the name *qasr*.¹⁹ Laila Ibrahim dates five to the Bahri Mamluk period namely 1) *Qasr Bashtak* 2) *Qasr Baktamur al-Saqi* 3)

¹⁹1) The Great Eastern Fatimid palace (while its individual *qusur* were also labelled as *qusur*) 2) The smaller Western Fatimid Palace 3) *Qasr al-Qarafa* 4) *Qasr al-Ward* 5) *Qasr Bashtak* 6) *Qasr Baktamur al-Saqi* 7) *Qasr Yalbugha al-Yahyawi* 8) *Qasr Altunbugha al-Maridani* 9) *Qasr Tatar al-Hijaziyya* (*Qasr Qawsun* – formerly *Qasr al-Zumurrud*).

Qasr Yalbugha al-Yahyawi 4) Qasr Altunbugha al-Maridani and 5) Qasr Tatar al-Hijaziyya^{20, 21} Neither al-Maqrizi nor Ibrahim comment on the restriction of the term *qasr* to these five structures, however, Ibrahim and Amin's *al-Mustalahat* defines a *qasr* as a residence (*manzil*) which was inhabited by a harem (*taqsur fihi al-harim*).²² Ibrahim and Amin refer to the use of the term in documents that indicates the place attached to the Madrasa of Qurqumas (854-860/1450-1456). They speculate that the place was dedicated to the harem of the emir or for the emir himself. This is a very vague definition given the complexity of this term and its different applications throughout different periods.

As per Ibrahim and Amin's definitions, a *qa'a* is a term with multiple uses; it can be used to describe a courtyard of a house, or a hall either on the lower or upper floor. The term *qa'a* was also used in *waqf* documents to describe a space based on its function i.e. Qa'at 'Ajin, Qa'a bi-Rasm al-Sham'...etc.²³ According to Rabbat, an important variable that distinguishes calling a hall a *qasr* or a *qa'a* is the presence of a lower hall on which the upper hall rests. To him, this explains why halls built in the Citadel during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods are called *qa'as* and not *qusur*.²⁴ This applies to the Qa'a of Columns (attributed to Shajar al-Durr by Casanova)²⁵, the Qa'a al-Salihiyya (of al-Salih Najm al-Din, 1245) and the Qa'a al-Baysariyya (built by Sultan Hasan ibn al-Nasir Muhammad, 1370) which were royal halls

²⁰ Initially known as Qasr Qawsun acquired by him in 740/1340. After his death, it was acquired by Tatar al-Hijaziyya to be known after her.

²¹ Ibrahim, "Mamluk Monuments of Cairo," 9-29.

²² Amin and Ibrahim, *al-Mustalahat al-mi'mariyya*, 90.

²³ Amin and Ibrahim, *al-Mustalahat al-mi'mariyya*, 87.

²⁴ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 201.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

with iwans arranged around a central *durqa'a*. The lack of lower halls under those halls mentioned above does not qualify them to be called *qusur*. However we have an exception where the condition of a lower hall was fulfilled and yet the hall was called a *qa'a*, namely in the Emerald Palace (Qasr al-Zumurrud) acquired by Qawsun in 741/1341, later known as Qasr Qawsun, where he intended to build seven *qa'at*, each with stables and attached dependencies.²⁶

While these residences were labelled as *qusur*, the rest of al-Maqrizi's list is comprised of fifty-one *dars*. In Ibrahim and Amin's *al-Mustalahat*, they stated that the term *dar* had many usages in different contexts; while it could be used for a residential building, it was also used for a space (*mawdi'*) of a certain function i.e. Dar al-Dawwab in a grain mill, Dar al-Mustawqad in a *hammam* and Dar al-Baqar²⁷ in a barn or a stable.²⁸ During the Burji Mamluk period, it is notable that the term *qasr* became obsolete and was substituted by the most commonly used term *bayt*. In Ibrahim and Amin's *al-Mustalahat*, the *bayt* is defined as per its use in *waqf* documents as a small place dedicated to a specific use.²⁹

The *Qasr*: A royal residence or an upper hall?

Before the term *qasr* developed a more specific definition to signify one of the components of a palace, the term was used to define a fortified palace of a ruler. Preceding

²⁶ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:130.

²⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:220, 221, 235. Dar al-Baqar was later known in *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya* as Hawsh al-Jamus owned by 'Ali Affandi al-Baqli al-Hakim.

²⁸ Amin and Ibrahim, *al-Mustalahat al-mi'mariyya*, 45.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

the Bahri Mamluk period, the descriptions of al-Maqrizi of the Fatimid palaces, especially those of the Great Eastern Palace, show that the term *qasr* had a dual meaning that signified the overall palatial structure as well as the individual structures within. In al-Maqrizi's *Khitat*, the Great Eastern Palace is said to have consisted of ten individual *qusur*,³⁰ the Qasr al-Nafa'i, Qasr al-Dhahab, the Princes' Palace, the Victory Palace, the Tree Palace, Qasr al-Shuq, Qasr al-Zumurrud, the Breeze Palace, the Women's Palace and Qasr al-Jarr.³¹

When writing about the Fatimid palaces in al-Qahira, in his entry on al-Qasr al-Kabir (the Great Eastern palace), al-Maqrizi gives an account of Qa'at al-Dhahab which was formerly called Qasr al-Dhahab.³² He goes on to describe it as one of the halls of the Great Eastern palace which was added by al-'Aziz Bi'llah and alternates in his entry between the terms *qasr* and *qa'a*. The same alternation between the terms *qasr* and *qa'a* was repeated in the entry of Qasr Wilad al-Shaykh³³; where al-Maqrizi names it as a *qasr* then mentions that it was a *qa'a* that consisted of several *dur*. In these two cases, the term *qasr* was used to designate the Great Eastern Palace as a whole as well as the individual structures within while the term *qa'a* was used to label the most important hall in a *qasr*, and a *dar* was an equivalent to a suite composed of a series of rooms that may include a hall.

This multiple application of the term *qasr* continued during the Bahri Mamluk period

³⁰ Bloom, *Arts of the City Victorious*, 66. Bloom cites Creswell who mentions twelve pavilions (*qusur*), touching each other and all square in plan. Nonetheless, Bloom reports that in his narrative, Khusraw states that the Great Eastern Palace consisted of twelve separate buildings.

³¹ Ibid., 67; Creswell also mentions that Khusraw mentioned twelve pavilions (*qasr*), 1:33.

³² Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:108.

³³ Ibid., 2:154. Named after al-Amir al-Kabir Mu'in al-Din Husayn Ibn Shaykh al-Shuyukh Sadr al-Din who served during the reign of al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub.

when describing the Ablaq Palace built by al-Nasir Muhammad in the Citadel of Cairo.

While scarce examples of its structure survive today, the understanding of the term *qasr* can be derived from the description of historians and chroniclers of the southern enclosure's palaces in the Citadel. The Ablaq Palace was the name of the principal palace that consisted of a series of interconnected palaces called *al-qusur al-juwwaniyya*, although later evidence suggest that they contained *qa'as* that had individual names³⁴ (Fig. 1.1-2). In al-Ablaq Palace, the halls of the harem were called *adurr* (singl. *dar*) and contained spaces referred to as *qa'as* (in this context meaning rooms).

Revault and Maury in their *Palais et maisons du Caire* took upon themselves to present architectural plans of the Bahri Mamluk palaces guided with labels that call the vaulted halls on the lower floors *istab*³⁵ and the upper halls *qa'as*. Nevertheless, in Garcin's articles of the same volume, he followed al-Maqrizi who used the term *qasr* in his *Khitat* to designate an important hall in the five Bahri Mamluk palaces on which he reported. A *qasr* as an architectural unit within an emiral palace can designate an important hall with a *qa'a* plan that can have any number of iwans around its *durqa'a* and may have had *takhayen* and *ma'azil*, which although undefined, probably refer to the sleeping spaces in recesses on the

³⁴ Ibn al-Furat, *Tarikh*, 9:1:105, 129. Casanova, *Histoire*, (Arabic translation) 134. Casanova reports the names of two *qa'as*, but he does not ascribe them to the Inner Palaces; the *Qa'a* of Silver and the *Qa'a* of Copper. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 181. The name *Qa'a* of Silver (*Qa'at al-Fidda*) is corroborated from Mamluk sources, one even implies that it was in the *Qasr*, that is the Ablaq Palace.

³⁵ They alternated in labelling the vaulted lower halls between *istabk* and *salles de gardiens* (halls of the guards).

side of a hall.³⁶

The prototype of a *qa'a* plan goes back as early as the seventh century city of Fustat. Fustat was originally a camp city which was a suitable living arrangement for the moving army. Excavations in Fustat have revealed hundreds of domestic prototypes belonging to the Tulunid and Fatimid periods. The study of these remnants along with information offered in the Geniza documents make it possible to draw out common features of domestic architecture of that period. According to Kubiak, the Arabs inhabiting Fustat were unskilled in construction and as a result, they hired locals to build their houses. Some features were found in nearly every house that was excavated; a courtyard with an iwan on one of its sides fronted by a portico. In most cases, the three other sides featured an irregular juxtaposition of rooms and dwellings, nonetheless, the feature of a second iwan, with or without a front portico and rarely a biaxial iwan arrangement was also known. The iwan component in these houses corresponded to the *majlis* cited in the Geniza documents and the overall composition of the iwan that overlooks a central space later introduced the module of the *qa'a*.³⁷ Although some accounts mention multi-storey dwellings, the iwan was usually found on the ground floor. Sometimes, the houses found would feature a central pool or marble basin in the courtyard, in some cases in combination with a *shadirwan* (Fig. 1.3).³⁸

A Bahri Mamluk princely residence in *waqf* documents

³⁶ Mona Zakarya, *Deux palais du Caire medieval*, 128.

³⁷ Bloom and Blair, *Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art & Architecture*, 1:399.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:399.

Of the sumptuous palaces erected during the Bahri Mamluk period for the rulers and their emirs, only four survive in an incomplete condition, those of Alin Aq (1293), Bashtak (1334-39), Qawsun (1335-37) and Taz (1352). Although these palaces remained in use even after the death of their initial builders and their components were added to or altered, they all share the common composition of vaulted halls on the ground floor and corresponding halls on the upper floors.

To trace the development of the term *qasr* and its architectural connotation from the Bahri until the Ottoman period, we are lucky to have a Bahri Mamluk princely palace of Alin Aq mentioned in three *waqfiyyas*. This palace is one of the four surviving Bahri Mamluk palaces that continued to be transferred from one owner to another until the mid-seventeenth century. The first *waqf* under which the palace was listed dates to the Circassian Mamluk period to that of Sultan Barsbay in 842/1438. It names the whole palace a *qasr*, the ground floor space as *marafiq* and *buyutat*³⁹ and the first floor hall both as a *qasr* or a *manzara* which was connected to other dependencies that include *takhayin* and *ma'azil*. The second *waqf* is that of Emir Khayrbek dated to 927/1521. In it, the whole structure is called a *qasr*, the lower hall *qa'a musaqqafa 'aqdan* (vaulted hall) and the upper level simply a *qasr*. It describes the *qasr* as an old structure with two sleeping spaces (*mabitat*) and dependencies. Finally in the third *waqf* of Ibrahim Aga Mustahfizan (1062/1652) describes the lower hall as a sitting *qa'a* (*qa'at julus*), and names both the whole structure and the upper hall *qasr*. From

³⁹Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 195. *Buyutat* was a generic term for the household dependencies' spaces which included the *tishtakhana* (the household goods room), the *hawa'ijkhana* (the pantry) and the *firashkhana*, (the tent-room).

the description of the three *waqfs* it is noticeable that the whole structure and upper hall is called a *qasr* and that the *istabl* must have been separate structure from the palace; instead the lower halls functioned as dependencies. Also, we note that the word *qasr* had a dual usage of designating the entire palace as well as the upper hall.

The examination of the *waqf* of Barsbay and the number of palaces that he acquired allows us to compare use of the term in the various descriptions. In the palace of Salar, a *qasr* is a large *riwaq* (in this context the word indicates a living unit in the upper floor of the palace) composed of two large iwans and a central *durqa'a* with attached dependencies that include *tibaq* and *khaza'in*.⁴⁰ In the residence of Mughulatay, the *qasr* is also a *riwaq* with *takhayen*, *ma'azil* and a *tibaq*, in addition to a kitchen and attached dependencies.⁴¹ In the palace of Emir Sudun Ba'jad, the *qasr* is a raised *qa'a* (*qa'a mu'allaqa*) with four iwans arranged in a cruciform plan with four columns that support the roof of the central *durqa'a* with unspecified dependencies. What can be extracted from the different descriptions in the *waqf* of Barsbay are common characteristics that can help provide a more inclusive definition of the term than that of Garcin and Ibrahim. First, all the descriptions show that the term *qasr* designates the upper hall of the palace or the whole structure; whereas in the cases of Alin Aq and Salar, their *waqfiyyas* use it for both. Secondly, the term *qasr* became obsolete in the Burji Mamluk period; in many descriptions the term *qasr* is mentioned as "the old place

⁴⁰ Mona Zakarya, *Deux palais du Caire medieval*, 125. *Tibaq* here means a separate room with small dimensions – or frequently a duplex while *khaza'in* is an equivalent of *mabitat*, which is a sleeping space.

⁴¹ Ismail, "Arba' buyut mamluqiyya min al-watha'iq al-'uthmaniyya", *Awqaf* 880, *Waqf of Sultan Barsbay*, 77:8-9.

known as the *qasr*" (*yu'raf qadiman bi'l-qasr*). Third and most importantly, the term is used in the cases of Bahri Mamluk princely palaces and since the term *qasr* was used to designate a palace of a sultan or an emir, applying it to a hall of honor in a royal residence is appropriate as it served a similar ceremonial value.

Therefore, the more precise definition of a *qasr* is an upper level hall in the residence of a Bahri Mamluk emir which rests on a lower hall whose plan it reciprocates and which in most cases is vaulted. This definition is specific and restricted to this period. The upper hall in a Burji Mamluk residence did not receive the same distinction that a Bahri Mamluk palace had, perhaps due to the loss of its ceremonial importance and function and its smaller scale. In a non-princely residence, the upper hall was simply called a raised *qa'a* or a *riwaq*.

Istabl, Qasr, Dar and Bayt Qawsun

The developed and more specified definition of the term *qasr* creates confusion with the more generic meaning of the term; in his *Khitat*, al-Maqrizi alternates between the terms *qasr* and *dar* when he speaks of several structures, while other chroniclers use the terms *bayt* (house) and *dar* to describe structures that al-Maqrizi calls *qasr*. This applies to the case of the Palace of Qawsun; the palace is named under *istabl* referring to its former function but alternates within the entry between *qasr*, *dar* and *bayt*. He uses the term *qasr* to indicate the type of structure added during the Bahri period and affirming that the residence of the Emir Qawsun "became a very large *qasr*". Finally, the word *istabl* was used to define this complex,

indicating the existence of the stables prior to the constructions added by Qawsun; the name of the palace, however, kept the memory of this type of building. Al-Maqrizi therefore uses these three terms with a precise meaning and thus gives valuable information about the palace and its development. During the Burji period, we find that almost every entry mentioning the palace refers to it as a Bayt Qawsun.⁴²

At its entirety, the upper hall of the Palace of Qawsun had a long two-iwan composition with side *majalis* and a covered central *durqa'a* that may have been flanked by two alcoves or other compositions. The usage of the term *qasr* to indicate the upper reception hall of a Bahri Mamluk princely palace was affirmed by Ibn Taghribirdi in one of his narratives where the upper hall of the Palace of Qawsun in Rumayla was called *al-qasr al-fuqqani* (the upper *qasr*).⁴³

The lower hall: *istabl* or a precondition of a *qasr*?

The most important precondition of the *qasr* arrangement is the lower hall on which the upper hall rests. Often, the lower hall may have functioned as an *istabl*. The *istabl* was defined in *al-Mustalahat al-mi'mariyya* as the place for keeping the horses; the *istabl* and its dependencies were among the main components of the residences of Mamluk sultans and emirs and soldiers. The dependencies of an *istabl* included a *rikabkhana*, a waterwell and a *hawd*. This prototype probably imitated the module of the Ablaq Palace in its inner palaces

⁴² See Arabic Narratives Text 1.

⁴³ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 16:41.

known as *qusur* that rested on two (and perhaps even three) levels of halls (Fig. 1.4).⁴⁴

However, in the Ablaq Palace, the lower halls were not part of the stables, which were a separate structure that was overlooked from the throne hall.⁴⁵ It should be noted that the Mamluk royal stables were important establishments that along the Mamluk era included several structures, one of which was a *maq'ad*⁴⁶ which probably hosted a part of the horse parade weekly processions where the matters of the emirs, mamluks and *iqta's* were discussed, a house of military musical instruments (*tablakhana*), two mosques and residences for high-ranking emirs.

The lower halls in princely palaces may have been for the mamluks in service and may have included some of the royal storehouses (*al-buyut al-sultaniyya*) namely the buttery (*sharabkhana*) and the saddlery (*rikabkhana*). In the description of the Palace of Qawsun in al-Rumayla by al-Maqrizi above, it proves the presence of a stable in the lower part of the palace in addition to a *rikabkhana* that was used to store the saddlery and other dependencies.⁴⁷

Verticality and Monumentality

⁴⁴ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 200.

⁴⁵ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:210; Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 181; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:2:682; 'Azab, *Qal'a*, 178-182.

⁴⁶ Amin and Ibrahim, *al-Mustalahat al-mi'mariyya*, 113. During the Mamluk period, a *maq'ad* was a sitting place for men. The *maq'ad* was normally built on a first floor and overlooked a *hawsh*, a garden, a *birka* (lake), a *khalij* or a road.

⁴⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:132. See Arabic Narratives Text 1.

It may also be observed that the term *qasr* was applied to an architectural unit of a residence that fulfilled the condition of monumentality.⁴⁸ The Fatimid rulers who built lofty palaces to be seen by the people who resided outside the walled city of al-Qahira clearly meant to establish a visual connection between themselves, being the embodiment of the religious and legitimate supremacy, and the people who were not allowed near the royal residences. Nasir-i Khusraw wrote on 1st Shawwal 440/8th March 1049:

When one looks from outside the city, the palace of the Sultan looks like a 'mountain because of the number and height of the buildings composing it, but from within the city 'it is not possible to see anything because the ramparts are high...'⁴⁹

The Ablaq Palace was perhaps conceived with the same concept in mind to be visible to the masses who gathered near the Citadel on various occasions of polo games⁵⁰ and on holidays. The aspect of grandeur and verticality seems to have been intended by al-Nasir Muhammad who built lofty *qusur* higher than their preceding structures, namely Qa'a al-Ashrafiyya. This intention was further emphasized by 'Umari's description of the Ablaq Palace as a "splendid construction, high in the air."⁵¹

CONCLUSION

It may seem from the more precise definition of the term *qasr* in princely residences that it was intended to substitute the inner *qusur* of the palaces of former rulers, given that

⁴⁸ Choay, "Alberti, the Invention of Monumentality and Memory," 99-105.

⁴⁹ Creswell, *Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, 1:33.

⁵⁰ See Glossary.

⁵¹ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 204.

they included lower halls that would bring it as close as possible to a small palace structure. Influences of the *qa'a* plan extend from the early city of Fustat and were later employed in the palaces of the Fatimid that might have provided prototypes for the Mamluk palaces and their components. However, to say that that the Ablaq Palace had a major influence on the plans and layouts of the other Mamluk palaces ignores its later construction date (1313-14).⁵² It also discards residences built before the Ablaq Palace that had *qusur* units such as the palaces of Alin Aq, Baysari, and Baktash Emir Silah. These *qusur* may have provided local inspiration for al-Nasir Muhammad's Ablaq Palace in the Citadel.

⁵² Nuwayri, *Nihayat al-Irb fi-Funun al-Adab*, vol. 30, fol. 82; Ibn al-Dawadari, *al-Durr al-Fakhir fi-Sirat al-Malik al-Nasir*; 266; Zettersteen, 161; al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2: 209; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, vol. 2, pt. 1, 129; Ibn Taghribardi, *Nujum*, 9: 36-7.

CHAPTER TWO
A CONTEXTUAL STUDY OF ISTABL QAWSUN FROM HISTORICAL DESCRIPTIONS
AND NARRATIVES

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THE URBAN EXPANSION OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF AL-QAHIRA AND BIRKIT
AL-FIL BEFORE THE BAHRI MAMLUK PERIOD

With the beginning of Fatimid rule in Egypt, al-Qahira was established as an exclusive compound for the caliph, his harem and soldiers, while the older settlement of Fustat became the commercial and economic center.⁵³ To the north, the earlier Tulunid city of al-Qata'i' was formed close to the area to be later known as Birkit al-Fil. Although most lakes were natural depressions, others were man-made lakes like Batn al-Baraqa dug under the Fatimids.⁵⁴ It has been accounted by travelers, such as Nasir-i Khusraw, that because of the high contour of the city of al-Qahira in contrast to the low topography of the region around Fustat that the walled city was privileged with fresher and cleaner air, and was less threatened by infections and further decay than the city of Fustat. Travelers also reported that the depressions between Fustat and al-Qahira (presumably Birkat al-Fil, Birkat Qarun, and Birkat Farayyin) were filled by ground leakage, which resulted in contaminated water and oppressive vapors. As a result, the few gardens and houses that already existed in these areas were subject to discomforts and diseases.

In the early Fatimid period, there was no urban connection between the royal city and the former settlements. The area outside Bab Zuwayla which constituted the southern part of the city "... contained nothing except Birkat al-Fil and Birkat al-Qarun. It was an empty space (*fada'*) [where] someone coming out of Bab Zuwayla [...] would see on his left

⁵³ Raymond, *Cairo*, 49.

⁵⁴ Behrens-Abouseif, *Azbakiyya and its Environs*, 20.

the mountain [*jabal*], and see in front of him [the Mosque of] Ibn Tulun and al-Qata'i', which were close to al-'Askar; and he would ... the Sahil al-Hamra' which was dominated by the Jinan al-Zahiri and he would see the Birkat al-Fil, which was dominated by the mountain with the Qubbat al-Hawa which is called today the Citadel. And all who came out of Musalla al-'Id in Fustat, ... would see the two lakes, Birkit al-Fil, Birkit al-Qarun, and the Nile."⁵⁵

The first wave of development in the southern district outside of Bab Zuwayla took place under Caliph al-Hakim with the founding of new *harat*, the most important of which were Harat al-Sudan and Harat-al Mansura (founded for the black contingent of the Fatimid army) which occupied a large area on the west side of the the road to Fustat. With the establishment of these new neighborhoods, the caliph also built a new gate, Bab al-Jadid to mark their limits to the south. With these *haras* established on either side of the road, al-Maqrizi wrote that the Fatimid Qasaba then extended from the northern gates of the al-Qahira to Fustat in the south. Nonetheless, the area between these *haras* and the Citadel had not been occupied by inhabitants until after 500/1106 (Fig. 2.1).

During the famine years under Caliph al-Mustansir (450-466/1058-1074), the urban expansion to the south had stopped and started to regress; most of the buildings at the time were abandoned while al-'Askar, al-Qata'i' and the northern limits of Fustat fell into ruins. After this crisis, Badr al-Jamali, followed by Caliph al-Amir and his vizier al-Ma'mun al-Bata'ih, tried to develop the city on all sides while simultaneously trying to revitalize the

⁵⁵ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:110.

southern district of the city. They ordered the clearing of all the ruins, and the erection of new buildings. Caliph al-Amir furtherly encouraged this urban revival by creating a new military *hara*, the Harat al-Masamida, a name transposed from 'Abd Allah al-Masmudi, one of the leaders of the Fatimid army, who was invited in 515/1122, to settle with his men outside Bab Zuwayla. Al-Masmudi chose a piece of land outside Bab al-Jadid, on the eastern side of the Qasaba which was on the left of the road to Birkat al-Fil, leaving free space between the new quarter and the pond.⁵⁶ The reign of al-Amir was therefore a period of urban development as al-Maqrizi reports that:

The people are building all along the main street from Bab al-Jadid to the mountain where the Citadel is now ... [...] and from Bab al-Jadid to Bab al-Safa in the city of al-Fustat [...] so that there was no more ruined area between al-Fustat and al-Qahira.⁵⁷

He adds that at that time the Qasaba was such a busy market that:

The people who made their living in al-Qahira and the officials, after [finishing] in this city the last evening prayer returned to their home in al-Fustat and the suq was enlightened from Bab al-Jadid out of Bab Zuwayla to Bab al-Safa in the middle of continuous animation, day and night.⁵⁸

As Fustat was the commercial center during the Fatimids, the number of workers commuting to Cairo increased and the "considerable distance between the earlier center and the new capital also made al-Qahira's transformation into a full-fledged city almost inevitable."⁵⁹ It was the further development of al-Qahira and the decline of Fustat that

⁵⁶ Salmon, *Etudes sur la topographie du Caire*, 58-60; Fu'ad, *La capitale de l'Egypte jusqu'à l'époque fatimide*, 505-507.

⁵⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:100.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:100; Raymond, *Cairo*, 84.

⁵⁹ Raymond, *Cairo*, 78-79.

tempted those living in Fustat to migrate to the larger walled city. By then, the ponds were patched with occasional pavilions and gardens, whilst the city of Fustat was left to gradually decline.

Following the fire of 564/1168, and the further development of al-Qahira, the population gravitated towards "the new capital"⁶⁰. The major enlargements to the city included the extension of Husayniyya to the north and to the military *haras* (al-Yanisiyya, al-Hilaliyya, and al-Masamida) south of Bab Zuwayla.⁶¹ At this time, the area of Birkat al-Fil and others such as Birkat Qarun and even Rawda Island were still largely areas of gardens, promenades and pavilions.

At the death of the last Fatimid Caliph al-'Adid in 567/1171, al-Qahira was no longer simply the seat of the government and the residence of the caliph, his court and troops. Chronicles by the traveler Ibn Jubayr mentioned congregational mosques and other smaller ones inside of the city, in addition to the presence of Christians and Jews who resided within the city walls. Despite of this building boom and population shift, the development and inhabitation around Birkat al-Fil had yet to take place; the latter was still an area where the residents of the over-crowded city could walk and enjoy the gardens and pavilions.

By the fall of the Fatimid dynasty and the inauguration of the Sunni Ayyubids, in 573/1176 Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi ordered his Emir Qaraqush to commence the preliminary construction of Qal'at al-Jabal which served as the royal city from the time of the Ayyubids

⁶⁰ Raymond, *Cairo*, 78.

⁶¹ MacKenzie, *Topographical Study*, 32.

onwards. Salah al-Din planned to unify the former settlements by encompassing them in a set of walls connected with his Citadel, between al-Qahira to the north and Fustat to the south. He razed the *haras* established during the Fatimids to the south of Bab Zuwayla and created gardens that extended all the way to the Mashhad of Sayyida Nafisa. The demolishing of all the structures in that area created a vast land with unobstructed view so that "all [...] who stood at the mosque of Ibn Tulun could see Bab Zuwayla."⁶² The construction of the Citadel was a magnet that attracted settlements in the areas proximate to it, especially to the south part of the city.⁶³

At the same time, the area below the Muqattam Hills was affected by the construction of the Citadel. The area started attracting populational growth in that direction extending and affecting areas as far as Birkit al-Fil. Al-Maqrizi noted that between 610-56/1213-59 many foreigners, fleeing the Mongols, arrived in Cairo and settled around the Birkat al-Fil and on both sides of the khalij. This was supported by another author, Ibn Laqlaq, who, around 637/1239, also reported that a sudden urban densification took place outside of the city because of the arrival of Eastern refugees.⁶⁴ Initially, the area of Birkit al-Fil attracted inhabitants seeking refuge from the overcrowded city of al-Qahira; their established building program included pavilions and gardens (*manzaras* and *bustans*). The *manzaras* on Birkat al-Fil were to enjoy of the view and breezes during the high seasons of the Nile during September and October. During this period, the area continued to be a promenade where the

⁶² Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:110.

⁶³ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 8.

⁶⁴ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:100-1.

population could walk and enjoy the uncrowded terrain of the pond and its surrounding gardens and pavilions.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, the occupation of this area by the immigrants does not appear to have been dense; Mackenzie points out that during the Ayyubid period no *hammam*, suq or wakala was built nearby.⁶⁶ Al-Maqrizi only mentions the construction of a mosque, the Masjid Sawab, in Khutt al-Saliba.

Later in that period, more *manzaras* were added to the shores of Birkit al-Fil (Figs. 2.2-3). Two of Salah al-Din's brothers, Sayf al-Islam Tughtakin and Taj al-Muluk Buri, owned *manzaras* in this area which were described as splendidly decorated with marble and gilding.⁶⁷ During the early Ayyubid period, the pond was surrounded by two large gardens; Bustan al-Habanniyya to the north which already existed during the Fatimid era, and Bustan Sayf al-Islam to the east which dominated the *birka*. The pavilion of Sayf al-Islam was located in Bustan Sayf al-Islam⁶⁸ which was watered by the *saqiyya* of Dar al-Baqar, presumably built at an earlier date, either by Sayf al-Islam or one of his descendants.⁶⁹ This area of this *bustan* later became known as Darb Ibn al-Baba which extended during the Mamluk period to the Madrasa al-Bunduqdariyya in al-Shari' al-'Azzam to the east beside the

⁶⁵ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 37.

⁶⁶ Ibn Iyas, *Histoire des Mamlouks Circassiens*, 2:412.

⁶⁷ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 38.

⁶⁸ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:364. Al-Maqrizi stated that Bustan Sayf al-Islam was called the gardens of 'Abbas in Fatimid times. It was among the properties appropriated by Salah al-Din's family along with other Fatimid properties. During the Mamluk period, it was bought by Baybars I from the last Ayyubid owner. He later divided the land into plots.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:364; Bylinski, "Darb Ibn al-Baba". Bylinski states that Bustan Sayf al-Islam extended "over a vast plot of land located between Birkit al-Fil and the street leading south from Bab Zuwayla".

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⁷⁰ Younes,
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⁷⁴ Rabbat,

bath of al-Fariqani reaching as far as the Complex of Sultan Hasan (Fig. 2.4).⁷⁰ Therefore, it can be concluded that the urbanization of the southern area of Cairo progressed under the Ayyubids, even though the land between Bab Zuwayla and Mashhad Sayyida Nafisa was never very densely populated.

On the other hand, according to Ibn Sa'id al-Maghribi, it was during the time of al-Malik al-Kamil (603/1206),⁷¹ that the area below the Citadel named Maydan al-Rumayla – a name that indicates a very dry piece of land with sandy ground- began to develop. Al-Malik al-Kamil is thought to be the mastermind behind the urban development of the area beneath the Citadel; it was stated by Ibn Sa'id that al-Kamil did not fortify the walls of the Citadel on the side facing the city like the sides facing the desert, presumably because he anticipated the eventual urban growth that would happen in that area.⁷² It was also at the time of Sultan al-Kamil that Maydan al-Rumayla became the location for the animal markets (i.e. horses, camels and donkeys) – which were moved to establish this area as a commercial center.⁷³ To the south of Rumayla, a number of royal stables and a hippodrome were built establishing this site for military parades and equestrian training (Fig. 2.5).⁷⁴ Initiatives of refurbishment occurred during the reigns of al-Kamil and al-Malik al-Salih including ponds, waterwheels and the planting of vegetation. Al-Malik al-Salih also built a large pavilion called Qal'at al-

⁷⁰ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 38; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:134.

⁷¹ Rabbat, *The Citadel*, 106. Al-Malik al-Sa'id Baraka Khan was the son of Baybars I who erected a number of structures within and around the Citadel that were attributed to him.

⁷² Al-Maghribi, *al-Mugharrib*, 390-91.

⁷³ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 8.

⁷⁴ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 3.

Kabsh in 639/1242 which served as a palace.⁷⁵ On al-Rawda Island, the last Ayyubid sultan al-Salih Najm al-Din built the Rawda Citadel as a palace for him and his loyal troops to retreat from the more official Citadel on the Muqattam Hills (Fig. 2.6). The Rawda Citadel was composed of residential and pleasure palaces. Historical accounts mention belvederes (*manzarās*), *maq'ad* (singl. *maq'ad*) and residential halls (*qa'ās*) on the two sides of the Citadel facing the river. However, when Sultan al-Salih Najm al-Din's death in 647/1249 was followed by the succession of his wife Shajar al-Durr, the unusual circumstances were not favored by the masses who objected to a female ruler. Her reign soon ended when the Ayyubid mamluks decided to confer the sultanate on Aybak, her husband, which inaugurated the Mamluk dynasty. After the death of al-Salih Najm al-Din the condition of the *maydans* beneath the Citadel gradually deteriorated and its structures were delapidated by the year 650-1/1252-3 during the reign of al-Malik al-Mu'izz Aybak.⁷⁶

THE BAHRI MAMLUK PERIOD

In the early Mamluk period, many *basatin* (singl. *bustan*) were developed opposite the Citadel and on its site after its abandonment at the end of the Ayyubid period. During this time, the concept of the open space shifted from the *bustan* to that of the *maydan*. *Maydans* became the venues for many festive, ceremonial and recreational events. Although they were

⁷⁵ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 1:364, 2:208.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:398.

all large, open and covered in grass (*najil*) they were not intended to be used by the mob.⁷⁷ The *maydans* were also used as training camps for young mamluks in archery, weaponry and the *furusiyya* exercises and polo games (Fig. 2.7). After two short reigns of those succeeding Aybak, al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars ruled until 676/1277. He established al-Maydan al-Zahiri to the east of the Citadel in the area later known as al-Qarafa al-Kubra where he and his successors continued to play polo until 714/1314.⁷⁸ Sultan al-Zahir Baybars restored the importance of the *maydans* and re-erected a number of stables to the south of Maydan al-Rumayla and at the outskirts of the horse market.⁷⁹ He was also the first to encourage his emirs to establish their residences below the Citadel, both because they were his advisers, and were hence indispensable to him, but also so he could watch over them, especially those who aspired to the throne.⁸⁰ Thanks to this policy, the expansion of this zone accelerated and new residential neighborhoods were created. As a result of his urban scheme, by the time of Baybars's death, the constructions around the Qara Maydan were incorporated with the city's structures and urban fabric.⁸¹

After the short reign of the two sons of Baybars, Emir Qalawun ascended the throne and was titled al-Mansur (the Victorious). Unlike most Mamluk sultans, he became a sultan later in age. The highlights of his architectural contributions were military structures inside the Citadel walls and his colossal complex in Bayn al-Qasrayn. After Qalawun and the short

⁷⁷ Rabbat, "A Brief History of Green Spaces in Cairo", 41.

⁷⁸ Ayalon, "Notes on the Furusiyya," 31-62; al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:347.

⁷⁹ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 65.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 102; Garcin, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 162.

⁸¹ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 23.

reign of his son al-Ashraf Khalil, came the most prominent of the Bahri Mamluk sultans and the one with the longest reign during the Mamluk dynasty, Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad. Al-Nasir Muhammad was beyond doubt the most generous patron of architecture and urban expansion in the Mamluk period; chroniclers of the period state that he was the first sultan to establish a special department for constructions (*diwan al-'ama'ir*) to coordinate the multiple architectural projects in which he was engaged. It is said that he spent an average of 100,000 *dirhams* a day - 36 million *dirhams* a year on his various building projects.⁸² These projects were paid for by the wealth brought in by the reforms achieved by al-Nasir Muhammad's land survey (*rawk*) in 715/1315.⁸³ Al-Nasir Muhammad was also a great entrepreneur; he collected income from other commercial and industrial sources unlike his predecessors who depended solely on taxes and *khass* estates for income. "He was involved in textile manufacturing, sugar production, trading livestock and grain."⁸⁴ Al-Maqrizi writes:

Al-Nasir Muhammad was fond of architecture. From the time that he returned from al-Karak for his third sultanate he kept on continuously building until his death. His expenditure was estimated at eighty thousand *dirhams* per day. When he saw something he disliked, he demolished it entirely and rebuilt it to his satisfaction. No king before him equaled his expenditure on architecture. When al-Mansur Qalawun desired to build a covered *mastaba* to sit on, protected from the heat of the sun, and al-Shuja'i wrote for him an estimate of its cost (four thousand *dirhams*), he took the paper from the hands of al-Shuja'i and tore it up. He said: "I sit in a *maq'ad* of four thousand *dirhams*! Erect me a tent when I descend [from the Citadel], for I will not

⁸²Younes, *Birkat al-Fil*, 9; Raymond, *Cairo*, 120; Al-Harithy, "The Patronage of al-Nasir", 224, citing al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:1:130, Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44 and al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:131 state a lesser sum ranging from a minimum of eight thousand *dirhams* that could reach twelve thousand *dirhams* per day while Nada Younes's thesis states an average of a hundred thousand *dirhams* a day.

⁸³ Ibn Iyas, *Bada'i' al-zuhur*, 1:1:446.

⁸⁴ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 220.

release anything from the treasury for such a thing."⁸⁵ This was the case with al-Zahir Baybars and those who preceded him; they did not spend money but saved it conservatively and fearfully.⁸⁶

His decisions in the fields of urbanization and architectural patronage were based on personal choice and preference. Therefore, he demolished the distinction between decisions made based on his personal inclinations and those considered sultanic policies. Al-Nasir Muhammad's profound interest in building and urban development set the tone for his followers and initiated a building boom all over the Mamluk sultanate. Architecture and urban projects inaugurated during the three reigns of al-Nasir Muhammad were not limited to those ordered by the Sultan; al-Nasir Muhammad also encouraged his emirs to build and cultivate lands in designated areas by giving them *iqta's*, facilitating procedures and granting them resources. He was deeply involved in the constructions of his *khassakiyya* emirs from the initial stage of choosing the locations of the buildings to the furnishings of the completed structures.⁸⁷

The Third Reign of al-Nasir Muhammad (709-40/1309-40)

Although his extensive contributions to the architectural legacy of the Mamluk period are undeniable, it is important to distinguish between al-Nasir Muhammad's works

⁸⁵ From various narratives, al-Mansur Qalawun appears to be more considerate in his spending than his son al-Nasir Muhammad. Here it shows how he refused to pay a sum of four thousand *dirhams* for a *maq'ad*. Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:391-2, mentions that Qalawun was not known to have spent more than five thousand *dirhams* for a horse, unlike al-Nasir who was known to favor Arabian horses and paid for them sums ranging from ten to thirty thousand *dirhams*.

⁸⁶ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:2:537.

⁸⁷ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 163.

during the period between 1311 and 1322 and those later in his reign (1333-41) since differences between them exist in terms of "scope, opulence, style, and monumentality".⁸⁸ At the very beginning of his rule, some of his projects were either essential restorations or impulsive whims.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, he soon embarked on long term projects of "additions, modifications, and monumentalization" which would turn the Citadel and its palatial complex into a royal city to serve the functions of the Mamluk administration and its army.⁹⁰ Whether inside its walls or near the Citadel, architectural projects of the period were meant to reflect his supremacy and prosperity. The new structures in the Citadel, especially his new mosque and the Great Iwan "were simply larger, costlier, and more lavishly ornamented reproductions of the old ones. In the chroniclers', superlatives such as "opulent", "splendid", "unparalleled", "monumental" and "great" are used to describe his architecture throughout this period.⁹¹

Concurrently with the refurbishments of the Citadel, the area below it was transformed.⁹² The areas between the Citadel and Bab Zuwayla once again attracted inhabitants which in turn encouraged commercial establishments. This time the domestic growth in the area was not caused by immigrants seeking refuge; the area behind the mosque

⁸⁸ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 168.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁹² Younes, *Birkat al-Fil*, 10.

of Ibn Tulun became a lush quarter that housed members of the sultan's family, emirs and ambassadors.⁹³

Under al-Nasir Muhammad, the areas under the Citadel and around the Birkat al-Fil were among those where the Sultan's projects were concentrated. He resorted to concessions (*ahkar*)⁹⁴ lands near Birkat al-Fil which were later given to the emirs who, in exchange, pledged to build constructions (baths, mosques) which would attract new inhabitants to rent shops or houses. He completely redeveloped the area below the Citadel; this area was not densely populated and the only building of any importance there was al-Khanqah al-Bunduqdariyya built in 683/1284.

Around Birkit al-Fil, the area once known during the Ayyubid period as Bustan Sayf al-Din became known as Darb⁹⁵ Ibn al-Baba, named after the Emir Jankali Ibn al-Baba. Emir Jankali may have had a house in his *darb* and a bath called Hammam Ibn al-Baba, which survived until the first half of the twenty first century near the Mosque of Emir Azbak al-Yusufi.⁹⁶ On its grounds, a *hikr* and a *maydan* were mentioned to have preceded Darb Ibn al-Baba. Initially, these grounds once included Istabl al-Jawq which housed the sultanic horses until Zayn al-Din Katbugha ascended the throne. A year after he dethroned al-Nasir

⁹³ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 10; Raymond, *Cairo*, 133-5.

⁹⁴ Raymond, *Cairo*, 138.

⁹⁵ Bylinski, "Darb Ibn al-Baba", 205. He defines a *darb* as a "quarter along a main street closed by gates on both sides, usually named after a person. This might have been an emir or a notable who had helped develop a new quarter around a residence associated with some public utility founded by him - a mosque, school, bath or water-tank, and sometimes all of them combined together". The term *darb* was more commonly used in Mamluk times to signify what may have been old Fatimid *haras*.

⁹⁶ Pauty, *Hammams*, 59.

Muhammad in 694/1294, he thought to transform Istabl al-Jawq into a polo ground to be called Maydan Birkit al-Fil, replacing Maydan al-Luq⁹⁷ that had been established by al-Zahir Baybars.⁹⁸ After its construction, people started building *dar* and "places" (*'amakin*)⁹⁹ next to it; the first of these was Emir 'Alam al-Din Sanjar al-Khazin. Later his *dar* was transformed into a *hikr* known as Hikr al-Khazin (Fig. 2.8).¹⁰⁰ This *hikr*¹⁰¹ became an area with many stables and *manzaras* extending all the way to Birkit al-Fil.¹⁰² It is also said that he had a mosque in the *darb*.¹⁰³ Other people followed in his footsteps and the area soon became a residential quarter. Later by the time of al-Nasir Muhammad, on this plot, the lofty palace of Baktimur al-Saqi was erected in 717/1317-8 (Fig. 2.9), directly to the north of Mosque and Madrasa of Azbak al-Yusufi. As mentioned by al-Maqrizi, building programs in the area were comprised of a hammam, the Madrasa al-Fariqani and Dar of Emir Taz.

Al-Maqrizi reports that during the period between 694-741/1293-1340, the southern district of Cairo housed a total of sixteen emirial palaces or residences which constituted 35% of all emirial residences in Cairo at the time. Six of those emirial palaces were built in the

⁹⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:317. During the Bahri Mamluk period, the area near Maydan al-Luq was granted to Emir Qawsun by Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad where he built a *zariba* that was known as Zaribat Qawsun.

⁹⁸ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:347. See Arabic Narratives Text 2.

⁹⁹ Al-Ayni, *Iqd al-juman fi ta'rikh ahl al-zaman*, 1:292.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:292.

¹⁰¹ Bylinski, "Darb Ibn al-Baba", 205. He defines a *hikr* as "a plot of land, originally outside the city walls, which belonged to the Treasury or to individuals and which at a certain moment in the history of the Mamluk state became property of military officials and members of the rulers' families. These lands, previously cultivated as gardens, were turned to grounds available for housing projects. Soon all of them became inalienable endowments (*awqaf*) whose rent (*hikr*) served to maintain privately founded religious establishments or to support the heirs of the original owner".

¹⁰² Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:347.

¹⁰³ Bylinski, "Darb Ibn al-Baba", 207. No traces remain of the mosque built by the *wali*.

quarter of Birkit al-Fil.¹⁰⁴ The occupancy of those Mamluk emirs immediately attracted "an entire class of servants, civilian clients, and merchants who catered to the needs of the military elite."¹⁰⁵

The most significant impact of al-Nasir Muhammad's patronage on the urban layout of the city was the expansion of southern edge of the city. Midway through his reign, al-Nasir Muhammad dug a new canal, the Khalij al-Nasiri, to divert water from the Nile to a new urban center at Siryaqus, north of Cairo.¹⁰⁶ Six hundred hectares between the two canals (the newly dug Khalij al-Nasiri and Khalij al-Masri) were allotted to this urban expansion scheme.¹⁰⁷ He restored the old glory days of covering the banks of the khalij with houses, turning the area surrounding Birkit al-Fil into a dense settlement for Mamluk emirs along its streets and by its shores¹⁰⁸ while the area behind it featured gardens, markets, public baths and mosques.¹⁰⁹ Al-Nasir Muhammad's fully controlled and sponsored contributions to the area of Birkit al-Fil restored its prestige as "one of Cairo's chic quarters."¹¹⁰

The area surrounding the Citadel and that encompassing Birkit al-Fil became the military and political centers of the city. The expansion of the population raised a need for more proximate religious foundations. By the time of al-Maqrizi, the southern district of the

¹⁰⁴ Younes *Birkit al-Fil*, 12.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 10; Petry, *Civilian Elite*, 133.

¹⁰⁶ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 161.

¹⁰⁷ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 9.

¹⁰⁸ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 10; Petry, *Civilian Elite*, 133.

¹⁰⁹ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 10; Raymond, *Cairo*, 127.

¹¹⁰ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 10; Raymond, *Cairo*, 132.

city – which included the area from the Fatimid walls to the Kabsh Hill and the Citadel – contained forty-nine mosques which equated to a third of the mosques of the city.¹¹¹ Two princely religious structures that remain today in proximity to Birkit al-Fil are the Mosque of Qawsun (730/1329) south of Bab Zuwayla¹¹² and the Mosque of Bashtak (728/1337) (Fig. 2.10).¹¹³

Another way to analyze the density of inhabitants of the areas below the Citadel and that surrounding Birkit al-Fil is to analyze the availability of necessary facilities. It was reported by al-Maqrizi that the government palaces in the Citadel, the adjacent palaces and homes of the Mamluk emirs and those belonging to the civilian elite all contained running water for purposes of cooking, hygiene and extinguishing fires.¹¹⁴ Assuming that palaces were equipped with water-wheels and cisterns that resolved the issue of drinking water, even the most extravagant Mamluk palace did not necessarily include *hammams* (baths). Therefore, one way to study this is to examine al-Maqrizi's entries on public baths and their locations and availability in comparison to other residential quarters of the city. Raymond noted that the southern part of the city contained four public baths which constituted only 7.8% of the

¹¹¹ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 12.

¹¹² Al-Harithy, "The Patronage of al-Nasir", 230. Nowadays, only the *riwaq* of the qibla remains and part of the northwestern portal containing the foundation inscription. The rest of the mosque was demolished to make way for Muhammad 'Ali Street. 'Ali Pasha Mubarak offered a design for its reconstruction which was implemented in 1893.

¹¹³ Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 11; Al-Harithy, "The Patronage of al-Nasir", 231. The mosque of Bashtak was rebuilt by Princess Ulfat Hanim, the mother of Musafa Pasha Fadil in 1278/1861 and is now called the Mosque of Mostafa Pasha Fadil. Only the main portal and the minaret remain of the original structure.

¹¹⁴ Levanoni, "Food and Cooking", 205; Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:210.

baths in the city.¹¹⁵ The first of these mentioned is Hammam Ibn al-Baba, located in the neighborhood of Darb Ibn al-Baba¹¹⁶, which was still standing when the French Expedition's *Description de l'Egypte* was compiled and was numbered 180.¹¹⁷ Al-Maqrizi's survey of public baths and mosques analyzed proportionally to the percentage of inhabitants in Raymond's *Cairo* indicates that the southern district – defined by him to extend “from Qahira's Fatimid wall to Kabsh Hill and the Citadel” – was the second most significant quarter of the city in terms of building projects and facilities after the walled city of al-Qahira.¹¹⁸ Al-Maqrizi's survey of Cairene *hammams* shows that they were built near princely palaces, however, they were not exclusively for the household of the emir's residence but were available for public use as well.¹¹⁹

Al-Nasir Muhammad's First Period (1311-22)

In 712/1311-12 al-Nasir Muhammad altered the urban layout of the area to the south of Maydan al-Rumayla by redefining its borders, rebuilding its walls and enclosing it, creating a buffer zone between the royal complex in the Citadel and the city to the west and the royal stables and hippodrome from the horse market to the north.¹²⁰ The altered dimensions created a three-walled enclosure around this *maydan* which shifted its location

¹¹⁵ Raymond, *Cairo*, 151.

¹¹⁶ Darb Ibn al-Baba is known in modern day as Shari' Nur al-Zalam around the mosque of Azbak al-Yusufi.

¹¹⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:315. Al-Maqrizi mentioned that this *hammam* allowed both males and females to enter.

¹¹⁸ Raymond, *Cairo*, 151.

¹¹⁹ Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture*, 42.

¹²⁰ Al-Nuwayri, *Nihayat al-'arab fi funun al-adab*, vol. 30, fol. 80; Ibn Abi al-Fada'il, Mufaddal, *al-Nahj al-sadid*, 20: 221; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:1:123; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 9: 51; Ibn Iyas, *Bada'i' al-zuhur*, 1:1:441-2.

slightly south so that the stable gate that had once opened onto it became its northern limit. The replacement of this space necessitated the inclusion of the old Qarafa Gate and the removal of a number of graves at the northern edge of the Southern Qarafa. A new gate was built, further to the south to replace the entrance to the Qarafa.¹²¹ The stables formerly built by Baybars were razed in the process of expansion and relocation. As a result of this replacement, the access points to this area, known as the Qara Maydan, became the new Bab al-Qarafa and Bab al-Silsila of the Citadel.

Al-Nasir Muhammad ordered his emirs to fill the *maydan* with some kind of black soil, hence its name Qara Maydan (Turkish for Black Maydan).¹²² The alteration in the dimensions of the *maydan* was to accommodate polo games played by al-Nasir Muhammad and his emirs¹²³ of which he was an avid player during his leisure time on Tuesdays and Saturdays.¹²⁴ Al-Maqrizi provided a vivid description of the procedures taken by al-Nasir Muhammad to beautify this square called Maydan al-Qal'a (the Citadel Maydan). He notes how al-Nasir Muhammad organized the plantation of the area around the palaces with luxurious palm and fruit trees and how he brought in Syrian gardeners, famous for their skills with the cultivation of fruit trees to care for them.¹²⁵ Al-Nasir Muhammad, who was known to be a fond buyer of horses, especially Arabian ones, constructed stables for his

¹²¹ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 24.

¹²² Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 173; Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:228.

¹²³ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 173.

¹²⁴ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:229.

¹²⁵ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 211. This piece of information, like what will be explained later in importing artisans and masons, shows how craftsmen were brought in from Syria to showcase their expertise in Cairo.

horses and camels around the squares beneath the Citadel. The stables in Mamluk cavalry society were given great importance. Extravagant palaces inside the Citadel were built nearby or overlooking the royal stables which were in the vicinity to the exclusive polo ground in the square below the Citadel.¹²⁶

This project could be considered the beginning of his scheme to restructure the Citadel, for this newly created buffer zone not only marked the border between the royal complex of the Citadel and the city, but also led to the development of the area to its west which resulted in a princely compound where stables, palaces and mosques for the favorite emirs of al-Nasir Muhammad were built.¹²⁷ In 1313, the first of those emirial palaces was constructed; al-Nasir Muhammad rebuilt the former *istabl* known as the House of Oxen (Dar al-Baqar), which was initially a stable run by oxens which turned waterwheels for the *maydan*. According to al-Maqrizi, this *dar*¹²⁸ was located on the spine of Hadrat al-Baqar (Fig. 2.11) and contained waterwheels and dependencies which stored and chopped straw for cows. After its refurbishment, al-Nasir Muhammad turned it into a *dar* and *istabl* and ordered its plantation for his emir Taqtimur al-Dimashqi, among the first mamluks to be promoted to the rank of emir in 1311.¹²⁹ He assigned Qadi Karim al-Din 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabir to this construction and dedicated a one million *dirhams* as its budget.¹³⁰ This *dar* or

¹²⁶ Behrens-Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture*, 37.

¹²⁷ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 25.

¹²⁸ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:125.

¹²⁹ Rabbat, *The Citadel*, 174; al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:68; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:1:130-1.

¹³⁰ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:125; Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44.

palace became later known as Dar Tashtamur Humus Akhdar (his last name means greens chickpeas, for the emir was known to be fond of this particular dainty). This *dar* survived until al-Maqrizi's time as a residence for Mamluk emirs.¹³¹ During the Circassian Mamluk period, as reported by Ibn Taghribirdi, this residence which had one door in Hadrat al-Baqar was owned by Emir Jarbash al-Muhammadi al-Atabak.¹³²

This was the first of the princely palaces established for the emirs of al-Nasir Muhammad that were an expansion or extension of previously existing structures into a princely residence for one of al-Nasir's favored emirs. According to Sherif Mansour, this palace became the nucleus of a group of monumental palaces built for the favored emirs of al-Nasir Muhammad to the west of Qara Maydan on the North-South axis to the west of the *maydan* during the last ten years of his reign.¹³³

Al-Nasir Muhammad's Second Period (1333-41)

In 738/1337-8 al-Nasir Muhammad revisited the area of Rumayla square and the Qara Maydan where he orchestrated a scheme to urbanize the quarter beneath the Citadel known as Hadrat al-Baqar.¹³⁴ Hadrat al-Baqar was located between the area of the mosque of Ibn

¹³¹ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:125; Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*, 28. Nada Younes in her thesis on Birkit al-Fil misinterpreted al-Maqrizi's identification of Dar al-Baqar with that of Istabl Qawsun as being located near the Madrasa of Sunqur Sa'di in Hadrat al-Baqar.

¹³² Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 9:122.

¹³³ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 25.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 59. According to Mansour in his thesis on Maydan al-Rumayla, Hadrat al-Baqar was the southern extension of the Qasaba. During the Circassian period, the area west of Rumayla square, of the palace of Yashbak and south of the Complex of Sultan Hasan up to al-Shari' al-'Azzam was known as Hadrat al-Baqar.

Tulun and Birkit al-Fil in the area currently extending from the Mausoleum of al-Muzaffar Sanjar to Sabil Umm 'Abbas.

One of the highlights of this project was a number of pleasure palaces built for himself and his favorite emirs.¹³⁵ This consisted of two palaces for his favorite *khassakiyya*¹³⁶ emirs Yalbugha al-Yahyawī and Altunbugha al-Maridani (738/1337-8) across from Maydan al-Rumayla in direction of Hammam al-Malik al-Sa'id Baraka Khan (the present location of al-Rifai' Mosque).¹³⁷

Al-Maqrizi's *Khitat* records that on the site of the palace of Yalbugha al-Yahyawī¹³⁸ was Istabl Aydughmish Amir Akhur¹³⁹ which al-Nasir Muhammad ordered to be incorporated within Yalbugha's palace. Opposite it were two facing palaces¹⁴⁰ which were added to the edifice as well as the Istabl of Emir Tashtamur al-Saqi and Istabl al-Jawq.¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, Ibn Taghribirdi's *Nujum* mentions that the palace of Yalbugha took only "a

¹³⁵ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 211.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 107. It was during the reign of Baybar's son al-Malik al-Sa'id Baraka Khan that the word *khassakiyya* was encountered. The word indicated the hierarchical organization of space inside the Citadel. The *khassakiyya* were the most trusted royal mamluks who constituted the sultan's immediate entourage and from whom new emirs were chosen.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 235.

¹³⁸ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:163 refers to Yalbugha's palace as *istabl* which he describes as being in the horse market in the direction of the Citadel and which was demolished by Sultan Hasan ibn Muhammad to build his complex. This remark is to show that the terms *qasr* and *istabl* can be sometimes used interchangeably when referring to the same building.

¹³⁹ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 9:122. Ibn Taghribirdi's *Nujum* mentions that Bayt Aydughmish Amir Akhur was probably Bayt Manjak al-Yusufi, which by the time Ibn Taghribirdi was owned by Tamurbugha al-Zahiri.

¹⁴⁰ Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44. See Arabic Narratives Text 3. The names of the two palaces are unknown but they probably belonged to the emirs of al-Zahir Baybars who were kept within eyesight from the ruling center at the Citadel.

¹⁴¹ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:131.

part”¹⁴² of Istabl Aydughmish Amir Akhur and another “part” of the Istabl of Emir Tashtamur al-Saqi and another of Istabl Qawsun.¹⁴³ Al-Nasir Muhammad wanted to convert the three former structures or parts of them into the two palaces of Yalbugha al-Yahyawi and Altunbugha al-Maridani.¹⁴⁴

The building program prioritized the Palace of Yalbugha al-Yahyawi which was given unprecedented personal supervision from the sultan;¹⁴⁵ he dedicated a *diwan* to overlook the construction, and a daily sum of twelve thousand *dirhams*,¹⁴⁶ which made a total cost of 4.6 million *dirhams*);¹⁴⁷ the lapis used in its decoration was worth one hundred thousand *dirhams*.¹⁴⁸ Al-Nasir Muhammad assigned a special *nazir* in charge of supplying the palace with meat and spices.¹⁴⁹ The Sultan personally came down from his Citadel to inspect the construction works on this palace. The Sultan and his emirs celebrated its inauguration with a feast where he presented all the emirs with robes of honor.¹⁵⁰

The palace of Altunbugha al-Maridani was never completed; according to *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya* its site contained remnants of an early construction stage which was stopped

¹⁴² Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:236. See Arabic Narratives Text 3. Istabl al-Jawq was part of Darb Ibn al-Baba opposite the Tulunid mosque and was occupied by the royal Mamluk cavalry.

¹⁴³ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 9:121.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:236. See Arabic Narratives Text 4.

¹⁴⁵ Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:44. ‘Ali Pasha Mubarak mentions that the usual sum issued by this *diwan* per day was eight thousand *dirhams*.

¹⁴⁷ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 58.

¹⁴⁸ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 48, 205; al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:131.

¹⁴⁹ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:131.

¹⁵⁰ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 58. See Arabic Narratives Text 5.

after accidents had taken place.¹⁵¹ Opposite the palace of Yalbugha al-Yahyawī, al-Nasir Muhammad ordered his older and more independent *khassakiyya*, Emir Qawsun to buy the properties adjacent to his *istabl* and expand it. The *Istabl* and later Palace of Qawsun was initially constructed by Emir 'Alam al-Din Sanjar al-Jumaqdar;¹⁵² later Emir Qawsun bought it from him with money¹⁵³ from the *bayt al-mal* (the Royal Treasury).¹⁵⁴ Al-Maqrizi mentions that Qawsun added to it the stable of Emir Sunqur al-Tawil¹⁵⁵ and was ordered by Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad to add structures (*amarahu al-malik al-Nasir Muhammad bi-'imarat hadha al-istabl*) to this stable to which he added *dur* and more stables turning it into a magnificent palace. Qawsun lived there during the lifetime of al-Nasir Muhammad until he was captured and executed.¹⁵⁶ This description seems to indicate a very large architectural complex and clearly indicates that it included several buildings, some of which had been previously erected: the remains of the stables of 'Alam al-Din Sanjar al-Jumaqdar and that of Emir Sunqur al-Tawil, which were part of the property that the Sultan had confiscated and that Qawsun acquired on the 20th Rajab 735/15th March 1334.¹⁵⁷ Al-Maqrizi also gives the

¹⁵¹ Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44. 'Ali Pasha Mubarak did not mention the exact accidents which disrupted the construction of the palace of Altunbugha al-Maridani and left the initial constructions on site until they were completely demolished by Sultan Hasan.

¹⁵² Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:132.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3:132. و صرف له ثمنه من بيت المال

¹⁵⁴ Dar al-Jumaqdar which belonged to Emir 'Alam al-Din Sanjar al-Jumaqdar was found on the left of Bab Harat al-Barjawan which indicates that the emir owned stables near Rumayla and the polo field as many of the contemporary emirs.

¹⁵⁵ Karim, "Buildings of the Amir Qawsun", 30. Dr. Chahinda Karim states that the palace was built by 'Alam al-Din Sanjar al-Tawil. "This palace was originally built by the Emir 'Alam al-Din Sanjar al-Tawil". Creswell and al-Maqrizi both agree that the palace was built by Emir Sanjar al-Jumaqdar.

¹⁵⁶ Karim, "Buildings of the Amir Qawsun", 30.

¹⁵⁷ Ahmad Shams al-Din, *Maqrizi and Khatat*, 62.

precise geographical position of the palace: "this stable is near the Madrasa of Sultan Hasan and has two doors that face the street, the first near the Hadrat al-Baqar and the other in the direction of Bab al-Silsila, which corresponds to the stables of the Sultan and the Citadel."¹⁵⁸ A plan of Cairo constructed in *Conquest and Fusion* by Susan Jane Staffa misplace Qawsun's stables right outside Bab al-Silsila of the Citadel (Fig. 2.9).

The entire initiative of the three palaces was supervised by al-Nasir Muhammad's superintendent of constructions (*shadd al-'ama'ir*) Emir Aqbugha 'Abd al-Wahid.¹⁵⁹ Each of the three palaces had a *qasr* and stables that opened onto the street across from the Hammam of al-Malik al-Sa'id. These three palaces were royal projects; not only because they were thought of, sponsored and supervised by Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad but also because they were part of a network of royal works that extended to the north and west of the Citadel.¹⁶⁰ As Baybars had realized before him, al-Nasir Muhammad's location choice for the palaces of his emirs was driven by a deep interest in keeping a close eye on them, especially those who had grown more powerful by the end of the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad:

As structures, they formed part of the network of princely palaces to the north and west of the Citadel that he had created as a symbolic ring around the royal residence [including the two palaces of Yalbugha and Altunbugha]. Their role was more important than that of other structures planned by the sultan and executed for his emirs because of their central location. They commanded the approach from the city of al-Qahira through the north-south Shari' al-'Azzam south of the Zuwayla Gate. Strategically, these palaces controlled access to the horse market area (Maydan

¹⁵⁸ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:72 (Bulaq, 1854).

¹⁵⁹ Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44; Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 219. Emir Aqbugha 'Abd al-Wahid was the brother of Princess Tughay, al-Nasir Muhammad's favorite wife, who is said to have reached esteemed positions based on this connection.

¹⁶⁰ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 253.

Rumayla), and defended the royal domain behind it. Aesthetically, they announced to the viewer the royal splendor that would fully unfold as one entered the open square of Rumayla.¹⁶¹

The Great Plague of 749/1348 and successive crises that struck Cairo until 815/1412 did not stop the development of the southern part of the city, especially the area between the Citadel and the Mosque of Ibn Tulun: nineteen of the forty-nine mosques built during the years 742-815/1341-1412 were built in this area, especially around the Citadel, more than the ones constructed during the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad. The construction of large emiral houses did not stop, on the contrary, they increased to forty residences dating between 741 and 814/1341 and 1412, seventeen of which were erected in this district; among these being the palace of Emir Taz, built in 753/1352.¹⁶²

THE CIRCASSIAN MAMLUK PERIOD

Throughout the fifteenth century the development of the southern district of Cairo continued; restoration works were carried out to refurbish monuments that had suffered from the crisis such as the mosque of Ibn Tulun. There were also not less than twenty new mosques and madrasa built at that time.¹⁶³ During the same period this area maintained its status as a privileged district for the elite where 60% of the emirs lived.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 237.

¹⁶² Raymond, *Cairo*, 149-150. Approximately during the same period, the Madrasa and Khanqah of Shaykhu (756/1355) and the Complex of Sultan Hasan (757/1356) were constructed.

¹⁶³ Raymond, *Cairo*, 182.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 182.

Based on descriptions by Ibn Taghribirdi who wrote of the topography of Cairo between 784 and 874/1382 and 1469, William Popper estimated the dimensions of the Qara Maydan beneath the Citadel to be "about 175 yards from west to east, 220 from north to south." He goes on to say: "... and from it radiated several streets south, west and north. By then, the *maydan* was limited by the Madrasa of Sultan Hasan on its west side, 200 yards west of Bab al-Silsila, and the *bimaristan* of al-Mu'ayyad (formerly al-Madrasa al-Ashrafiyya) on its north, at the foot of the ramp. The *maydan* was located west of the stables area and south of Maydan al-Rumayla, extending from the Chain Gate several hundred yards toward the Qarafa Gate of the city" (Fig. 2.12).¹⁶⁵

During the Circassian Mamluk period (784-923/1382-1517), the status of the *maydans* around the city gradually deteriorated.¹⁶⁶ Historians who witnessed the period including al-Qalqashani, al-Maqrizi and Ibn Taghribirdi did not report any hippodrome construction by a Circassian Mamluk sultan within the now unified city. According to Ibn Taghribirdi and al-Maqrizi, the first sultan of the period who could be accused of neglecting the area beneath the Citadel was Sultan Barquq. He broke the tradition of riding to the hippodrome after he ascended the throne, which deprived *maydans* like Rumayla and Qara Maydan of their ceremonial character.¹⁶⁷

The first Circassian sultan to refurbish the Qara Maydan and repair it was al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh who wished to reaffirm the power of the Mamluk army and revive its old

¹⁶⁵ Popper, *Egypt and Syria*, 26.

¹⁶⁶ Ayalon, "Notes on Furusiyya Exercises", 37.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:399; Ayalon, "Notes on Furusiyya Exercises", 43.

glory days.¹⁶⁸ He chose the site of al-Madrassa al-Ashrafiyya (1363-76) as the location of his *bimaristan*. To make room for his building, he demolished the madrasa and buildings that were attached at the time to the wall of the Citadel, evacuated the area of inhabitants and cleared the area from al-Suwwah¹⁶⁹ to the skirts of the Citadel as far as Bab al-Qarafa where then the Rumayla square was the western edge of the *bimaristan*. He also added a small *zawiya* near the mosque of the stables in Rumayla.

In 834/1430, the Madrasa of Jawhar al-Lala was constructed on Khatt al-Masna'at at the end of Darb al-Labbana on the lower part of the hill of the Citadel.¹⁷⁰ In 909/1503, Emir Qanibay Qara constructed his mausoleum whose foundation inscription dates to Sha'ban 909/February 1503.¹⁷¹ Three years later, in Shawwal 911/March 1506, the last architectural contribution added in Maydan al-Rumayla by the end of the Circassian Mamluk period was a madrasa/mosque in the area known as Rahbat al-Suwwah, stretching from the Madrasa of Sultan Hasan to the Citadel. Emir Qanibay became Amir Akhur during the reign of Qaytbay's son al-Nasir Muhammad. Emir Qanibay 'al-Rammah' built two mosques in Cairo, one of which is currently in Maydan al-Rumayla. The madrasa was initially part of a large complex that included a palace and other dwellings.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 42; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 1:417.

¹⁶⁹ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 28. Al-Suwwah is a high mount to the North-East of the Citadel on which the *bimaristan* of al-Mu'ayyad stands now.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 29.

¹⁷¹ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 305.

¹⁷² Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 29.

In the same year, Sultan Qansuh al-Ghawri decided to construct in the ancient Qara Maydan. He paved the *maydan* and surrounded it with lofty walls. On its western side, a magnificent palace was built with a *manzara* and a pond. The palace was built at the gate separating the Rumayla square and the Qara Maydan and was connected to the Citadel by stairs. The area was beautified with plantations and gardens. Other constructions in the *maydan* also included a *maq'ad* and a *bayt* which served as a court of justice, a *sabil*, a *maghasil* (a place for washing the dead) and an ablution area.¹⁷³ Sultan al-Ghawri shifted major ceremonies from the Hawsh in the Citadel to al-Rumayla. He restructured the ancient hippodrome of al-Nasir Muhammad (Rabi' I-Jumada I 909/September-November 1503) and built two small mosques behind it. Doris Behrens-Abouseif determined the location of the complex erected by al-Ghawri to have reached the Complex of Sultan Hasan on the northern side and the mosque near the cemetery on the southern side. At the time, Ibn Iyas described the *maydan* "as walled between two main gates... closed with chains... a monumental one and one adjoined by a *qasr* which is an elevated residential structure."¹⁷⁴

THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

In 923/1517, Sultan Selim captured Egypt to end the Mamluk Sultanate that lasted from the second half of the thirteenth century until beginning of the sixteenth century. Egypt came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and was deprived from its status as the

¹⁷³ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 30.

¹⁷⁴ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 303.

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capital of the Islamic realm turning it into merely a province governed from the capital in Istanbul. The Citadel was no longer the seat of the ruler and the military base of the Sultanate, but became the residence of the Ottoman 'Azab regiment based in the southern enclosure.¹⁷⁵ Accordingly, the area beneath the Citadel lost its ceremonial significance and became the center of military revolts or popular rebellions.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, some structures were still being erected in that area; in 975/1567, Mahmud Pasha built his mosque in Maydan al-Rumayla followed by the Madrasa and tomb of Shaykh al-Din al-Qarafi in 983/1575 built by Khadim Masih Pasha between the Qara Maydan and the Qarafa area.¹⁷⁷

During the first two centuries of the Ottoman period, the most important change that took place in this area was the movement of emirs from around the Citadel to the banks of Birkat al-Fil. This trend was apparent from the beginnings of the Ottoman era and became stronger after 1008/1600, when the tanneries on the north bank of the pond were transferred to Bab al-Luq. According to Raymond, "between 1060-1169/1650-1755, 40% of the emirs had a palace overlooking the pond, which is surrounded by a continuous belt of dwellings."¹⁷⁸ Consequently, the area beneath the Citadel was neglected and eventually declined.¹⁷⁹

Later in 1109/1697, the mosque of Ahmad al-Katkhuda was constructed just outside the Chain Gate in sight of the Mamluk stables and incorporating the fifteenth century Zawiya of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh. This mosque later attracted a series of shops and houses

¹⁷⁵ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 31.

¹⁷⁶ Raymond, "The residential districts", 218.

¹⁷⁷ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 32.

¹⁷⁸ Raymond, *Cairo*, 221; Raymond, "The residential districts", 218.

¹⁷⁹ Raymond, "The residential districts", 218.

which catered to the needs of the 'Azaban.¹⁸⁰ In 1168/1754, the commander of the 'Azaban Radwan Katkhuda al-Jalfi constructed a new outer wall to enclose the mosque of Ahmad Katkhuda and the surrounding structures. This new Bab 'Azab replaced the former Mamluk Chain Gate (Fig. 2.13).¹⁸¹

On the other side, the area stretching from the ancient Rumayla and Qara Maydans to Birkit al-Fil once again witnessed a building boom. The area maintained its status as the residence for the elite and emirs with their palaces and private houses. Three reasons triggered this boom; the development of the Bab al-Luq area and the congestion of the ancient city of al-Qahira made it impossible to build large palaces. Thirdly, the Citadel remained an attraction, not as the prestigious seat of the Sultan or ruler but as an elevated residential area that then encompassed "shops, markets, coffee houses and public baths while various towers were converted into civilian living quarters."¹⁸²

With this decline of the status of the Citadel that was once the powerful seat of the Sultan and his government, it simply became a large walled palace as described by the Venetian ambassador Trivisano: "Cairo has a citadel which is not very strong... It dominates the entire city... This citadel would not be called a fortress back home it would be called a magnificent palace."¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Casanova, *Historie*, 714-5.

¹⁸¹ Al-Jabarti, *Aja'ib al-athar*, 192; Casanova, *Historie*, 715.

¹⁸² Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 3:239.

¹⁸³ Wiet, *Cairo*, 144; Williams, "Urbanization and Monument Construction", 38.

In 1204/1789, when the French invaded Egypt, the gates of the Qara Maydan were closed and the newly enclosed space was incorporated within the Citadel. According to al-Jabarti, many buildings surrounding the Qara Maydan and within the Citadel were destroyed but no addition or embellishment was made to the *maydans* beneath the Citadel.¹⁸⁴ He recites:

Among the destructions are those around Birkat al-Fil and particularly those of the houses of the emirs, from which all the wood was removed to build the fortresses or to make firewood or to sell it. The soldiers also took lead, iron and marble in these houses. This *birka* was one of the wonders of Cairo.¹⁸⁵

The French's main contribution to documenting the city was their volumes of *La Description de l'Egypte* with its illustrations, maps and drawings (Fig. 2.14).

THE PERIOD OF MUHAMMAD 'ALI

Under Muhammad 'Ali (1220-64/1805-48), the city transformed from a medieval to a modern one during which the Citadel and the *maydans* beneath were completely changed. The Citadel once again became a new royal city, while the *maydans* and the area around it lost some of its earlier Mamluk and Ottoman buildings (Fig. 2.15).¹⁸⁶

Muhammad 'Ali established gunpowder factories at the stables in the Citadel. In 1240/1824, most of the Mamluk buildings of the southern enclosure of the Citadel

¹⁸⁴ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 25.

¹⁸⁵ Al-Jabarti, *Journal d'un Notable du Caire Durant l'Expédition Française*. 319.

¹⁸⁶ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 26.

overlooking the Qara Maydan were destroyed as result of the explosion of a power magazine on site. While the Citadel once again regained parts of its importance with the construction of a military school, the spaces beneath the Citadel and the former Mamluk heritage suffered from deterioration. According to 'Ali Pasha Mubarak, the *maydans* beneath the Citadel fell into neglect. Around the Rumayla anyone could acquire property and monuments were overshadowed by the clutter of houses and shops.¹⁸⁷ Photographs of the Rumayla square around 1279/1862 display its deteriorated state. The grounds of the *maydan* were unpaved and the façade of the Complex of Sultan Hasan overlooking the square rose behind the shops aligned in front of its mausoleum (2.16 and 2.17).

By 1292/1875, the area to the South of Rumayla was known as al-Habbalin or al-Habbala (the rope-makers) and al-Husuriyya (the mat-makers) whose shops were concentrated in this poor area connecting al-Rumayla and Qanatir al-Siba'. At that time, the Habbala quarter was one of the most wretched in Cairo, composed of small, middle-class residences (Fig. 2.18).¹⁸⁸

Until the reign of Khedive Ism'ail, the Rumayla remained the location of the animal market. The dwellers in the areas around the two *maydans* were from two extremities; either the gentry of Turkish or Circassian origin or native Egyptian peasants and poorer workmen attracted by the low rents at the outskirts.¹⁸⁹ The Citadel became the seat of Khedival Egypt until 1285/1868, when Khedive Ism'ail established a new European-inspired district where

¹⁸⁷ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 38.

¹⁸⁸ Raymond, "The Economy of the Traditional City", 746.

¹⁸⁹ Tawakol, *'Abdin area*, 19.

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¹⁹³ Ibid., 2:4
¹⁹⁴ Depaule

he built the 'Abdin palace as the seat of the ruler and his family.¹⁹⁰ Khedive Ism'ail assigned 'Ali Pasha Mubarak to the creation of the master plan of the city which necessitated al-Rumayla and the former Qara Maydan to be cleared of dirt.¹⁹¹ According to this new plan, Maydan al-Rumayla was renamed Muhammad 'Ali Square and the two ancient squares were enlarged and planted with trees. Before the houses built and owned by 'Ali Pasha Mubarak to the west of the *maydans* were constructed, the site was occupied by Saqiyyat Ghazawi al-Kabira (*zat al-wujuh al-arba*) which 'Ali Pasha Mubarak speculated might have been the waterwheel of the ancient Dar al-Baqar. The well of this waterwheel still exists in an empty plot between the houses.¹⁹² Bayt 'Ali Pasha Mubarak was once part of Hadrat al-Baqar near Hawsh Bardaq. At the time of the construction, it was found that the entire flooring of the *hawsh* was paved with stone.¹⁹³

The first major transformation beneath the Citadel was the construction of an enormous palace by 1277-97/1860-80, which opened on the square of the Complex of Sultan Hasan as far as Birkat al-Fil which by then was partly drained and covered with gardens (Fig. 2.19).¹⁹⁴ A new street was constructed between 1284-90/1867-73 to connect the district of Azbakiyya, now Maydan al-'Ataba, to the Citadel and was named Muhammad 'Ali Street.

¹⁹⁰ Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*, 39.

¹⁹¹ MacCoan, *Egypt As It Is*, 53.

¹⁹² Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 2:44.

¹⁹⁴ Depaule et al., *Actualité de l'habitat ancien au Caire*, 82.

Between 1297 and 1328/1880 and 1910 Birkat al-Fil was finally almost completely drained. On its southern end, and new subdivisions were created. The palace that opened on the *birka* was destroyed and the land it occupied was divided into regular rectangular plots.

The area was then occupied by a commercial and literate bourgeoisie who built villas and modern buildings adorned with art nouveau elements. Monuments that were tied to *waqfs* in that area remained relatively intact thanks to their perpetual and inalienable property status. They testify to the scale that plots and buildings had in the past.¹⁹⁵

However, following the draining and covering of the pond, the area became inhabited by the lowest segments of the population. The process of transformation of this area from the residence of the elite into a working-class district ended in the nineteenth century with the abandonment of members of the wealthy bourgeoisie whose homes represented the last hints of economic and political power.

Around Muhammad 'Ali Square, Khedive Ism'ail's mother, Khushyar Kadin Affandi ordered the construction of houses behind Qaraqul al-Rumayla known at the time of *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya* as Qaraqul Muhammad 'Ali.¹⁹⁶ She bought the area of Istabl Qawsun known as Hawsh Bardaq and constructed a number of houses in its space opposite the Complex of Sultan Hasan. The rear fragment of Istabl Qawsun was destroyed to construct a street that leads from Suyufiyya Street to Manshiyya.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Depaule, *Actualité de l'habitat ancien au Caire*, 86-87.

¹⁹⁶ Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44. See Arabic Narratives Text 6.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:44.

By the early twentieth century, Maydan al-Rumayla was restored to its importance as a ceremonial space for police parades on the day of Prophet Muhammad's birth and the procession of the Ka'ba's *kiswa* (the Ka'ba's gold-threaded holy carpet), offered to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and a site for execution of death sentences. At the time, the *maydan* appeared to be refurbished and planted with greenery (Fig. 2.19).

CONCLUSION

More than any time, it was under al-Nasir Muhammad that prosperity was reflected in the expansion and embellishment of the city during the first half of the fourteenth century. By the time of al-Nasir's death in 1341, Cairo more than doubled its size and spread into areas that had been farmland, desert or land recovered from the retreat of the Nile.

During the Bahri Mamluk period, especially that of al-Nasir Muhammad, Rumayla square and the Qara Maydan both achieved their acme. The altered layout of the Qara Maydan with the palaces of the emirs to the west with the adjacent façade of the southern enclosure of the Citadel reflected the monumentality of the structures built and embellished by al-Nasir Muhammad in the Citadel and in the area beneath it. By the third reign of al-Nasir Muhammad, the wealth and power accumulated by him were reflected in the colossal aspect of his architectural projects. Ibn Khaldun remarked that "the size of monuments erected... was proportional to their original power."¹⁹⁸ The established center of power

¹⁹⁸ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, in O'Kane, "Monumentality", 499.

caused the expansion of former settlements of Fustat and al-Qahira in that direction,
resulting in a more coherent arrangement of a unified city rather than distant settlements.

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ements.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PATRONS OF ISTABL QAWSUN

THE BAHRI MAMLUK PERIOD

قوصون قد كانت له رتبة ... تسمو على بدر السما الزاهر
فحطه في القيد أيدغمش ... من شاق عال على الطائر
ولم يجد من ذله حاجبا ... فأين عين الملك الناصر
صار عجبيا أمره كله ... في أول الأمر وفي الآخر 199

In 702/1302 Emir Sayf al-Din Qawsun b. 'Abd Allah al-Sayfi al-Maliki al-Nasiri al-Saqi²⁰⁰ was born in the Qipchaq steppe territory of the Mongol Golden Horde, north of the Black Sea. In his eighteenth year, Qawsun, a tall and handsome young man was a member of the entourage of Lady Tulunbay daughter²⁰¹ of Özbek Khan, Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad's bride from the house of Berke - the descendants of Genghis Khan and rulers of the Golden Horde. This marriage was to affirm the good relations between the Mamluk Empire and the rulers of the Golden Horde. The ship with a group of 2,400 individuals arrived from the Black Sea in Alexandria on 23rd Rabi' II 720/5th May 1320. In addition to Lady Tulunbay and officials, this large retinue included merchants with 440 new mamluks, 204 of whom were bought by the Sultan for 1,000,000 *dirhams*. Among this group was the young merchant Qawsun who accompanied this entourage carrying his merchandise of leather blade strops

¹⁹⁹ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:48. See Translation Text 1.

²⁰⁰ Al-Safadi, *Kitab al-wafi*, 24:277; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Durar*, 3:257; al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 4:104-5 (Cairo, 1997).

²⁰¹ Steenbergen, "The Amir Qawsun", 451; Bauden, "The Sons of al-Nasir Muhammad", 62; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 132. Steenbergen reports that Tulunbay was the daughter of Özbek (as cited by Shuja'i), while Bauden reports that she was his niece. Lady Tulunbay did not bear any children and was repudiated in 728/1328. She was successively married off, by al-Nasir himself, to three of his emirs. Holt, "An-Nasir Muhammad b. Qalawun," 316-17.

and pieces of embroidered leather worth 500 *dirhams*.²⁰² After he arrived in Cairo, Qawsun wandered the markets, streets, the horse market and the Citadel selling his wares.²⁰³

Contemporary historians mention a number of scenarios of how Qawsun came to encounter Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad.²⁰⁴ The first version presented by al-Shuja'i and reproduced by al-Maqrizi reports that Qawsun entered the Citadel one day to sell his merchandise to one of the *awshaqiyya*²⁰⁵. One of them grew very fond of Qawsun, who started to frequent him regularly. One day, the sultan visited his stables to find Qawsun. Described as a tall and handsome young man, Qawsun immediately caught the eye of the Sultan. Later, al-Nasir Muhammad summoned Qawsun to appear before him; he started asking him about his situation and the reason for coming to Egypt. When Qawsun mentioned that he merely came for a visit, the sultan asked him to stay with him (*fa sa'alahu al-sultan 'an yuqima 'indahu*). He promised Qawsun to bring his relatives from his homeland Qipchaq; in the end Qawsun accepted the sultan's proposition and agreed to sell himself to him - a crucial act to become a mamluk and gain a standing in Cairo (*ba'a nafsahu li'l-sultan*).²⁰⁶

The second version of the story was reported by Ibn Aybak al-Safadi; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani also relied on it. They report that Qawsun, curious to see the sultan at close

²⁰² Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:20.

²⁰³ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 4:104; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:203-4; al-Dawadari, *Kanz al-Durar*, 9: 302-3; Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 34; al-Shuja'i, *Tarikh al-Malik al-Nasir*, 159.

²⁰⁴ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 34-5.

²⁰⁵ See Glossary.

²⁰⁶ Al-Shuja'i, *Tarikh al-Malik al-Nasir*, 159-160; Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 34.

quarters, one day accompanied a merchant up the Citadel. There, al-Nasir Muhammad noticed Qawsun and was pleased by him (*'ajabahu*). Consequently, he wanted to buy him; the merchant told the sultan that he was not a mamluk and therefore he could not be sold. Nevertheless, the issue was resolved when the sultan bought Qawsun from his merchant for 8,000 *dirhams*²⁰⁷ which were sent to his brother Susun²⁰⁸ in his homeland by the commander of the retinue.²⁰⁹ There is a third version that is quite close to the second one in which Qawsun ascended to the Citadel in the service of some merchants (*fi khidmat ba'd al-tujjar*) which implies that he was not in charge of his own trade.²¹⁰

Whether Qawsun voluntarily sold himself to al-Nasir Muhammad to enter Mamluk society or was forced is something that probably will never be known. What is repeated and thus can be considered truthful is that all narratives reflect how fond al-Nasir Muhammad became of the young Qawsun. From then on, al-Nasir Muhammad "favored him greatly, loved him, bestowed the emirate on him, increased his importance and elevated him the highest ranks."²¹¹ Al-Nasir Muhammad immediately bestowed a grant (*iqta'*) on Qawsun and appointed him as one of his corps of cupbearers.²¹² He also became a member of the sultan's *khassakiyya*²¹³, his personal retinue of 40 mamluks. The sultan's *khassakiyya* held court posts

²⁰⁷ Steenbergen, "The Amir Qawsun", 452.

²⁰⁸ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 39, "Emir Susun was later brought to Cairo as promised by Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad, to become Emir of Hundred and then Commander of Thousand".

²⁰⁹ Al-Safadi, *Kitab al-wafi*, 24:277; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Durar*, 3:257; Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 35.

²¹⁰ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:46.

²¹¹ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 34; Al-Shuja'i, *Tarikh al-Malik al-Nasir*, 160; al-Nuwayri 19B, fols. 119b-120a; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Durar*, 3:342; al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:65-67.

²¹² Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:46.

²¹³ See Glossary.

and occupied a privileged position among the sultan's mamluks. Al-Nasir Muhammad entrusted his emir and son-in-law Baktamur al-Saqi to Qawsun's training.²¹⁴ In less than five years, Qawsun was promoted Emir of Ten and not long after Emir of Forty.²¹⁵ He continued to rise in Mamluk society to the highest ranks; he had attained enough power and favor from the sultan that in 723/1323 he got *naqib al-jaysh* Emir Sunqur Sa'di exiled to Tripoli.²¹⁶ On the 4th Jumada II 726/8th May 1326, while maintaining his status as one of al-Nasir Muhammad's *khassakiyya*, Qawsun was promoted Emir of One Hundred and later appointed among the 24 Commanders of One Thousand (*muqaddam 'alf*)²¹⁷ instead of Tinal al-Hajib.²¹⁸ Emir Tinal al-Hajib's *iqta'* was consequently transferred to Emir Qawsun who was exceptionally allowed to add it to his previous *iqta'*.²¹⁹ His career of bypassing the rigorous Mamluk apprenticeship in Mamluk schools and military service was an exception to the standard practice of Mamluk promotion set by earlier Mamluk sultans.²²⁰

In 727/1327²²¹ Qawsun married the daughter of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad adding the title "son-in-law of the sultan" to his existing titles and privileges. The marriage was

²¹⁴ Al-Safadi, *A'yan al-'Asr*, 4:138.

وصار في طبقة بكتمر الساقى، وكان يتنفس عليه ويفتخر، ويقول: أنا السلطان اشتراني بماله، وكنت من خواصه وأمرني وقدمني وزوجني ابنته، ما أنا مثل غيري تنقلت من التجار إلى الاصطبلات إلى الطبايق.

²¹⁵ Al-Shuja'i, *Tarikh al-Malik al-Nasir*, 160, 222; al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 4:104; Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 34-5.

²¹⁶ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 35-36. An interesting piece of information given the location of the Palace of Qawsun almost attached to the complex of Sunqur al-Sa'di.

وَكَانَ سَبَبَ اخراجِه غضب قوصون منه

²¹⁷ See Glossary.

²¹⁸ Steenbergen, "The Amir Qawsun", 452.

²¹⁹ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:272; Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 53.

²²⁰ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 35.

²²¹ Al-Nuwayri, *Nihayt al-arab*, 33:228, al-Nuwayri reports that the wedding of Qawsun to the daughter of al-Nasir Muhammad took place on the 13th Dhu'l-Hijja, while Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:47 reports that the

commemorated by Qadi al-Qudah Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn al-Hariri al-Hanafi.²²² The wedding was celebrated extravagantly for seven days in the Citadel where the emirs presented the groom with fifty thousand *dirhams* and the tips collected for the *maghan*²²³ counted for ten thousand *dirhams*.²²⁴ This celebration reflected of the extravagance of Mamluk occasions where overspending was a sign of wealth and status in Mamluk society where the emirs' grants were a sign of competition, pride and bragging. This was the second time al-Nasir Muhammad married a daughter of his to one of his emirs, the first being Baktamur al-Saqi. Later Qawsun had the double privilege of also becoming the sultan's brother-in-law after he married his sister to the Sultan.²²⁵

This rapid advancement of Qawsun and other emirs of al-Nasir Muhammad were bestowed upon them at a young age "before any of them had a moustache".²²⁶ He himself testified with a boast that his story and that of many mamluk emirs succeeding him were above the norm. As reported by Ibn Aybak al-Safadi in his biography of Qawsun; "He [Qawsun] became the greatest of the favorites [of the sultan] after the Emir Sayf al-Din

wedding took place in Rajab of 727 not Dhu'l-Hijja. This date was concurred by Abu al-Feda al-Dimishqi, *Bidaya wa nihaya*, 14:148 and al-Wardi, *Ibn al-wardi*, 2:272 وفي رجب كان عرس الأمير سيف الدين قوصون الساقى الناصري، وكان وقتا مشهورا، خلع على الأمراء والأكابر place on Monday 3rd Jumada II. while al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:97 reports that the wedding took

²²² Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:283; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 9:89.

²²³ 'Abd al-Hafiz, *al-Mustalahat al-mi'mariyya*, 12. The *maghani*, known today as the singers or the performers were seated in an upper loggia that overlooked a *qa'a* called the *aghani*. The *aghani* was defined by 'Abd al-Hafiz as upper corridors with seating areas concealed behind *mashrabiyyas*. Usually, the *aghani* overlooked the *durqa'a* and was reachable by an inner wooden staircase and sometimes through a secret passageway.

²²⁴ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:47

²²⁵ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:101. See Arabic Narratives Text 7.

²²⁶ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 39; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 11:292; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 9:303; Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Durar*, 2:324, 325

Baktamur al-Saqi. He [Qawsun] used to compete with him [Baktamur] and despise him, saying, "I was not brought from the stables to the barracks. Rather the sultan himself bought me²²⁷ and I became special to him. He made me emir, and then he made me commander [of a thousand] and married me to his daughter".²²⁸

The designations Qawsun held made him one of the most privileged of all emirs which were granted to him by the Sultan driven by the personal feelings of the latter. Qawsun kept his titles and continued to grow stronger until his death. After al-Nasir Muhammad's death, Qawsun served as the defacto ruler (*na'ib al-sultana*) to his sons Abu Bakr and Kujuk. This task affirms Qawsun's importance and prestige and fondness of his master.

Qawsun was among several emirs encouraged by their master to construct buildings for public benefit. As result, he became a patron of numerous religious, commercial and agricultural projects. He owned and resided in several palaces during his lifetime. Nonetheless it cannot be assumed, due to his unusual origins and entry into Mamluk society, and as Ibn Aybak al-Safadi's recounts²²⁹ that he followed the promotional sequence starting as a young mamluk soldier in training residing the stables to the *tibaq* in the south enclosure of the Citadel.

²²⁷ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:46-47.

²²⁸ Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Durar*, 3:343; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Al-Manhal*, fol. 37a; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:47.
ثُمَّ إِنَّهُ انْتَشَأَ وَعَظَمَ وَأَمْرُهُ مَائَةٌ وَصَارَ أَكْبَرَ الْخَوَاصِّ بَعْدَ الْأَمِيرِ سَيْفِ الدِّينِ بَكْتَمُرِ السَّاقِي
وَكَانَ يَنَافِسُهُ وَيَفْخَرُ عَلَيْهِ وَيَقُولُ أَنَا مَا تَنَقَّلْتُ مِنَ الْإِسْطِبْلَاتِ إِلَى الطَّبَاقِ بَلِ اشْتَرَانِي السُّلْطَانُ وَصَرْتُ خَاصًّا بِهِ وَأَمَرَنِي ثُمَّ قَدِمَنِي وَزَوَّجَنِي ابْنَتَهُ

²²⁹ Al-Safadi, *A'yan al-'asr*, 4:138.

Inside the Citadel, the residences of the mamluks maintained a level of segregation between different zones depending on the distribution of ranks and the permitted proximity to the residence of the sultan (Fig. 3.1). The ranks of the military residences in the Citadel were arranged from low ranks at the north to the apex in the south: the soldiers (*jund*), then *barrani* emirs followed by the *juwwani* emirs then finally the sultan. The mamluks under training resided in the Citadel's southern enclosure, and were mentioned in the chronicles under two names; *juwwani* and *barrani* (Fig. 3.2). The *juwanni* emirs, also called the *khassakiyya*, among whom was Emir Qawsun, were the ones who were destined to be elevated in rank and importance and were later selected to be royal mamluks (Fig. 3.3). They were further divided into two groups; the *kuttabiyya* and the *mamalik al-tibaq*. The *kuttabiyya* studied in the *maktab* with the sultan's sons and were prepared to become *khassakiyya* while *mamalik al-tibaq* were lodged in the southern enclosure's *tibaq* and were later trained to become *silahdariyya*, *jamadariyya* or a bodyguard of the sultan, which were lower ranks than that of the *khassakiyya*.²³⁰ Young *khassakiyyas* awaiting their promotions to the rank of Emir and their reception of fief (*iqta'*) were lodged in the *tibaq* in the southern enclosure and did not own palaces in the city. The title *khassaki* did not merely dictate the proximity of his residence to the sultan but also his intimate relation with the sultan. The great emirs, especially Emirs of One Hundred or Commanders of One Thousand, who also held the title of *khassaki*, either had separate structures or small palaces in the southern

²³⁰ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 261-2.

enclosure of the Citadel (Fig. 3.3). Some even owned small palaces outside of the Citadel, but close to or inside the walled city of al-Qahira.²³¹ Those palaces within the city were composed of the residence of the emir, his family, his mamluks and his stables.²³² On the other hand, the *barrani* emirs, also called *khurjiyya*, lived in the northern enclosure and included the unfortunate who had been punished and removed from the *khassakiyya*.

In 732-733/1332-3 the first residential property owned by Emir Qawsun was reported by al-Maqrizi was known as Dar Baysariyya. It was once the *dar* of Emir Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Shamsi al-Salahi al-Najmi al-Bakhmi, one of the mamluks of the Ayyubid Sultan al-Salih Najm al-Din.

Dar al-Baysariyya was located on the Fatimid Qasaba in Bayn al-Qasrayn. At the end of the Fatimid period it served as a place to host important foreign guests. In 659/1260, during the reign of Sultan al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari, Emir Rukn al-Din spent large sums on its refurbishment. Al-Maqrizi in his *Khitat* mentions that Sultan al-Zahir Baybars expressed his discontent with the amount of money spent on the *dar*. Questioning his actions, Sultan al-Zahir asked his emir "What did you leave for the invaders and the 'turks'?"²³³. The emir²³⁴ replied "Charities of the sultan. I swear my lord, I did not build this

²³¹ Ibid., 110. This could be applied to the cases of the palace of Baysari – later to become the palace of Qawsun in Bayn al-Qasrayn, the palace of Bashtak and the later metropolitan project of Yalbugha al-Yahyawi, al-Maridani and Qawsun.

²³² Ibid., 110.

²³³ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:126. "Turk" was the generic term for the Mamluks as a system including the Circassians. Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 14. (*wa wuli sultanat misr al-muluk min al-turk*).

ثم زالت دولة بني أيوب، وولي سلطنة مصر الملوک من الترك

²³⁴ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:126. Al-Maqrizi's narrative states that in this dialogue the sultan called his emir "Emir Badr al-Din" not Rukn al-Din.

dar for a reason other than to spread its news to the homeland of the enemies, to be said that one of the sultan's mamluks embellished a *dar* on which he spent a magnificent sum." The sultan was pleased by the emir's answer and granted him *alf dinar 'ayna* – which al-Maqrizi remarks as one of the sultan's greatest gifts. The palace was said to have had a *riwaq* on its upper floor with an attached *ma'azil* and *manafi*.²³⁵ It was decorated with the finest marble work in al-Qahira. Its premises included stables, a *hammam* and a garden extending almost two *faddans*. People were astounded by its luxuriousness; at the time, *sultani* mamluks and court members did not change their *dar* where they resided when they were soldiers.

After the death of Emir Baysari, the palace's property passed to his heirs. In 733/1332-3 Emir Qawsun asked al-Nasir's permission to acquire the palace. Permission was granted to speak to the heirs of Emir Baysari who complied willingly. However, since the palace was tied to a waqf it entailed a verdict of *istibdal*²³⁶ by Qadi Qudah Sharaf al-Din al-Hurani al-Hanbali which was issued in favor of Qawsun and cost him two hundred thousand *dirhams* for the entire transaction.²³⁷

After Qawsun bought Dar al-Baysariyya, Emir Bashtak became envious of Qawsun's palace for "there existed envy between them that equaled the envy of second wives"²³⁸ and bought the palace opposite that had once belonged to Emir Badr al-Din Baktash al-Fakhri to

²³⁵ Awqaf 880, Waqf of Barsbay, 77:8-9; Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 197.

²³⁶ *Istibdal* refers to the conversion of a type of *waqf* into another type.

²³⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:483 (Cairo, 1997).

²³⁸ Al-Shuja'i, *Tarikh al-Malik al-Nasir*, 68.

فلما أخذ قوصون دار البصري اختار بشتاك ان يعمل له دار نظيره. و كان مثل الضراير من الحسد

imitate him by owning a *dar* in Bayn al-Qasrayn inside al-Qahira.²³⁹ Both former residents of the two palaces - Emir Badr al-Din Baktash al-Fakhri, also known as Emir silah and Emir Badr al-Din Baysari - served together. When they were done with their duties they would ride together with a magnificent entourage from the Citadel to their palaces.²⁴⁰ Opposite Dar al-Baysariyya, Emir Bashtak received a plot of land from his master, demolished eleven mosques from the Fatimid period and built his vast palace.²⁴¹ Upon its completion in 739-740/1339-1340, the two palaces competed in monumentality and extravagance which restored the ancient name of the area as Bayn al-Qasrayn to connote the palaces of Bashtak and Qawsun instead of the former Fatimid Eastern and Western palaces.²⁴²

Dar al-Baysariyya was later subject to different owners; the last transaction of *istibdal* was around the year 780/1379. It later became part of the *waqf* of al-Zahir Barquq. In 792/1390 the *qa'a* of al-Baysariyya in Bayn al-Qasrayn became the residence of the *khawandat*, the elder and youngest siblings of al-Zahir Barquq.²⁴³ At the time of al-Maqrizi's *Khitat* the *dar* was owned by the daughter of Bayrum; it had one of the most magnificent gates in al-Qahira and was accessed from an entrance near Hammam al-Baysari.²⁴⁴

From 1st Sha'ban-18th Dhu'l-Hijja 761/16th June-29th October 1370, Sultan Hasan is known to have constructed a *dar* among the *dars* of the Citadel called al-Baysariyya. Al-

²³⁹ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:517 (Cairo, 1997).

²⁴⁰ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:128.

²⁴¹ Raymond, *Cairo*, 122.

²⁴² Al-Dar al-Baysariyya is one of the Cairene houses mentioned by al-Maqrizi that fell in ruins after the 15th century.

²⁴³ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 11:366.

²⁴⁴ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:127.

Maqrizi describes the extravagance of its furnishings as unprecedented and unwitnessed before its time.²⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the distinction between Sultan Hasan's Dar al-Baysariyya in the Citadel and that of Qawsun in Bayn al-Qasrayn is important.

The most famous of Emir Qawsun's residences was that near Rumayla square towards Bab al-Silsila, famously known as Istabl Qawsun. The Istabl or Palace of Qawsun was initially constructed by Emir 'Alam al-Din Sanjar al-Jumaqdar.²⁴⁶ Emir Qawsun bought it from him with money from the *bayt al-mal* then later added to it the stable of Emir Sunqur al-Tawil.²⁴⁷ At this point, it can be argued that this property had a single use as *istabls* for the cavalry of the emir, located near the polo ground in Rumayla. In 738/1337 al-Nasir Muhammad chose the nearby area for princely palaces for his favorite emirs Yalbugha al-Yahyawi, Atltinbugha al-Maridani and Qawsun. He also ordered Qawsun to add *dur* and *istabls*, turning it into a magnificent palace. Emir Qawsun lived there during the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad until he was executed.²⁴⁸

As mentioned above, the initial constructions on the site included an *istabl* by Emir Sanjar al-Jumaqdar. However, Emir Sanjar was imprisoned from 720-9/1320-9.²⁴⁹ It was also mentioned by al-Maqrizi that construction of the princely palaces near the *maydans* beneath the Citadel took place in 737/1337. Therefore, the Istabl of Sanjar may have been erected any

²⁴⁵ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:369. See Arabic Narratives Text 8.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:132.

²⁴⁷ Karim, "Buildings of the Amir Qawsun", 30, stating that the palace was built by 'Alam al-Din Sanjar al-Tawil. Creswell and al-Maqrizi both state that the palace was built by Emir Sanjar al-Jumaqdar.

²⁴⁸ Karim, "The Mosque of Amir Qawsun in Cairo", 30.

²⁴⁹ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:398.

time before 720/1320 or after 729/1329 while Qawsun's architectural additions must have taken place anytime between the time he acquired it on the 20th Rajab 735/15th March 1334 and 737/1337.

The information given by al-Maqrizi on the location of the palace confirms Qawsun's intimacy with Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad and the importance of the palace which was used on royal occasions. On 4th Rabi' I 735/1st November 1335 it hosted the ceremony granting al-Nasir Muhammad's son Abu Bakr the rank of Emir. Abu Bakr rode from Qawsun's stables to the royal palaces in a grand procession to be granted his promotion and then returned back to attend a banquet that Qawsun gave in his honor.²⁵⁰ On 17th Muharram 737/25th August 1337, Dar Qawsun was the venue of the marriage ceremony of the same Emir Abu Bakr to the daughter of Emir Sayf al-Din Tuqzdumr.²⁵¹ In 739/1339 al-Nasir Muhammad ordered arrangements to be made there for the marriage of two sons of the *na'ib al-sham* Tankiz to two daughters of the Sultan.²⁵² A later incident reports a riot that took place in 742/1342 at which time the treasures of the palace were described in their full glory.²⁵³

In 740/1340 the number of residences owned by Qawsun in Bayn al-Qasrayn increased. He then also occupied the Emerald Palace which was once part of the north-east quarter of the Great Eastern Fatimid Palace. It was once the site of the Court of the Festival,

²⁵⁰ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:379; Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 9:110-111. The existing architecture of the *istabl* by 1335 is not known. According to the narratives and the archeological evidence found today, it can be speculated that it included the lower stable halls.

²⁵¹ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:211. In this entry, al-Maqrizi did not specify whether it was the one near Rumayla or the one in Bayn al-Qasrayn.

²⁵² Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 9:130.

²⁵³ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:132.

also known as *Rahbat al-'Id*.²⁵⁴ After the fall of the Fatimid Caliphate it was owned and used by Ayyubid Sultans until it was bought by Emir Badr al-Din Amir Mas'ud b. Khatir al-Hajib from the heirs of Bani Ayyub. When al-Hajib had to leave for Gaza he transferred the ownership of the palace to Emir Qawsun at the end of the third reign of al-Nasir Muhammad. Qawsun built seven *qa'at* there; al-Maqrizi mentioned that each *qa'a* had a stable with dependencies²⁵⁵ with the total edifice measuring ten *faddans*.²⁵⁶ Qawsun died before completing what he had intended. Although at the time Qawsun resided in his palace in Rumayla, the renovation and construction initiatives mentioned above hint that maybe he was intending to change his residence back to the walled city of al-Qahira (Fig. 3.4).²⁵⁷ After his death, this palace became known as *Qasr Qawsun* until it was bought by Khawand Tatar al-Hijaziyya, the daughter of al-Nasir Muhammad and the wife of Emir Maliktumur al-Hijazi. She built adjacent to it her madrasa that was known at the time of al-Maqrizi as al-Madrasa al-Hijaziyya and made this palace part of its *waqf*.²⁵⁸

When al-Nasir Muhammad died he was succeeded by al-Malik al-Mansur Sayf al-Din Abu Bakr, Qawsun's preferred choice. Sultan Abu Bakr's attempts to rule independently were suppressed by Qawsun, who had the new sultan arrested two months into his reign and later executed. Later, Qawsun installed al-Nasir's infant son al-Ashraf Kujuk on the throne

²⁵⁴ Bloom, *Arts of the City Victorious*, 66.

²⁵⁵ فشرع في عمارة سبع قاعات لكل قاعة اصطبل ومنافع ومرافق

²⁵⁶ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 1:130.

²⁵⁷ It is unknown if Qawsun had given up the ownership of Dar al-Baysariyya at the time, we merely know that the next transaction of *istibdal* to acquire Dar al-Baysariyya took place in 780/1379.

²⁵⁸ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:130.

and served as his regent. Placing a minor on the throne gave Qawsun unchallenged control over government affairs. His ultimate bid for the sultanate needed the support of the army. Despite the wealth Qawsun distributed to its members, he failed to win not only the favor of the army but also the Sultani Mamluks (*al-mamalik al-sultaniyya*). His defacto rule combined with claims of corruption triggered unrest between him and the rest of the Sultani Mamluks, starting on 28th September 1342, driven by their chief Emir Aydughmish Amir Akhur.²⁵⁹ By sunset of the following Monday 30th September, the Sultani mamluks, encouraged by Emir Aydughmish, conspired to topple and execute Qawsun.²⁶⁰ This unrest created a riot that involved the mob who attacked Istabl Qawsun; the premises were defended by Qawsun's mamluks who fought back from the roofs. One of those responsible for the turbulence was named Surbugha; al-Maqrizi reports that he opened the armory for the mamluks who took part in this loot. Qawsun ordered his arrest and he was later hanged on Bab Zuwayla. The lives of other members involved in this incident were spared, nevertheless they were sentenced to prison where they were tied up in *khazanit shamayil* while nine others were nailed up on Bab Zuwayla.²⁶¹ This attempt to deprive Qawsun of his powers and privileges was aborted quickly.

ولبعض عوام مصر قصيدة «كان وكان» أولها:
 من الكرك جانا الناصر ... وجب معه أسد الغابه
 ووقعتك يأمير قوصون ... ما كانت إلا كذابه²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:341.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 3:342.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 3:343.

²⁶² Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:48. See Translation Text 2.

In Rajab 742/1342 Emir Aydughmish Amir Akhur led another uprising which prompted the looting of Qawsun's palace while he was seized in the Citadel. The mob confronted Qawsun's personal mamluks who defended their premises and fired arrows²⁶³ at the intruders. In return, the mamluks in the palace of Yalbugha al-Yahyawī ascended its top and started firing arrows back at those of Qawsun with the same weaponry.²⁶⁴ The mob broke the doors of the palace with axes, ascended its storeys and brought an end to everything in Istabl Qawsun including the horses, their saddles all the money, textiles and utensils of gold and silver in the palace.²⁶⁵ The mamluks of Aydughmish, Yalbugha al-Yahyawī and others took part in the looting by sharing the stolen gold and other goods with the public.²⁶⁶ While people were fleeing with their loot they found the emirs' mamluks waiting for them at Bab al-Istabl in Rumayla Square to recollect the looted items by force if needed and by immediate execution if they resisted. Scattered gold filled the alleys and streets in addition to fine jewels, royal weapons, valuable textiles and carpets ruptured with knives, broken crystals, porcelain vessels and the gold and silver saddles.²⁶⁷ On the day of this pillage, the mob even dismantled the roofs, doors and marble of the palace.²⁶⁸ This looting even effected the price of gold; a *mithqal* of gold that once cost twenty *dirhams* was later

²⁶³ النشاب

²⁶⁴ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:132. The approximate distance between the grounds of the Complex of Sultan Hasan (formerly that of the palace of Yalbugha al-Yahyawī) and that of Qawsun is approximately 60-80 meters. This is a long distance to consider the range of the arrows fired between both parties.

²⁶⁵ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:133. See Arabic Narratives Text 9.

²⁶⁶ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:354. See Arabic Narratives Text 10.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3:354. See Arabic Narratives Text 11.

²⁶⁸ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:45.

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Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*
Al-Maqrizi, *Khita*
Drory, "The Princ
Ibid., 25.

reported to cost eleven.²⁶⁹ In this incident, it is interesting to observe for the first time in Mamluk history the collaboration between *al-mamluk al-sultaniyya* and the mob in achieving an uprising over the *na'ib al-sultana*.

Qasr Qawsun became known as one of the ominous palaces in Cairo; al-Maqrizi witnessed himself during his lifetime more than one Emir who lived there and fulfilled the palace's gloomy reputation. It remained for years neglected until it was refurbished by Emir Baraka al-Zayni at the time of al-Maqrizi's *Khitat* (765-846/1364-1442), redeeming its status as one of the most magnificent palaces in al-Qahira.²⁷⁰

After this riot Qawsun's impressive career came to a brutal end. He was transported to Alexandria and imprisoned. On 13th Sha'ban 742/21st January 1342, Ahmad ibn al-Nasir Muhammad was proclaimed Sultan.²⁷¹ The newly appointed sultan arrived in Cairo in March. A few weeks later, he ordered the properties of Qawsun to be confiscated.²⁷² In Dhu'l-Qa'da 742/April 1342, Qawsun died in prison, although it is not known if his death was ordered by Sultan Ahmad. He was buried in his *khanqah* in the southern cemetery.

In 769/1367, Qawsun's son Khalil was appointed *atabak al-'asakir* by Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban. He defended his master when he stood against Emir Yalbugha al-'Umari, a key figure behind an organized rebellion at the time. Khalil ibn Qawsun was considered a candidate for the sultanate by Emir Asandamur; not only for his kinship with al-Nasir and

²⁶⁹ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:354. See Arabic Narratives Text 12.

²⁷⁰ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:133.

²⁷¹ Drory, "The Prince Who Favored the Desert", 24.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 25.

being the son of his beloved Emir Qawsun but also for his strong military and political position²⁷³. However, no mention of his father's palace was made concerning him.

Between 775-6/1373-5, after the revolt that led to the assassination of Sultan Sha'ban on his pilgrimage to Mecca, Emir Tashtamur al-'Ala'i the First Secretary of State or Grand *dawadar* of Sultan Sh'aban was relocated to Syria where he held the position of governor of the province. He was later called back to the capital as *atabak al-'asakir* where he resided in the Palace of Qawsun.²⁷⁴ On the 13th of Dhu'l-Hijja 779/11th April 1378 it was reported that Emir Baraka al-Jubanni *Ra's al-Nauba al-Kabir* (Chief of the Guard) resided in Bayt Qawsun in the direction of Bab al-Silsila.²⁷⁵ On the 7th Safar 782/12th May 1380, the conflict between the *atabek* Barquq and his *khushdash* Baraka al-Jubanni began and kept ascending until Barquq received information from Emir Saray al-Rajabi al-Tawil that Baraka and his emirs were planning his assassination. Defending himself from this threat, Barquq ordered his mamluks to prepare themselves with weaponry; among which was Bazlar al-Nasiri and his mamluks who went inside the Complex of Sultan Hasan, ascended its roof and minaret and started firing arrows at Baraka in his istabl – which was Bayt Qawsun towards Bab al-Silsila.²⁷⁶

²⁷³ Levanoni, *Turning Point*, 51; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:34, 105, 110, 274, 275, 311; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 2:610, 709.

²⁷⁴ Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 463.

²⁷⁵ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 11:163; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 5:35. See Arabic Narratives Text 13.

²⁷⁶ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 11:175.

THE CIRCASSIAN MAMLUK PERIOD

Al-Maqrizi wrote that in 806/1404, after Emir Nuruz left *niyabat al-Sham*, he wrote to Cairo ordering Bayt Qawsun in Rumayla to be refurbished. He added his blazon to it and lived there.²⁷⁷ In Dhu'l-Hijja 824/December 1421, Ibn Taghribirdi reports that the state's affairs were to be divided among Emir Barsbay and Emir Turbay and that the latter lived in Bayt Qawsun in the direction of Bab al-Silsila.²⁷⁸

In 830/1427 Janibak al-Ashrafi seems to have lived in the Palace of Qawsun in Hadrat al-Baqar. Ibn Taghribirdi reports that he lived in the *dar* in Suq al-Qabw al-Hasani which had an opening on Hadrat al-Baqar, a description that corresponds to the palace of Qawsun.²⁷⁹

On Thursday 15th Muharram 842/7th July 1438, Emir al-Kabir Nizam al-Mulk Jaqmaq sought refuge from his palace on Birkit al-Fil at Bayt Qawsun in the direction of Bab al-Silsila when he was surrounded by "*al-qarasina*" (the pirates).²⁸⁰ At the time Ashrafiyya mamluks were calling for the execution of their *khushdash* Emir Inal al-Dawadar and asked Emir Jaqmaq to be the judge in this matter. When his verdict was delayed for two days, they

²⁷⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 6:327.

²⁷⁸ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 14:221. See Arabic Narratives Text 14.

²⁷⁹ Ibn Iyas, *Bada'i' al-zuhur*, 3:330.

²⁸⁰ The pirates (*mamluk al-qarasina*) in this incident meant the emirs and mamluks of al-Zahir Barquq, al-Nasir Faraj ibn Barquq, al-Mu'ayyadiyya, al-Nuruzyiyya and al-Juqmiyya and some of al-Ashrafiyya.

declared him to be their target.²⁸¹ At the time, Emir Jaqmaq left his house in Birkit al-Fil and resided Bayt Qawsun towards Bab al-Silsila.²⁸²

In Rabi' II 842/October 1438 the house of Qawsun was mentioned in the incident that occurred between Emir Qurqumas and Sultan al-Malik al-Zahir Jaqmaq. After Jaqmaq ascended the throne, some of *al-mamalik al-qarasina* demanded an increase in their salaries. They spoke to Emir Qurqumas who promised them to petition to the sultan. They then offered to help him overthrow Sultan Jaqmaq and ascend the throne himself. He hesitated at first but gave in to their wishes. He rode with them from his house near the *madabigh* outside Bab Zuwayla until they reached the Madrasa of Sultan Hasan.²⁸³ At the time Emir Ariqmas al-Zahiri al-Dawadar al-Kabir resided in Bayt Qawsun which Ibn Taghribirdi wrote that the palace had a secret door. He recounts that Qurqumas wanted to enter Bayt Qawsun which was closed by the mamluks of Ariqmas. Ariqmas fled Bayt Qawsun whose ownership was then transferred to Emir Qurqumas²⁸⁴ who presumably made it the base for attacks on the Citadel. The Sultan suppressed the rebels and the palace returned to its owner, Emir Ariqmas. Only a few months later he also fell out of favor with the Sultan who "bestowed the fief of Ariqmas al-Zahiri on Emir Asanbugha al-Tayyari, the second executive secretary".²⁸⁵ Unfortunately Ibn Taghribirdi does not specify if the palace also was part of this fief. Asanbugha al-Tayyari *ra's naubat al-nawb* died suddenly without suffering from an

²⁸¹ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 7:375.

²⁸² Ibid., 7:375.

²⁸³ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 15:267-8.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 15:262-7.

²⁸⁵ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 7:78; Popper, *Egypt and Syria*, 56.

illness beforehand. His death prayer took place in the maq'ad of Bayt Qawsun and was carried and buried in the desert.²⁸⁶

During the reign of al-Zahir Jaqmaq, on Rabi' I 857/March 1453, Ibn Taghribirdi recounts the disputes between al-Malik al-Mansur 'Uthman and al-Emir al-Kabir Inal over delegating the sultanate to the latter. Emir Inal was invited by Emir Silah and the mamluks to ride with him to Bayt Qawsun by Bab al-Silsila. He initially refused, then succumbed and rode along with the emirs, surrounded by soldiers until they reached Bayt Qawsun.²⁸⁷ In the narratives it stated that they entered it from a secret door on al-Shari' al-'Azzam.²⁸⁸ Al-Emir al-Kabir and the emirs accompanying him sat in the bayt's *maq'ad*²⁸⁹ overlooking the courtyard while the caliph sat in *al-qasr al-fuqqani* (the upper qasr).²⁹⁰ In the same year, the *qadis* gathered in the house of *atabak* Inal which is Bayt Qawsun.²⁹¹ On 3rd Rabi' I 857/13th March 1453 Emir Inal was nominated for the sultanate to become Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Inal.²⁹² Until the actual transition from al-Malik Mansur to Inal took place, Inal remained in Bayt Qawsun where he sat in the *maq'ad* with the emirs "on his left and right".²⁹³ It was mentioned that Inal did not leave the house of Qawsun for some time since he resided it and did not ride from the mentioned maq'ad except once, and he returned to the house after

²⁸⁶ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 16:48.

²⁸⁷ Ghaly, *The Shari' al-'Azzam*, 176.

²⁸⁸ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 16:41. See Arabic Narratives Text 15.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 16:53. This entry indicates that the palace of Qawsun had already had a *maq'ad* by that time, perhaps another one prior to that attributed to the 15th century fragment of the palace.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 16:41.

²⁹¹ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Mawrid*, 2:165.

²⁹² Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 16:57.

²⁹³ Ibid., 16:47. See Arabic Narratives Text 16.

going half-way into the frontal hawsh, before even reaching the portal of the house leading to Rumayla.²⁹⁴ Later, he rode from Bayt Qawsun to the Citadel in a great procession to ascend the throne. After his death, the house of Qawsun became the official residence of the *dawadar* for the rest of the Mamluk period.²⁹⁵

On the night of 6th Rabi' I of 857/16th March 1453 Emir Asanbugha 'Abdallah al-Nasiri died in his eighties in Bayt Qawsun after being sick for a day.²⁹⁶ Prayers for him took place in the mentioned bayt.²⁹⁷ In the same year, a conflict between al-Emir al-Kabir Inal and Emir Tanim min 'Abdal-Razaq al-Mu'ayyadi Emir silah had risen; during which emir Tanim supported Sultan al-Malik al-Mansur Fakhr al-Din Uthman. At the time Emir Jarbash al-Muhammadi al-Nasiri rose to the royal stables in the Citadel and overtook Bab al-Silsila. Al-Emir al-Kabir left the maq'ad of Bayt Qawsun and rode in a procession to the Citadel with the Caliph on his right and Tanibak al-Bardabaki Emir Majlis on his left.²⁹⁸

In the year 865/1460 it was reported by Ibn Taghribirdi that the door of Istabl Qawsun in Rumayla at Bab al-Silsila was blocked.²⁹⁹ Sultan Inal ordered the arrest of a number of Commanders of One Thousand, Emirs of *tablakhanat* and Commanders of Ten. When their *khushdashes* heard about this they rebelled, gaining support from *al-mamalik al-*

²⁹⁴Ibid., 16:47.

ومنهم من يقول: «الأمير الكبير»، ومنهم من يقول: «السلطان» كل ذلك وهو على حالة جلوسه كأول يوم دخل إلى بيت قوصون المنكور، أعنى من أول يوم الوقعة ولم يتغير عليه شيء مما كان عليه، ولم يركب من المقعد المنكور من يوم قدم بيت قوصون غير مرة واحدة في يوم الثلاثاء، وعاد من وسط الحوش قبل أن يصل إلى باب البيت النافذ إلى الزميلة.

²⁹⁵ Ghaly, *The Shari' al-'Azzam*, 176.

²⁹⁶ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 16:162.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 16:162.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 16:53.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 16:261.

Ashrafiyya al-Inaliyya and some of *al-mamalik* al-Nasiriyya. They headed to al-Emir al-Kabir Jarbash al-Muhammadi al-Nasiri who at the time resided in the *turba* of al-Malik al-Zahir Barquq in the desert. The mamluks found him and took him to Bayt Qawsun in Rumayla. They passed from Bab al-Nasr in al-Qahira and called him 'al-Malik al-Nasir' after his master al-Nasir Faraj ibn Barquq until they reached the Bayt Qawsun where they sat him in the maq'ad. This entry indicates that the palace's secret door or another entrance was used for access at the time.³⁰⁰ In 869/1465 the *atabak* Qaytbay was mentioned in relation to Bayt Qawsun whose door was reported to still be blocked in the direction of the Citadel.³⁰¹

After being inhabited by several Burji Mamluk emirs before him, the ownership of the palace of Qawsun was transferred to Emir Yashbak min Mahdi, one of the Mamluks of Sultan al-Zahir Jaqmaq (824/1421). Sultan Jaqmaq appointed Yashbak as a *khassakiyya* and he remained in that post until Sultan al-Ashraf Inal ascended the throne from 857-65/1453-61 and made him junior *dawadar* which he retained during the reign of al-Zahir Khashqdam (865-71/1461-67).³⁰² He held the title Emir of Ten and was appointed Officer of the Southern District of Egypt. Yashbak kept ascending the ranks until he was granted the vizierate in 873/1469 on Qaytbay's accession to the throne. Yashbak was the first mamluk to hold simultaneously the post of first General, Regent of the Kingdom, Grand *dawadar* and Inspector-General (*kashif al-kushshaf*).³⁰³ In the following years Yashbak continued to

³⁰⁰ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 16:261.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 16:389.

³⁰² Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 251.

³⁰³ Ibid., 252.

accumulate all the most important functions within the Mamluk state until he became the most powerful emir in the Sultan's court. Ibn Iyas states that:³⁰⁴

The power of the Emir Yashbak had no limits: he simultaneously exercised the functions of minister of war, secretary of state, vizier, butler, inspector of the prefects and regent of the kingdom. At the royal palace he sat on the left of the sovereign. It was only in the fifteenth century in the reign of Qaytbay that Emir Yashbak moved

to the Palace of Qawsun which he added to and restored in Ramadan 880/ January 1475.

Another later source also gives some information about the palace during the period when it was inhabited by the Emir Yashbak and says that the latter "took the residence of Qawsun in front of Bab al-Silsila, which he enlarged and added to it an entrance that opens on the street".³⁰⁵ Nonetheless, the author does not specify on which street this door opened nor how many doors there were there at the time in the complex.

In 885/1480 Yashbak was sent to Syria to lead an army to stop Emir al-Fadl after he executed the *na'ib al-sultan*. Yashbak was captured there and executed. His body was carried back to al-Qahira where he was buried in the mausoleum he had erected for himself in the northern cemetery. After Yashbak, the *dawadar* traditionally inhabited the palace of Qawsun (of Yashbak) and the *atabaks* lived in Azbakiyya.³⁰⁶

After the death of Yashbak in 887/1482, Qaytbay handed over the palace and all its possessions of the deceased emir to Emir Aqbardi al-Dawadar – from whom the name of Hawsh Bardaq was transposed. He was a mighty prince, who was also married to the sister of

³⁰⁴ Ibn Iyas, *Histoire des Mamlouks Circassiens*, 2:63.

³⁰⁵ Ibn Iyas, *Histoire des Mamlouks Circassiens*, 2:404.

³⁰⁶ Petry, *Cambridge History of Egypt*, 1:310; Garcin et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 182-185.

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the wife of Sultan Qaytbay. Emir Aqbardi min 'Ali succeeded Yashbak min Mahdi as Great *dawadar* in Dhu'l-Qa'da 891/November 1486 and as Vizier and in 897/1492. "He was appointed Major-domo, deposed on the 26th Dhu'l-Qa'da 901/6th August 1496 and in Rajab 902/1497 he was reinstalled in all the offices he previously held".³⁰⁷ The attribution of this residence to the Emir Aqbardi in 886/1481, after the death of Yashbak is documented in the chronicle of Ibn Iyas:³⁰⁸

The sultan appointed his relative, the commander of miles Aqbardi min 'Ali Bay, secretary of state to replace Yashbak min Mahdi, killed in Ruha. He descended from the Citadel in solemn procession and went to live in the house of Emir Yashbak. The Sultan had given him all the furnishings of the Emir Yashbak, stuffs and utensils, without exception.

Two months later, he was appointed Governor of Tripoli. He died in Aleppo in 904/1499; his body was moved to al-Qahira and was buried in the desert. Creswell speculates that Aqbardi added and renovated the palace between 901/1495 and 904/1499 – and possibly before 904/1499.³⁰⁹

After the death of Aqbardi the palace remained for some time abandoned, probably because it was still a very significant place in the political life of the late Mamluk era; probably nobody lived there when the Sultan al-Ashraf Janbalat, in December 906/1500 ordered part of it to be demolished so that it could not be used as a base for the army of the emir Tumanbay, who had threatened to dethrone him.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ Mayer, *Saracenic Herladry*, 65.

³⁰⁸ Ibn Iyas, *Histoire des Mamlouks Circassiens*, 2:196.

³⁰⁹ Creswell, *Brief Chronology*, 100.

³¹⁰ Ibn Iyas, *Histoire des Mamlouks Circassiens*, 2:496.

THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

In the first years of Ottoman rule, the palace was no longer inhabited by the emirs of the ruling government. Ibn Iyas mentions the palace for the last time in 1520 when an envoy of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent Muhammad ibn Idris "was housed in the Palace of the Secretary of State Yashbak, in Hadrat al-Baqar, where a delicious meal awaited him."³¹¹ This, however, does not seem to have led to any significant changes in the palace since the Ottoman period buildings (the first upper halls) are too modest to be intended for the reception of an ambassador of the sultan and are presumably later.

Following this period, the palace was already deteriorating, likely no member of the Ottoman ruling class was living there. The alteration of pre-existing structures in the palace may indicate the absence of a desire to expand the complex and may also reflect the limited economic resources of its new occupants.

Turkish texts concerned with the Mevlevi order mention travels and stays in Egypt by members of this confraternity which indicate their presence even before the Ottoman conquest. Between 953/1546 and 956/1549, Cairo was known to have "contained a large number of Ghagar women, who speculate upon public credulity"³¹² working as dancers (*ghuwazis*) (Fig. 3.5), fortune tellers and monkey tamers who were reported to have lived in the area of Hawsh Bardaq at the time.³¹³ In 998/1590, Mevlevi dervishes arrived in Egypt and obtained permission to build on the ruins of the Madrasa and Mausoleum of Sunqur Sa'di and

³¹¹ Ibn Iyas, *Journal d'un Bourgeois du Caire*, 386.

³¹² Burton, *The Jew*, 152.

³¹³ Hanna, *Jama'at al-ghagar*, 143-151.

Hasan Sadaqa. They settled in the adjacent rooms of the Madrasa from the sixteenth century onwards. On the 17th Safar 1016/12th June 1607, Yusuf Pasha Sinan³¹⁴ allotted the area of the remains of the Sunqur Sa'di complex and that of Qawsun's palace as a gift to the Mevlevi confraternity who used the existing monuments and adapted them for their as cells and the community area for the convent.³¹⁵

THE KHEDIVAL PERIOD

The last phase of abandonment of the palace occurred after 1215/1800. Only a few parts that were reused by the *takiyya* were still in use. It is hard to pinpoint the exact time when the palace was deserted; nevertheless, in 1310/1892, the members of Comité describe the palace as in ruins (Figs. 4.11-14). At the time of the French Expedition (1798-1801), a drawing of the Madrasa of Sultan Hasan and the Rumayla Square features the Palace of Qawsun in the background. The drawing shows the palace already with its ceilings collapsed, exposing the massive pointed arches of the upper *qa'as* (Figs. 3.6-7).

Jacob Burkhardt recounts that during his stay in Egypt (1227-1232/1812-1817) female entertainers lived in a large khan called Hawsh Bardaq.³¹⁶ Sir Richard Burton visited the area of Hawsh Bardaq in November 1294/1877 to find the courts of the area still occupied by "people, tinkers and blacksmiths, who sell ear-rings, bracelets, amulets and other metal

³¹⁴ Fanfoni, "The Foundation and Organization of the Cairo Mawlawiyya", 106.

³¹⁵ Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44, since the Mevlevi *takiyya* was part of the *waqf* of Yusuf Sinan.

³¹⁶ Fraser, *Before They Were Belly Dancers*, 118.

articles".³¹⁷

During the Khedival period, Khushyar Kadin Affandi, Khedive Ism'ail's mother, ordered the construction of houses behind Qaraqul al-Manshiyya. Istabl Qawsun, known as Hawsh Bardaq at the time, was bought by Khedive Ism'ail's mother who constructed in its space a number of houses.³¹⁸ A photo of the mid-nineteenth century shows new buildings in front of the north facade of the palace, however, they could also be buildings that can be seen to the left of the portal in the contemporary photos (Fig. 3.8). In the thirties and forties of last century, the area of Hawsh Bardaq became an infamous quarter for prostitution.

During the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the Comité realized the value of the palace and its ruins and assigned themselves to their documentation and preservation. Nonetheless, they dedicated special attention to the preservation of the palace's portal and securing the remnants of the palace by fencing it off from the streets to prevent further deterioration. In 1892, the Comité proposed "to carry out conservation work which consists in the demolition [...] walls and staircase that have been elevated into the interior of the monumental door and uncover the beautiful stone facings and mosaics of the portal that were covered with plaster and whitewash." The complete restoration project of the palace seems to have been extended as in the same *Bulletin* that "the Commission [...] will indicate what work should be done for its preservation." At the same time as these interventions, the

³¹⁷ Burton, *The Jew*, 152.

³¹⁸ *Bulletins of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* (1905), 20. It is mentioned in this *Bulletin* that Saray Bardaq is part of the *waqf* of Khushyar which was submitted to al-Awqaf al-Khediwiyya on 11th October 1903.

Comité had pictures taken of the palace and planches drawn by Max Herz, who was then the chief architect of the Comité, which were published in the *Bulletin* of 1893. After the mentioned *Bulletin*, no article or report mentioned this architectural complex until 1905, where it states the expenses needed for its restoration.

The ruins of the southern part of the palace were demolished completely between 1893 and 1930 where a large portion of the palace's southern part was allotted to the construction of the Azhari School of 'Uthman Mahir Pasha. (Fig. 5.31)³¹⁹ One can envision how the rear components of the palace would have corresponded in monumentality and importance to those on its northern façade. The school was abandoned after the earthquake of 1412/1992. It was later restored by the Ministry of Antiquities and resumed its function as a school for preparatory and secondary education.

Later a request submitted to expand the school and acquire more ruins of the palace. Their request had been submitted to the department responsible for the royal *waqfs* to add new classrooms to the school, and disengage the school from the palace at its northern side for ventilation purposes and to prevent dust falling from the palace into the school.³²⁰ It was also urged this year that delaying the process of conservation would worsen the condition of the palace further. It was reported that Simaika Pasha suggested that once the palace was restored, that the lower halls provided a vast space, suitable for showcasing architectural pieces that were too large to find space for their display in the halls of the Arab Museum.

³¹⁹ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 33.

³²⁰ *Bulletins of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* (1920-24), 230.

Simaika Pasha's proposal was adopted unanimously. Between 1933-35, the Comité reported that the various entrances of the palace were blocked and that opening them was a necessity to visit the whole edifice.

The final abandonment of the Mevlevi *takiyya* took place in the decade 1351-61/1932-42. The last certain date which mentions an activity of the *takiyya* dervishes is the year 1351/1932, when a "Congress of Arab Music" was held in Cairo, during which eight Mevlevi compositions were presented. In 1361/1942 the *takiyya* premises were given by the Awqaf Ministry to Jam'iyya Qahiriyya, which turned it into a reception center for pensioners.³²¹

In 1979 the complex of Sunqur Sa'di began a long process of restoration under Giuseppe Fanfoni, director of the Italian-Egyptian Center for Restoration and Archeology (CIERA). By the time Fanfoni arrived in Cairo, the *sama'khana* was completely abandoned. The conservation process included the Mevlevi Complex, the area overlapping with the palace of Qawsun and the block of cells of Mevlevi convent.³²² Available reports covering the work of the CIERA feature plans and elevations of the Mevlevi center and the palace of Qawsun beside the complex of Sunqur Sa'di (Fig. 3.9).

In Rabi' I 1433/January 2012, it was reported in a local online newspapers that parts of the palace had collapsed, threatening the safety of the students of the school of 'Uthman

³²¹Fanfoni, "The foundation and organization of the Cairo Mawlawiyya", 116-117.

³²²Ferrari, "Science and Technology", 21.

Mahir. According to this *Bulletin*, the administration of the school tried to reach out to officials responsible for the Islamic heritage of this area, in attempts to restore the ancient palace and to ensure the safety of the students of the school, but in vain.³²³ The abandoned state of the palace and the lack of crucial supervision encouraged a new level of obscenity as five men in Sha‘ban 1437/May 2016 were able to get into the palace with a ladder in effort to dig up the parts of it in search for antiquities. Luckily, they were arrested, and the incident was investigated by the prosecutor.³²⁴

CONCLUSION

This chapter traced the origin of Qawsun, the first owner and contributor of the palace. Before 1337 Qawsun already owned a residence in the walled city of al-Qahira in Bayn al-Qaṣrayn while his stables were a separate structure near Rumayla. During the second part of his third reign, al-Nasir Muhammad decided to keep the residence of his favorite emirs within eyesight forming a symbolic ring around the citadel. He ordered Qawsun to expand his existing stables, turning the building into a magnificent palace where he lived until the death of al-Nasir Muhammad. After Qawsun, the palace continued to be the residence of the *atabak al-‘asakir* or Commander General of the Mamluk army.

During the Circassian Mamluk period the palace became the residence of the *dawadar*

³²³ <http://www.elbalad.news/370055>

³²⁴ Youm 7 and al-Masry al Youm. <http://www.youm7.com/story/2016/5/12/2714508>

including Emir Yashbak who refurbished and added to it. After his death, the palace was where the *dawadar* traditionally resided while the *atabaks* moved to Azbakiyya. After Yashbak, we know that the palace was occupied by Emir Aqbardi who also added to the palace parts that overlap with the Mevlevi Complex. As the chapter showed, the palace housed many more emirs than just the most famous, Qawsun, Yashbak and Aqbardi. While the palace of Qawsun was mentioned in numerous narratives, scarce information are available on its architecture and interior furnishings.

The palace is rarely mentioned in post-Mamluk period histories. From the sixteenth until the twentieth centuries, little is mentioned about the palace or its residents. Thus, it was crucial to consider the adjacent monuments during that period to learn about its status.

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CHAPTER FOUR
THE ARCHITECTURE OF ISTABL QAWSUN

Today, what remains of Istabl Qawsun (Fig. 4.1) is located behind blocks of modern apartment buildings aligned parallelly to the Madrasa of Sultan Hasan and partially visible for those coming from Muhammad 'Ali Street (Fig. 4.2). The remnants of the palace are reserved within a vast quadrangle, fenced and shielded from side streets and Maydan Muhammad 'Ali as part of the conservation work done on the palace by the Comité in 1892.³²⁵ Nowadays the palace is bound by al-Muzaffar Street to its north, Manah al-Waqf Street to its east, Qurra Qul al-Manshiyya Street to its south and the Madrasa of Sunqur Sa'di, the mausoleum of Hasan Sadaqa and the Mevlevi complex to its west (Fig. 4.3).

The Façade and Layout of the Palace

At a first glance, it's hard to appreciate the significance of what is a rare example of a surviving royal Bahri Mamluk palace. Nevertheless, the palace still reflects the grandeur and overwhelming effect that it once possessed without being preserved and over-restored as in the case of many Islamic monuments in Cairo. The palace's northern façade extends westwards from the portal reaching nearly a length of one hundred meters. (Fig. 4.4) The piles of rubble that have been accumulating for years in front of the palace conceal most of its northern façade. This mostly featureless façade is pierced with numerous windows from the lower superimposed halls to the halls on the top floors. Despite its present condition, the remaining ruins make it possible to date most components of the palace. With its entrance on

³²⁵ *Bulletins of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* (1892), 47. Building a fence around the edifice was listed in the *Bulletins* as a necessary precaution to protect the monument.

the left of its main northern façade rises to the height of the upper floors, the rest of the palace is divided mostly into two floors; a ground floor with vaulted halls, and an upper floor which probably contained the private living units of the residents and the reception halls (Fig. 4.5).

THE CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ISTABL QAWSUN

In 2004, Professor Cinzia Tavernari traced the development of the palace based on her archeological study of the edifice. Her study presented five different methods and materials of constructions used in different fragments of the palace. After analysis, she dated her findings into five periods (Fig. 4.6); 1) Period I: before 1330 (Fig. 4.7), 2) Period II with two phases of constructions and additions: 1335-1468 (Fig. 4.8), 3) Period III: 1468-1517, 4) Period IV: 1517-1800 (Fig. 4.9), 5) Period V: 1800-2004.³²⁶ Nonetheless, the dating of Period I is supposed to indicate structures built before Qawsun's acquisition of the *istabl* which should be modified to 'before 1335'.

Structures built in Period I include possible structures that remained from pre-existing buildings that were erected on site before Qawsun's acquisition of the edifice. The first phase of Period II includes the expansions done by Emir Qawsun which include the monumental portal, the second lower hall (no. 10 on Plan A) and the upper cruciform hall

³²⁶ Tavernari, *L'évolution du Qasr Qawsûn-Yashbak*, 36.

(nos. 8-10 on Plan D) while the second phase of Period II includes modifications and some restorations executed after the death of Qawsun and Yashbak's acquisition of the palace.

Period III includes mainly the expansion of the palace and modifications of some of its earlier structures. The fourth phase under this period includes interventions carried out to the west of the second lower (no. 12 on Plan B) and upper halls (nos. 16 and 18 on Plan C) with the addition of the fifteenth century lower and upper compositions (no. 14 on Plan B and no. 15 on Plan D) and the modification of the last part of the inscription attributed to Emir Yashbak. It also includes the addition of a *maq'ad* (no. 20 on Plan C) that opened onto the front courtyard or garden.³²⁷ During this period the palace was extended to the west by the construction in the fifteenth century of lower and upper halls. Towards the south (no. 13 on Plan A), the large vaulted halls around a garden which is now part of the CIERA (no. 16 on Plan A) were built. Tavernari was unable to explore the vaulted hall and the small structure to its west (nos. 16-17 on Plan A). Later phases of Period IV included the fire which destroyed most of the *maq'ad* and an order from Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf Janbalat to demolish parts of this complex. In Period IV two parts underwent significant changes in their function; the most important transformations were carried out in the first lower (no. 8 on Plan A) and upper halls (nos. 21-23 on Plan C). The spaces in the first upper halls (nos. 21-23 on Plan C) were rebuilt as residences, while the internal spaces of the fifteenth century halls (nos. 13-15 and 18 on Plan A) were adapted to the needs of the Mevlevi convent who

³²⁷ Ibn Iyas, *Histoire des Mamlouks Circassiens*, 2:496. The *maq'ad* was an innovation introduced into Mamluk architecture during the Bahri Mamluk period and later replaced the *qa'a* as the main hall for receiving guests.

resided in that area. During this period, the palace lost its original significance as the residence of the great emirs of the Mamluk period and was inhabited during the Ottoman period by occupants whose reconstruction of the remnants of the palace does not necessarily reflect wealth. The last phase of abandonment of the palace took place around 1310/1892 when the members of Comité and photographs described the palace as in ruins (Figs. 4.11-14).

THE ARCHITECTURE OF ISTABL QAWSUN

THE EXTERIOR

THE PORTAL

A rival in height and luxury to those of the most beautiful mosques and madrasas of its period, the monumental entrance of the palace of Qawsun remains its *pièce de résistance*. Surpassed only by the monumental thirty-eight-meter-high portal of the Madrasa of Sultan Hasan (possibly once higher, since the street level has risen)³²⁸, the portal of the palace of Qawsun is described as "one of the finest... in all Cairo" (Fig. 4.15).³²⁹

Plates reproduced by the Comité divide the entrance into four; the outer portal, the muqarnas canopy, the 'inner' portal and the vestibule. (Fig. 4.16) Above the portal remnants of ambiguous constructions still survive — these may have once been rounded crenellations comparable to what once topped al-Iwan al-Kabir of al-Nasir Muhammad in the Citadel (Fig

³²⁸ Kahil, *Sultan Hasan*, 105.

³²⁹ Briggs, *Muhammadan Architecture*, 155; Bloom and Blair, *Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art & Architecture*, 1:399

4.17). The outer portal earlier thought to be added by Emir Yashbak min Mahdi³³⁰ – a hypothesis that is later debated in this chapter – is topped by a ribbed, or what is sometimes called fluted, half dome. (Fig. 4.18) The fluting of the half dome of the outer portal is also present in the portal of the Complex of Sultan Hasan. (Fig. 4.15)³³¹

The Muqarnas Canopy

Following the fluted half dome of the outer portal is a deep porch crowned by a magnificent dripping muqarnas canopy (Fig. 4.19) ranked among the most impressive vaults in Cairo along with its contemporaries in the mosques of Ulmas and Bashtak. (Fig. 4.20)³³² The canopy rises from the corners on four stone stalactite pendentives. The muqarnas units fill the canopy by forming three tiers of stalactites with the peripheral tier arranged in a circle so that their pointed apex and curved sides form star-shaped apexes in the canopy. The muqarnas units meet in center of the canopy forming a shallow ribbed polylobed dome (Fig. 4.19). The closest resemblance to the portal's dripping muqarnas canopy is that of the Mosque of Bashtak. The mosque of Ulmas (1329-30) has an earlier and less developed muqarnas canopy in its portal. Relatively similar wooden ceilings are also found in the mosques of Janibak al-Ashrafi and Jawhar al-Qanuqbani (Fig. 4.21).

³³⁰Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 35; Lezine, "Les salles nobles", 95.

³³¹Kahil, *Sultan Hasan*, 159.

³³²O'Kane, "James Wild and the Mosque of Bashtak", 164.

The Blazons

Traces of a blazon possibly belonging to Emir Yashbak min Mahdi can still be seen on either side of the outer portal of the palace (Fig. 4.22). Yashbak's composite blazon – as classified by Mayer – was tripartite and featured “on [the] upper field a *napkin* (*buqja* symbolizing the *jamdar*), on the middle field a cup (*saqi*) charged with a pen-box (*dawadar*) and placed between a ‘pair of powder horns’ [and] on [the] lower field a cup”.³³³ Composite blazons were more common during the Burji Mamluk period. According to Meinecke, this emblem was the most popular during the late Burji period, known to be used by at least forty-seven emirs among whom were Emirs Yashbak min Mahdi and Aqbardi min ‘Ali Bay. Its first employment could be traced to Sultan Qaytbay (872-901/1468-96) when he was still merely an emir himself.³³⁴

The Foundation Inscription

‘Asim Rizk and Dr. O’Kane provided the inscription in the *tiraz* band that extends from the right side of the portal, then runs along the ‘inner’ portal and ends up on the left side (Fig. 4.23). In a beautifully carved *naskhi* script, the band reads:

بسملة، مما امر بانثاشانه برسم المقر الاشرف العالي المولوي الاميري الاجلي الكبير المحترمي المخدومي الاسفهلاري
المجاهدي المرابطي المؤيدي المنصوري الغازي المثاروي الاكلمي الاوحدى الاعزى الامجدى الافضلى المفضلى المجدى
السيدى السندي الكفيلى الزعيمى العضدى النصيرى الذخرى الهامى الغوثى العاتى المجتبى المرتضى عمده الملوك اختيار
السلطين كهف الفقراء و المساكين كنز الضعفاء و المنقطعين، مبيد الطغاة و الملحدى قاتل الكفرة و المشركى قاهر الفجرة
و المتمردى، نصره الغزاة و المجاهدين بغية الطالبين ذخر الايتام و المحتاجين منصف المظلومين من الظالمين مهلك
الطاغين و المنافقين (حامى حوزة الدين مظهر الحق بالبراهين بغية الملوك) السيفى يشيك من مهدي (امير دوادار كبير و

³³³ Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry*, 252.

³³⁴ Meinecke, “Zur mamlukischen Heraldik”, 213–87.

بائس) العساكر المنصوره و مدبر الممالك الاسلاميه و استادار العاليه و... (وذلك في شهر رمضان المعظم سنة ثمانين و ثمانمائة) 335

The deep entrance of the palace is flanked by two side *mastabas* surmounted with rectangular recesses crowned with curvilinear muqarnas recesses. Beneath the *mastabas*, a frieze of alternating white marble and stone with *fleur de lis* motifs at either end decorates the side benches (Fig. 4.24).

The 'Inner' Muqarnas Portal

The wall of the 'inner' muqarnas portal is built of a reddish-brown stone with strips of marble decorating the sides of the entrance (Fig. 4.25). Atop the entrance to the palace is the tripartite composition of a lintel, lunette and a relieving arch (Fig. 4.26). The lintel is a dark granite block surrounded by a fine molding of light marble, framed by a band of polychrome star-and-polygon pattern inlaid with marble mosaic in turquoise, red and white and others that feature a simple scroll design (Fig. 4.27).³³⁵ This design was copied in the Complex of Sultan Hasan (757/1356) above the entrances of the madrasas in the courtyard and later above the entrance of the mosque of Barsbay on the Fatimid Qasaba (826-7/1423-4) (Fig. 4.28). It was anticipated by Kahil that Syrians were among the artisans who worked on the marble veneers above the madrasa entrances.³³⁷ On the entrance of the palace of Qawsun, above the lintel area, the relieving arch is composed of a surfaced stone joggling of

³³⁵ Rizk, *Atlas*, 785; O'Kane, *The Monumental Inscriptions of Historic Cairo*, <https://islamicinscriptions.cultnat.org/default>, (October 23rd).

³³⁶ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 36.

³³⁷ Kahil, *Sultan Hasan*, 229.

alternating white and black (an indication of this arrangement can be found now with the last surviving white paint. Above this decorative part of the entrance runs a marble frieze in black and white with patterns of upright and inverted trefoils (Fig. 4.29).³³⁸ This is topped by a rectangular window with a metal grill.

The Epigraphic Medallions

On either side of joggling on the relieving arch above the entrance of the palace are two epigraphic medallions carved in marble with two sentences of script; the first line reads محمد while the second reads "عز لمولانا السلطان الملك الناصر" surrounded by simple scroll design. The background of the medallions still contains traces of yellow gilding. Both medallions on either side of the entrance feature interesting differences in calligraphy in some letters like the ن in السلطان and the ص intertwining with the ل in الناصر and the absence in the floral decoration in the medallion on the right side of the entrance (Fig. 4.30).

The dating of those medallions is controversial; while speculated to have survived from the time of Qawsun, the initial resident and owner of the palace, another potential dating has been argued. In his *Brief Chronology of Muhammadan Monuments*, Creswell clarifies that two Mamluk sultans bore the titles of "al-Nasir Muhammad"; the first was the son of Qalawun while the second was al-Nasir Muhammad the son of Qaytbay who reigned

³³⁸ Kahil, *Sultan Hasan*, 249.

from 901-4/1496-8.³³⁹ Creswell gravitated towards Van Bercham's interpretation that it belonged to the latter;³⁴⁰ testifying that these medallions were uncommon in the time of al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun.³⁴¹ However, there are indications to believe otherwise. The palace of Qawsun was one of three palaces constructed in 737/1337 that were funded by al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun. Al-Maqrizi accounts that the expansion of Istabl Qawsun was ordered to be executed from the sultan's money;³⁴² thus, it is possible that these medallions honor the funder of the palace. Secondly, praising the sultan with the phrase *'azza li-mawlana al-sultan* "Glory to our master the sultan" was made a standard titlature by al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, having been used occasionally used by earlier sultans, including al-Ashraf Khalil.³⁴³ Traces of a similar emblem with the same epigraphy are still visible on one of the pendentives inside al-Bab al-Mudarraǰ in the Citadel (Fig. 4.31). Moreover, during the Burji Mamluk period, emblems usually had *'azza nasrahu* on the lower part of the Sultan's blazon with a plain background. Thirdly, the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qaytbay does not coincide with any of the known residents of the palace of Qawsun; al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qaytbay ruled for a very short period with an interregnum and died by the age of eighteen. During his second reign, his blazon in fact had *'azza nasrahu* on its lower part and *rahama hu Allah* – a prayer for his late father Qaytbay as found beside the entrance in the mosque in Fayoum (Fig. 4.32). Fourthly, the design of the

³³⁹ Creswell, *Brief Chronology*, 99.

³⁴⁰ Van Bercham lists that the epigraphical medallions state عز نصره which is not the case.

³⁴¹ Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44.

³⁴² Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:131

³⁴³ Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*, 157.

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³⁴⁴ Kahil, *Sultan Ha*
³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.

marble mosaic decorative frame above the lintel of the entrance and the side medallions was copied almost identically in the Mosque of Barsbay in Bayn al-Qasrayn years later which could make this decoration in the palace of Qawsun a precedent for Barsbay's (826-7/1423-4) (Fig. 4.33).

Description of the 'Inner' Muqarnas Portal

By the fourteenth century, muqarnas portals had developed a compositional formula of three parts: a lower section with squinches and a central section with muqarnas units surmounted by a half dome.³⁴⁴ The muqarnas units start from the corners on squinches forming the half dome. The palace's portal is given similar decorative treatments to some Damascene portals such as that of the Mosque of Yalbugha.³⁴⁵ Close attention was given to the decoration of the muqarnas units and the half dome; hardly visible, the muqarnas units at the corners are decorated with twisted colonettes topped by tiny carved capitals (Fig. 4.34). The miniature semi-circular niches at the corners are decorated with a thin frieze decorated with stem and leaf design. The niche hoods are decorated with triangulated sunray patterns radiating from three points. The sun-ray fluting ends with tiny polylobes. The corner niches of the muqarnas vaults of the mosques of Bashtak in Cairo, the Madrasa Tuwashiyya in Tripoli, the Madrasa Tankiziyya in Jerusalem and the Tankiziyya mosque in Damascus are

³⁴⁴ Kahil, *Sultan Hasan*, 158-9.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.

decorated with similar fluted hoods.³⁴⁶ Some of the muqarnas units of the 'inner' portal of the Palace of Qawsun are decorated in ribs. The triangular pattern with the sun-ray design was preceded by those on the entrance portal of the nearby Madrasa of Sunqur Sa'di (715-21/1315-21) and that of Madrasa al-Tankiziyya in Jerusalem (729/1329). It was also found nearly two decades later the west entrance of the Mosque of Arghun Shah al-Isma'ili (748/1347)³⁴⁷ and later in the mihrab of the Complex of Sultan Hasan (757/1356) (Fig. 4.35).³⁴⁸ The narrow space above the half dome of the 'inner' muqarnas portal is decorated with red and white joggling.

Introduction to the Syrian Craftsmen of the Muqarnas Canopy

During the Bahri Mamluk period (1250-1382) the schools of Damascus and Aleppo developed a distinctive architectural taste that continued to inspire the local builders and craftsmen of the ateliers of Cairo and Jerusalem. This was exemplified in the taste for hooded muqarnas portals decorated with inlaid stone patterns and colored striped masonry. Religious and secular buildings in Cairo welcomed Syrian craftsmen whose mutual works can be compared.

³⁴⁶ O'Kane, "James Wild and the Mosque of Bashtak", 167.

³⁴⁷ Kenney, *Power and Patronage in Medieval Syria*, 211.

³⁴⁸ Kahil, *Sultan Hasan*, 249.

Cairene monuments were erected by *muhandisin*³⁴⁹ who included *sunna* of coppersmiths, builders, marble workers, carpenters and others who were not necessarily from Cairo. It's unfortunate that we do not hold enough records to identify the details of each masterpiece done by the numerous *muhandisin* and *sunna* who contributed to those monuments. The reason behind this scarcity is unknown; 'Abd al-Wahhab suggests that the *muhandisin* and the *sunna* did not care to sign their works.³⁵⁰ He also debates whether only the masters were allowed to sign their works; however, this is unlikely given the countless masterpieces erected without the signatures of their creators.³⁵¹

One of the rarest testaments of architectural signatures is that on this palace. On either side of the palace's entrance are two cartouches; the one of the right reads 'amal Muhammad b. Ahmad عمل محمد بن أحمد while the one on the left reads Ahmad Zaghlish al-Shami أحمد زغليش الشامي (Fig. 4.36).³⁵² This signature of Muhammad b. Ahmad... Ahmad Zaghlish al-Shami (the Syrian or the Damascene) is suggested by Rabbat to connote the names of a son and his father, possibly Turks. Concurring with Rabbat's hypothesis, Doris Behrens-Abouseif proposes that the signature belongs to one person "who is the builder, not

³⁴⁹ Rabbat, "Architects and Artists in Mamluk Society", 31. In this article, Rabbat distinguishes artisans and the building craftsmen. "In the building crafts, the most frequently encountered terms are *mu'allim*, *mi'mar*, *muhandis*, and *shadd*. In the arts, most terms, on the face of it, seem to designate specific vocations or skills, such as *muzawwiq*, *nuqqash*, *musawwir*, and *muzammik*, while some appear to be generic, such as *mu'allim* and *sani*."

³⁵⁰ Abd al-Wahhab, "Tawqi'at", 545.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 545.

³⁵² El Behnasi, *Mamluk Art*, 88; 'Abd al-Wahhab "Tawqi'at", 555; Rabbat, "Architects and Artists in Mamluk Society", 34.

the decorator, of the portal vault".³⁵³ On the other hand, 'Abd al-Wahhab lists Muhammad b. Ahmad and Ahmad Zaghlish al-Shami as two *murrakhimun*³⁵⁴ with no mentioned possible kinship. 'Abd al-Rahman Zaki agrees with 'Abd al-Wahhab that the signature gives the names of the marble workers responsible for the marble work that once adorned the portal and not the construction of the entire palace.³⁵⁵

Nevertheless, the same name of Muhammad b. Ahmad is inscribed on the stalactite portal at the summit of the vault of Gate of the Cotton Merchants (Bab al-Qattanin) in Jerusalem built at the time of al-Nasir Muhammad and overseen by Tankiz al-Nasiri (Fig. 4.37).³⁵⁶ It presents the possibility that the Syrian mason Muhammad b. Ahmad had a long association with Tankiz al-Nasiri, partaking in several projects over a period of ten years, beginning in 717/1317 with the construction of the emir's mosque in Damascus (Fig. 4.38) until 738/1327-8 with the completion of the market in Jerusalem. It appears that after he was finished with his work in Jerusalem that he was relocated to Cairo where he participated in the building of Qawsun's palace.³⁵⁷ The stalactite portal of the Tankiziyya featured curvilinear muqarnas, customary in Syria, which follows the designs of earlier portals in

³⁵³ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 44.

³⁵⁴ Marble craftsmen.

³⁵⁵ Zaki, *Bunat al-Qahira*, 93-95.

³⁵⁶ Creswell, *Brief Chronology*, 99; Grabar, *Where Heaven and Earth Meet*, 209.

³⁵⁷ Kenney, *Power and Patronage in Medieval Syria*, 211. Dr. Kenney pointed out that the *nisba* of Muhammad b. Ahmad in Jerusalem and Cairo does not specify the extent of the role played by this mason in the buildings' creation.

Damascus.³⁵⁸ The same kind of muqarnas is featured on the stalactite portal and canopy of the palace of Qawsun.

The portal of the palace of Qawsun belongs to four built in the fourth decade of the fourteenth century in Cairo which bear a remarkable resemblance to one another. Although simpler precedents of the same style exist at an earlier date in the Mosque of Ulmas (730/1330), one of these contemporary muqarnas vaults is in the portal of the Mosque of Bashtak (736/1336). Due to artistic similarities between the muqarnas canopies of the palace of Qawsun and that of the Mosque of Bashtak, both featuring a ribbed half dome in the outer portal, an extensive dripping muqarnas canopy and two niches crowned by stalactites on either walls of the entrance porch, it had been speculated by Meinecke that perhaps Muhammad b. Ahmad was also assigned the construction of the Mosque of Bashtak.³⁵⁹ An equally striking resemblance exists between the Mosque of Bashtak and the Sallamiyya Madrasa in Jerusalem north of the Haram (1338) (Fig. 4.39)³⁶⁰. Rosovsky had an eye for this resemblance as he drew comparisons between the portal of al-Majd al-Sallami's³⁶¹ madrasa which is crowned by a dripping stalactite canopy and its contemporary the palace of Qawsun in Cairo (Fig. 4.39).³⁶²

³⁵⁸ Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 98.

³⁵⁹ Kenney, *Power and Patronage in Medieval Syria*, 211. Meinecke, *Mamlukische Architektur*, 84.

³⁶⁰ Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 99.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 307. Al-Majd al-Sallami was a very important merchant who was responsible for buying mamluks for al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun.

³⁶² Rosovsky, *City of the Great King*, 411.

These buildings all range in the fourth decade of the fourteenth century. The Sallamiyya in Jerusalem probably dates to 738/1338; after this style of muqarnas vaulting had been practiced in Cairo for some time.³⁶³ These buildings were erected for prominent figures of the Mamluk court during the time of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun who was known for his profound interest in architecture and his contributions to the building activities of his emirs.³⁶⁴

The Dating of the Portal

Initial assumptions made by Lézine that the portal of the palace has been built over two consecutive decades – the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, attributing the back part to Qawsun and the front part to Yashbak - were followed by some later scholars. But evident archeological demonstrations challenge his hypothesis. Van Bercham stated that “comparable to the religious monuments, the portal of the palace of Yashbak has characteristics of the style of the fourteenth century (proportions ... side niches and friezes)”.³⁶⁵ His statement matches the findings above of its similarity with specific fourteenth century monuments. Furthermore, there aren't enough archeological indications to think that the portal was built in stages, on the contrary; not only do the courses of stone of which the portal is constructed align perfectly, but also the entire portal is connected by a double molding that runs on its

³⁶³ Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 307.

³⁶⁴ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 2:307-8.

³⁶⁵ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 35. In their book, the authors seem to gravitate more towards Lézine's hypothesis which shows in their labelling of the portal in the proposed plans.

sides and the top view of the portal does not indicate any break in bond that could be a result of later additions (Fig. 4.40). Furthermore, Dr. O'Kane following Laila Ibrahim, pointed out an interesting indication that proves that the portal standing today dates entirely from the fourteenth century; the inscription band that features at its end (on the left of the portal) the name of Emir Yashbak and the date of his contributions to the palace is carved in a lower relief than other fragments of the same inscription band (Fig. 4.41). Furthermore, the inscription contains the term *isfahsalari* which was restricted to a certain period (Fig. 4.42). The term *isfahsalar*, originally *ispahsalar* or *sipahsalar* in Persian means "army commander" which was later arabized to *isfahsalar* or *isfahsalari*. The use of the term goes back to the 4th/10th century during the Buyid dynasty. During the Mamluk period, the term *isfahsalari* was found as a component in the titles of the great emirs "and the second term in their designations on objets d'art and in inscriptions".³⁶⁶ According to Ibn Fadl Allah al-'Umari, in *Subh al-a'sha*, the honorific *al-isfahsalari* was especially reserved for the emirs of the *tablakhana*, but he goes on to say that its use had been abandoned in his own time (8th/14th century), perhaps because of the term's debasement where the common people were using the term *isbahsalar* (Persian) for all the guards around the sultan's circle.³⁶⁷ The database on the inscriptions of historic Cairo revealed that the term *isfahsalari* was used on four monuments only — 1) the Mosque of Mughaltay al-Jamali (730/1329), 2) the Gate of Sayf al-Din Manjak al-Yusufi al-Silahdar (747/1346), 3) the Madrasa of Sunqur Sa'di (the Tomb of

³⁶⁶ Van Bercham, *Materiaux*, 1:733 no. 529.

³⁶⁷ Bosworth and Digby, "Ispahsālār, Sipahsālār", 208–210.

Hasan Sadaqa) (715-21/1316-21) and 4) the Palace of Qawsun (of Yashbak) (735-737/1335-1337) where the term *isfahsalari* occurred twice on the portal and in the vestibule (Fig. 4.43).

بسملة، مما امر باننشائه برسم المقر الاشرف العالي المولوي الاميري الاجلي الكبير المحترمي المخدومي
 الاسفهلاري المجاهدي المرابطي المؤيدي المنصوري الغازي المتاغري الاكلمي الاوحدي الاعزي الامجدي
 الافضلي المفضل الممجي السندي الكفيلي الزعيبي العضدي النصيري الذخري الهمامي الغوثي العاتي
 المجتبي المرتضي عمده الملوك اختيار السلاطين كهف الفقراء و المساكين كنز الضعفاء و المنقطعين، مبيد الطغاة
 و الملحددين قاتل الكفرة و المشركين قاهر الفجرة و المتمردين، نصره الغزاة و المجاهدين بغية الطالبين ذخر الايتام
 و المحتاجين منصف المظلومين من الظالمين مهلك الطاغين و المناقين (حامي حوزة الدين مظهر الحق بالبراهين
 بغية الملوك) السيفي يشبك من مهدي (امير دودار كبير و باش) العساكر المنصوره و مدير الممالك الاسلامية و
 استادار العالية و... (وذلك في شهر رمضان المعظم سنة ثمانين و ثمانمائة) 368

During the Mamluk period, grand residences had several entrances, but only two portals — one on the street and another in the courtyard. The Palace of Qawsun was reported by historians to have had two portals; one on the main street beside Hadrat al-Baqar, stated in narratives to open onto al-Shari' al-'Azzam while another opened onto al-Rumayla towards Bab al-Silsila through which one could reach the Sultan's stables and the Citadel.

THE INTERIOR

The Vestibule (no. 4 on Plan A)

Special attention was given to the vestibules of the palaces; it was where "visitors were received, and guests waited until they were admitted. It was also where the emir's

³⁶⁸ Rizk, *Atlas*, 785; O'Kane, *The Monumental Inscriptions of Historic Cairo*, <https://islamicinscriptions.cultnat.org/default>, (October 23rd). The underlined parts of the inscription feature faded script or carving in low relief.

mamluks waited all day".³⁶⁹ The 'inner' portal of the palace topped by a half dome decorated with the sun-ray motif and stalactites is echoed in its rear in the vestibule (Figs. 4.44-5). The vestibule is topped with a shallow dome resting on pendentives. The apex of the dome is decorated with a six-pointed star, commonly known as the seal of Solomon which may have had a lamp or a chandelier hanging from its center illuminating vestibule. This ceiling arrangement of the domed vestibule in the palace of Qawsun is among the earliest ones in Cairo. Later examples are found in the Mausoleum of Sanjar al-Shuja'i and the Complex of Sultan Hasan (Fig. 4.46).³⁷⁰ The dome and its transitional zone are emphasized by a band of double molding. The wall opposite the doorway features a trilobed recess topped with a ribbed half dome above a series of stalactites (Fig. 4.47). Traces of floral painting that once adorned the stalactites that has gone unnoticed until now are still visible, a parallel for which can be seen inside the Zawiya and Sabil of Faraj ibn Barquq (Fig. 4.48-9). Underneath the series of stalactites, the wall is pierced with a round window.³⁷¹ On the either sides of this window are traces of two Mamluk elliptical *bukhariyyas* that were once painted (Fig. 4.46).³⁷² Below these medallions are traces of what may have been the blazon of the occupant of the palace (Fig. 4.50). The bottom part of this recess is a built-in *mastaba* for visitors who once waited in this area. The two lateral walls of this recess feature what may have been two built-in cupboards. The vestibule's *mastaba* and its muqarnas crown provided an inspiration

³⁶⁹ Ibrahim, "Residential Architecture in Mamluk Cairo", 56 quoting Al-Khafajji, *Kitab al-shifa al-ghalil*, 124.

³⁷⁰ Kahil, *Sultan Hasan*, 188.

³⁷¹ The piercing of this roundel shows that nothing was ever built behind the entrance vestibule.

³⁷² These medallions may have been like the ones found on the dome of the mausoleum of Hasan Sadaqa, filled with either vegetal or geometrical ornaments.

for the succeeding vestibule of the Complex of Sultan Hasan (Fig. 4.51).³⁷³ The side walls of the vestibule have rectangular windows. Above each window on both sides are two arched windows with three engaged marble octagonal columns (two on either side of the windows and one in the center) topped by an oculus (Fig. 4.52). The rounded arches and their surmounted oculi are framed with wood on the exterior. The inscription band surrounding the vestibule starts across the entrance, celebrating the glory of the founder with his praise and titles; the emir to which the palace is attributed is currently illegible. It still contains traces of gilding (Fig. 4.53). The inscription reads as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ مِمَّا أَمَرَ بِإِنشَاءِ هَذَا الْمَكَانِ الْمُبَارَكِ السَّعِيدِ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَجَزِيلِ عَطَايَاهِ الْمَقْرُ
الْأَشْرَفِ الْعَالِي الْمَوْلِيِّ الْأَمِيرِيِّ الْأَجَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِيِّ الْمُحْتَرَمِيِّ الْمُخْدُومِيِّ الْأَسْفَهْسَلَارِيِّ الْمَجَاهِدِيِّ الْمُرَابِطِيِّ
الْمُتَأَغْرِيِّ الْمُؤَيَّدِيِّ الْمَنْصُورِيِّ... الْأَمْجَدِيِّ الْمَمْجَدِيِّ الْأَعْزِيِّ الْأَفْضَلِيِّ الْمَفْضَلِيِّ الْكُفْلِيِّ الزَّعْمِيِّ الْوَرَعِيِّ الزَّاهِدِيِّ
السَّيِّدِيِّ السَّنْدِيِّ الْغَوْتِيِّ الْغِيَاثِيِّ الْمَجْتَبِيِّ الْمُرَابِطِيِّ عَمْدَةِ الْمُلُوكِ وَالسَّلَاطِينِ كَهْفِ الْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ كَنْزِ الضَّعْفَاءِ
وَالْمَنْقَطَعِينَ بَغِيَّةِ الطَّالِبِينَ نَصْرَةَ الْغَزَاةِ وَالْمَجَاهِدِينَ مَغِيثِ الْمَلْهُوفِينَ السَّيْفِيِّ (يَشْبَكِ) أَدَامَ اللَّهُ أَيَّامَهُ وَكَيْدَ عَدُوِّهِ وَ
أَهَانَهُ وَجَعَلَ السَّعْدَ وَالْإِقْبَالَ حَيْثُمَا تَوَجَّهَ أَمَامَهُ.³⁷⁴

Like the inscription band on the portal, the inscription band running along the walls of the vestibule shows a change in script, evident in the depth of the carving and in certain letters like the *ال* and the *ي*. Moreover, before the space that would have contained the name of Yashbak, we find *السيفي سيف* still readable (Fig. 4.54) Succeeding it, the space that may have included the name Yashbak is too wide to be intended for such a short name, which

³⁷³ Kahil, *Sultan Hasan*, 189.

³⁷⁴ Van Bercham, *Materiaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, 456; O'Kane, *The Monumental Inscriptions of Historic Cairo*, <https://islamicinscriptions.cultnat.org/default>, (October 23rd). The inscription underlined features faded script or carving in low relief.

may indicate that it had once included the name of Emir Sayf al-Din Qawsun al-Sayfi al-Maliki al-Nasiri al-Saqi.

The vestibule is flanked by two doors on each side, like those of the Palace of Bashtak³⁷⁵; the one on the left leads to a small room, presumably once used for the guard (no. 5 on Plan A). It rests on an arch for support while the rest of the roof in this space is a modern wooden one with projecting beams (Fig. 4.55). The wall opposite the room's entrance that may have once led to a corridor that is currently blocked by a wall of alternating courses of stones and bricks (Fig. 4.56).³⁷⁶ The opening on the right leads to the staircase that rose to the dwellings and *qa'as* on the first floor (Fig. 4.57). The corridor is topped with a flat wooden ceiling at its beginning with bare modern beams (Fig. 4.58).³⁷⁷ In *Palais et maisons du Caire*, Revault and Maury suggest that the staircase might have been vaulted originally and that the vaulting possibly disappeared at the time the staircase did. At the beginning of the staircase on the right, we find a peculiar room labelled by Revault and Maury as a latrine (no. 7 on Plan A). This part of the palace has been brutally altered by a recently built wall of rubble alternating with bricks that separates the palace from the madrasa. Revault and Maury questioned whether this was the original configuration of the staircase, built at a twisted angle compared to the palace's regular grid-like arrangement (Fig.

³⁷⁵ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 36-38.

³⁷⁶ The top view of the portal with its attached units in addition to two windows pierced in the portal's eastern wall suggest that this room may have once connected a corridor with the vestibule, that may have led to various architectural components to the south. The remnants of this part at the back of the portal suggest that it may have had further constructions there.

³⁷⁷ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 38.

4.59). The bending of the wall corresponds to that of the neighboring hall (no. 8 on Plan A).³⁷⁸

The First Lower Hall (no. 8 on Plan A) (Fig. 4.60)

The relatively plain façade of the palace with its pierced openings extends to the right of the portal. Visually, the northern façade could be divided into five sections (from left to right), the portal (nos. 2 and 3 on Plan A), the first lower halls (no. 8 on Plan A) and corresponding dwellings on top (nos. 21-3 on Plan C); the second lower halls (no. 10 on Plan A) and corresponding cruciform *qa'a* on top (no. 16 on Plan C), the lower rooms (nos. 12 and 13 on Plan A) and corresponding 'smaller' hall on top (no. 19 on Plan C) and the lower rooms (no. 14 on Plan A) and corresponding *maq'ad* (no. 20 on Plan C).

The first lower hall was once accessible through three arches; the first was next to the portal of the palace (Fig. 4.61), the second was a large pointed arch (Fig. 4.62) and the third was probably a higher rounded arch (Fig. 4.63). Creswell's photo from the early twentieth century³⁷⁹ shows that the large pointed arched entrance was almost completely blocked except for a small arched entrance while the higher rounded arch was completely blocked except for very narrow window openings at its top.³⁸⁰ (Fig. 4.64). Revault and Maury classified this composition of the lower hall as a portico, comparable to the one beside the

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 38.

³⁷⁹ Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, neg. EA.CA.2734. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library, Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library.

³⁸⁰ The higher rounded arch possibly features the original height of the portico speculated by Revault and Maury.

entrance in the palace of Bashtak (Fig. 4.65).³⁸¹ The interior of the first lower halls are divided into two aisles running North-South and until very recently when a large portion of this façade collapsed, three aisles running East-West resting on massive pillars (No. 8 on Plan A) (Fig. 4.66). These superimposed halls were roofed with barrel and cross vaults that support the dwellings above (Fig. 4.67). The bases of the pillars are made of courses of ashlar masonry (h: 50 cm, l: 85 cm w: 40 cm), never used in civil buildings after the end of the fourteenth century). Cinzia Tavernari dated these pillars as earlier than 1335 on the basis of the materials and the building technique used, however there are more than archeological reasons to believe otherwise. To begin with, the arches and vaults supported on their lateral walls show breaks in bond with the lateral walls of the corridor and the second lower hall (Fig. 4.68). Secondly, an arch that may have once opened to the other structures at the southern end of the palace is interrupted by a massive pillar that nearly blocks its opening which dates it to the second period classified by Tavernari as 1330-1468 (no. 8 a on Plan A) (Fig. 4.69). This pillar is among several others built later inside the hall to provide structural support for the storey above. In this hall, the piercing of certain openings and doors and the obstruction of others are a result of later alterations and occupancies of the premises (Fig. 4.70).

At the back of this hall, we find a peculiar room that was labelled by Revault and Maury as a rest room (no. 9 on Plan A) (Fig. 4.71). The strange twist in the angle of this room

³⁸¹ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 39.

corresponds with the bending of the corridor leading to the staircase that rises to the upper floor. Its unexplainable function and configuration add to the confusion of the composition of this hall.

The First Upper Halls (nos. 21-23 on Plan C) (Fig. 4.72)

The first upper halls to the right of the portal consist of several *qa'as* built around the eighteenth century, probably to meet the needs of the harem of the resident of the palace at the time. It is not certain that these more recent apartments were built in conformity to the original structures that were once installed in the palace of 735-7/1335-7 judging by the division of the walls on the upper floor which are not in correspondence to the structural pillars on the lower floor. It was suggested by Revault and Maury that this area was once occupied by a loggia (*maq'ad*)³⁸² surmounting the lower portico in the first lower hall (no. 8 on Plan A), as noted earlier. Later on, the addition of the fifteenth century *maq'ad* - traces of which are still visible at the far right of the northern façade - substituted the need for the ancient one whose space was converted into rooms and *qa'as* (Fig. 4.73).

The apartments built above the first lower hall are composed of two parallel *qa'as* with dependencies positioned around them (nos. 21 and 22 on Plan C). The first *qa'a* (on the left) (no. 22 on Plan C) follows the classical plan of a central *durqa'a* and two iwans³⁸³ with window openings pierced in the northern façade and its rear wall (Fig. 4.74). The iwans of

³⁸²Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 16:41; Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 16:47. See Arabic Narratives Text 15 and 16.

³⁸³The depth of the two iwans would have been unequal.

the *qa'a* are framed with sleek wooden borders with muqarnas elements at their ends (Fig. 4.75-6). The *qa'a* is covered with a wooden ceiling with projecting ribs and painted with floral ornamentation traces of which are still visible on the frieze below the ceiling and on the beams (Fig. 4.77). The style of painted floral ornaments on this ceiling are similar to those of the sabil of the palace of Emir Taz built by 'Ali Aga Dar al-Sa'ada (1671) (Fig. 4.78).

The side recesses of this *qa'a* have blind keel arches (Fig. 4.79). Parallels to this feature are found in one of the *qa'as* in the Ribat of the wife of Inal near Maydan Bab al-Sha'riyya and in the remains of the *mandara* of Bayt al-Mulla (1064/1654) (Fig. 4.80). Under these blind keel arches are a few recesses which may have served as built-in cupboards or shelves. To the east of the *qa'a* we find what would have been a utility corridor. At the end of this corridor on the left is a latrine topped with a groin vault decorated in a geometric star ornament (Fig. 4.81). Next to the latrine on the right is a vaulted structure at a lower level, which presumably served as a bath (Fig. 4.82). Today this bath's level reaches below the height of a standing person; its ceiling forms a shallow vault decorated at its apex with a pierced geometric star that may have been once decorated with stained glass. This subsidence of the bath is unexplainable, but it also seems peculiar that the bath would be at one level while the latrine and the entire floor at another. Parallel to the hall described above is another hall (no. 21 on Plan C) around which a series of rooms are scattered (Fig. 4.83). The construction material of the walls of this *qa'a* are exposed in some parts revealing courses of

stones alternating with bricks and covered with plaster. The construction materials used in these halls are another indicator of an Ottoman-period addition.

The access to the first upper halls, and what may have been formerly in place was probably from its rear southern side. As in the plans laid out in the "essai de restitution" (Plan D), they suggest that the upper floor was accessible by the staircase from the entrance vestibule that reached that floor. A corridor that ran at the back of the first upper hall probably gave access to that space as well as to the next cruciform *qa'a*.

The Second Lower Hall (nos. 10 and 11 on Plan A) (Fig. 4.84)

The second lower hall surpasses the significance of the former one. It differs entirely in its exterior and interior configurations which feature peculiar elements. This hall (*istabl*) is classified among the structures dating from the Second Period. If one excludes the recent doors pierced in its façade, one can notice that the second lower hall had only high rectangular windows. An access door was added later to its right. From the inside, the cruciform plan and architectural style complies with that in its corresponding upper *qa'a*. The hall features sets of recesses arranged on either side with spaces in front of them (nos. 9-11 on Plan D). The bulky split walls and pillars ensure a powerful support for the massive arches spanning the surmounting *qa'a*. The roofing technique used for this space is similar to the one found in the previous lower hall, composed of tunnel and cross-vaults coated with plaster (Fig. 4.85). The structural-beams that support the roof of this hall were painted

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alternatively in white and red, traces of which still survive (Fig. 4.85). Despite the magnitude of the walls and pillars, the large span of the vault below the upper *durqa'a* necessitated adding an additional central pillar for reinforcement. While this central pillar survived the ravages of time, the vaults it once supported completely collapsed.³⁸⁴ The splendid remnants of this hall make it possible to imagine the same arrangement duplicated beyond the surviving central pillar (Fig. 4.86).

Nevertheless, the accessibility and methods of ventilation and lighting of this hall remain unanswered questions. In addition to the high windows pierced in the palace's northern façade; further openings, now walled, were pierced in the east, west and south walls of this hall.³⁸⁵ The thickness (nearly 150 cm) of the walls and the few windows in this lower hall allowed only dim light to penetrate.

This supports the speculations above regarding the dating of the first lower hall. These high windows were obviously not meant to be obstructed, as they are now, by neighboring structures. This also determines that the date of the second lower hall must be earlier than the present first lower hall. It must also be earlier than the structures to the west as will be discussed later.

To the west of the second lower hall a doorway pierced in the northern façade opens onto an antechamber with deep lateral recesses (no. 12 on Plan B). This antechamber³⁸⁶ was

³⁸⁴ The cross vault formed in the lower *durqa'a* whose arches were connected to the central pillar was still evident until the intervention of the Comité in 1900.

³⁸⁵ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 40.

³⁸⁶ Perhaps this antechamber was once used as a room for the guards before entering the first hall.

once connected to a corridor which is now walled (Fig. 4.87).³⁸⁷ A vaulted arch that may have connected the second lower hall and the antechamber appears to have been built-up, but today evidence of a high blocked window pierced in that built-up wall can be seen (Fig. 4.88). This may resolve the issue of accessibility to the second lower hall; as it can be presumed that the entrance to the above-mentioned hall was through the doorway from the northern façade through the corridor to the antechamber the northern area of the hall. Other options of entrances to that space may have been from the side walls.

Revault and Maury speculate that this second lower hall was used by the residents of the house to host and welcome the assembly of their emirs. There were, as will be later discussed in the upper cruciform *qa'a*, divisions and recesses in the layout of the *qa'as*, suggested by Revault and Maury to have served as a hierarchical seating chart for the emirs according to their ranks and affinities. However, it is unlikely that this hall served any ceremonial purpose. It is more plausible that it was used as storerooms, stables, kitchens, servants' quarters and for other dependencies or the like.

The Second Upper Cruciform *Qa'a* (nos. 8-10 on Plan D) (Fig. 4.89)

The cruciform *qa'a* on the upper floor can be considered the most important court of honor surviving from the Bahri Mamluk period in the city of Cairo. Despite the fact that only a third of the *qa'a* remains standing today, what survives is a unique witness of royal

³⁸⁷ The palace of Qawsun is another example after the palace of Alin Aq which features a main portal to the palace in addition to another entrance that opens onto a corridor that connects to the lower superimposed hall on the lower floor (*istabk*).

residential architecture of the fourteenth century. From the regular configuration of the remnants of the *qa'a* it is possible to restore its general layout before most of it collapsed.

The *qa'a* of Qawsun is the largest that survives in Cairo, reaching probably thirty five to forty meters at its longest.³⁸⁸ Its cruciform composition corresponds perfectly to the configuration of the lower hall (Plan A). The examination of both shows how the architect was keen to obtain perfect coordination between both floors to ensure optimum support for the *qa'a* and its numerous arched iwans on top. The walls of the court of honor were built of large courses of ashlar stone (h: 50 cm, l: 85 cm w: 40 cm)³⁸⁹ up to the level of the lintels of the windows above which smaller courses of stone were used (Fig. 4.90). The inner frames of the arched windows and their oculi are supported by wood while the rectangular window grills were supported by wooden lintels surmounted by stone relieving arches. Beneath the rectangular windows, in their sills, I noticed two wooden beams projecting from the walls. One hypothesis is that these beams constituted the support for a wooden structure in front of this window, perhaps a *mashrabiyya*. This interpretation could be supported by the presence, just under the two beams, of deep cuts that could have been used for wooden supports for a structure coming out of the wall (Fig. 4.91).

The only conserved part of this *qa'a* is the northern iwan with lateral *majalis* that opened onto a central *durqa'a* supported by the central pillar in the hall below. The *durqa'a* that would have measured 12.5 x 11.1 meters may have been roofed by a wooden ceiling,

³⁸⁸ Lezine, "Les salles nobles", 95.

³⁸⁹ They were never used for the construction of civil buildings after the end of the fourteenth century.

probably carrying a lantern (*shukhshaykha*), supported on the thick walls of the *qa'a*. The iwan and its lateral recesses form a T-shaped space that opens by pointed horseshoe arches decorated in alternating red and white stone (Fig. 4.92). Some of the keystones of the arches still contain the round hook that may have carried the chandeliers that once lighted this hall (Fig. 4.93). At its entirety, the aeration and lighting of this *qa'a* would have been through the windows and openings pierced in its northern wall, through the lantern and perhaps through windows pierced on the southern iwans of the *qa'a*. The lower fragment of the iwan features three large windows with four rounded arches topped by five oculi.³⁹⁰ The Maristan of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (1418-20) also has four semi-circular windows with five oculi (Fig. 4.94). The lower windows would have had metal grills while the upper windows were decorated in stained glass held together by stone grills (Fig. 4.95).

The last vestiges of a roof remain in one of the smaller iwans that flank the northern iwan (Fig. 4.96).³⁹¹ This recess features two side alcoves.³⁹² Halfway up this wall, piercings which may have carried wooden beams cut deep into the wall can be seen, in addition to remains of a narrow stone staircase on the left supported by wooden beams (Fig. 4.97). Revault and Maury assume that this upper loggia was reserved for the harem, where the

³⁹⁰ This similar style of arched windows topped by oculi can be seen in contemporary examples in the palaces of Alin Aq, Bashtak and Taz.

³⁹¹ The ceiling seen nowadays looks like a later restoration. It's uncertain that the main *qa'a* of Qawsun had a wooden coffered ceiling like the one restored in the palace of Bashtak or was roofed by a painted wooden ceiling with projecting beams.

³⁹² Iwans can have a T-shape arrangement without necessarily having alcoves. This architectural feature survives from Mesopotamian influences, seen later in houses in Fustat and in the Tulunid and Fatimid houses in Cairo.

women would have been shielded by a *mashrabiyya*. A surviving example of a similar arrangement can be seen nowadays in one of the *qa'as* of the House of Mustafa Ja'far, the coffee trader, in Harat al-Darb al-Asfar (approx. 1125/1713) (Fig. 4.98). However, the intended use of the space is arguable since the available room as a seating area is very confining given the presumed number of the females in the household of the emir. While I concur with Revault, Maury and Tavernari's speculation that this structure once served as an *aghani* for the audience of this *qa'a*, another possibility is that it was a later Ottoman partition (Fig. 4.99).

From the late-thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth century bands of inscriptions set against a foliate background were often used in Mamluk decoration. These bands are usually Quranic, interrupted by medallions or emblems of the sultan or the emir.³⁹³ Although it's expected to find these Quranic scripts in religious buildings, they were also incorporated within the decorative scheme of secular Mamluk architecture. This feature was also found in the Great Iwan of al-Nasir Muhammad in the Citadel (Fig. 4.100). Circling the *qa'a* of the palace of Qawsun, we find traces of the wooden supports that once held an epigraphic frieze, comparable to what still survives in the neighboring palace of Taz (Fig. 4.101).

According to Revault and Maury's speculations, this *qa'a* may have had two main iwans and side alcoves with pointed horseshoe arches, similar to those that still survive. They

³⁹³ Kahil, *Sultan Hasan*, 257.

speculate that the sides of the hall were at a lower level flanked by two walled partitions and were once surmounted by arches, forming two symmetrical alcoves on either side of the *durqa'a* (the alcoves near nos. 11 and 12 on Plan D).³⁹⁴ However, there are a couple of reasons to believe otherwise. Nowadays, on the western wall of the hall, there are visible remnants of what look like recesses. Also, Pascal Coste's painting of the Complex of Sultan Hasan and its surroundings between 1818-1826 show possibly the same recesses visible from the outside due to the deteriorating status of the palace (Fig. 4.102). Nevertheless, the remnants of this *qa'a* are not enough to propose any definite reconstruction of the side recesses. To the west of the northern iwan, accessible from the *durqa'a* through a bent corridor, we find a large featureless room (nos. 17 and 18 on Plan C) (Fig. 4.103). This room may have served as the *khazana nawmiya* (bedroom) for the master of the house (Fig. 4.104).³⁹⁵ On the northern façade, the height of this *qa'a* extends to that of the hall of honor, displayed two arched windows and an oculus (Fig. 4.105). However, there are reasons to speculate that the dating of this *qa'a* does not coincide with that of its neighboring hall of honor. Firstly, it may be assumed that this 'smaller' *qa'a* may have been built later; the vault between the antechamber and the hall on the lower floor was built-up, to provide further support for the corridor and eastern wall of the 'smaller' *qa'a* on the upper floor. Secondly, an evident break in bond on the northern façade can be seen in addition to the different use of materials and

³⁹⁴ An example of a *durqa'a* flanked by lateral arches was found in the *Qa'a* of Aqqush (fourteenth century). The main *qa'a* in the palace of Bashtak has lateral galleries on either side that open onto the *durqa'a* by smaller arches.

³⁹⁵ Ibrahim, "Residential Architecture", 55.

methods of construction. And lastly, the arrangement of windows of the 'smaller' *qa'a* is not aligned with those of the neighboring cruciform *qa'a*.

Information on details of interiors of royal palaces, their furnishings and division of spaces are scarce, probably because few historians or travelers would have been able to gain access to a royal palace. It is in rare incidences like the material looted from Istabl Qawsun described by al-Maqrizi that the luxury of such palaces and its treasures are known. Therefore, to reconstruct the interior architecture of this hall of honor, we must look at contemporary surviving princely palaces. Similar contemporary surviving examples of richly painted epigraphical friezes topped by gilded wooden ceilings along with well-preserved chandeliers, textiles, wood, metal and glass work can help us imagine how this luxurious *qa'a* may have once looked like. The floors and lower walls of the *qa'a* of Qawsun would probably have been covered with colorful marble mosaics (Fig. 4.106).³⁹⁶ Underneath the floors of the upper cruciform *qa'a* stone pipes have been found indicating that a fountain might have existed in the central *durqa'a* similar to that preserved in the palace of Bashtak (Fig. 4.107).³⁹⁷

The 'Smaller' Halls and Lower Rooms (no. 13 on Plan A and 19 on Plan C)

Dating apparently to the fifteenth century, attached to the more ancient upper and lower halls of the fourteenth century, these annexed buildings showcase distinctive features of the period (Fig. 4.108). The lower constructions and their upper corresponding ones are

³⁹⁶ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 46.

³⁹⁷ Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 40.

not to be compared to their neighboring hall and *qa'a* in terms of monumentality and grandiose proportions. The constructions of this fragment of the façade consist of superimposed small hall on the lower level and reception hall at the upper level. The lower small hall is accessible through an entrance doorway on the northern façade and features two recesses parallel to the entrance, roofed by cross vaults measuring almost 10 meters and almost completely covered with plaster (no. 13 on Plan A) (Fig. 4.109). The upper hall opens onto the northern façade through three "Qalawun-set" of windows; two on the northern façade and one on the west side. Obvious differences are clear from the break in bond, the façade architecture in *ablaq* masonry of alternating reddish and brownish limestone color, the red band framing of the arched windows and their oculus and different treatment of the relieving arches above the rectangular windows (Fig. 4.110). Nevertheless, efforts were made to harmonize its façade with the adjacent constructions by piercing windows with a similar style. However, unlike the ancient part of the palace, the construction material used in this addition was limestone. Today the three "Qalawun-set" of windows of the upper hall are filled-in and the entire space is reused by the CIERA among the space was converted into offices for their on-site usage (Fig. 4.111).³⁹⁸

³⁹⁸ The offices of the CIERA are currently locked and inaccessible.

The Maq'ad and Lower Rooms (no. 20 on Plan C and 14 on Plan A)

To the right of the latter structures, the *maq'ad*, which coincides in style with those of the fifteenth century, was raised above a series of lower rooms. This addition could be attributed to either Emir Yashbak or Aqbardi (Fig. 4.112). In 902/1497 the *maq'ad* was destroyed in a fire.³⁹⁹ The fire may have happened during the struggle for power between Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qaytbay and Emir Aqbardi. Today, *maq'ad* is completely ruined and filled-up except for traces of the beginning of one of its arches (Fig. 4.113). The small remaining façade of the *maq'ad* has a band of double molding with circular loops. On the lower floor, small vaulted rooms dating to the same period once supported the *maq'ad*. Two of these rooms are connected and are accessible through pointed arched doorways⁴⁰⁰ (Fig. 4.114) and open onto the ancient courtyard by two windows, while a third room is solely built to their right.

Next to the small lower rooms, there is a series of rooms built at a right angle to the palace's northern façade (Fig. 4.115). From the sixteenth century onwards, we know that this part was used as cells for the Mevlevi convent. Revault and Maury mention that this part served as a *wakala* before being allotted as a hospice for the elderly.⁴⁰¹ Revault and Maury report that the hospice had a beautiful interior garden, probably inherited from the heirs of

³⁹⁹ Ibn Iyas, *Histoire des Mamlouks Circassiens*, 2:404.

⁴⁰⁰ Revault and Maury name it a Persian arch.

⁴⁰¹ The volumes of *Palais et maisons du Caire* were published in 1977. The usages of the cells between the palace and the Mevlevi *takiyya* could have been known from the description provided by the document of *waqf* of Yusuf Sinan on 17th Safar 1016/1607 or by later historians of the Ottoman period.

Yashbak.⁴⁰² By 2004, Tavernari reports that these rooms were used as working spaces for the training of the staff who worked in the CIERA. The type of masonry used in this part is composed of plastered ashlar.

⁴⁰² Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*, 41.

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CHAPTER FIVE
THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY CONSTRUCTIONS AND THE MEVLEVI TAKIYYA

There is no doubt that the former constructions of the palace of Qawsun-Yashbak-Aqbardi extended beyond what is currently visible on the northern façade; the palace extended westwards into what later became the Mevlevi Complex (the Italian-Egyptian Center for Restoration and Archeology) and southwards into Hadrat al-Baqar. In the fifteenth century, the palace is known to have been occupied, expanded and restored by Emir Yashbak min Mahdi and Emir Aqbardi min 'Ali Bay. Judging by the style, we are left with a few remnants of architecture that can be dated to that period. While they only mention that they contributed to the edifice, none of the literary sources provides a detailed description of what exactly was added or renovated in the palace when it was occupied by the two Burji Mamluk emirs (Fig. 5.1).⁴⁰³

In 1590, Mevlevi dervishes arrived in Egypt and obtained permission to build on the ruins of the Madrasa and Mausoleum of Sunqur Sa'di and Hasan Sadaqa, making use of the pre-existing structures which were at the time abandoned and ruinous. The first official document⁴⁰⁴ which testified the Mevlevi presence in that area dates to 17th Safar 1016/12th June 1607 in which the Yemenite Prince Yusuf Sinan gave them this land among other properties and monetary support. The document provides a detailed description of the exact boundaries of the area of the *takiyya*, then called Sa'diyya. Archaeological investigations done by the CIERA show that probably after the donation of the area nothing much was

⁴⁰³ As presented in this thesis, the palace was occupied over the years by many emirs who belonged to both Mamluk periods. It can be assumed that any of those residents may have added, restructured, restored or altered aspects within the palace. Of course, we have no records that mention interior refurbishments made by each individual occupant.

⁴⁰⁴ Mubarak, *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, 2:44.

altered and that the dervishes limited themselves to using what was already there. From the sixteenth century⁴⁰⁵ onwards they settled in the series of rooms adjacent to the madrasa and adapted them for their use as cells and a community area for the convent (Fig. 5.2).⁴⁰⁶

Further restructuring and additions took place in different stages until the nineteenth century. CIERA divided the buildings of the ancient Mevlevi *takiyya* into four blocks; 1) the religious area, which includes the *sama'khana* and the mausoleum of Hasan Sadaqa (nos. 19 and 20 on Plan A), 2) the monastery area, made up of individual cells built around the garden with a central fountain (no. 18 on Plan A); 3) an area for daily activities, with meeting and prayer areas, the refectory and the kitchens and 4) the public area with reception areas that define the complex on al-Suyyufiyya Street in which there is an entrance to the complex that leads into the Aqbardi garden "where pilgrims were welcomed and the poor who came seeking food were nourished" (Fig. 5.3).⁴⁰⁷

The fragments of the palace that were adapted for the use by the Mevlevi dervishes overlapped in several areas, 1) the *maq'ad* with the corresponding lower halls speculated to have been added in the fifteenth century (no. 20 on Plan C and no. 14 on Plan A); 2) the area behind the lower antechamber to the west of the second lower hall and below the 'smaller' *qa'a* on the upper floor (no. 13 on Plan A), 3) and the palatial extension added by Aqbardi found nowadays within the borders of the Mevlevi Complex (nos. 16 and 17 on Plan A).

⁴⁰⁵ These rooms may have been the ones underneath the *maq'ad*.

⁴⁰⁶ Fanfoni, "The Foundation and Organization of the Cairo Mawlawiyya", 106.

⁴⁰⁷ Fanfouni, "Preservation of Historic Cairo", 202.

Today what stands of the palatial extension that belongs to the fifteenth century is found to the far right of the northern façade of the palace and extends south, then west forming a U-shaped block. Reconstructing the upper floors of the fifteenth century extension of the palace is challenging for many reasons. To begin with, the *qa'a* with the ablaq façade and the *maq'ad* (nos. 19 and 20 on Plan C) have been adapted for reuse by the CIERA who restored their remnants, blocked their windows and used their spaces as offices that are currently inaccessible. Therefore, it would be hard to speculate on the plan of the upper floor plan of those spaces, given that their current division might not correspond to that of the lower floor. Secondly, we have plans issued by the CIERA that provide ground floor plans for the areas that were adapted for reuse by the dervishes, among which is a plan for the floor below the *qa'a* that was added in the fifteenth century which differs from that in *Palais et maisons du Caire* by Revault and Maury (Fig. 5.4). Thirdly, all that survives from the area to the south of the latter space is a series of cross vaults on the ground floor – some of which are still intact while others have collapsed revealing their ceiling structure – with high windows pierced in its side walls (Fig. 5.5). Fourthly and most importantly, to the west of the latter cross vault support is what remains of the extension presumably by Aqbardi (Fig. 5.6).⁴⁰⁸ Fifthly, according to Mubarak's *al-Khitat al-Tawfiqiyya*, a construction of a street to connect al-Suyyufiyya and al-Manshiyya streets pierced the rear of the palace. Today, traces of arches that ran both parallel and perpendicular (and that may have been roofed by cross vaults) are

⁴⁰⁸ Only the first floor of the extension added by Aqbardi is accessible.

still visible on the rear wall of the palace (Fig. 5.7) while any constructions built above are unknown. Therefore, for a more accurate reconstruction of the palace, it is safer to stick to what remains on the ground plan.

The Fifteenth Century Mamluk Extension

Although the remains of the extension of the palace of Qawsun were formerly inaccessible, I was able enter what remains of this structure, reachable from inside the CIERA (Fig. 5.8). The lower floor is supported at one of its corners on a round column and features a few rectangular windows shielded with grills (Figs. 5.9-10). To the right side of the remaining wall is an entrance bracketed by the remains of a wall with a recess, that may have been a built-in cupboard, and to the left by remains of a perpendicular wall (no. 1 on Plan E) (Fig. 5.11). After going through that entrance, up a few stairs (Fig. 5.12) and to the left, it opens onto a double-height hall divided into two spaces by a wall (nos. 2 and 3 Plan E). To the left of the entrance there is a narrow stone staircase that leads up to an upper mezzanine floor supported on wooden beams (Fig. 5.13). The mezzanine was once also accessible through a door that is now blocked and would have been connected to other parts of the palace that extended further south (Figure 5.14). The ceiling of this double-height hall remains its most prominent feature. It has projecting ribs and traces of the paint that had once decorated its ceiling are still visible, featuring painted coffers and floral ornaments (Fig. 5.15). Interestingly, one of the painted coffers features a composite tripartite princely blazon;

with a *napkin* (*buqja* symbolizing the *jamdar*) with a red background on its upper field, a cup (*saqi*) charged with a pen-box (*dawadar*) on the middle field and a cup with a dark background – (green or blue) on the lower field (Fig. 5.16). Below this wooden ceiling, a cornice runs along the four sides of this hall decorated in a style comparable to that found in the *maq'ad* of Mamay al-Sayfi (901/1496) (Fig. 5.17). This cornice features a *thuluth* inscription band that was once gilded, on a simple foliated scroll. In the middle of each cornice on the four sides we find a large medallion featuring the same princely blazon mentioned above (Figs. 5.18-19).⁴⁰⁹ What was legible of inscription is as follows:

مما أمر بإنشاء هذا المكان المبارك و المقر الكريم العالي المولوي الأميري الأكرمي المجاهدي المرابطي المثناعري
 المؤيدي المنصوري الممجدي الذخري الهمامي القوي النظامي العالي المغنثي... المعيني الكفيلي الأوحدي الأمجدي
 ... النصيري ... الأكملي ... عمدة الملوك و [السلطين] (Figs. 5.20-24)

To the right side of the entrance below the mezzanine is a doorway that leads to the double-height space of the hall (no. 3 on Plan E). To the left of the entrance that leads from the first part of this room to the other is a built-in *mastaba* with recesses on the walls probably serving as built-in cupboards or shelves (Fig. 5.25). Above the *mastaba* there are wooden beams in the wall that may have supported an epigraphic band. It is unclear whether this was intentional; today one of the recesses of this wall is pierced (no. 3 a on Plan E) and leads to narrow corridor with a vaulted *hammam* on one side (no. 4 on Plan E) and a what looks like a small room on another (no. 6 on Plan E) (Fig. 5.26). This room is in fact the rear side of an entrance added probably in the beginning of the Ottoman period (no. 7 on Plan E)

⁴⁰⁹ The blazon featured on the painted coffer and on the cornice below the ceiling did not have the pair of powder horns in the middle field. Such a composite blazon is not mentioned in Mayer's *Saracenic Heraldry*.

(Fig. 5.27). It is a simple tri-lobed stone entrance emphasized by a double molding. From the inside what looked like a window in a room was the metal window grill above the entrance – which is currently blocked.

The Dating of the Fifteenth Century Mamluk Extension: the Jaqmaq-Inal Hall

After the death of Qawsun, the structures of the palace continued to expand southwards and westwards between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, extending at some point over the ruins of the Madrasa of Sunqur Sa'di. To-date, Emir Aqbardi was the last Circassian Mamluk resident known to have contributed to the edifice, therefore, we find that earlier publications attribute the structures that are now part of the Italian-Egyptian Center for Restoration and Archaeology to Emir Aqbardi (901-4/1495-9).⁴¹⁰

However, an interesting detail negates this attribution to Aqbardi min 'Ali which is the composite blazon found in one of the coffers of the ceiling and in the cornice between the inscription band that once encircled the hall. During the reign of Barquq, the composite blazon contained a napkin in the upper field and cups in the middle and lower fields. This basic form of the blazon remained until the time of Qaytbay with the addition, absence and variation of different emblems. By the time of Jaqmaq (842-57/1438-53) and Inal (857-

⁴¹⁰ Fanfoni, "The Preservation of Historic Cairo", 208.

66/1453-61), the cup in the middle field sometimes contained the pen-box emblem (Fig. 5.28).⁴¹¹

Therefore, the painted blazon inside the hall features a less developed form than the one employed during the reign of Qaytbay and later by Emir Yashbak – and probably more or less similarly by Aqbardi min 'Ali Bay. Thus, it can be concluded that the hall discovered within the borders of the CIERA precedes the residency of Aqbardi in Istabl Qawsun. According to the findings of this thesis, this nominates possibly three residents to which this hall could be attributed; Emir Jaqmaq (841-2/1438), Emir Ariqmas (841-2/1438) and Emir Inal (857/1453).

The Ottoman Addition

Opposite the entrance in the first part of the double-height hall, there is an opening that leads to another smaller hall with attached rooms (no. 5 on Plan E). This fragment of the building features a visible break in bond on the façade mentioned earlier (Fig. 5.29). It seems that this part of the building is a later Ottoman addition. Half of the flooring of this hall had collapsed revealing interesting aspects (Fig. 5.30). This hall belonged on the first floor and was entirely supported on wooden beams. Those wooden beams on which the floor rests are inserted into the fifteenth century construction to link both structures together. The height of this smaller hall was split to house another room on top that would have rested on

⁴¹¹ Meinecke, "Zur mamlukischen Heraldik", 269.

wooden beams whose traces can still be seen (Fig. 5.31). The inner walls of this hall still contain traces of red and yellow paint. And finally, this smaller hall would have led to other smaller units on both sides, of which currently only the ones to the east survive. The entire construction may have contained more halls and rooms that once extended to the west and south.

CONCLUSION

By illuminating the modern urban layout of the square known today after Salah al-Din and the large central planation leading to and from the area of the Southern Cemetery, it is challenging to envision how this clutterly mobile district was once an exclusive ground suited for the Sultan and emirs of a great Muslim Empire during which Cairo was an important economic and artistic center in the Islamic region. Istabl Qawsun is a rare surviving testimony of secular architecture built during the Mamluk period for top officials who enjoyed a unique standing in Mamluk society and an intimate relationship with the Sultan. The palace's fate was destined to greatness since its initial construction and expansion by Emir Qawsun after whom it is attributed. Its proximity to the Citadel, and particularly to Bab al-Silsila designated it as an important residence for powerful emirs and a witness to numerous historical disputes between high ranking emirs and the ruling Sultan in the Citadel. Enduring the ravages of time and negligence, the palace stands today as the last of the princely palatial compound built in the maydan beneath the Citadel during the second half of the third reign of the longest ruling Mamluk Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun.

At a first glimpse, it is hard to notice the staggering phases of constructions that overlap within a single structure which crawled at one point to reach near al-Shari' al-'Azzam at its extremity. The longest surviving of these constructions are the monumental portal and the remnants of the large hall on the first floor; however, at a closer look, we are

lucky to have one of the smaller halls of the palace still surviving inside the borders of the Mevlevi Complex which now serves as the Italian-Egyptian Center for Restoration and Archeology. The hall, that dates almost a century later than the initial foundation date of the palace, displays the lasting importance of the residence during the second period of the Mamluk dynasty which continued to incorporate new structures added then by its inhabitants. This intriguing finding urged the need for more accurate and updated plans of the historical palace and its evolution up until this thesis was completed. Traces of collapsed walls or incomplete arches, that hint the direction towards which the palace once extended, had to be indicated; however, from an architectural point of view, the few surviving structures on the first floor of the palace did not help in determining a possible circulation pattern or division of spaces on this storey (Fig. 5.32).

Nowadays, Istabl Qawsun is left to wither behind modern workshops and warehouses, housing stray dogs and occasional consumers of prohibitions – judging from their leftovers. Although its magnificent muqarnas portal continues to attract art and architecture scholars and heritage enthusiasts, no serious action was ever taken to rescue this precious edifice. Informally, news about Professor Fanfoni returning to Cairo to restore Istabl Qawsun echoed between scholars and restoration experts and that a sumful budget was allocated to its restoration and conservation. However, this was never confirmed and until this thesis was submitted, no steps were made to save and restore Istabl Qawsun.

TRANSLATION

Text 1

Qawsun had a rank... that rose above the shining moon
Aydughmish put him in chains... after being high and free as a bird
He did not find a rescuer from those who humiliated him... where's the al-
Nasir Muhammad
His issue became unusual... from its beginning to the end⁴¹²

Text 2

From Karak al-Nasir came... and brought with him the king of the jungle
Your ending Qawsun... was nothing more than a lie⁴¹³

⁴¹² Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:48.

⁴¹³ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:48.

THE EPIGRAPHICAL PROGRAM IN ISTABL QAWSUN

The Inscription Band on the Portal

بسملة، مما امر بانثائه برسم المقر الاشرف العالي المولوي الاميري الاجلي الكبير المحترمي
المخدومي الاسفهلاري المجاهدي المرابطي المؤيدي المنصوري الغازي المئاغري الاكلمي الاوحدى
الاعزى الامجدى الافضى المفضلى الممجدى السىدى السندى الكفىلى الزعىمى العضىدى النصىرى
العاىى المجبىى المرضىى عمده الملوك اأىيار السلاطىن كهف الفقراء و <1> الذخرى الهامى الغوىى
المساكىن كنز الضعفاء و المنقطعىن، مبد الطغاة و الملحدىن قائل الكفرة و المشركىن قاهر الفجرة و
المتمردىن، نصره الغزاة و المجاهدىن بغىة الطالبىن ذخر الاىتام و المحتاجىن منصف المظلومىن من
الظالمىن مهلك الطاغىن و المنافقىن (حامى حوزة الدىن مظهر الحق بالبراهىن بغىة الملوك) السىفىى يشبك
من مهدى (امىر دوادار كبرى و باش) العساكر المنصوره و مدبر الممالك الاسلامىة و استادار العالىة
و... (وذلك فى شهر رمضان المعظم سنة ثمانىن و ثمانائة)

The Inscription Band in the Vestibule

بسملة، مما امر بانشاء هذا المكان المبارك السعىد من فضل الله تعالى و جزىل عطاىاه المقر الاشرف
العالى المولوى الامىرى الاجلى الكبرىى المحترمىى المخدومىى الاسفهلارىى المجاهدىى المرابطىى
المئاغرىى المؤىدىى المنصورىى ... الامجدىى الممجدىى الاعزىى الافضىى المفضلىى الكفىلىى الزعىمىى الورعىى
عمده الملوك و السلاطىن كهف الفقراء و <1> الزاهدىى السىدىى السندىى الغوىىى الغىاىىى المجبىىى المرابطىى
المساكىن كنز الضعفاء و المنقطعىن بغىة الطالبىن نصره الغزاة و المجاهدىن مغبث الملهوفىن السىفىى
(يشبك) اءام الله اىامه و كىد عدوه و اهانه و جعل السعد و الاقبال حىثما توجه امامه

The Inscription Band on the Cornice in the Jaqmaq-Inal Hall

مما امر بانشاء هذا المكان المبارك و المقر الكرىم العالى المولوى الامىرىى الاكرمىى المجاهدىى المرابطىى المئاغرىى
المؤىدىى المنصورىى الممجدىى الذخرىى الهامىى القوىى النظامىى العالىى المغبثىى... المعىنىى الكفىلىىى الاوحدىىى الامجدىى
... النصىرىى ... الاكلمىى ... عمده الملوك و [السلاطىن] ...

ARABIC NARRATIVES

Text 1

إصطبل قوصون: هذا الإصطبل بجوار مدرسة السلطان حسن وله بابان، باب من الشارع بجوار حدره البقر، وبابه الآخر تجاه باب السلسلة الذي يتوصل منه إلى الإصطبل السلطاني وقلعة الجبل، أنشأه الأمير علم الدين سنجر الجمقدار، فأخذ منه الأمير سيف الدين قوصون وصرف له ثمنه من بيت المال، فزاد فيه قوصون إصطبل الأمير سنقر الطويل، وأمره الملك الناصر محمد بن قلاوون بعمارة هذا الإصطبل، فبنى فيه كثيرا وأدخل فيه عدة عمائر، ما بين دور وإصطبلات، فجاء قصرا عظيما إلى الغاية، وسكنه الأمير قوصون مدة حياة الملك الناصر. فنادى أيدغمش في العامة يا كسابه عليكم بإصطبل قوصون، إنه يهوه، هذا وقوصون محصور بقلعة الجبل، فأقبلت العامة من السؤال والغلمان والجند إلى إصطبل قوصون، فمنعهم المماليك الذين كانوا فيه ورموهم بالنشاب وأتلفوا منهم عدة، فثارت ممالك الأمير يلبغا اليحياوي من أعلى قصر يلبغا، وكان بجوار قصر قوصون حيث مدرسة السلطان حسن، ورموا ممالك قوصون بالنشاب حتى انكفوا عن رمي النهاية، فافتحم غوغاء الناس إصطبل قوصون وانتهبوا ما كان بركاب خاناته وحواصله، وكسروا باب القصر بالفوس، وصعدوا إليه بعد ما تسلقوا إلى القصر من خارجه، فخرجت ممالك قوصون من الإصطبل يدا واحدة بالسلاح وشقوا القاهرة وخرجوا إلى ظاهر باب النصر يريدون الأمراء الواصلين من الشام، فأنتت النهاية على جميع ما في إصطبل قوصون من الخيل والسروج وحواصل المال التي كانت بالقصر، وكانت تشتمل من أنواع المال والقماش والأواني الذهب والفضة على ما لا يحذ ولا يعدّ كثرة...

... وكان من جملة الخام نوبة خام جميعها أطلس معدني قصب، جميع ذلك نهب وكسر وقطع وانحط سعر الذهب بديار مصر عقيب هذه النهبة من دار قوصون، حتى بيع المثقال بأحد عشر درهما لكثرتة في أيدي الناس، بعد ما كان سعر المثقال عشرين درهما ومن حينئذ تلاشى أمر هذا القصر لزوال رخامه في النهب، وما برح مسكنا لأكابر الأمراء، وقد اشتهر أنه من الدور المشنومة، وقد أدركت في عمري غير واحد من الأمراء سكنه وآل أمره إلى ما لا خير فيه، وممن سكنه: الأمير بركة الزينبي، ونهب نهبه فاحشة، وأقام أعوام خرابا لا يسكنه أحد، ثم أصلح وهو الآن من أجل دور القاهرة.

ولما هجمت العامة بيت قوصون خرجوا ممالكه منه على حمية وشقوا القاهرة وتوجهوا إلى عند الأمير الطنبغا الصالحى نائب الشام، فبعث أيدغمش في أثرهم إلى الطنبغا نائب الشام ومن معه بالسلام عليهم⁴¹⁴

Text 2

وهو مع ذلك ينزل من قلعة الجبل إلى الميدان الظاهري بطرف اللوق، فحسن بخاطره أن يعمل إصطبل الجوق المذكور ميدانا عوضا عن ميدان اللوق

Text 3

أنشأ السلطان قسراً للأمير يلبغا اليحياوي وقسراً للأمير الطيبغا المارديني تجاه حمام الملك السعيد قريبا من الرميعة تحت القلعة وأخذ لذلك من إصطبل الأمير أيدغمش قطعة ومن إصطبل الأمير طشتمر الساقى قطعة ومن إصطبل الأمير قوصون قطعة ونزل بنفسه حتى مر أمره. وتقدم السلطان إلى الأمير قوصون أن يشترى الأملاك المجاورة لإصطبله بالرميعة تحت القلعة ويضيفها إلى إصطبله وأمر أن يكون باب الإصطبلين اللذين أنشأهما أيضا للأميرين يلبغا والنبغا تجاه حمام الملك السعيد وأقام أقبغا عبد الواحد شادا بعمارة

⁴¹⁴ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 10:42. Underlined are the alternations between *qasr*, *dar*, *bayt* and *istabl* when describing the Palace of Qawsun near al-Rumayla.

القصرين. فاشترى قوصون عدة أملاك وسع بمواضعها في اسطبله وطرح النشو أنقاضها بأعلى الأثمان وجعل قوصون باب اسطبله من الرميطة تجاه القلعة⁴¹⁵.

Text 4

أمر السلطان الملك الناصر محمد بن قلاوون في سنة ثمان وثلاثين وسبعمائة ببنائه لسكن الأمير يلبغا اليحياوي، وأن يبني أيضا قصر يقابله برسم سكنى الأمير الطنبغا المارديني، لتزايد رغبته فيهما وعظيم محبته لهما، حتى يكونا تجاهه وينظر إليهما من قلعة الجبل، فركب بنفسه إلى حيث سوق الخيل من الرميطة تحت القلعة، وسار إلى حمام الملك السعيد، وعين اصطبل الأمير أيدغمش أمير اخور، وكان تجاهها ليعمره هو وما يقابله قصرين متقابلين ويضاف إليه اصطبل الأمير طاشتمر الساقى، واصطبل الجوق وأمر الأمير قوصون أن يشترى ما يجاور اسطبله من الأملاك ويوسع في اسطبله، وجعل أمر هذه العمارة إلى الأمير اقبغا عبد الواحد، فوقع الهدم فيما كان بجوار بيت الأمير قوصون، وزيد في الاصطبل وجعل باب هذا الاصطبل من تجاه باب القلعة المعروف بباب السلسلة⁴¹⁶.

Text 5

فلما كملت العمارة نزل السلطان لرويتها، وحضر يومئذ من عند الأمير سيف الدين طرغاي نائب حلب تقدمة، من جعلتها عشرة أزواج بسط أحدها حرير، وعدة أواني من بلور ونحوه، وخيل وبخاتي، فأنعم بالجميع على الأمير يلبغا اليحياوي، وأمر الأمير أقبغا عبد الواحد أن ينزل إلى هذا القصر ومعه أخوان سائر برفقته، وسار أرباب الوظائف لعمل مهم، فبات النشو ناظر الخاص هناك لتعبية ما يحتاج إليه من اللحوم والتوابل ونحوها، فلما تهيأ ذلك حضر سائر أمراء الدولة من أول النهار وأقاموا بقصر يلبغا اليحياوي في أكل وشرب ولهو، وفي آخر النهار حضرت إليهم التشاريف السلطانية، وعدتها أحد عشر تشريفا برسم أرباب الوظائف، وهم: الأمير أقبغا عبد الواحد، والأستادار، والأمير قوصون الساقى، والأمير بشتاك، والأمير طقوزدمر أمير مجلس في آخرين⁴¹⁷.

Text 6

أنشأت والددة الخديوي اسمعيل البيوت الواقعة خلف قراقول الرميطة المعروف الان بقراقول ميدان محمد علي

Text 7

وفي ليلة الجمعة ثالث عشر ذي الحجة: دخل الأمير قوصون على ابنة السلطان بعد ما حمل جهازها إليه وكان شبيها عظيما: منه بشخاناه ودابر بيت زركش زنة البشخاناه بمفردها مائة ألف متقال ذهبيا. وعمل الفرح مدة سبعة أيام ذبح فيه خمسة آلاف رأس من الغنم الضأن ومائة رأس من البقر وخمسون فرسا ومن الدجاج والأوز ما لا يحصى كثرة. واستعمل فيه من السكر برسم الحلوات وتحالي الأطعمة والمشروب أحد عشر ألف أبلوجة وبلغ وزن الشمع الذي أحضره الأمراء ثلاثمائة قنطار وأحد عشر قنطارا. وبلغت تقادم الأمراء لقوصون خمسين ألف دينار. وعمل فجلس في القلعة برجا من بارود ونفط غرم عليه ثمانين ألف درهم. وحصل للمغاني من النقود عشرة آلاف دينار مصرية وقد جمع أمراء مصر والشام تقادم جليلا منها تقدمه الملك صاحب حماة ومن جملة مشعل وطرطور ومخلاة مطرز ذهب بالف دينار⁴¹⁸.

⁴¹⁵ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:236

⁴¹⁶ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:131.

⁴¹⁷ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitat*, 3:131-2.

⁴¹⁸ Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:101.

Text 8

من جملة دور القلعة قاعة 419 البيسرية، أنشأها السلطان الملك الناصر حسن بن محمد بن قلاوون، وكان ابتداء بنائها في أول يوم من شعبان سنة إحدى وستين وسبعمائة، ونهاية عمارتها في ثامن عشرين ذي الحجة من السنة المذكورة، فجاءت من الحسن في غاية لم ير مثلها، وعمل لهذه القاعة من الفرش والبسط الفضة البيضاء الخالصة المضروبة مائتا ألف وعشرون ألف درهم، وكلها مطلية بالطهب، وجاء ارتفاع بناء هذه القاعة طولا في السماء ثمانية وثمانين ذراعا، وعمل السلطان بها برجا يبيت فيه، من العاج والأبنوس، مطعم يجلس بين يديه، وأكفاف وباب يدخل منه إلى أرض كذلك، وفيه مقرنص قطعة واحدة يكاد يذهل الناظر إليه، بشبابيك ذهب خالص، وطرارات ذهب مصوغ، وشرافات ذهب مصوغ، وقبة مصوغة من ذهب صرف، فيه ثمانية وثلاثون ألف مثقال من الذهب، وصرف في مؤنه وأجره تتمة ألف درهم فضة، عنها خمسون ألف دينار، ذهبا، وبصدر إيوان هذه القاعة شبك حديد يقارب باب زويلة يطل على جنينة بديعة الشكل⁴²⁰.

Text 9

وذكر عن كاتب قوصون أنه قال: أما الذهب المكيس والفضة كان ينيف على أربعمائة ألف دينار، وأما الزركش والحوايص والمعصبات ما بين خوانجات وأطباق فضة وذهب، فإنه فوق المائة ألف دينار، والبلور والمصاغ المعمول برسم النساء فإنه لا يحصر، وكان هناك ثلاثة أكياس أطلس فيها جواهر قد جمعه في طول أيامه، لكثرة شغفه بالجواهر، لم يجمع مثله ملك، كان ثمنه نحو المائة ألف دينار، وكان في حاصله عدة مائة وثمانين زوج بسط، منها ما طوله من أربعين ذراعا إلى ثلاثين ذراعا عمل البلاد، وستة عشر زوج من عمل الشريف بمصر، ثمن كل زوج اثنا عشر ألف درهم نقرة، منها أربعة أزواج بسط من حرير، وكان من جملة الخام نوبة خام جميعها أطلس معدني قصب، جميع ذلك نهب وكسر وقطع وانحط سعر الذهب بديار مصر عقيب هذه النهبة من دار قوصون، حتى بيع المتقال بأحد عشر درهما لكثرتة في أيدي الناس، بعد ما كان سعر المتقال عشرين درهما ومن حينئذ تلاشى أمر هذا القصر لزوال رخامه في النهب، وما برح مسكنا لأكابر الأمراء، وقد اشتهر أنه من الدور المشنومة، وقد أدركت في عمري غير واحد من الأمراء سكنه وآل أمره إلى ما لا خير فيه، ومن سكنه: الأمير بركة الزينبي، ونهب نهبة فاحشة، وأقام أعوام خرابا لا يسكنه أحد، ثم أصلح وهو الآن من أجل دور القاهرة⁴²¹.

Text 10

فَوحد لقوصون أربع سراري نهب جميع مالهن وحملت أكياس الذهب والفضة ونشرت بالدلهيز والطرق. فأخذ ممالك أيدغمش وغيره شيئا كثيرا من المال ونزلت ممالك بلبغا البيجاوي من سور إصطبله وقروا على الناس واقتسموا الذهب وأخرجت النهاية من البسط الرومية والأممية وعمل الشريف شيئا كثير قطعوها قطعا وتقا سموها وكسروا أواني البلور والصيني وسلاسل الخيل الفضة والذهب ومن السروج واللحم ما لا يحد وقطعوا الخيم وثياب الخركاوات ما بين حرير وزرنيب بحاصله⁴²².

Text 11

⁴¹⁹ Rabbat clarifies the use of the word *qa'a* used by al-Maqrizi to describe this palace instead that of the word *qasr*. He speculates that these structures had *qa'a* plans after that of Qasr al-Ablaq but because they were not raised lower halls, thus they were never identified as *qasr*.

⁴²⁰ Al-Maqrizi, *Khitar*, 3:369.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 3:133.

⁴²² Al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 3:354.

وكانت تشتمل من أنواع المال والقماش والأواني الذهب والفضة على ما لا يحَد ولا يعدُّ كثرة... وظفروا بجواهر نفيسة وذخائر ملوكية وأمتعة جليلة القدر وأسلحة عظيمة وأقمشة ثمينة، وجرّوا البسط الرومية والأمدية وما هو من عمل الشريف وتقاتلوا عليها وقطعوا قطعاً بالسكاكين وتقاسموا، وكسروا أواني البلور والصيني، وقطعوا سلاسل الخيل الفضة، والسروج الذهب والفضة، وفكوا اللجم وقطعوا الخيم وكسروا الخزكاوات وأتلفوا سترها وأغشيتها الأطلس والزرکفت... أما الذهب المكّيس والفضة كان ينيف على أربعمئة ألف دينار، وأما الزرکش والحوايص والمعصبات ما بين خوانجات وأطباق فضة وذهب، فإنه فوق المائة ألف دينار، والبلور والمصاغ المعمول برسم النساء فإنه لا يحصر، وكان هناك ثلاثة أكياس أطلس فيها جوهر قد جمعه في طول أيامه، لكثرة شغفه بالجوهر، لم يجمع مثله ملك، كان ثمنه نحو المائة ألف دينار، وكان في حاصله عدة مائة وثمانين زوج بسط، منها ما طوله من أربعين ذراعاً إلى ثلاثين ذراعاً عمل البلاد، وستة عشر زوج من عمل الشريف بمصر، ثمن كل زوج اثنا عشر ألف درهم نقرة، منها أربعة أزواج بسط من حرير، وكان من جملة الخام نوبة خام جميعها أطلس معدني قصب، جميع ذلك نهب وكسر وقطع وانحط سعر الذهب بديار مصر عقيب هذه النهبة من دار قوصون

Text 12

وكان بحاصل قوصون لما نهب ما ينيف على أربعمئة ألف دينار ذهباً في أكياس ومن الحوايص والزرکش والأواني ما بين أطباق وخونجات زيادة على مائة ألف ومن حلي النساء ما لا ينحصر وثلاثة أكياس أطلس ها جواهر بما ينيف على مائة ألف دينار ومائة وثلاثين زوج بسط منها ما طوله أربعون ذراعاً وثلاثون زوجاً في ذراعاً كلها من عمل الروم وأمد وشيراز وستة عشر زوجاً من عمل الشريف بمصر قيمة كل زوج اثنا عشر ألف درهم وأربعة أزواج بسط حرير لا يقوم عليها نوبة خام جميعها أطلس معدني قص. فأخط ذلك سعر الذهب حتى كان صرفه بأحد عشر درهماً الدينار من كثرة ما صار في الأيدي بعدما كان الدينار بعشرين درهماً.⁴²³

Text 13

ثم في يوم الاثنين ثالث عشر ذي الحجة استقرّ برقوق العثماني أتاك العساكر بالديار المصرية عوضاً عن طشتمر العلاني المقدم ذكره واستقرّ بركة الجوباني رأس نوبة كبيراً أطابكا - وهذه الوظيفة الآن مفقودة في زماننا- وسكن برككفي بيت قوصون تجاه باب السلسلة.⁴²⁴

Text 14

ثم فوض الخليفة المعتضد بالله للأمير برسباي الدقماقي نظام الملك أمور الدولة بأسرها، ليقوم بتدبير ذلك عن السلطان الصالح محمد إلى أن يبلغ رشده، وحكم بصحة ذلك قاضي القضاة زين الدين عبد الرحمن التفتني الحنفي؛ ومع هذا كله تقرر الحال على أن يكون تدبير الدولة وسائر أمور المملكة بين الأمير برسباي وبين الأمير طرباي، وأن يسكن الأمير برسباي بطبقة الأشرفية على عادته، ويسكن الأمير طرباي الأتابك بداره تجاه باب السلسلة، وهو بيت قوصون.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Ibid., 3:354.

⁴²⁴ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 11:163; al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, 5:35.

⁴²⁵ Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujum*, 14:221.

Text 15

ولما تكامل لبس المماليك والأمراء السلاح طلبوا من الأمير الكبير الركوب معهم والتوجه إلى بيت قوصون تجاه باب السلسلة، فامتنع تمنعا ليس بذاك، ثم أجابهم في الحال، وركب هو والأمراء وحولهم الأعظم، ونزل الأمير الكبير بمن معه من الأمراء بالمقعد من الحوش، ودخلوه من باب سره الذي بالشارع بالبيت المذكور، ورسم على قراجا وتغرى بردى القلاوى وبردبك بالقصر أيضا.⁴²⁶

Text 16

ومنهم من يقول: «الأمير الكبير»، ومنهم من يقول: «السلطان» كل ذلك وهو على حالة جلوسه كأول يوم دخل إلى بيت قوصون المذكور، أعنى من أول يوم الوقعة ولم يتغير عليه شيء مما كان عليه، ولم يركب من المقعد المذكور من يوم قدم بيت قوصون غير مرة واحدة في يوم الثلاثاء، وعاد من وسط الحوش قبل أن يصل إلى باب البيت النافذ إلى الرميطة، رده أصحابه إجلالا لقدره، وإنما كان يجلس هو بالمقعد، والأمراء عن يمينه ويساره جلوسا ووقفا بين يديه⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 16:47.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 16:47.

GLOSSARY

- 'Akra* or *al-Kura* (polo game)
A type of sport that was similar to polo. *Al-Kura* was big and made of a light material and the game entailed that it was thrown on the ground while the riding players, who formed two competing teams tried to hit it each using his own *sawlajan* or *jukan* (scepter/mace or polo stick). The sport was especially important for it had its recognized officials, tools, animals and processions. A banquet was offered following the game, usually by the defeated team if the sultan was not generous enough to offer it himself, even when he wins. The sultan also normally bestowed costumes of honor on the participants, some of their followers and other emirs and state officials after the game. Sultans were keen on hitting the first ball, announcing the beginning of the games season and its end.⁴²⁸
- Amīr ākhūr*
The inspector of the sultani stables
- Amīr arba'īn* or *amīr ṭablkhāna*
"Amir of forty", the third highest rank of an officer in the Mamluk army, entitled to keep about forty mamluk horsemen in his service.
- Amīr 'ashara*
"Amir of ten", the rank of an officer in the Mamluk army, entitled to keep ten mamluk horsemen in his service.
- Amīr majlis*
The supervisor of the physicians and the like who were in the service of the sultan.
- Amīr mi'a*
"Amir of one hundred", the second highest rank of an officer in the Mamluk army, entitled to keep about one hundred mamluk horsemen in his service.
- Atabak al-'asākir*
The commander-in-chief of the Mamluk army, commonly the natural candidate for the sultanate from among the senior amirs.

⁴²⁸ Nassar, Lotfi, *Wasa'il al-Tarfihi 'Asr Salatin al-Mamalik fi Misr* (Cairo, 1999), 243-59.

Awshāqiyya or awjāqiyya

The grooms responsible for preparing the horses of the royal stables for military training, processions and battles.

Dawādār

The bearer of the sultani inkwell, as such in charge of presenting the mail to the sultan, and of conveying to the sultan petitions directed to him.

Faddān

Land measure of one acre.

Huquq

Dependencies

Jamdār

The person in charge of the sultan's clothing

Muqaddam alf

"Commander of one thousand", the highest rank of an officer in the mamluk army, given to an amir of one hundred who was appointed to command one thousand horsemen in battlefield.

Muqaddam al-mamālīk al-sultāniyya

"the commander of the Royal Mamluks", the head of the military schools of the Royal Mamluks in the Citadel

Nā'ib al-sultāna

The sultan's viceroy in Egypt; until al-Nasir Muhammad's third reign the highest rank an amir could attain in the Mamluk sultanate. In the sultan's absence, in *na'ib al-sultana* substituted for him and in his presence acted as sultan on a more limited scale.

Naqīb al-jaysh

The official whose duty it was to escort the emirs, mamluks and soldiers of the *halqa* to the sultan whenever they were summoned to the court.

Nāzīr al-jaysh

The official in charge of the *diwan al-jaysh*, or *al-juyush*, responsible for the affairs of the army and the *iqta'at*

Ra's nawba (pl. *ru'us nuwab*)

The supervisor of the mamluk's conduct and in charge of executing the sultan's or the amirs' disciplinary orders; responsible as well for organizing parades before the army set out for expeditions

Ṭabaqa

Apartment

Ustādār

“grand major domo”, the head of the *diwan al-mufrad* or *diwan al-ustādāriyya*, an office in charge of the distribution of the monthly pay, fodder and clothes to the Royal Mamluks; the grand major domo of the royal palaces.

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Figure 5.15. The painted wooden ceiling with projecting joints featuring painted coffers with floral ornamentation.

Figure 5.16. A detail of one of the painted coffers featuring the blazon of the emir.

Figure 5.17. On the top: A detail of the cornice of the Jaqmaq-Inal hall.

On the bottom: A detail of the cornice of Maq'ad Mamay (after Muhammad al-Sadek from the Facebook page of al-Qahira al-Tarikhiyya).

<https://www.facebook.com/historiccairo/photos/a.236704486373242.56813.233719140005110/1569361486440862/?type=3&theater>

Figure 5.18. One of the sides of the double height hall with the inscription band running under the ceiling.

Figure 5.19. The blazon of the emir in a roundel between the script.

Figure 5.20. مما أمر بإنشاء هذا المكان المبارك و المقر الكريم العالي المولوي الأميري الأكرمي المجاهدي المرابطي المثنغري المؤيدي المنصوري الممجي

Figure 5.21. النخري الهمامي القوي النظامي العالي المغيبي

Figure 5.22. ... المعيني الكفيلي الأوحدي الأمجدي ...

Figure 5.23..... النصيري ... الأكملي ... عمدة الملوك و [السلطين]

Figure 5.24. A detail of the cornice on one of the sides of the hall with an illegible inscription.

Figure 5.25. On the top: The doorway to the right of the *qa'a*'s entrance separating both parts of the hall with the built-in *mastaba* and traces of a potential inscription that was once in place.

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Figure 5.26. The vaulted *hammam* now accessible from one of the pierced recesses of the double height hall.

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PLANS, FIGURES & ILLUSTRATIONS
OF ISTABL QAWSUN:
THE HISTORY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF AN ABANDONED PALACE

ABSTRACT

Figure

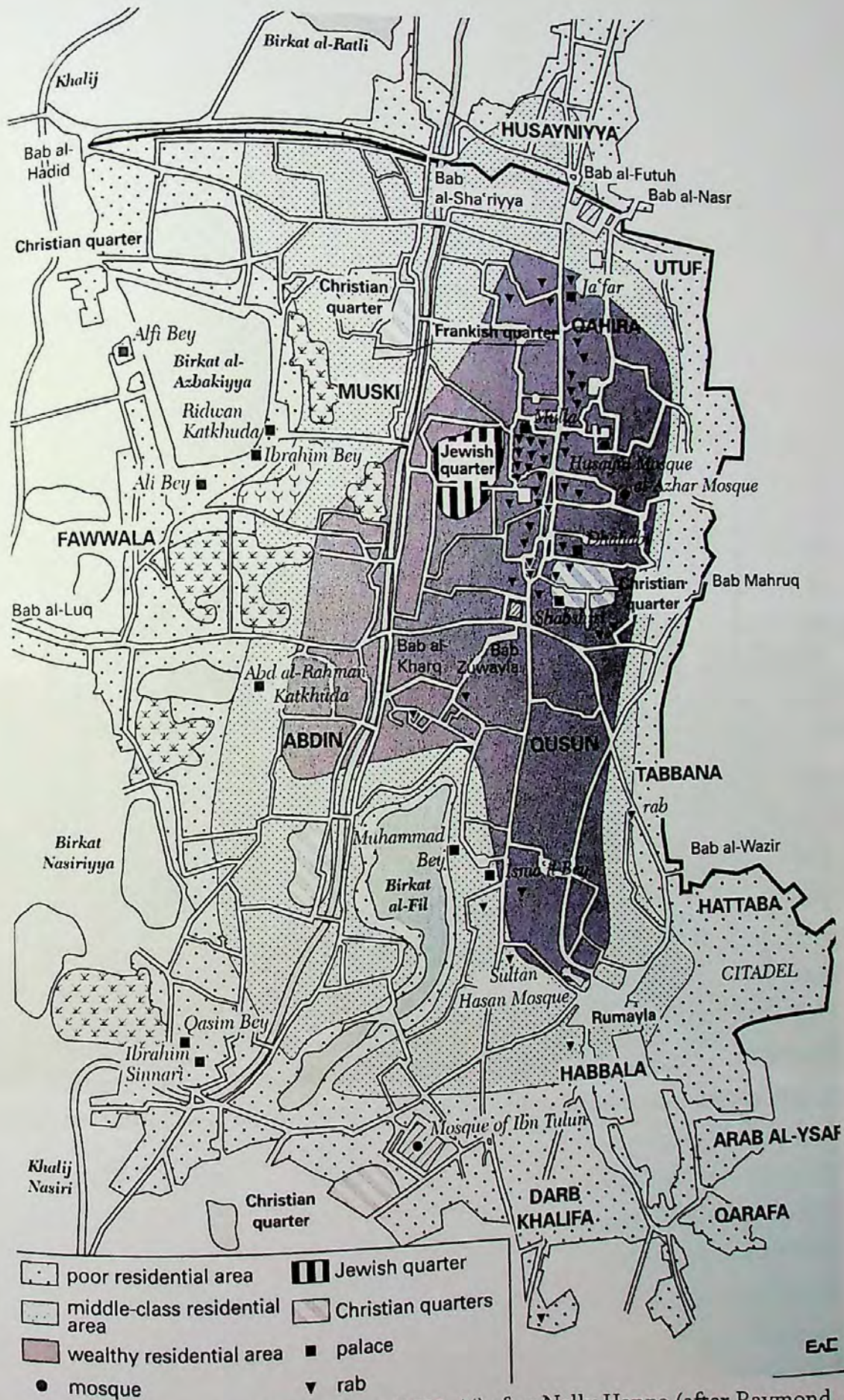


Figure 0.3. Distribution of residential areas (1738-44) after Nelly Hanna (after Raymond, *Cairo*).

CHAPTER ONE
THE CONCEPT OF THE BAHRI MAMLUK PRINCELY PALACE: A TERMINOLOGY STUDY



Figure

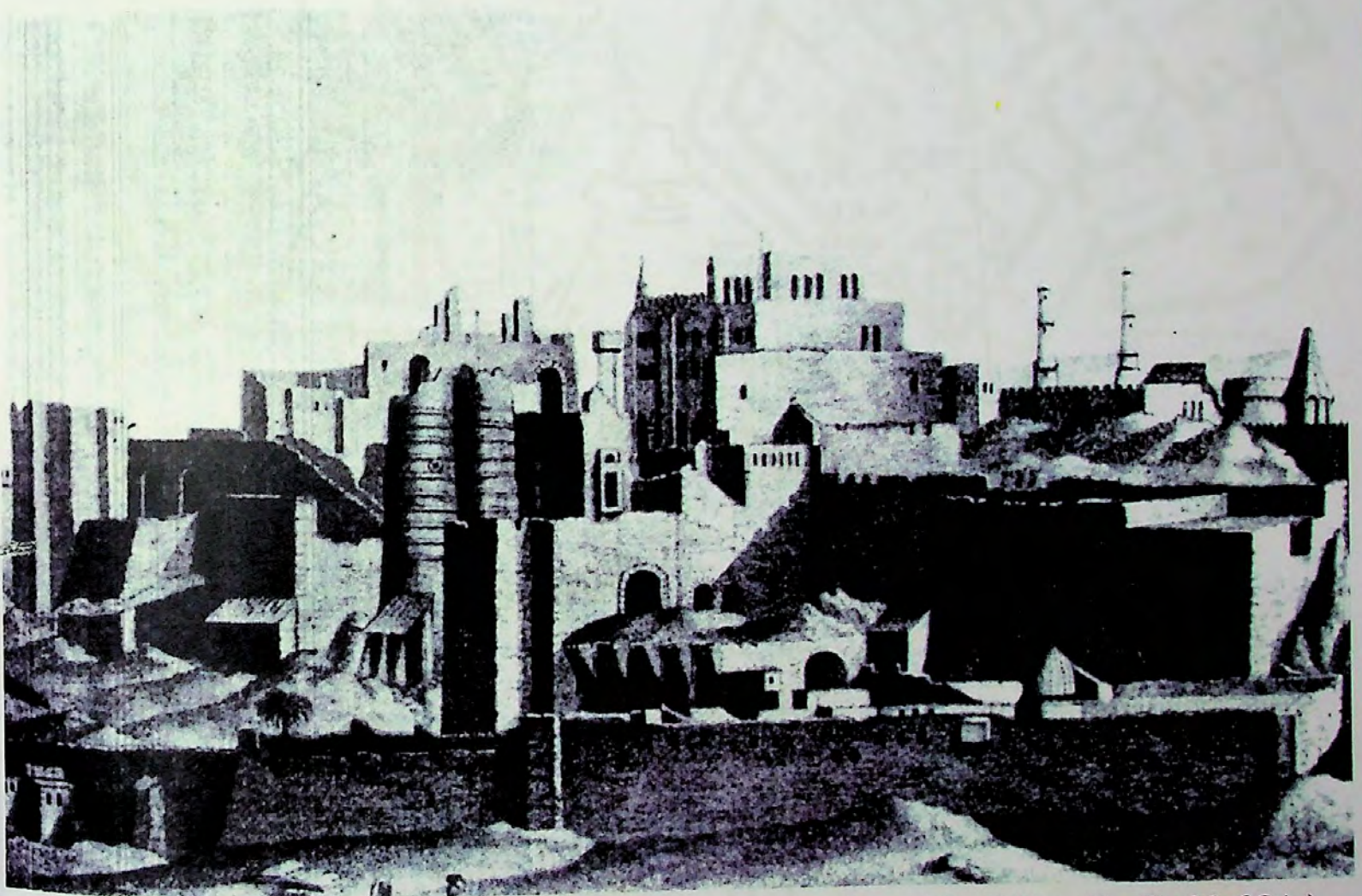


Figure 1.1. Print of the Ablaq Palace in the Citadel of Cairo by Arthur Rhoné (after Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).

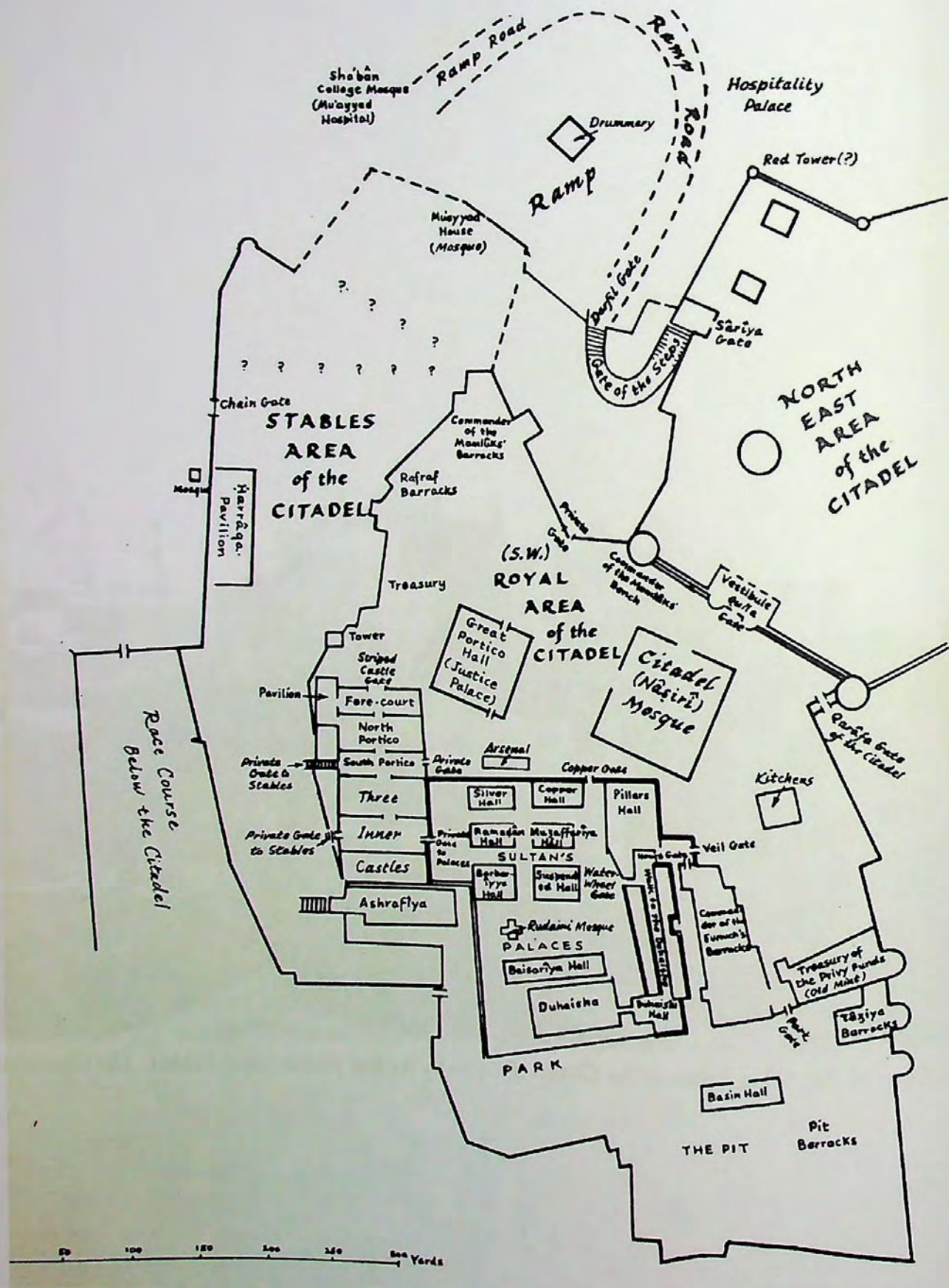


Figure 1.2. The inner palaces and *qa'as* in the Southern Enclosure of the Citadel (after Popper, *Egypt and Syria Under the Circassian Sultans*).

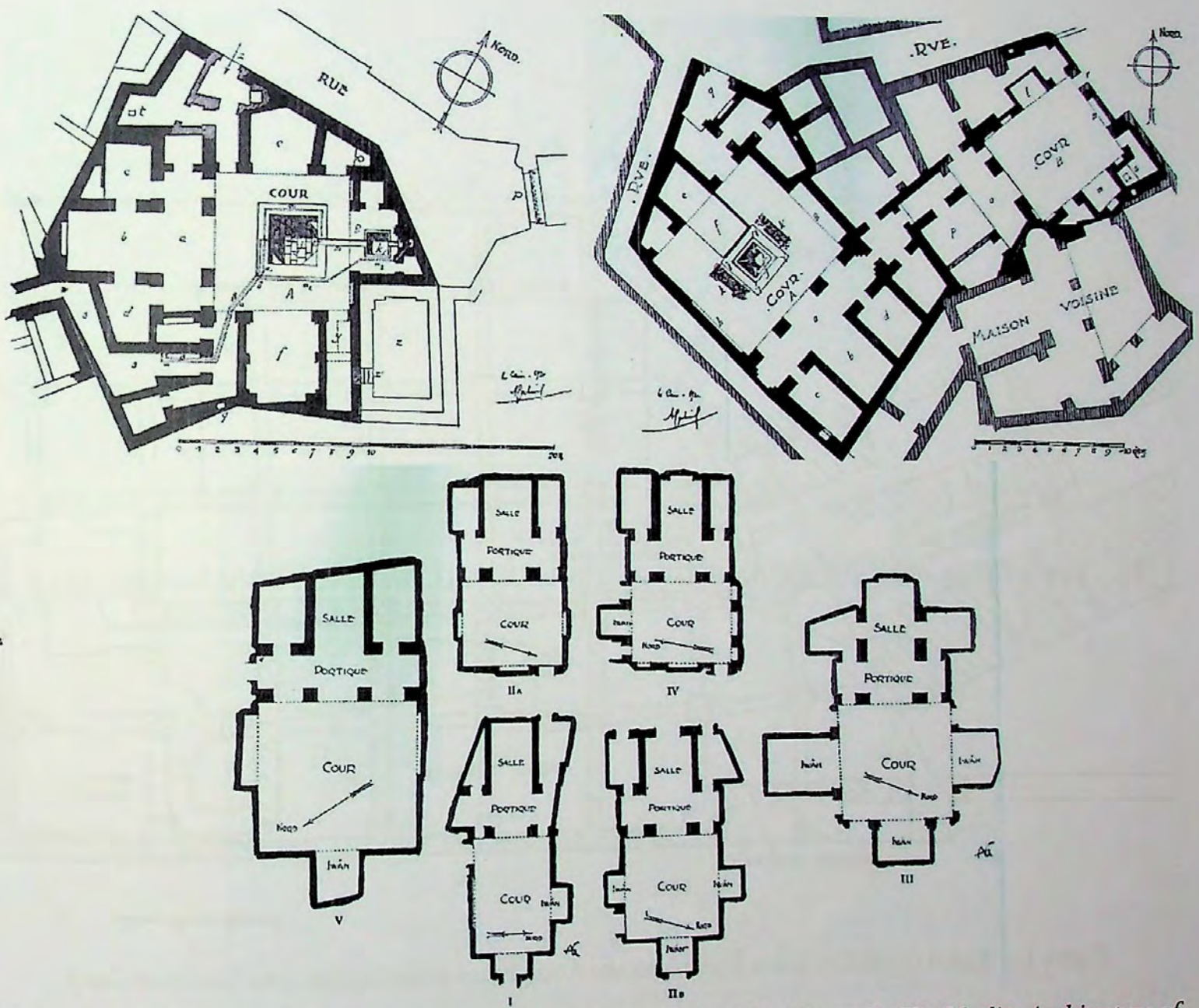


Figure 1.3. On the top left: House No. III, by Aly Bahgat and Gabriel (after Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*).
 On the top right: House No. V, by Aly Bahgat and Gabriel (after Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*).
 On the bottom: Different house types, by Aly Bahgat and Gabriel (after Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*).

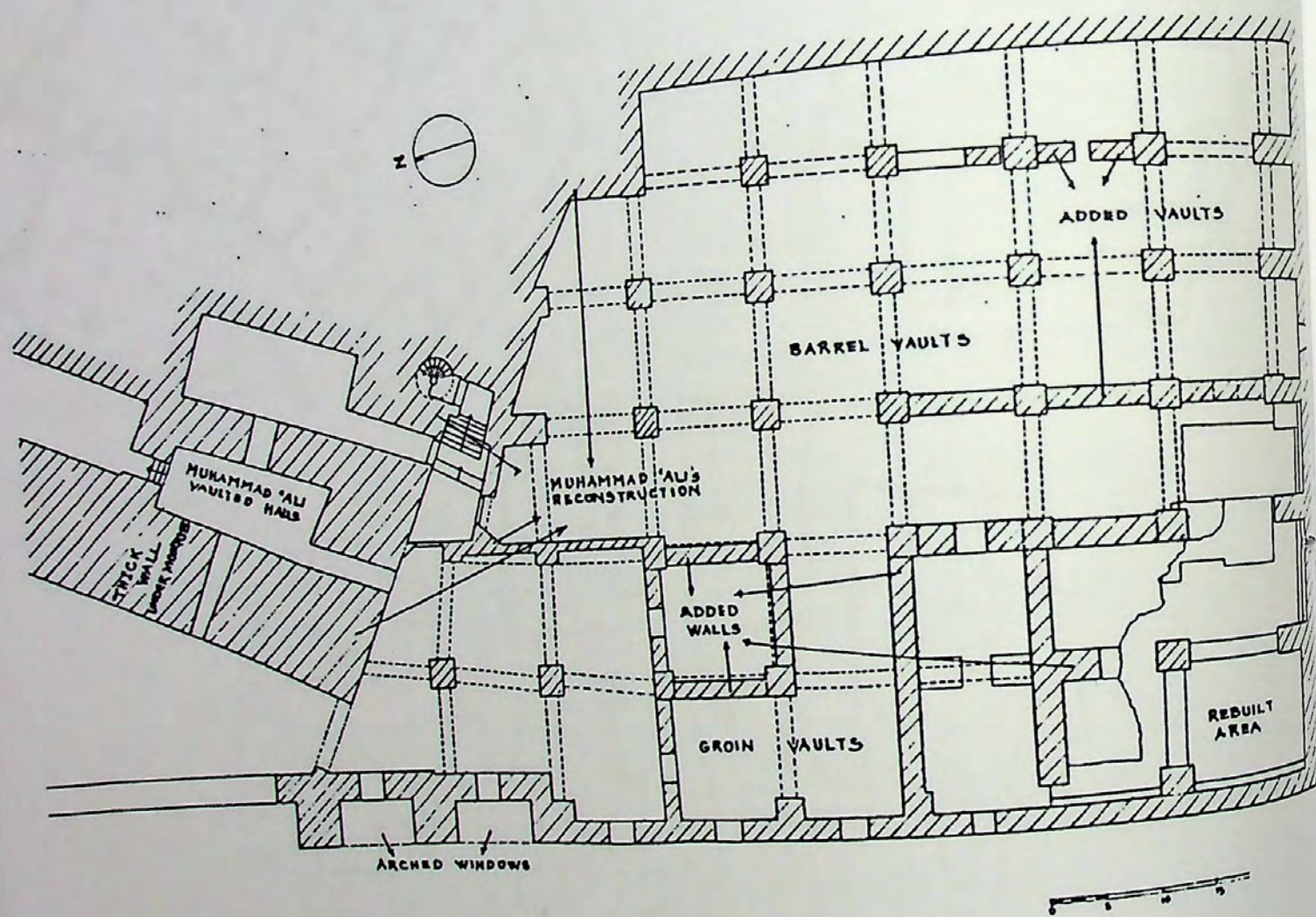
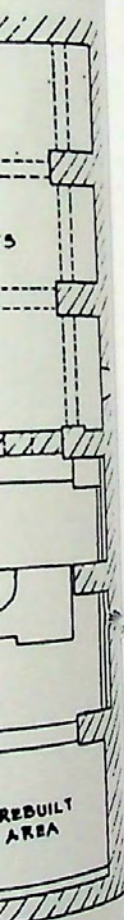


Figure 1.4. A plan of the first lower level under the Ablaq Palace (after Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).



f Cairo).

CHAPTER TWO

A CONTEXTUAL STUDY OF ISTABL QAWSUN FROM HISTORICAL DESCRIPTIONS AND NARRATIVES

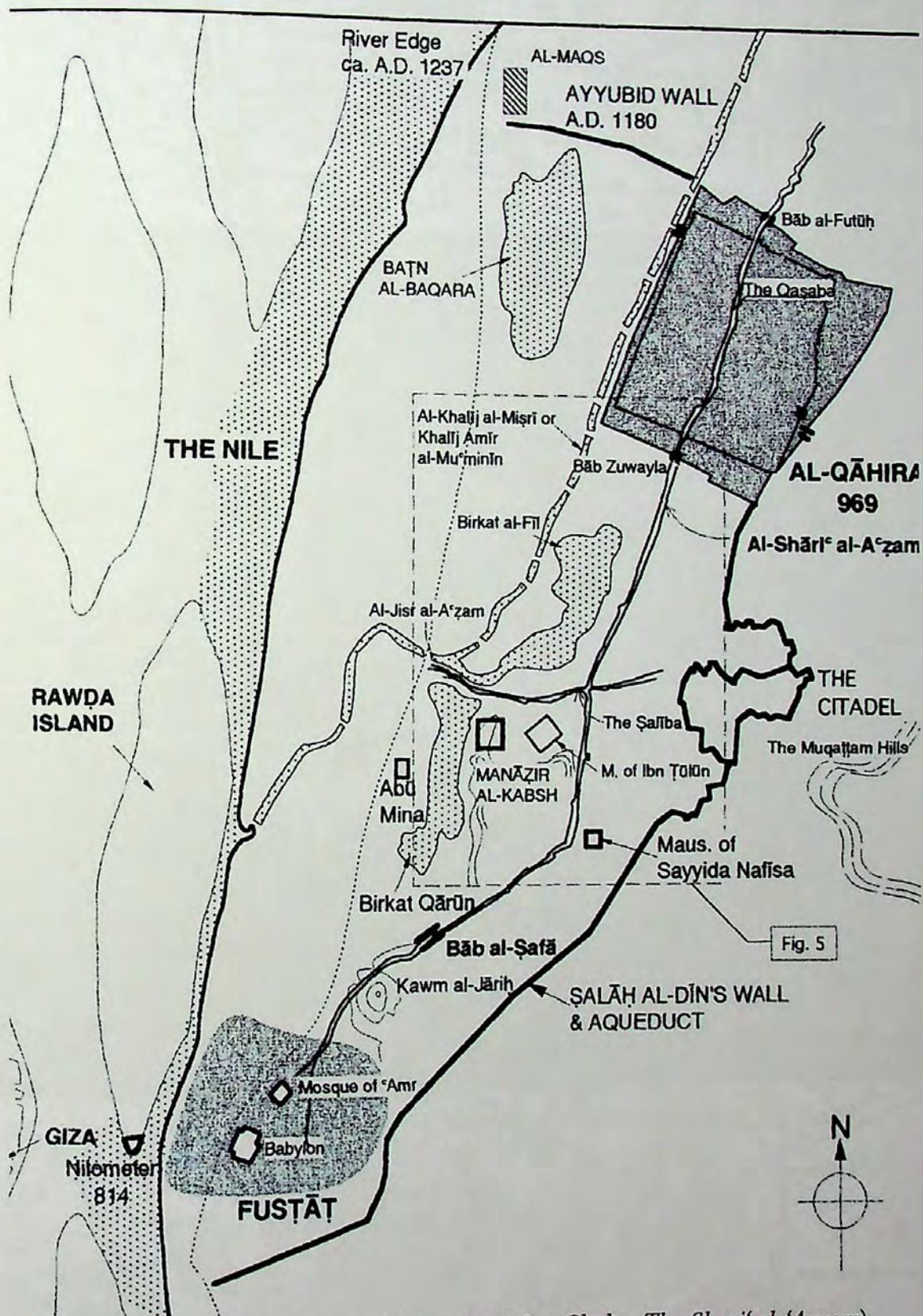


Figure 2.2. Cairo in the Ayyubid period (after Ghaly, *The Shari' al-'Azzam*).

n, *Etudes*).



Figure 2.3. Birkit al-Fil after *Description de l'Egypte* (after Raymond, *Cairo*).



Figure 2.4. Darb Ibn al-Baba and al-Shari' al-'Azzam (after Ghaly, *The Shari' al-'Azzam*).



Figure 2.5. The Citadel in the Ayyubid Period (1183-1250) (after Rabbat, "The Citadel of Cairo").

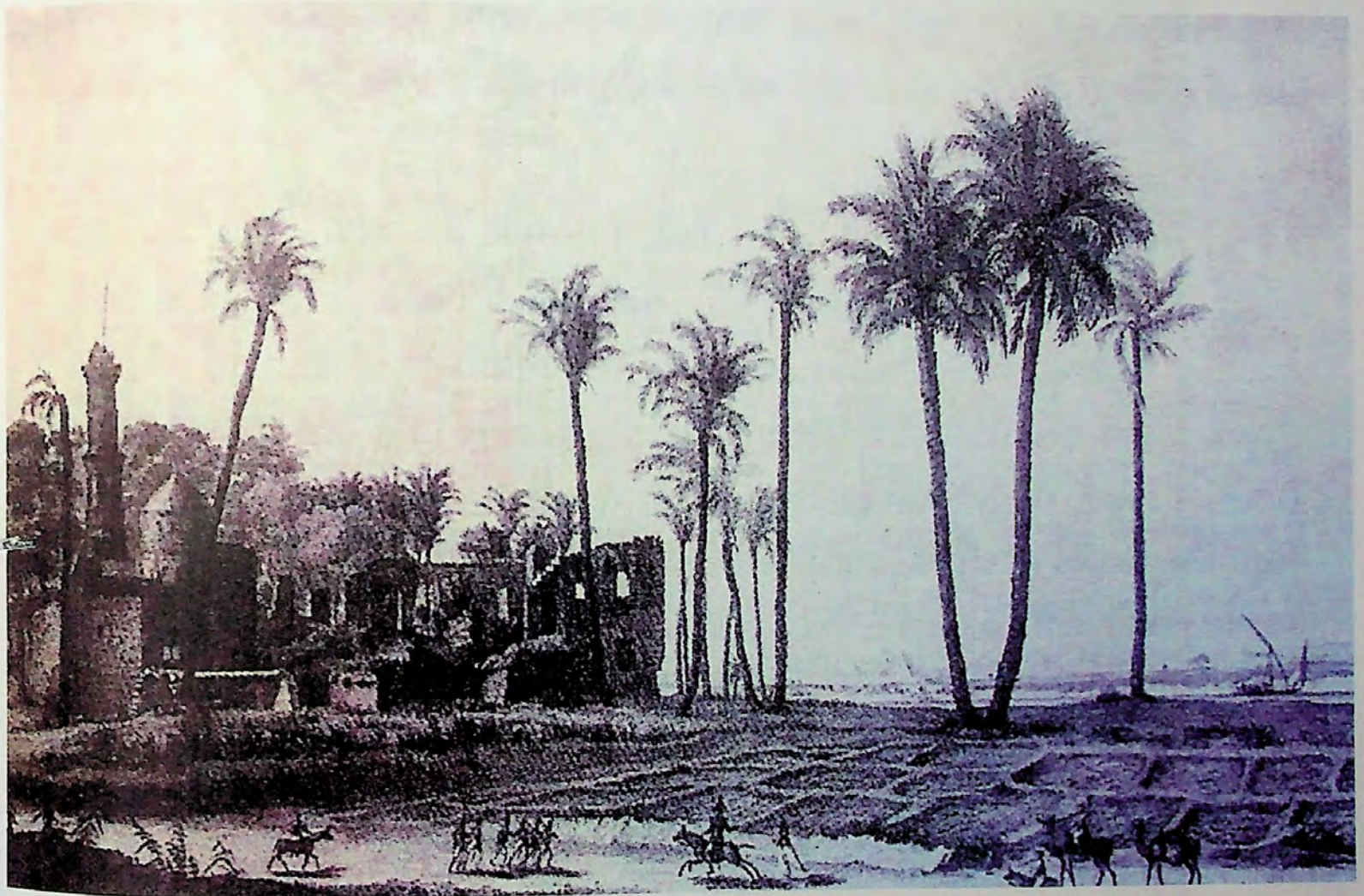


Figure 2.6. The Rawda Island after *Description de l'Egypte* (after Raymond, *Cairo*).



Figure 2.7. The Citadel and its surroundings in the Bahri Mamluk period (after Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*).

Figure 2

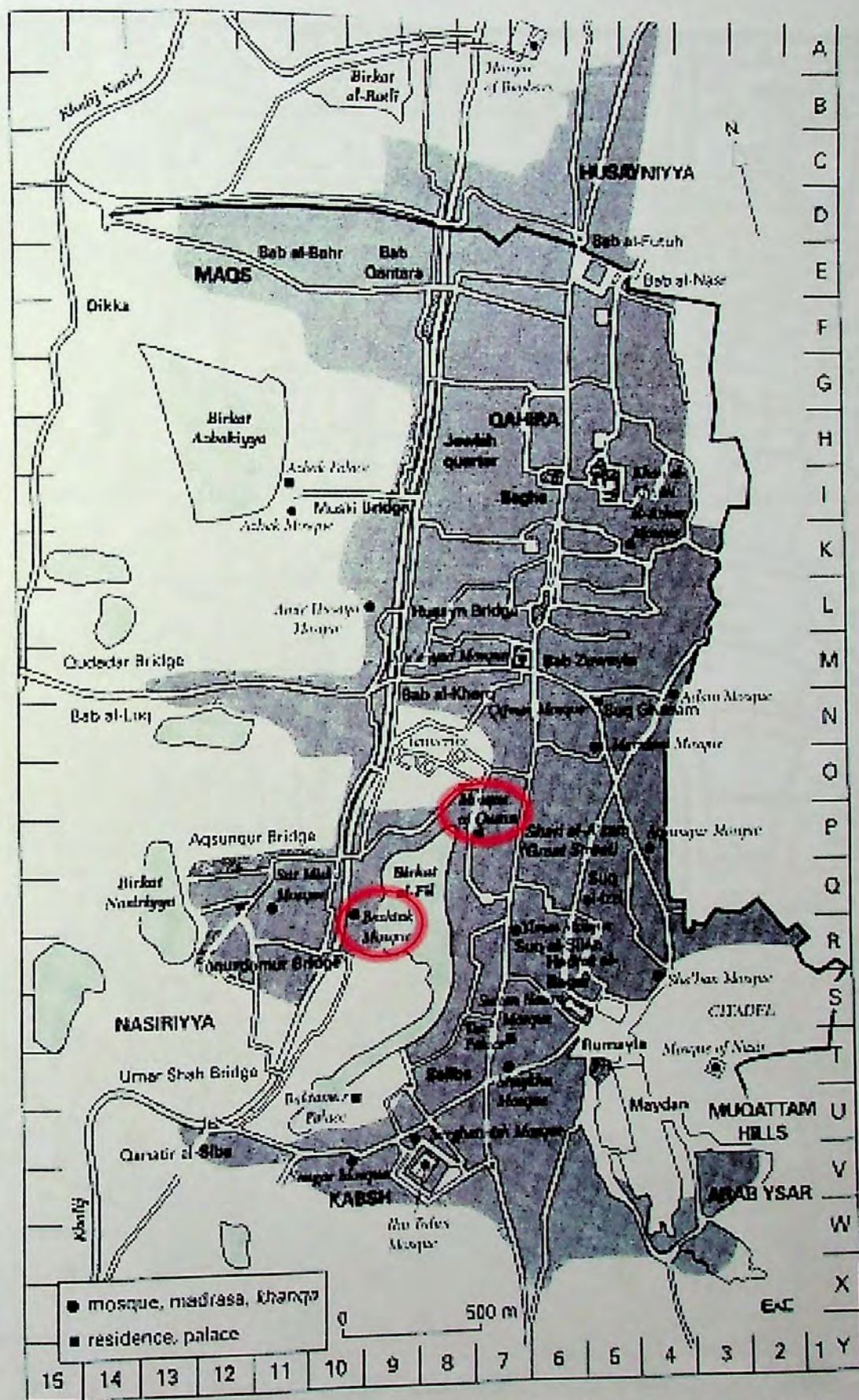


Figure 2.10. The Mosques of Qawsun and Bashtak (after Raymond, *Cairo*).



Figure 2.12. The Citadel and its surroundings in the Circassian Mamluk period (after Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*).

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Figure 2.13. The Citadel and its surroundings in the Ottoman period (after Mansour, *Maydan al-Rumayla*).

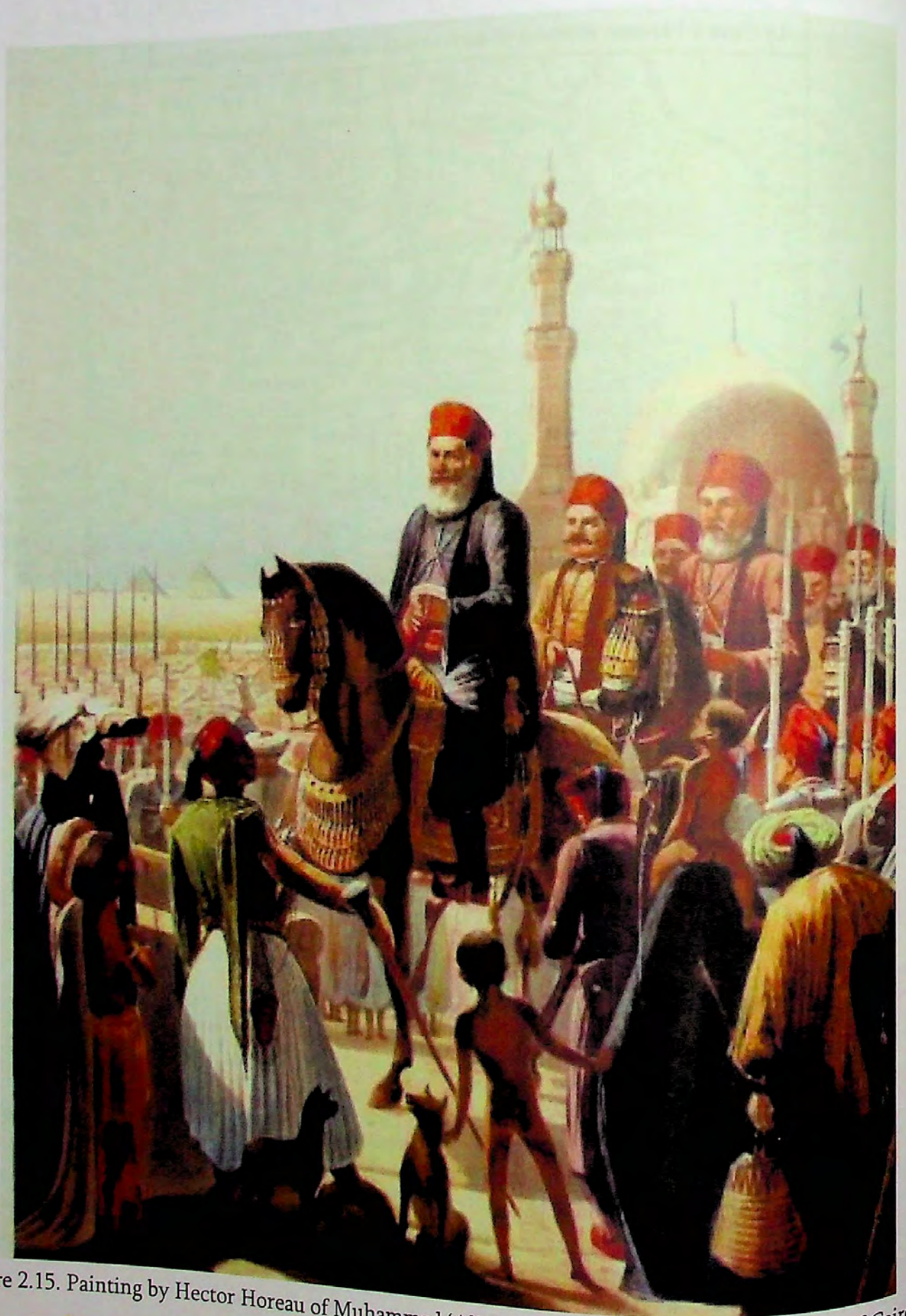


Figure 2.15. Painting by Hector Horeau of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha in a procession to the Citadel of Cairo in 1841, printed in 1846 (1801-1872).
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/426434658443637209/>

Figure 2

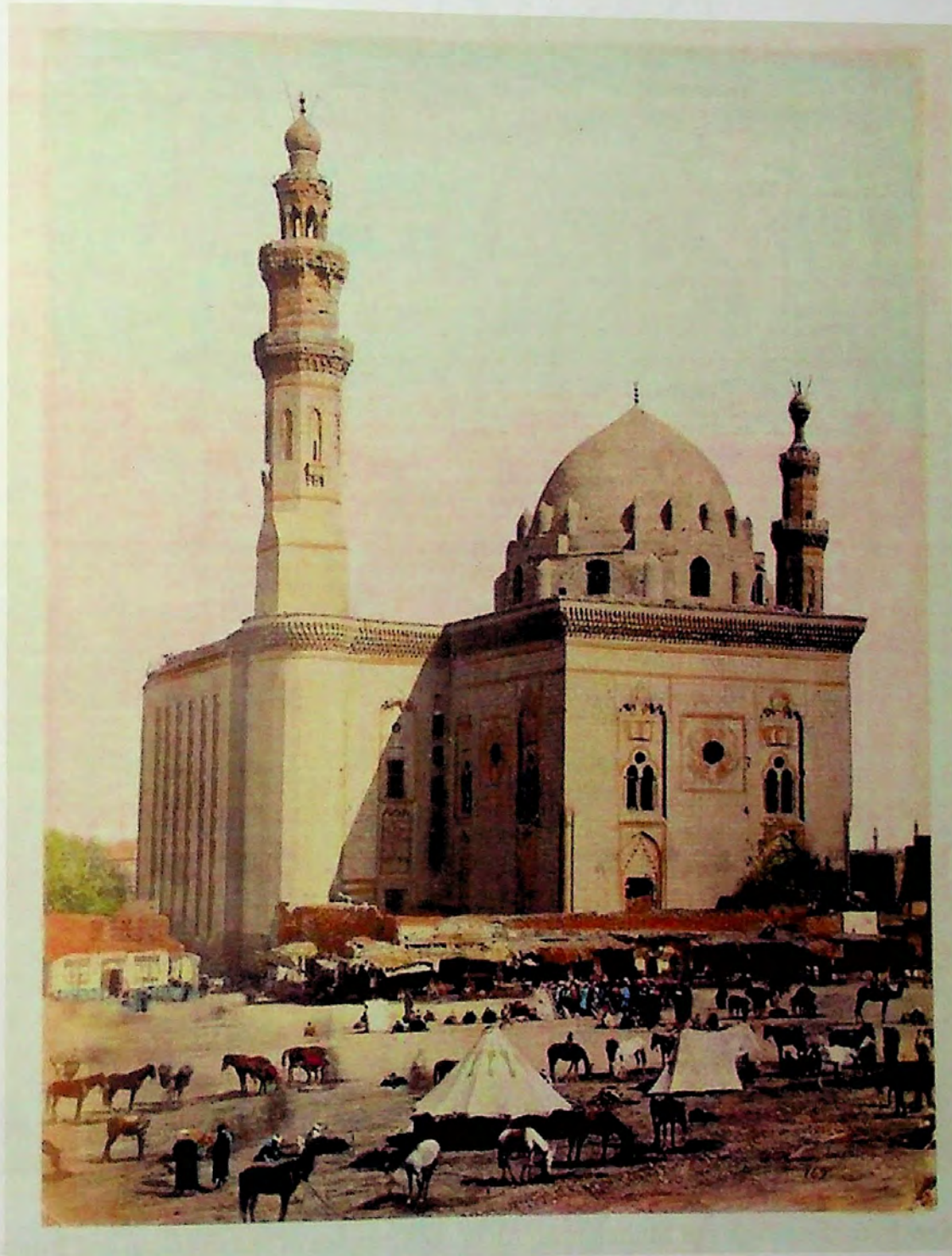


Figure 2.16. The Complex of Sultan Hasan and the Rumayla Square (1860–70) by Wilhelm Hammerschmidt (after the MET museum).

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/734439>



Figure 2.17. A view from the Mosque of Muhammad 'Ali of the Complex of Sultan Hasan and Rumayla Square prior to 1862.
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/515099276112848882/>

Figure

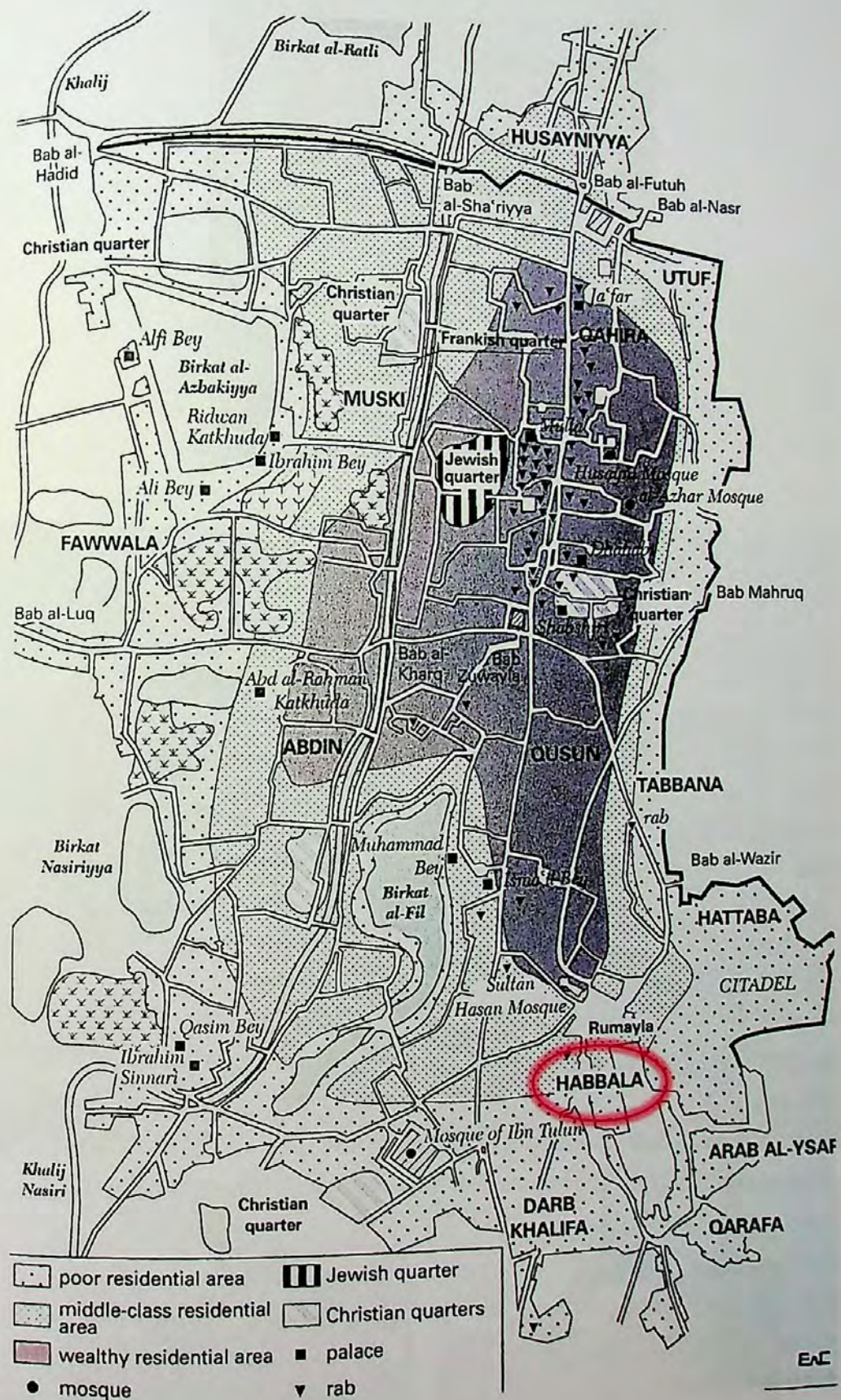


Figure 2.18. Cairo between 1738 and 1744 with the area of al-Habbala near Rumayla (after Raymond, *Cairo*).



Figure 2.19. Photograph in 1861 by Hammerschmidt of Saray al-Hilmiyya (after Younes, *Birkit al-Fil*).



Arrival of the Holy Karpet from Macca, Cairo.

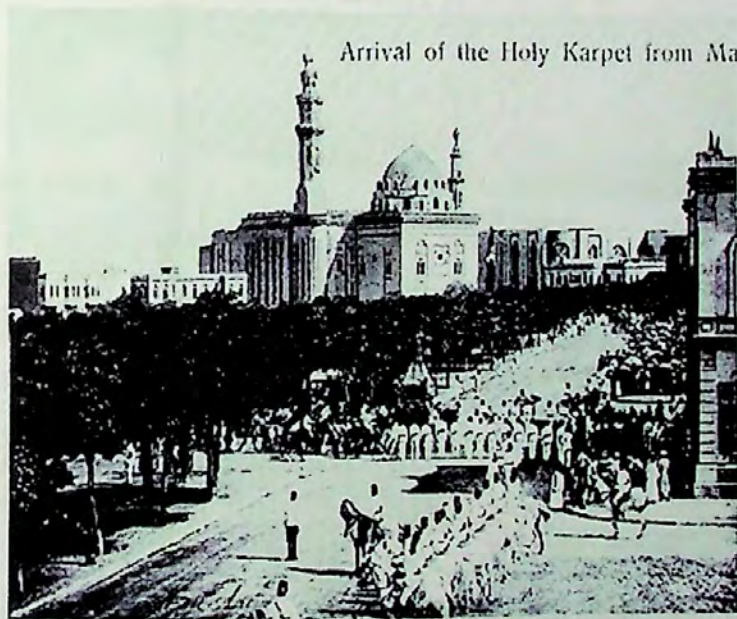


Figure 2.20. On the top: Police processions on al-Mawlid al-Nabawi.
 In the middle: The procession of the Holy Carpet of the Ka'ba prior to 1905.
 On the bottom: Death sentences taking place in al-Rumayla.
<https://www.pinterest.com/hcairo/>

CHAPTER THREE
THE PATRONS OF ISTABL QAWSUN

Fig

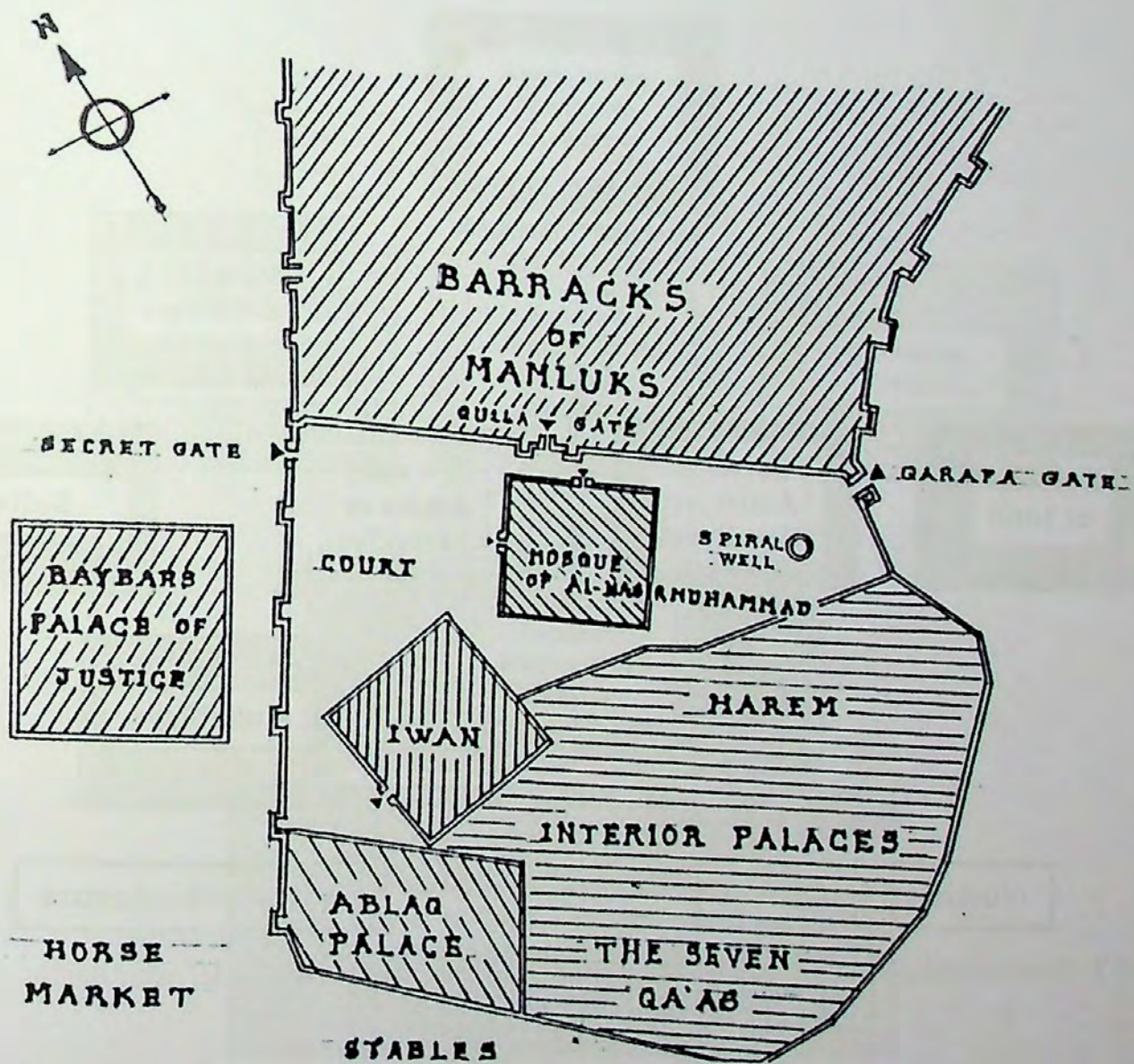


Figure 3.1. Casanova's schematic plan of the Southern Enclosure (after Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).

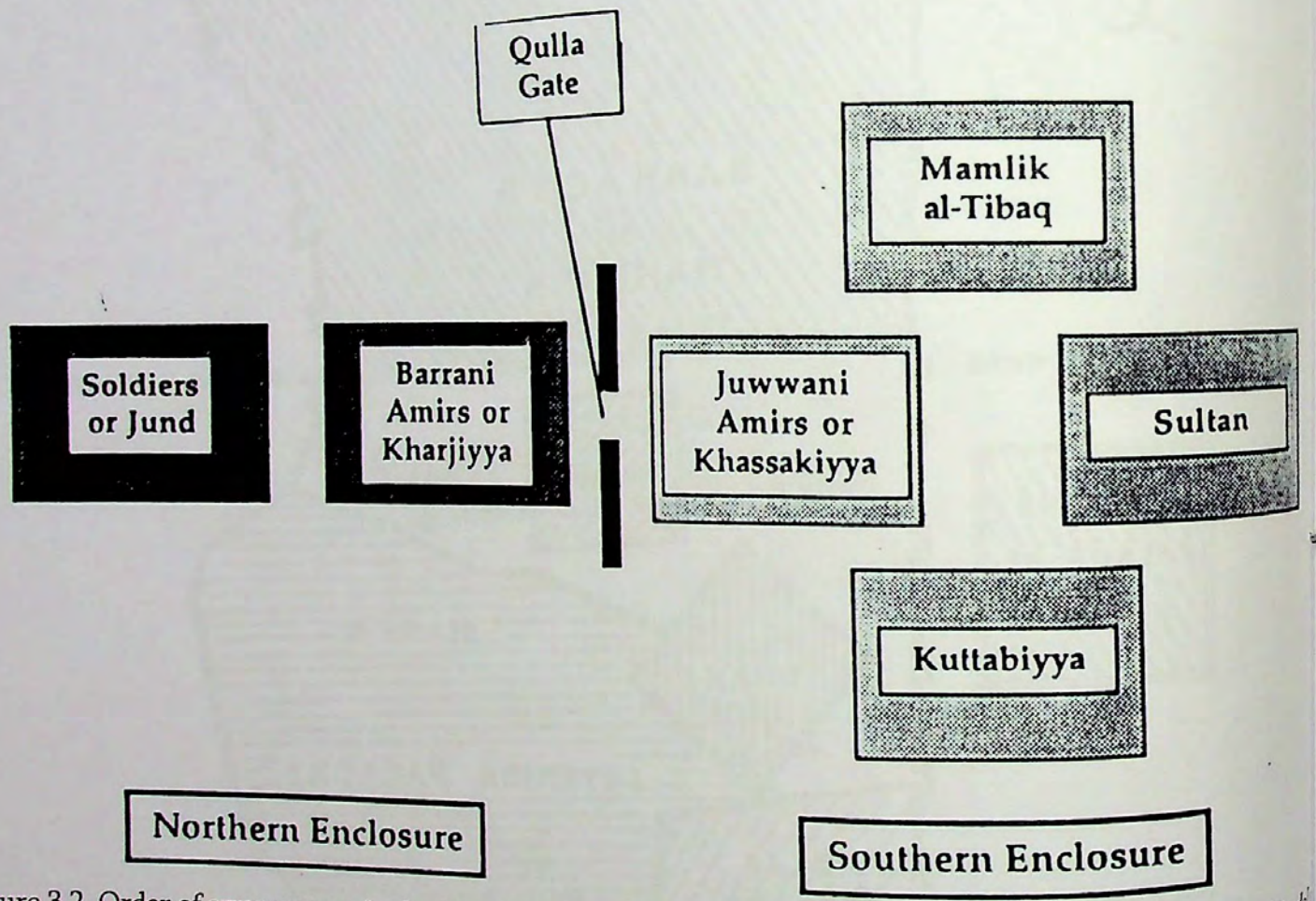


Figure 3.2. Order of arrangement in the Mamluk Hierarchy as translated in the Citadel (after Rabbat, *The Citadel Cairo*).

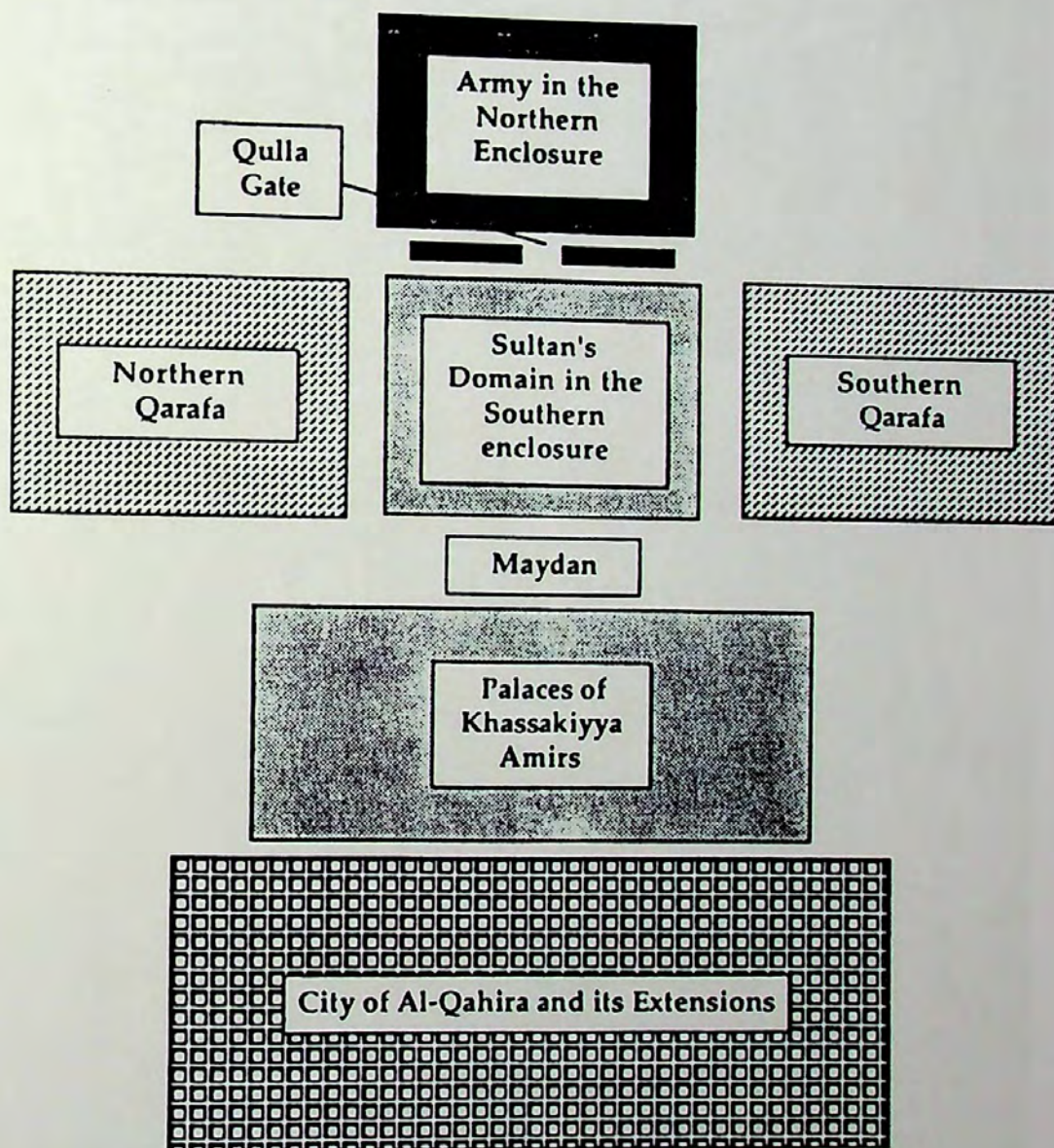


Figure 3.3. The Centrality of the Citadel in the City (after Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).



Figure 3.5. A scanned image of a postcard showing Egyptian Ghawazi dancers in Egypt in 1880.
<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/f4/58/7d/f4587ddbed2794ae323e6753ec6d0d0c.jpg>

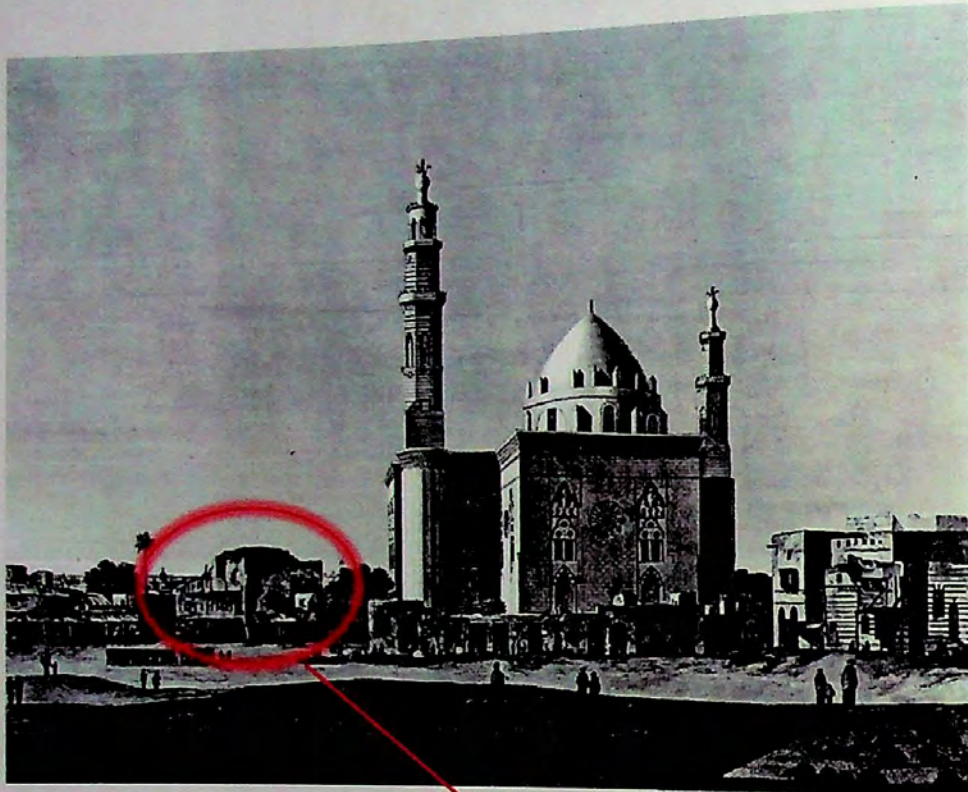


Figure 3.6. The Complex of Sultan Hasan and Rumayla Square after *Description de l'Egypte*.

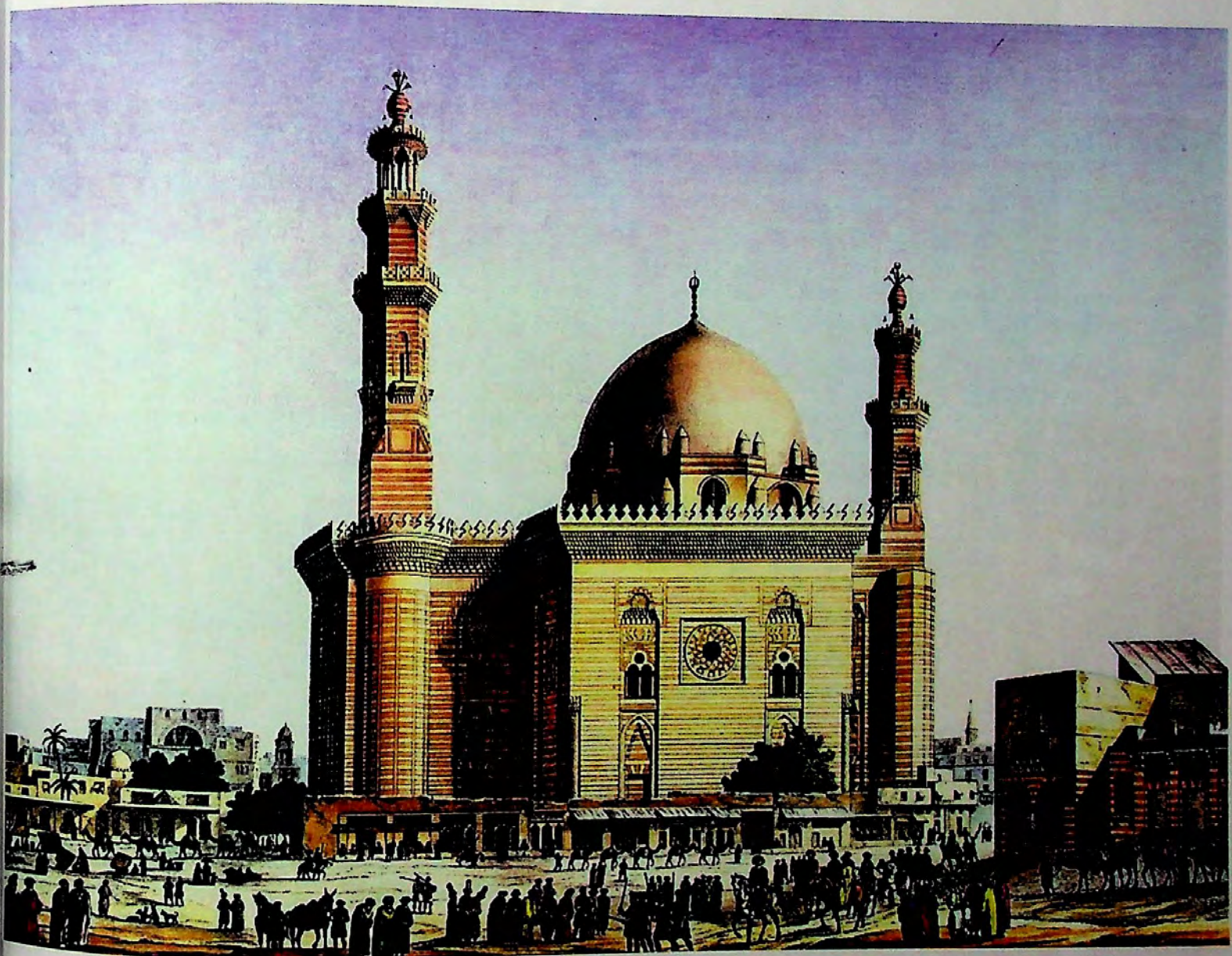


Figure 3.7. The Complex of Sultan Hasan and Rumayla Square by Pascal Xavier Coste 1787-1879.

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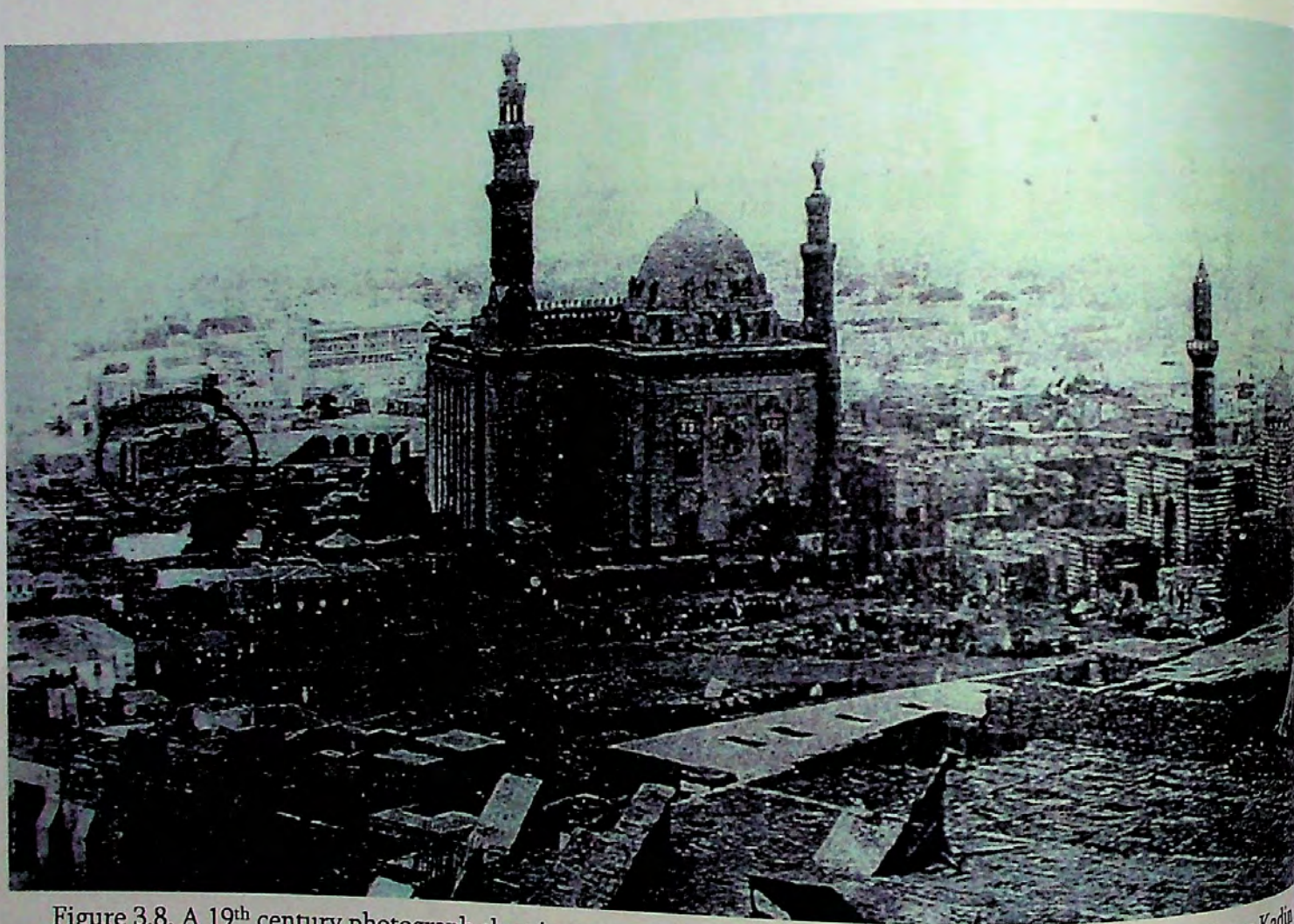


Figure 3.8. A 19th century photograph showing potentially the apartment buildings ordered by Khushyar Kadın Affandi (after Tavernari, *L'évolution du Qasr Qawsûn-Yashbak*).

Figure

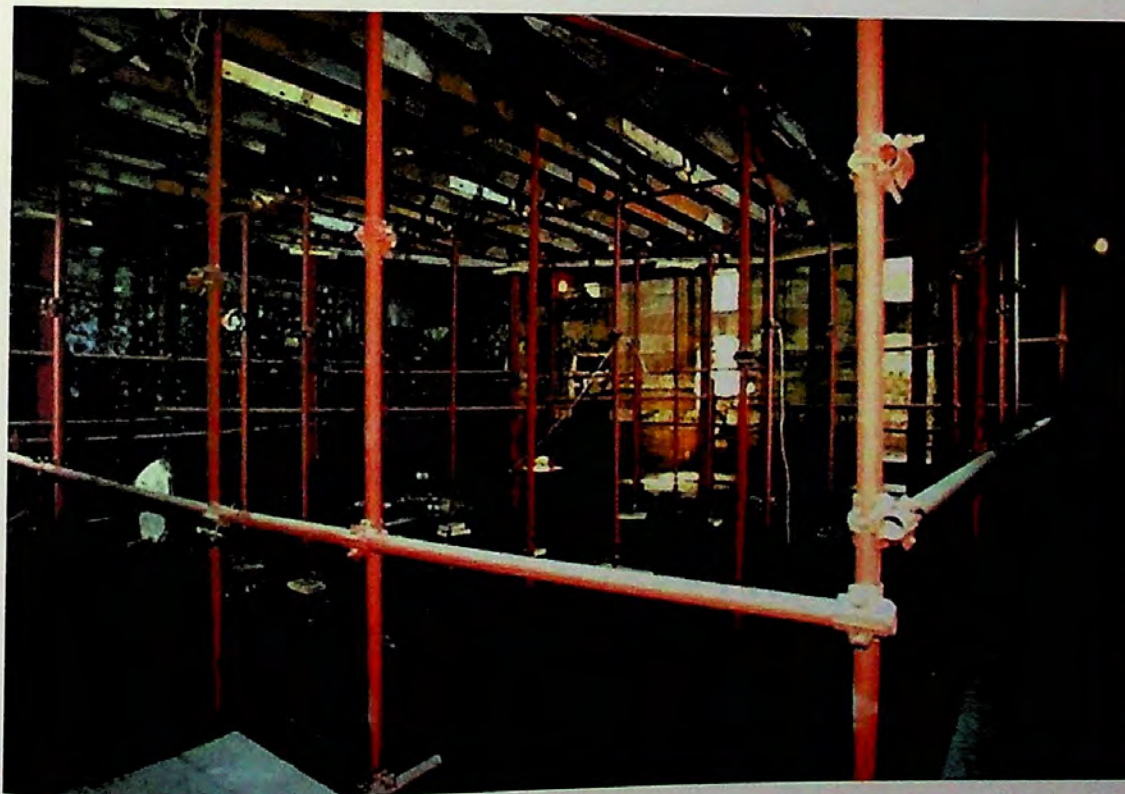
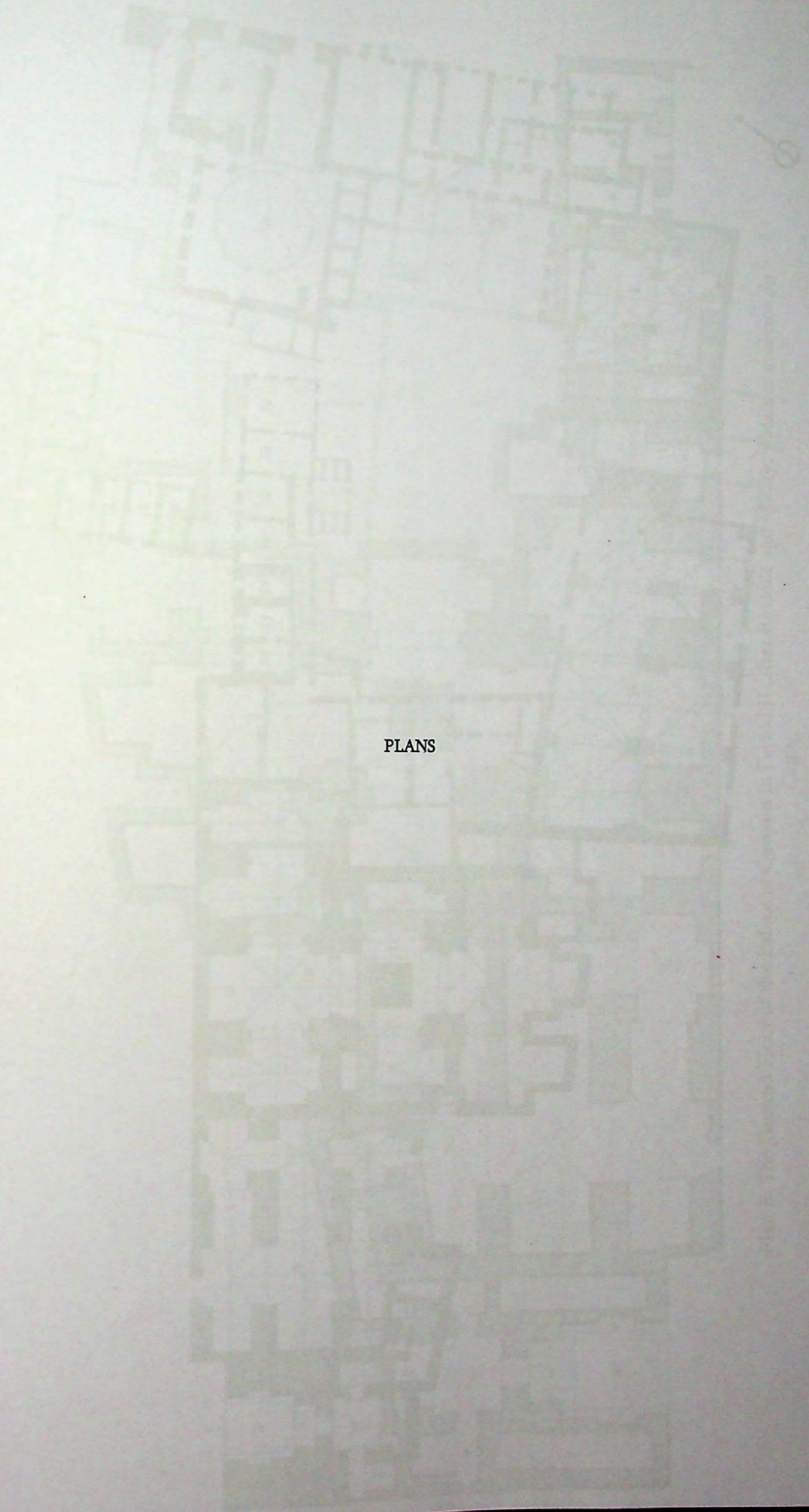
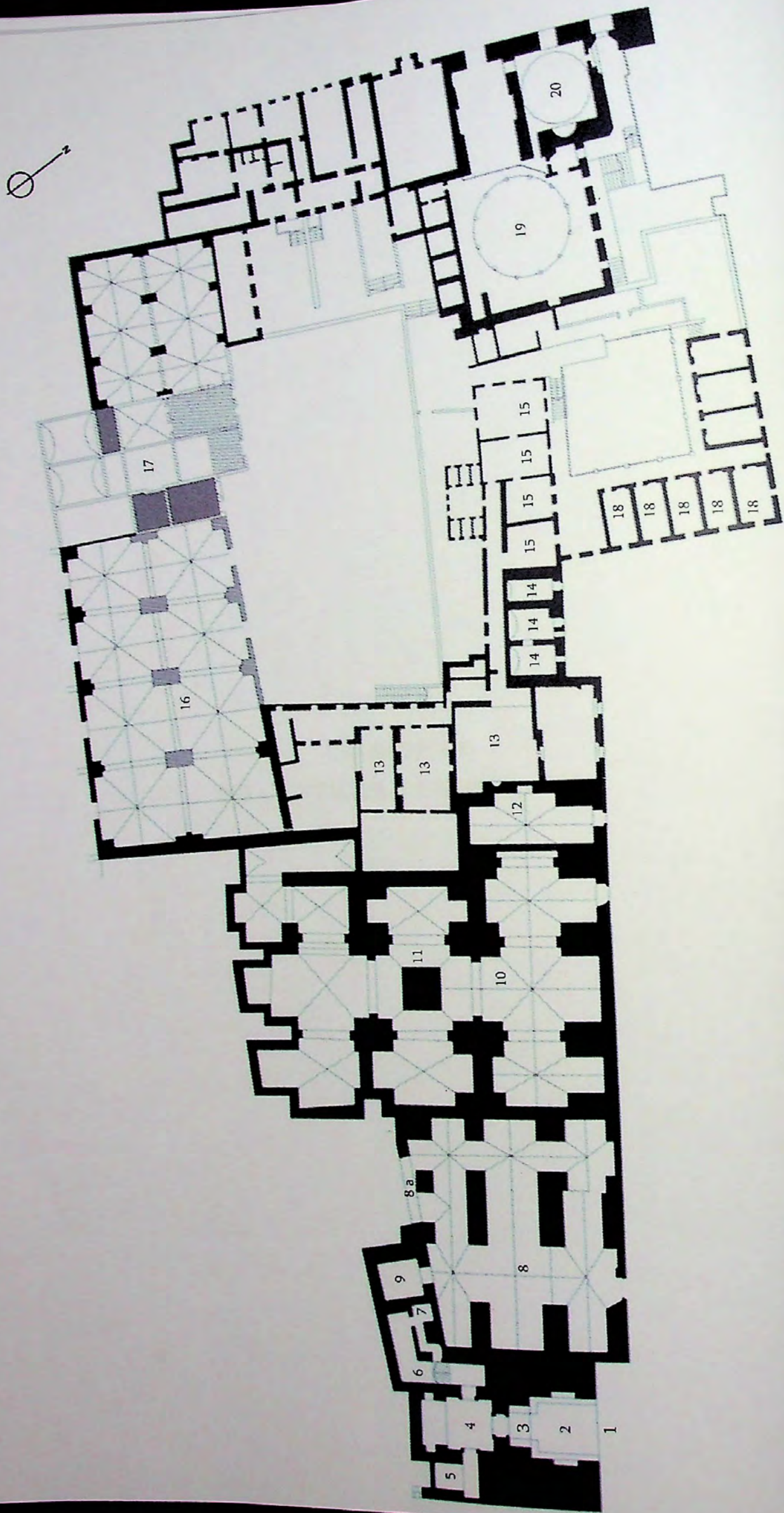


Figure 3.9. CIERA restoration works of the Mevlevi *sama'khana* (after Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1988).

CHAPTER FOUR
THE ARCHITECTURE OF ISTABL QAWSUN

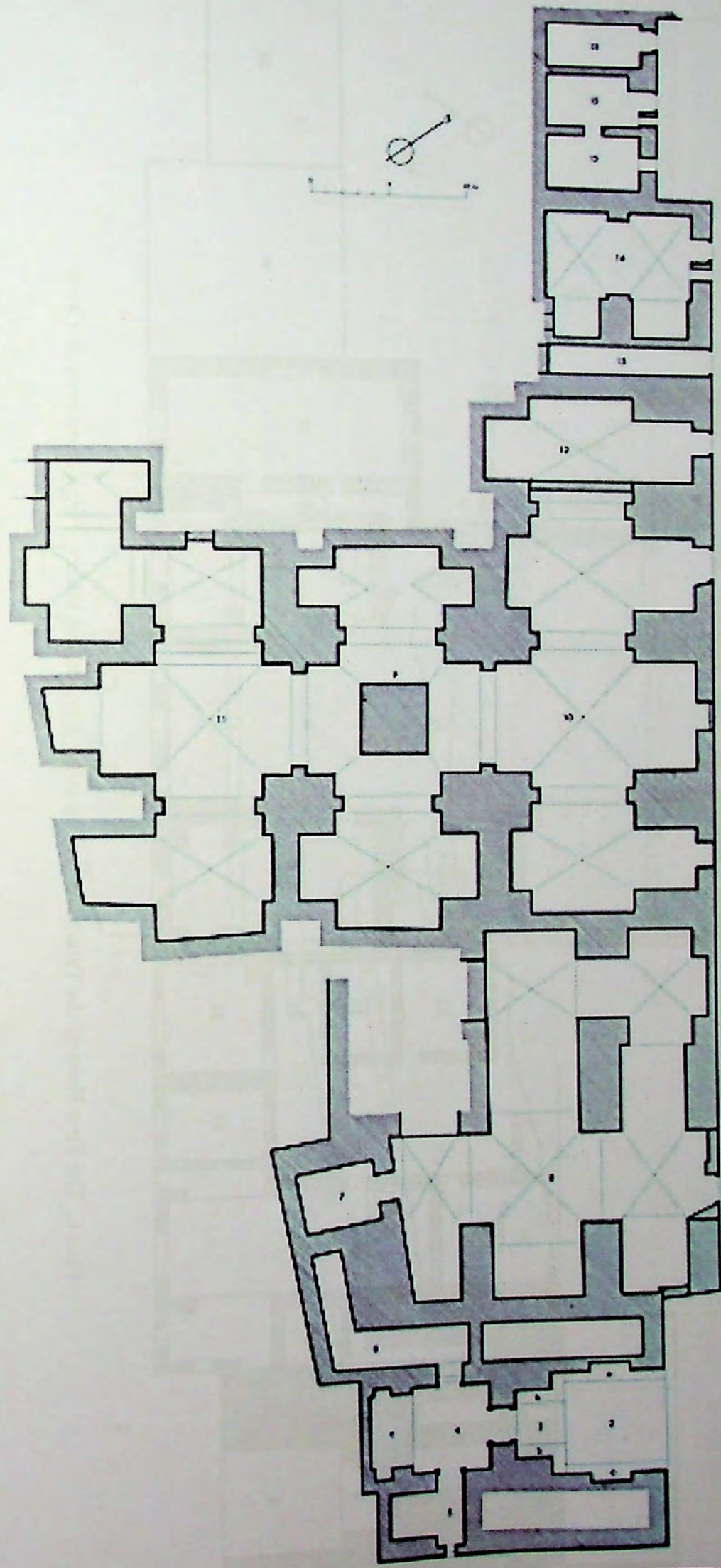


PLANS

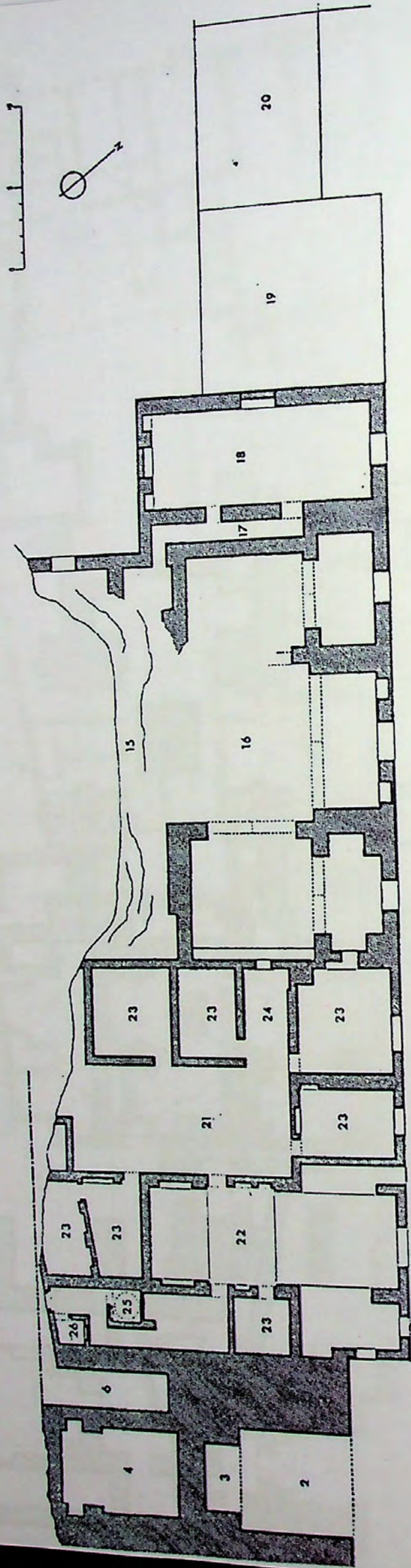


Plan A. The Ground Floor of the Palace of Qawsun (by Nouran El-Begermy).

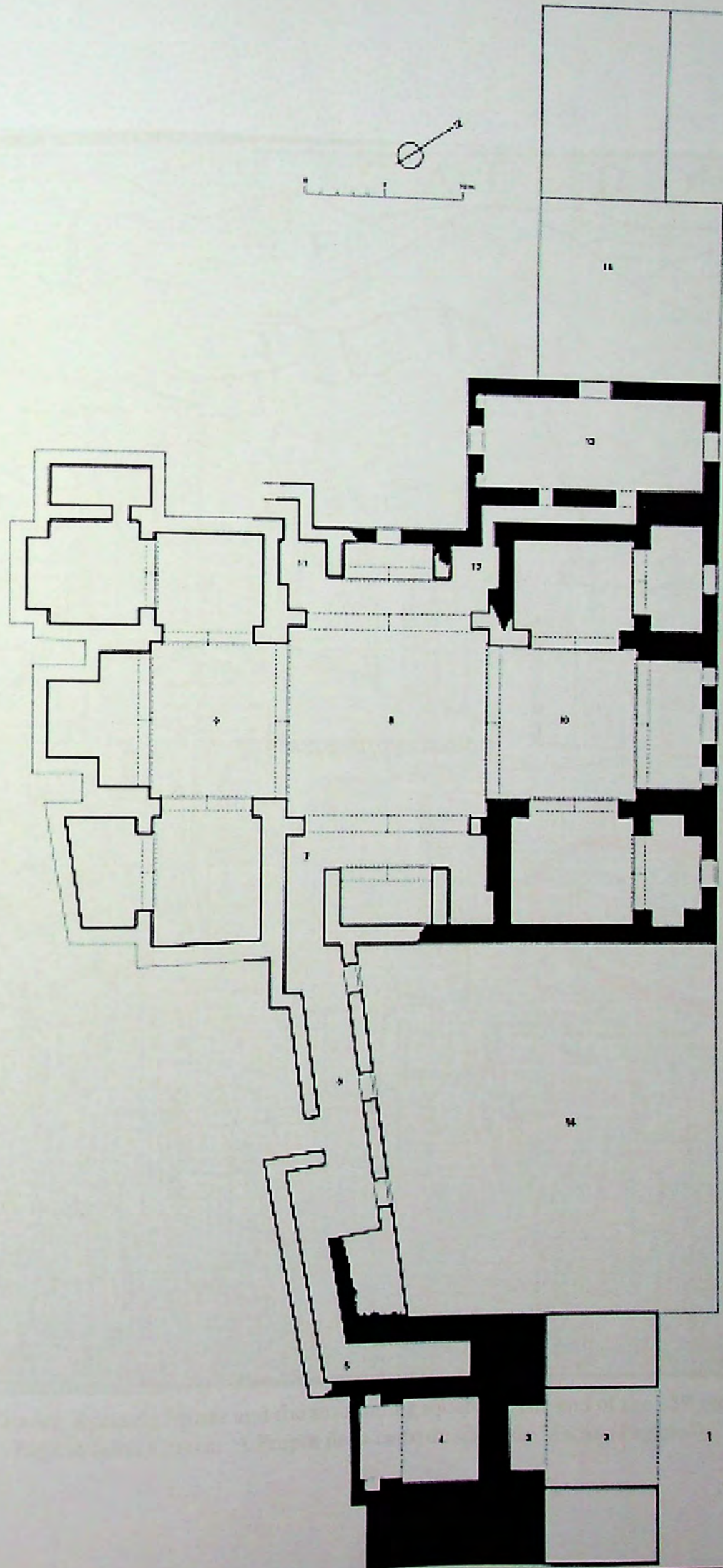
Plan A. The Ground Floor of the Palace of Qawsun (by Nouran El-Begermy).



Plan B. The Ground Floor of the Palace of Qawsun in Period II (after Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*).



1
 Plan C. The First Floor of the Palace of Qawsun (after Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*).



Plan D. Plan of the upper floor from Essai de Restitution (after Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*).

FIGURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Figur

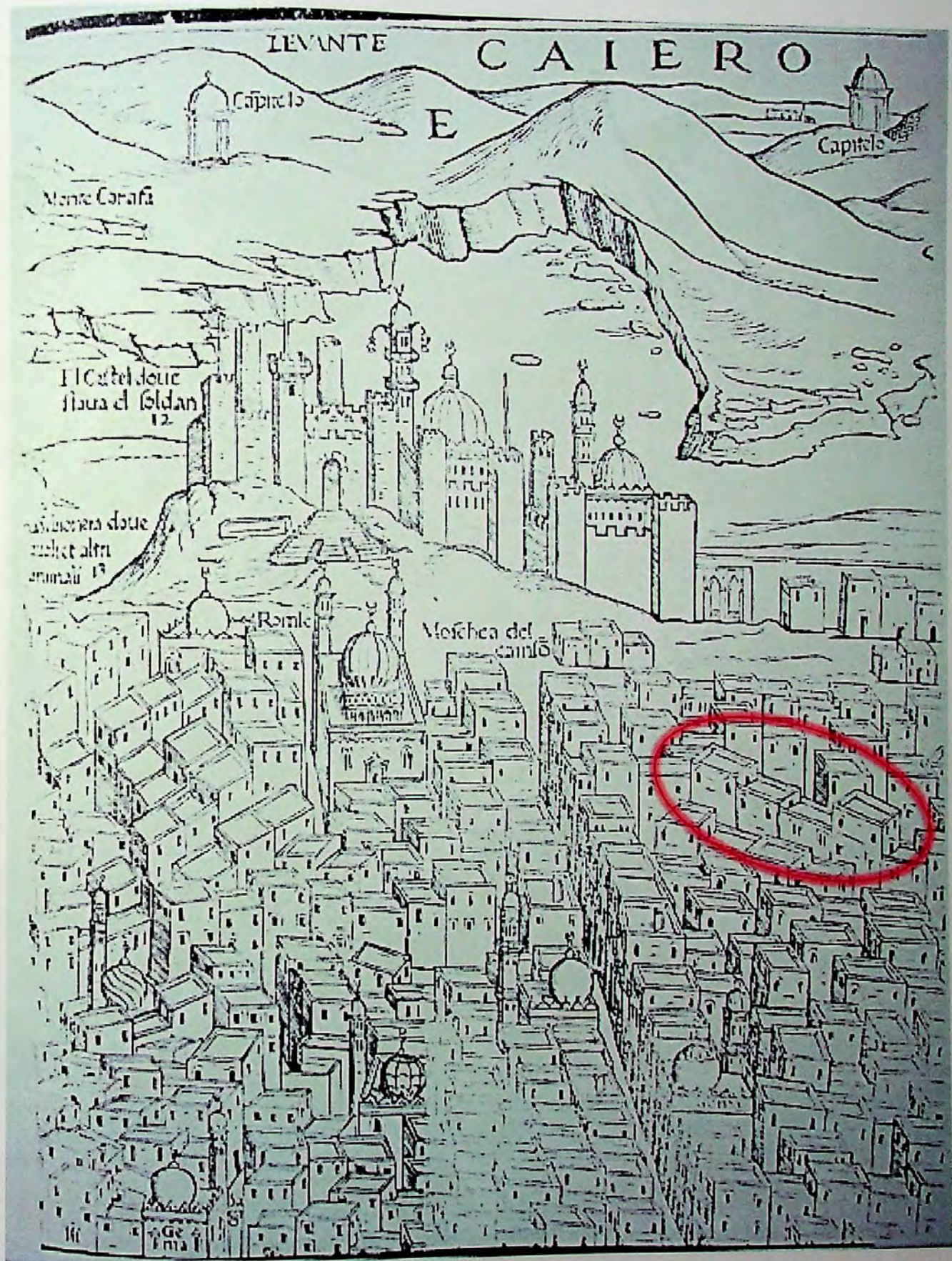


Figure 4.1. The Citadel, Rumayla Square and the surrounding squares at the end of the 15th century by Matheo Pagano (after Garcin, "A Propos de la carte du Caire de Matheo Pagano").



Figure 4.2. The borders and streets around the Palace of Qawsun (after Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons de Caire*).

Figure

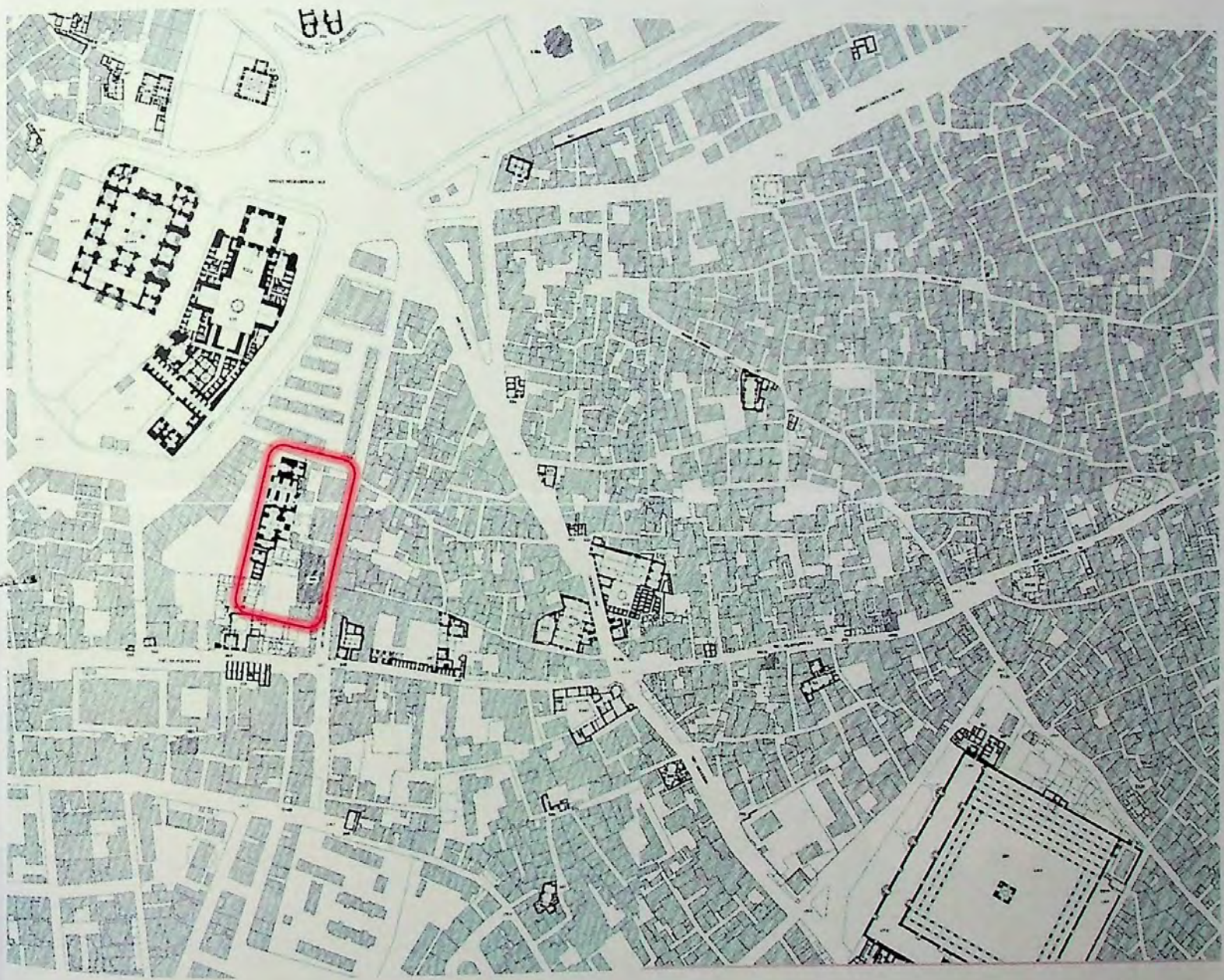
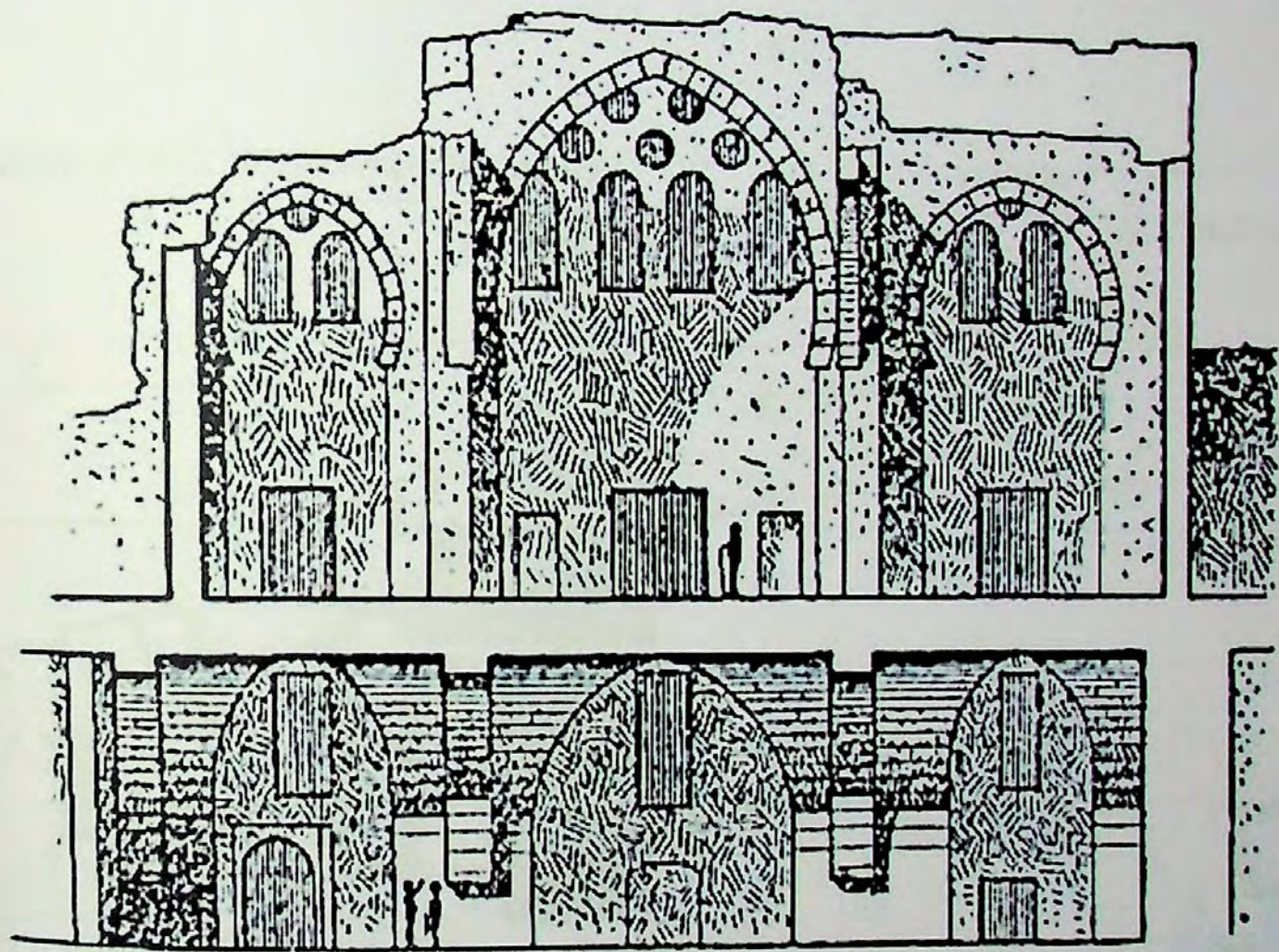


Figure 4.3. The location of the Palace of Qawsun near Rumayla Square (after Warner, *The Monuments of Historic Cairo*).

is et maisons de



Figure 4.4. On the top: The northern façade of the Palace of Qawsun near Rumayla (after Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, neg. EA.CA.2734. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library). On the bottom: A more recent photograph of the façade of the palace (after Rabbat, 1999) archnet.org.



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PALAIS DE L'ÉMIR YOUCHBAK
connu sous le nom de Palais Bardak. — Caire

Section par c d du prem. étage et du rez-de-chaus.

Figure 4.5. A section of the Palace of Qawsun by the Comité (after Rizk, *Atlas*).







PERIODS	METHODS AND MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION
Before 1335	
1335-1468	
Phase I	
Phase II	
Phase III	
1468-1517	
1517-1800	

Figure 4.6. Different periods of construction showing different methods and materials used in the Palace of Qawsun (based on Tavernari's *L'évolution du Qasr Qawsûn - Yashbak*).

Figure

RUCTION

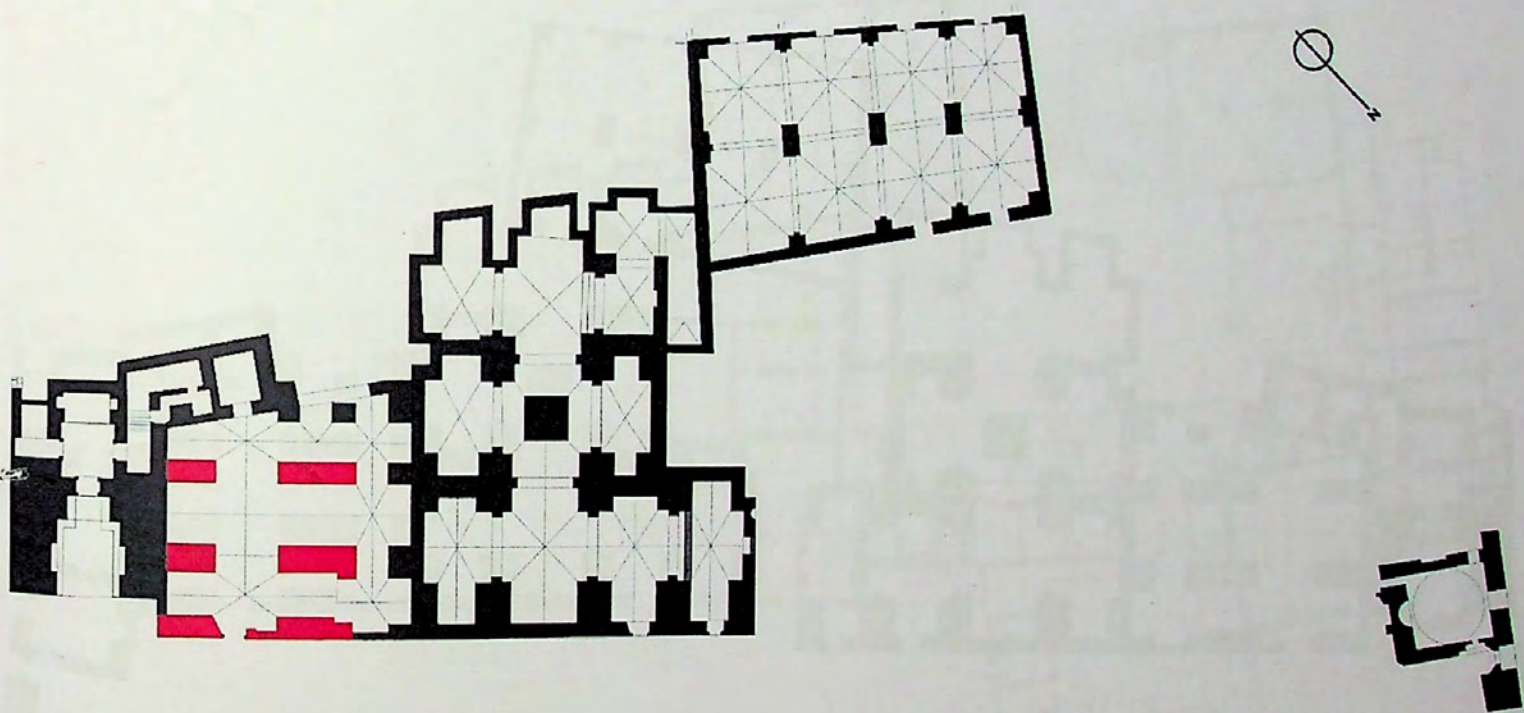


Figure 4.7. Plan of the Palace of Qawsun. The structures erected in Period I (before 1335) are highlighted in red (by Nouran El-Begermy).

the Palace of

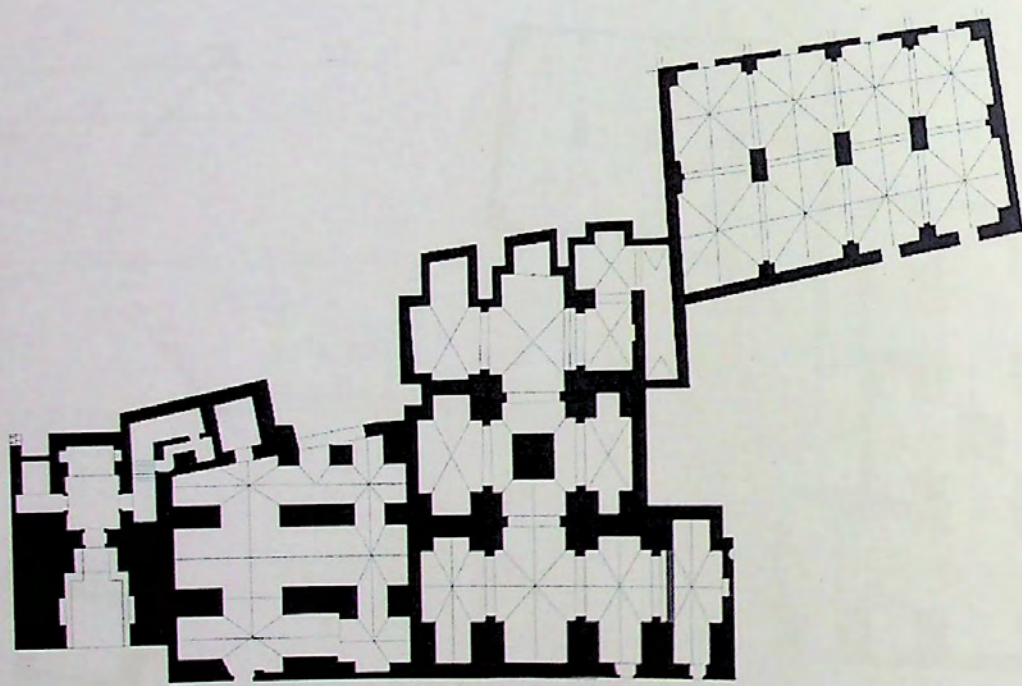


Figure 4.8. The structures built during Period II (1335-1468) (by Nouran El-Begermy).

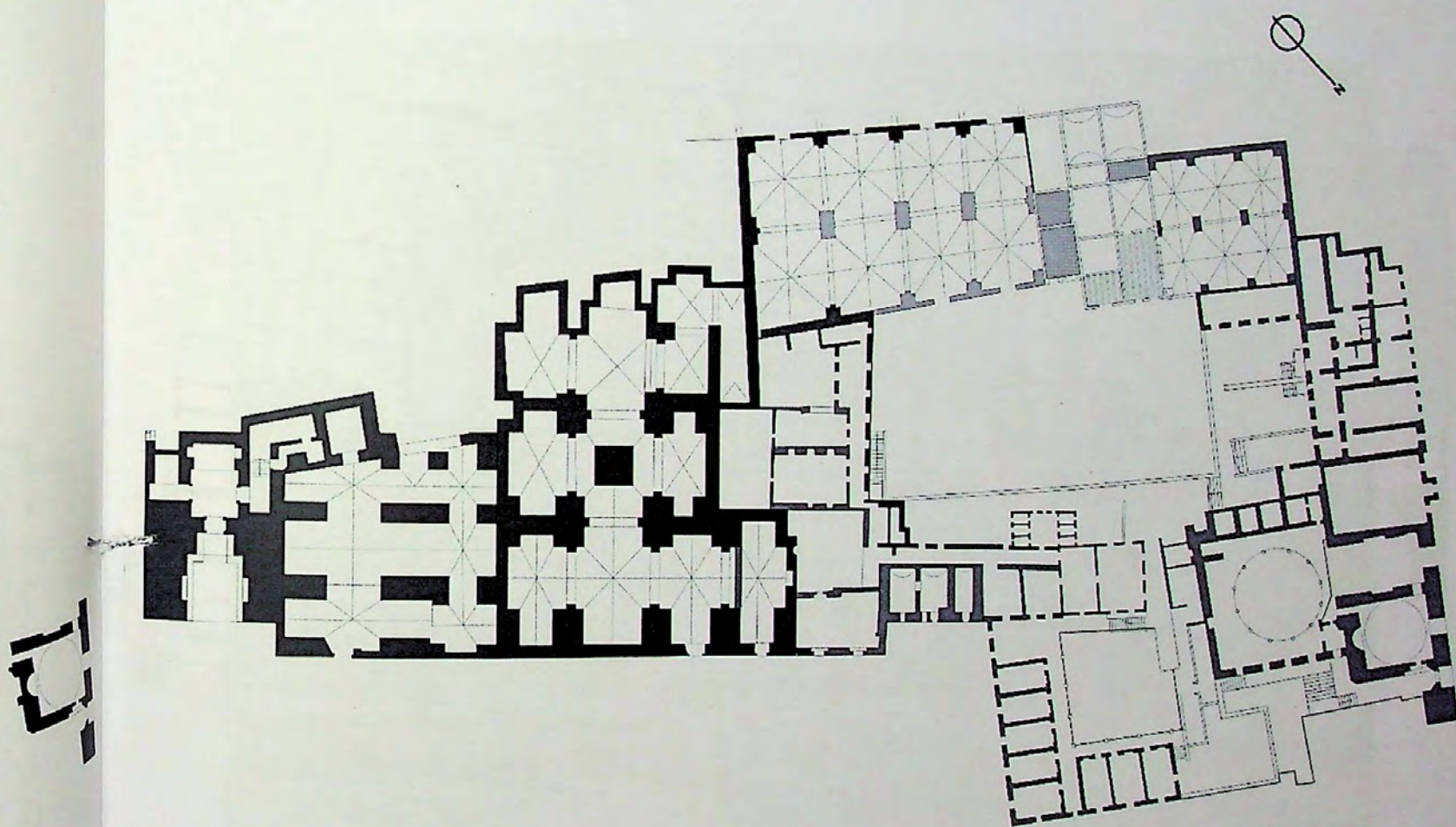


Figure 4.9. The structures built in Period IV (1517-1895) (by Nouran El-Begermy).

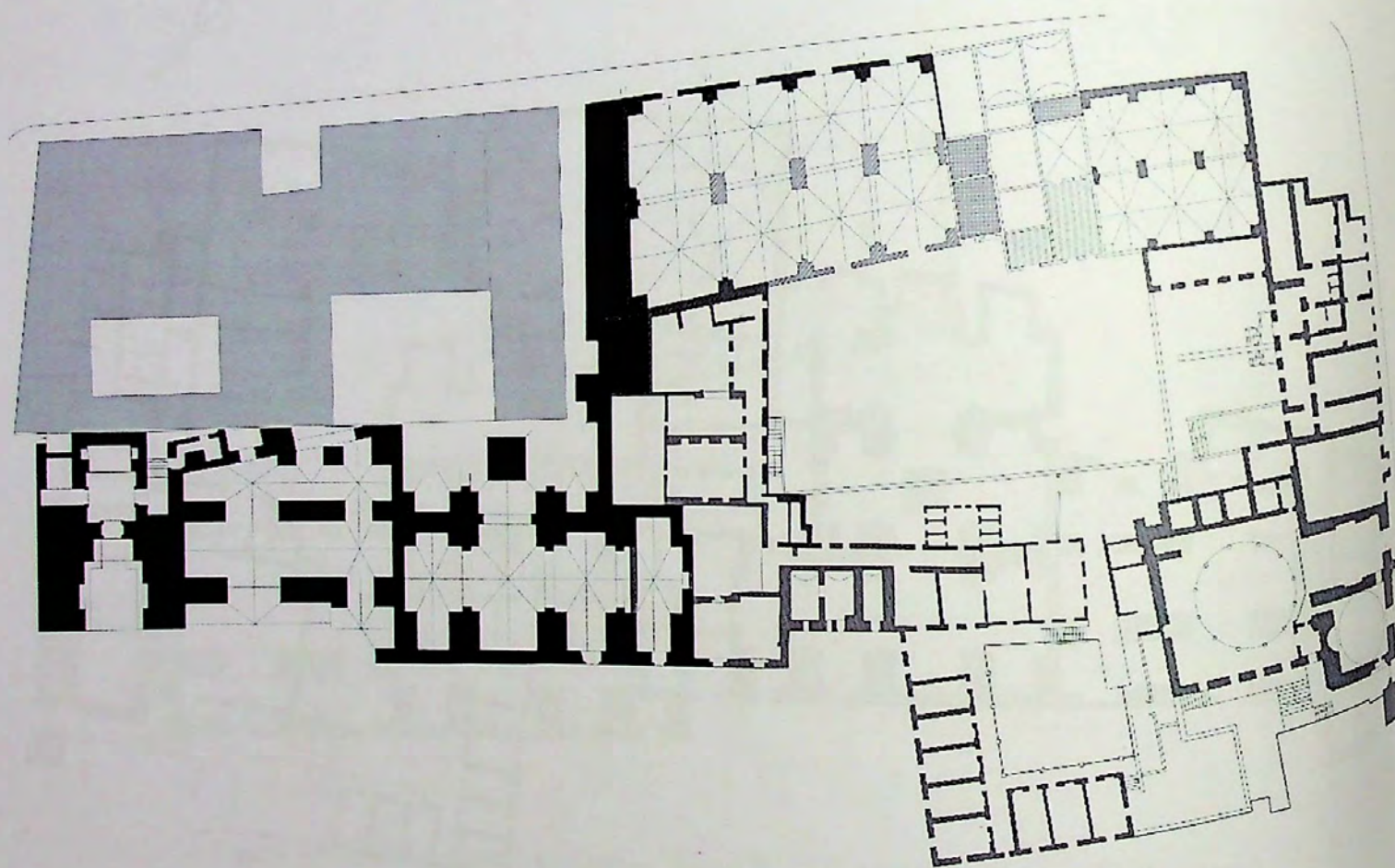


Figure 4.10. Istabl Qawsun as it stands in 2017 (by Nouran El-Begermy).



Figure 4.11. The Palace of Qawsun as depicted in *Description de l'Egypte* in their illustration of the Complex of Sultan Hasan and Rumayla Square (detail of Fig. 3.6).

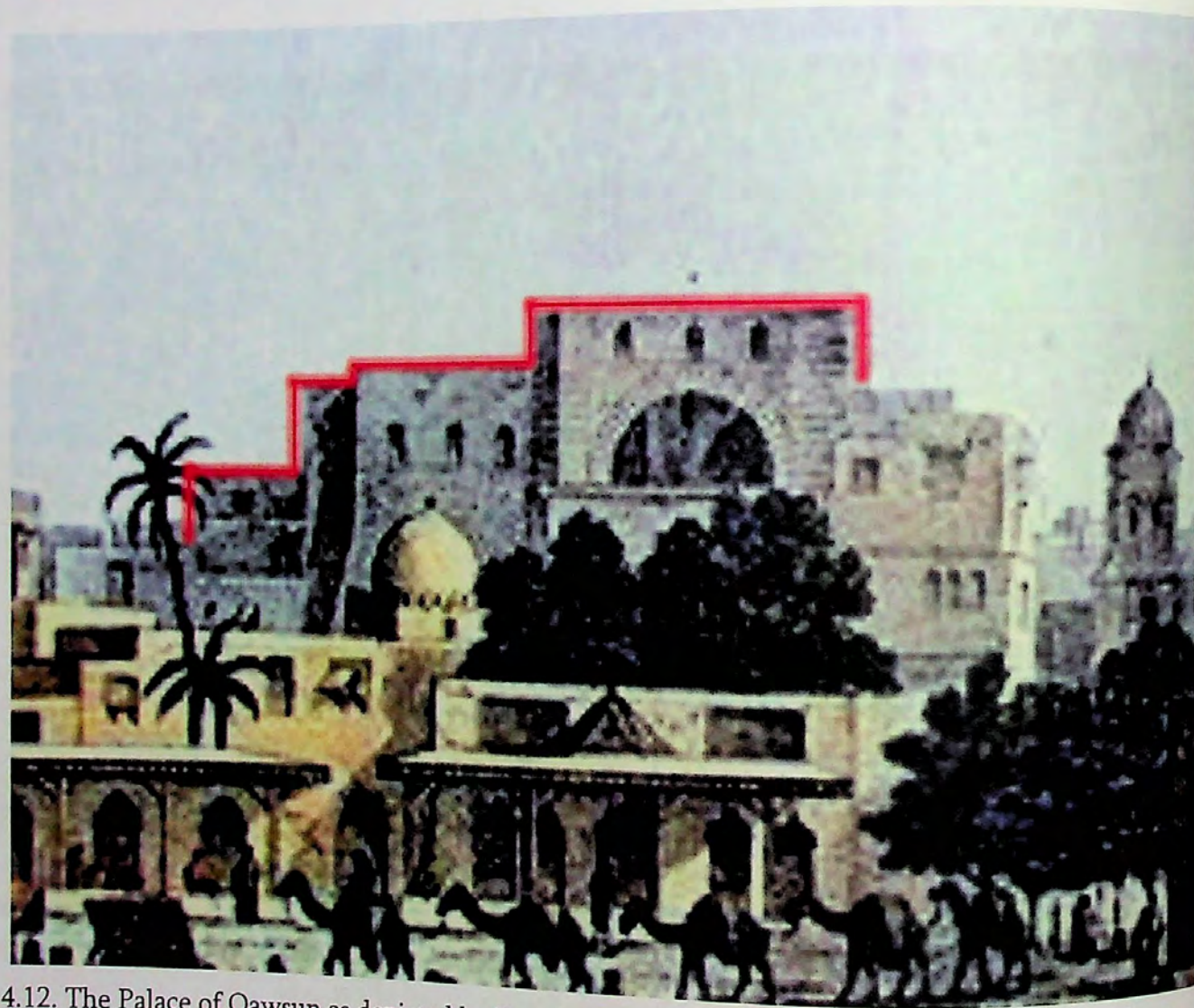


Figure 4.12. The Palace of Qawsun as depicted by Pascal Coste in the background of his painting of the Complex of Sultan Hasan and Rumayla Square. The main upper *qa'a* appears already in ruins revealing its arches (detail of Fig. 3.7).



Figure 4.13. A detail of a photograph dating from 1861 by Hammerschmidt that showed the Palace of Qawsun in the background (after the MET Museum).

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/734439>

Complex of
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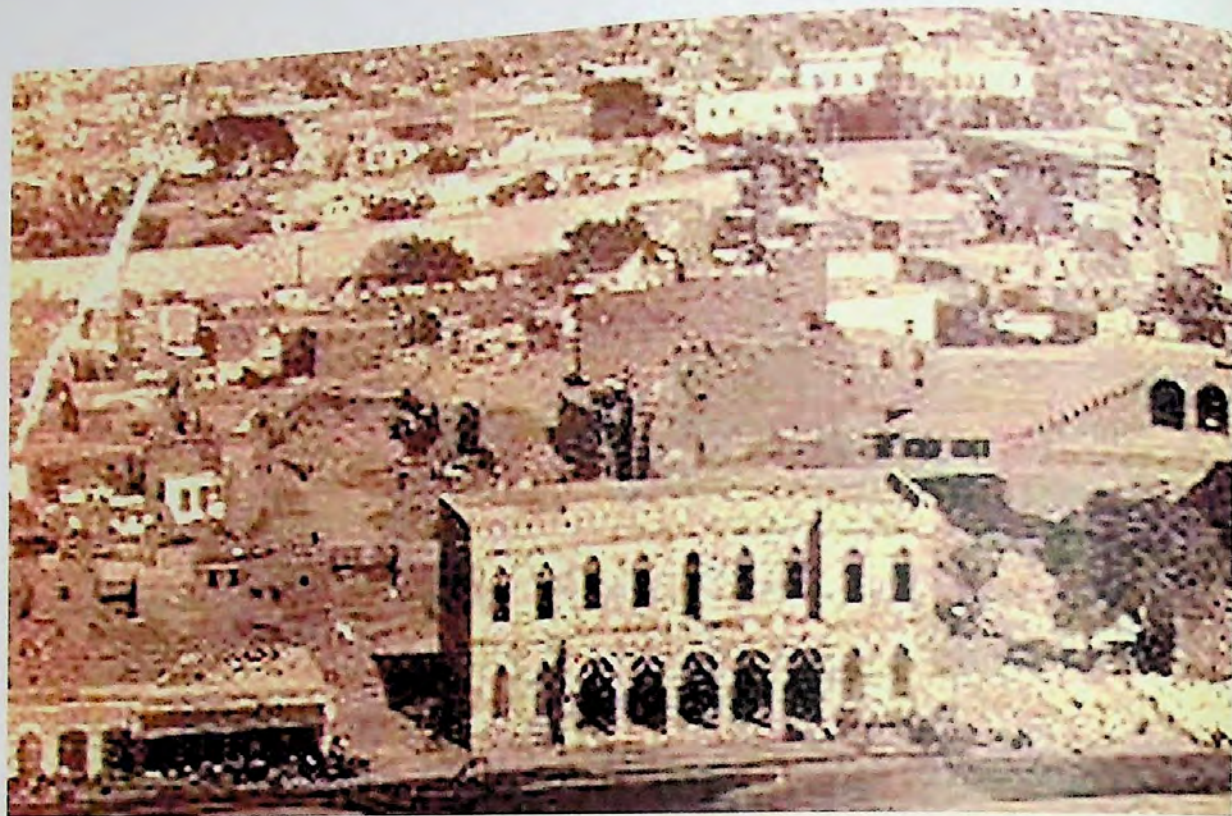


Figure 4.14. The Complex of Sultan Hasan and the mosque of al-Mahmudiyya in a photograph dating to 1930. On top: A detail of the photograph showing the rear of the Palace of Qawsun in ruins before the construction of the school of 'Uthman Mahir.

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/10836855331852207/>

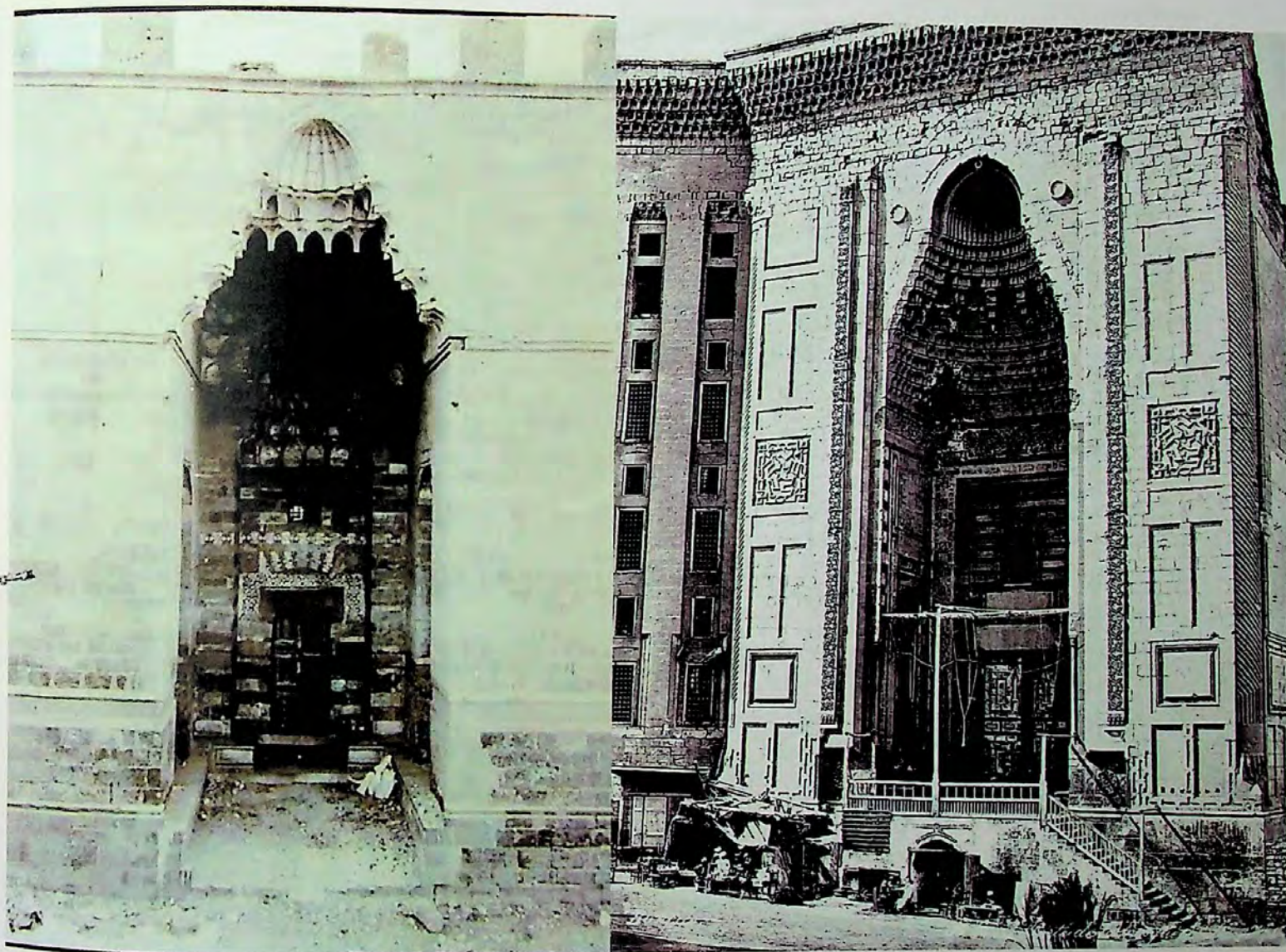


Figure 4.15. On the left: The portal of Istabl Qawsun (after Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, neg. EA.CA.2734. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library).
On the right: The portal of the Complex of Sultan Hasan (after Maison Bonfils, 1870).

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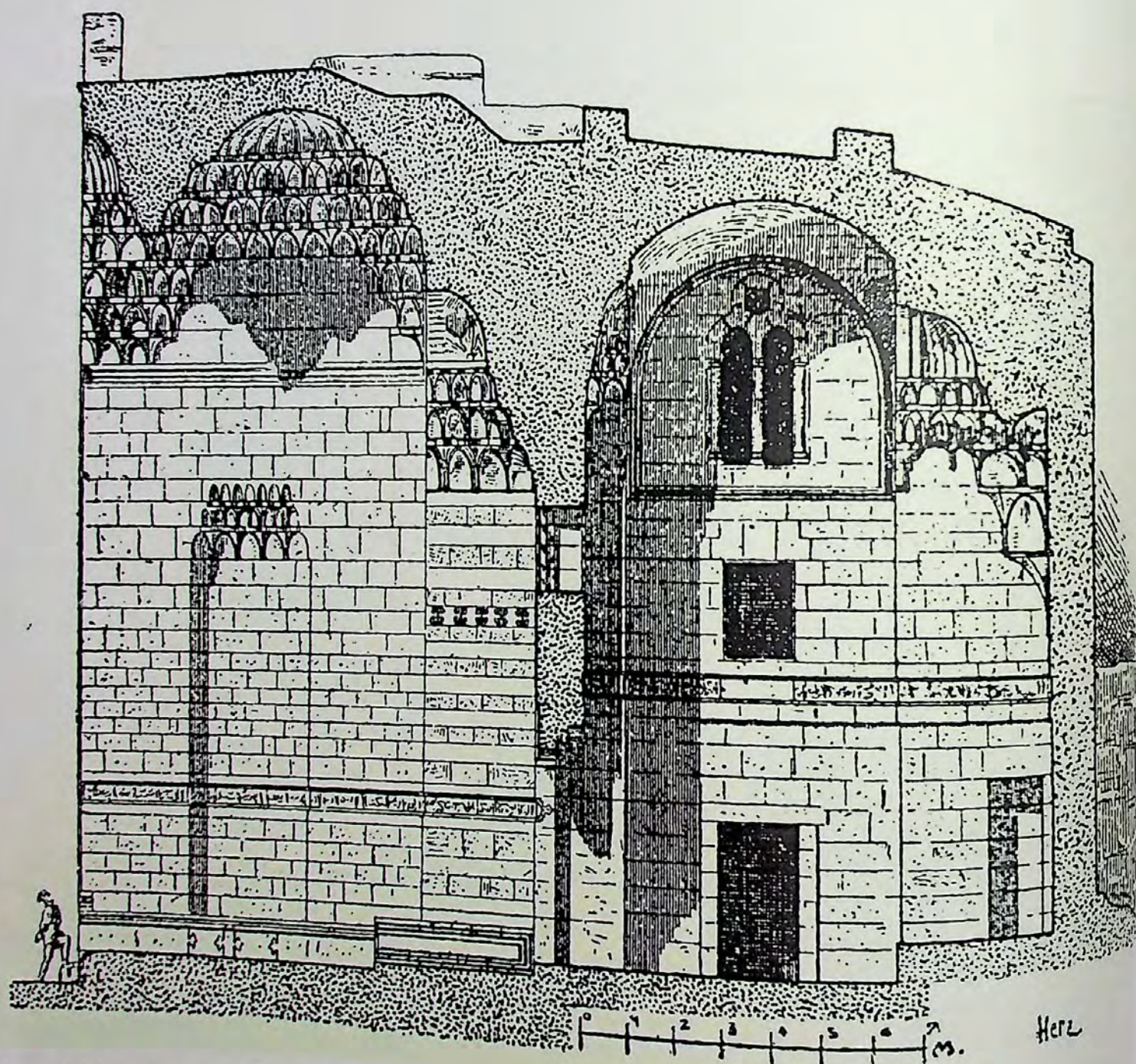
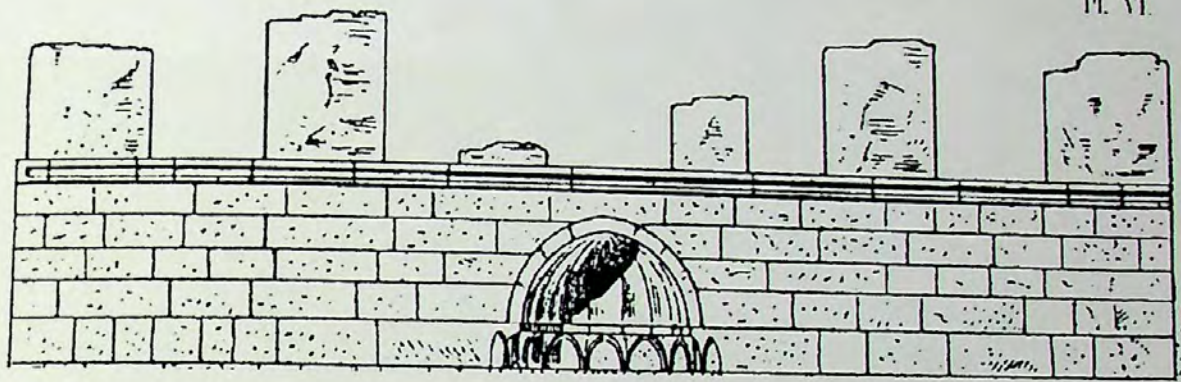
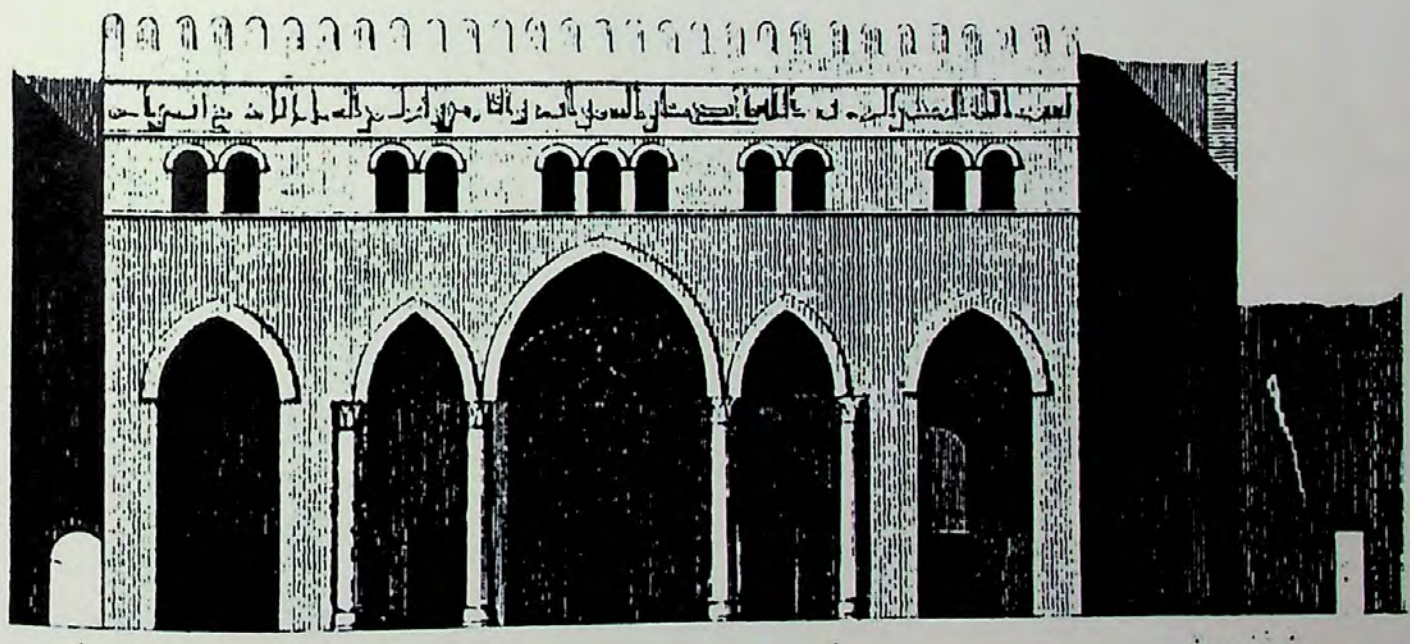


Figure 4.16. A section of the portal of the Palace of Qawsun produced by the Comité (after Ormos, *Max Herz Pasha (1856-1919) His Life and Career*).



Pl. VI.



N. L. ROBERTSON. 1884

Figure 4.17. On the top: The remnants on top of the portal of the Palace of Qawsun (after Rizk, *Atlas*).
 On the bottom: The façade of the Great Iwan in the Citadel by al-Nasir Muhammad (after Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).

Herz Pasha



The Outer Portal

The Muqarnas Canopy

The 'Inner' Muqarnas Portal

The Side Recesses

Figure 4.18. The portal composition of the Palace of Qawsun.



Figure 4.19. Detail of the muqarnas canopy of the portal of the Palace of Qawsun.

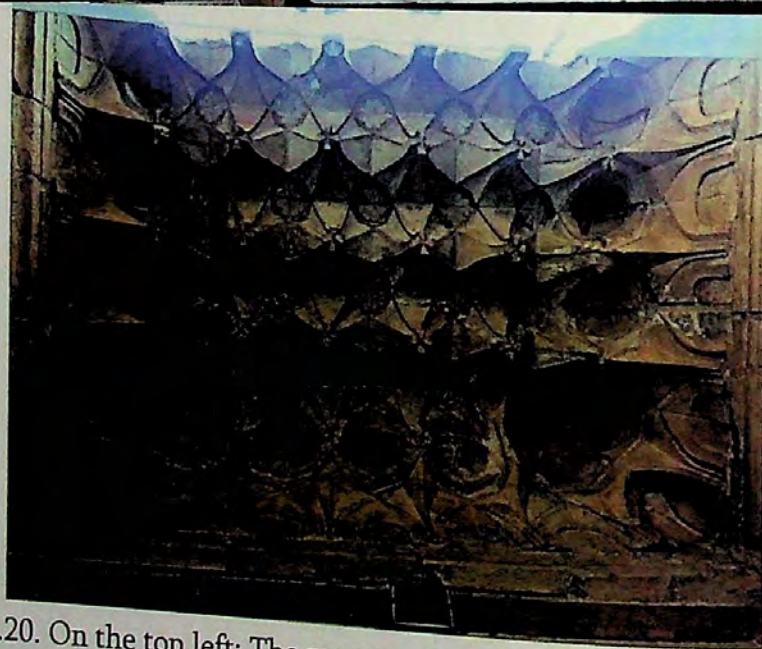


Figure 4.20. On the top left: The muqarnas portal of the Mosque of Ulmas.
On the top right: The muqarnas portal of the Mosque of Bashtak (after Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, 1954).
Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library).
On the bottom: The muqarnas portal of the entrance of the Palace of Bashtak on the Fatimid Qasaba (Mu'izz Street).

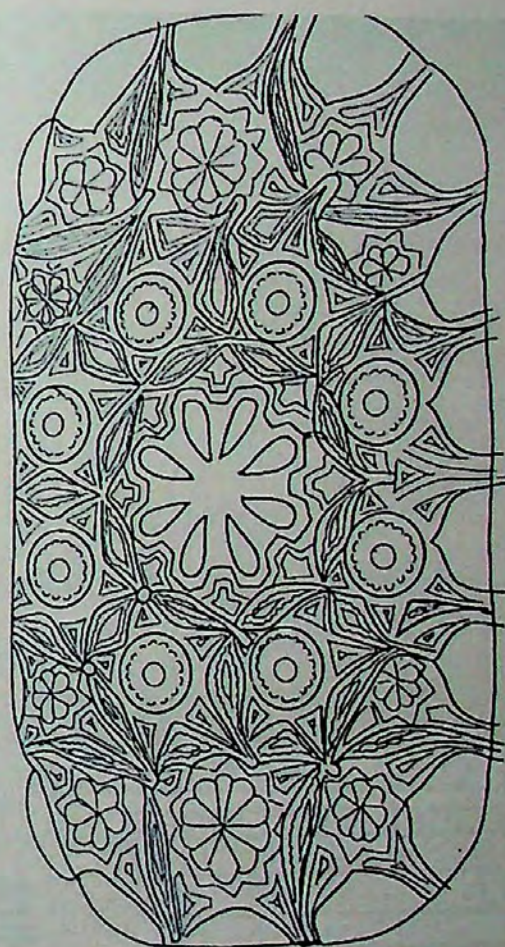
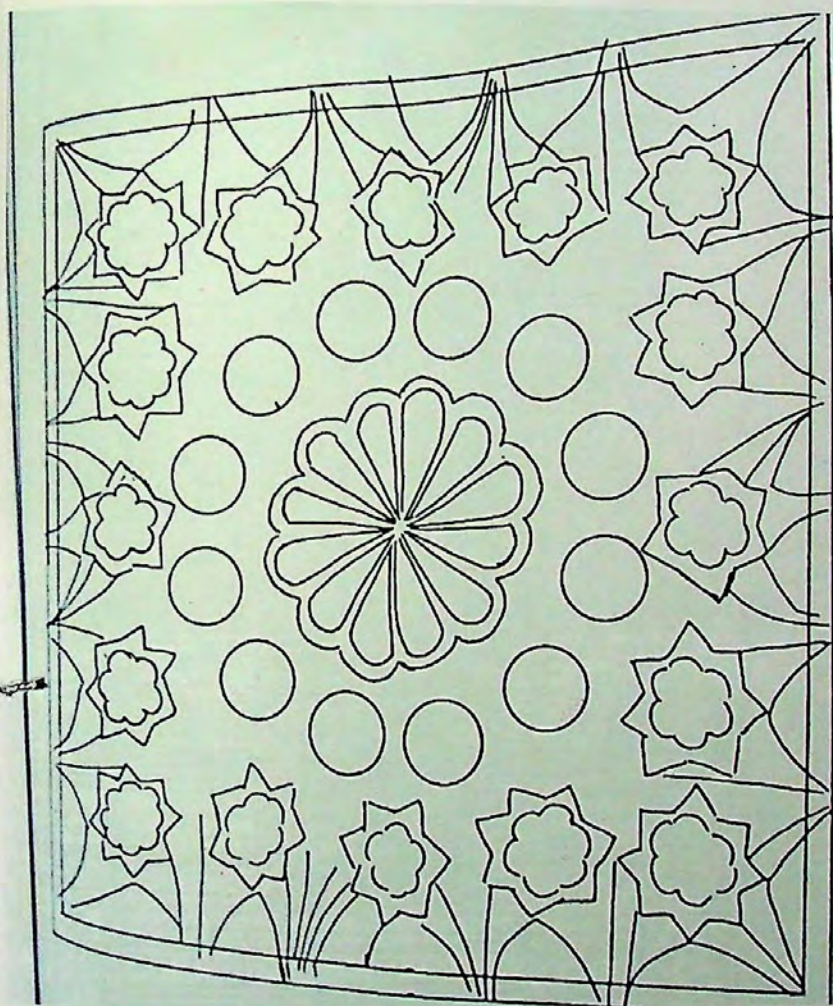
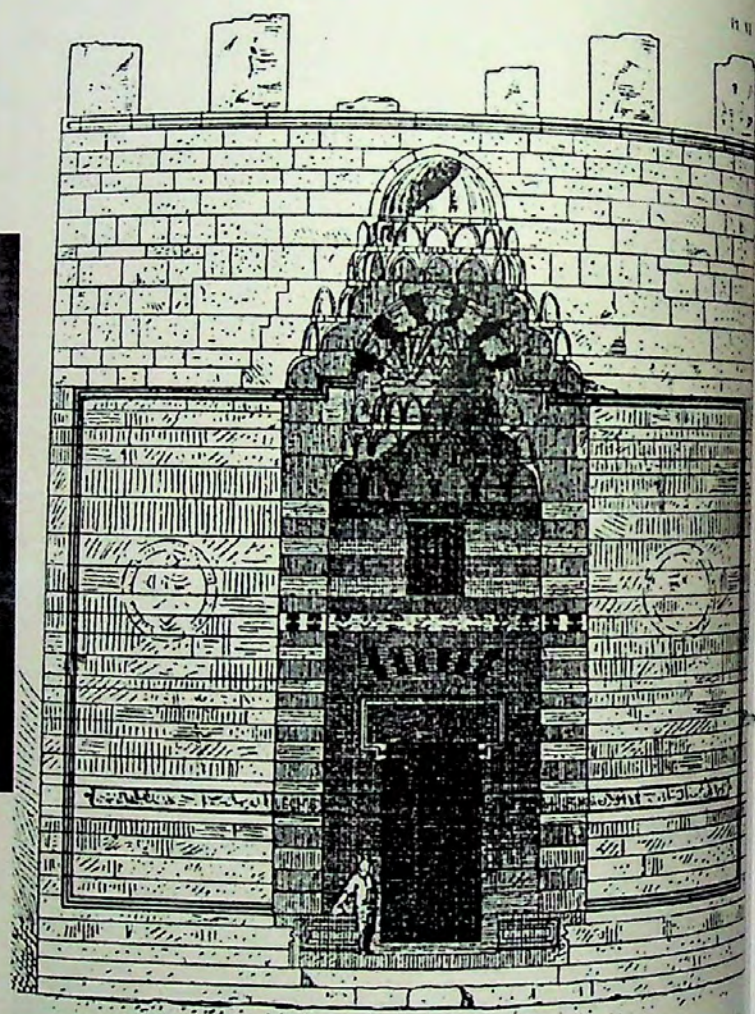


Figure 4.21. On the left: The wooden ceiling of the vestibule of the Mosque of Janibak.
On the right: A fragment of the wooden ceiling of the South-Eastern iwan of the Madrasa Jawhar al-Qanuqbani (drawings after Gindy, *Dirasa fanniyya athariyya l'il 'asqaf al-khashabiyya fil 'asr al-mamluki*).

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Relief par les côtés de l'École point

Figure 4.22. Traces of blazons that can be seen on either side of the portal.
On the right: A drawing of the portal produced by the Comité (after Ormos, *Max Herz Pasha (1856-1919) His Life and Career*).

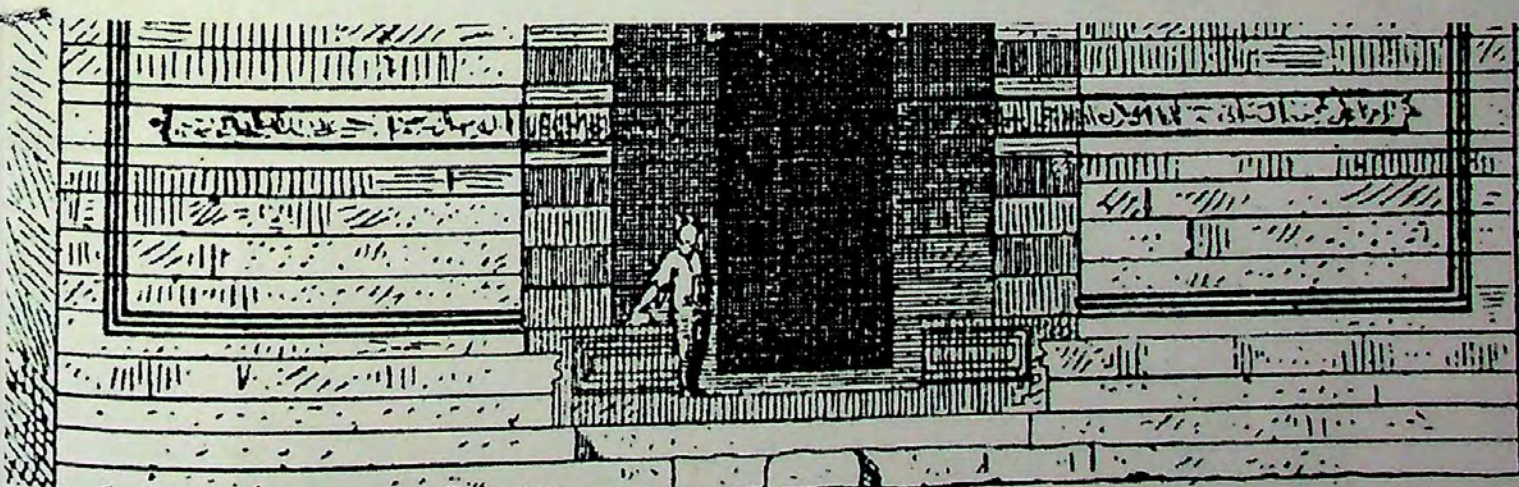


Figure 4.23. The inscription band of the Palace of Qawsun that extends from the right side of the portal and ends up on the left side.

On the bottom: A detail of a drawing of the portal produced by the Comité (after Ormos, *Max Herz Pasha (1856-1919) His Life and Career*).



Figure 4.24. On the top: The side recesses on either side of the portal of the Palace of Qawsun. On the bottom: The marble frieze with *fleur de lis* decorations the runs under the side *mastabas* on either side of the entrance.

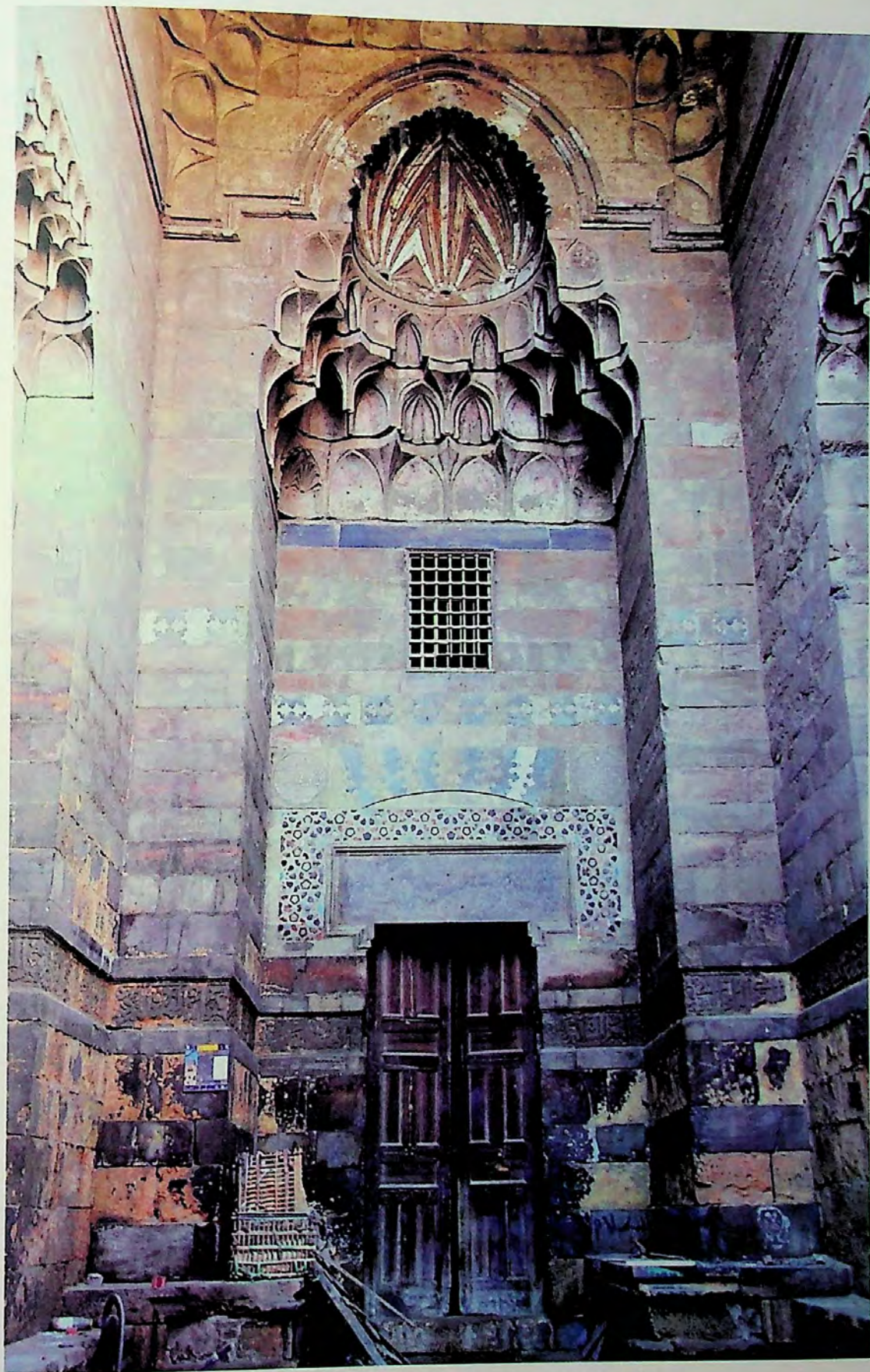


Figure 4.25. The 'Inner' muqarnas portal.

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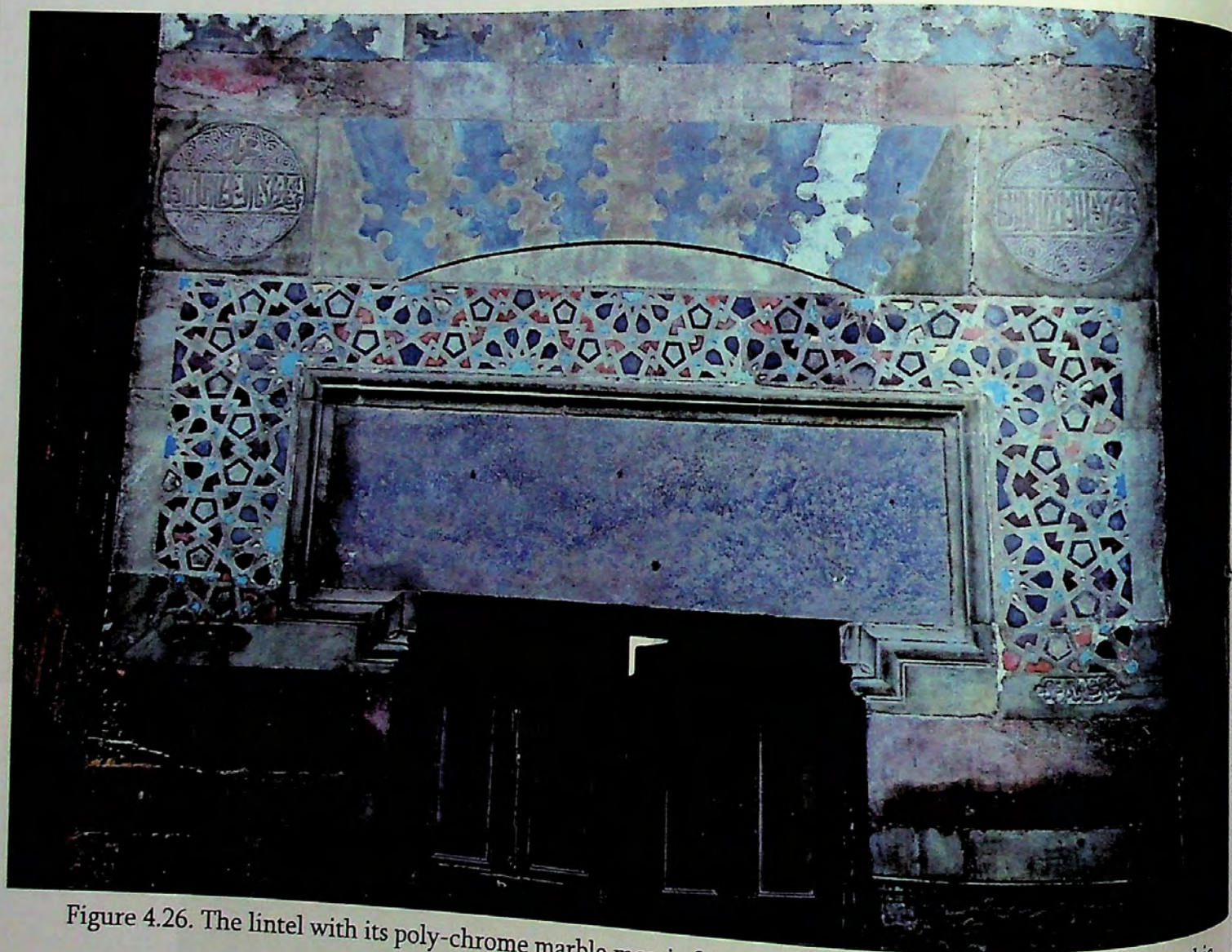


Figure 4.26. The lintel with its poly-chrome marble mosaic frame, lunette and relieving arch and epigraphic medallions on the 'inner' muqarnas portal.



Figure 4.27. A detail of the marble mosaic framework above the lintel.

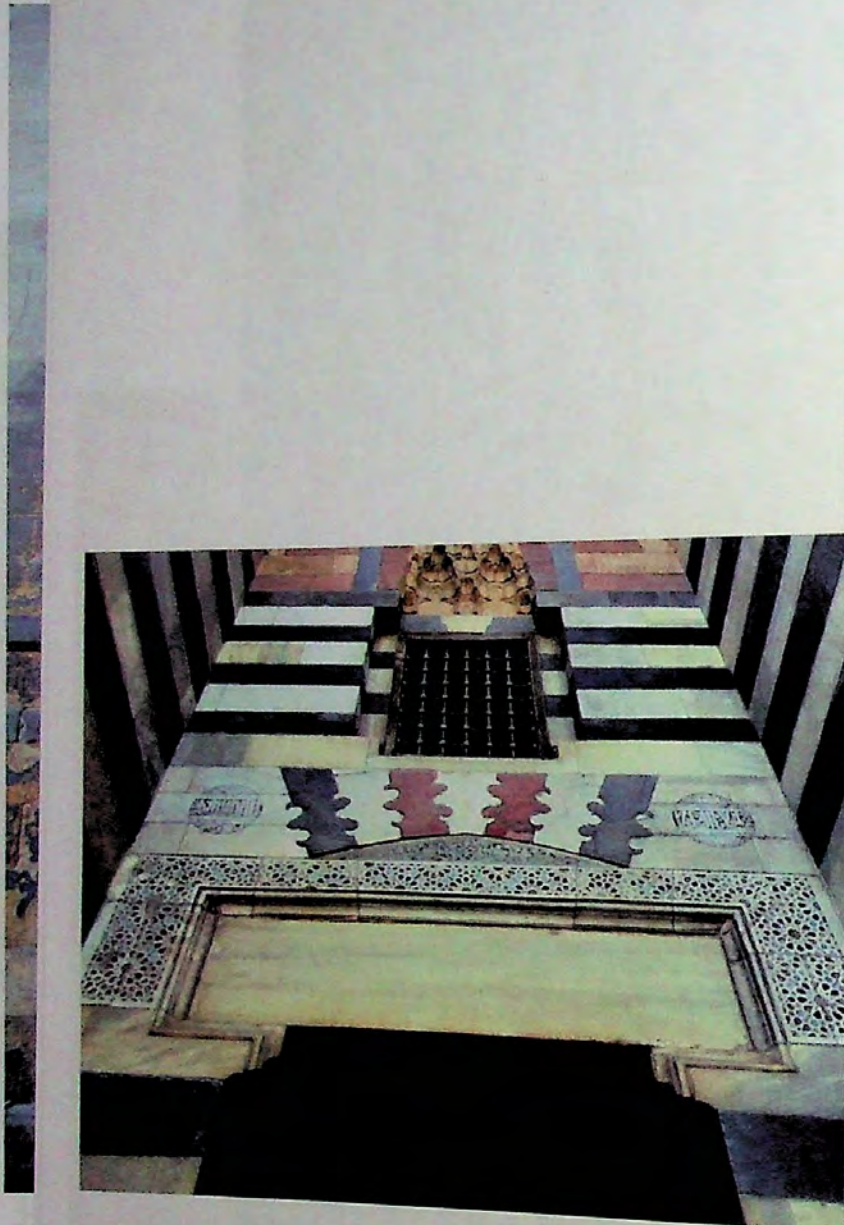


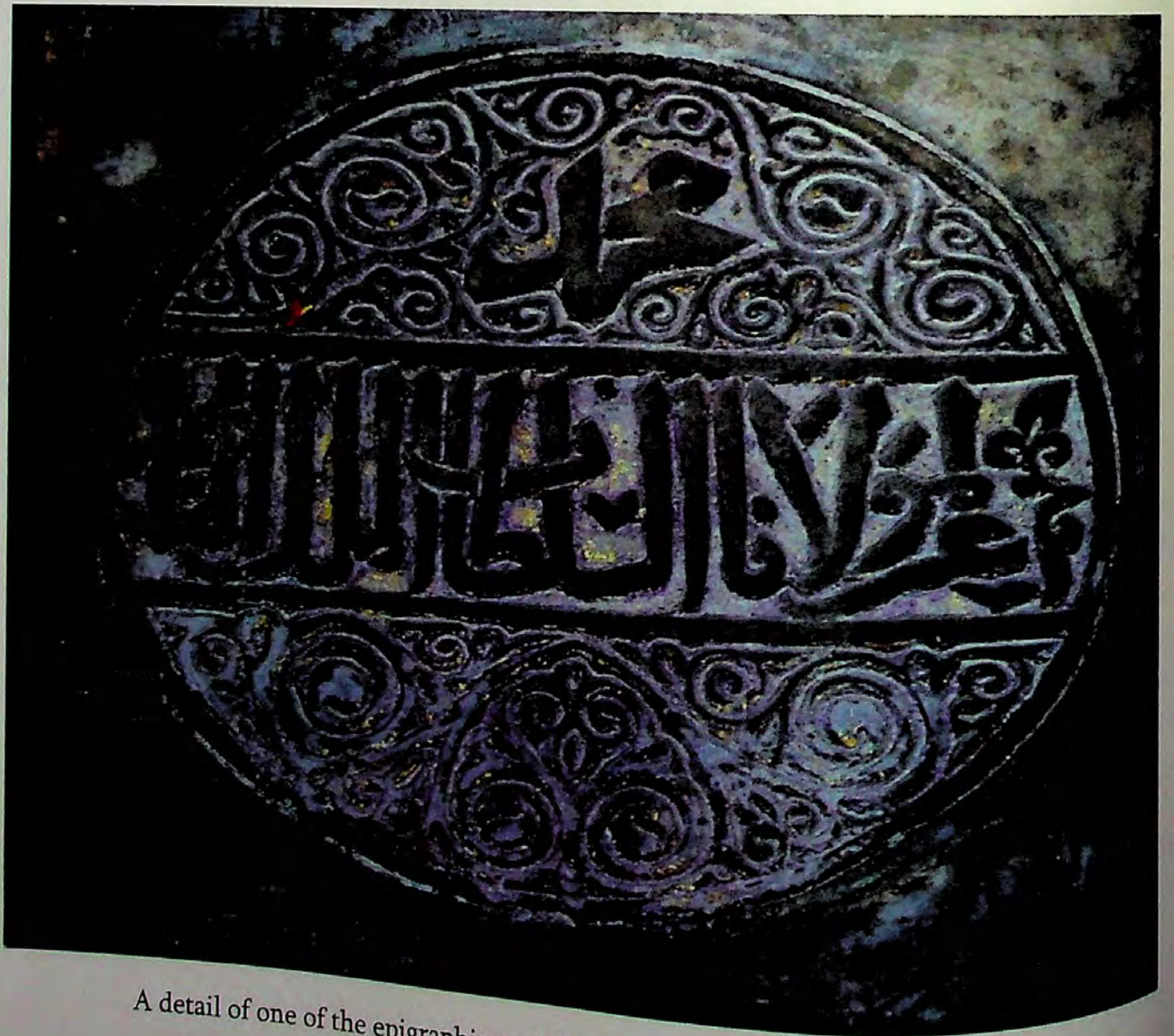
Figure 4.28. On the left: The entrance of the Madrasa of al-Ashraf Barsbay on the Fatimid Qasaba (1423-4).
On the right: One of the entrances to the madrasas in the Complex of Sultan Hasan.



Figure 4.29. Detail of the joggled voissours above the entrance of the palace and the last traces of white paint.
Above it is the marble frieze in black and white trefoils.



Figure 4.30. The two epigraphic medallions on either side of the door showing interesting differences.



A detail of one of the epigraphic medallions showing traces of yellow gilding.



Figure 4.31. The emblem of al-Nasir Muhammad on one of the pendentives of Bab al-Mudarraġ in the Citadel featuring *ʿazz li-mawlana al-sultan* (after the Facebook page of al-Qahira al-Tarikhiyya).
https://www.facebook.com/pg/historiccairo/photos/?ref=page_internal



Figure 4.32. The emblem of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qaytbay on his mosque in Fayoum featuring *nasrahu* on its lower part (after the Facebook page of al-Qahira al-Tarikhiyya).
https://www.facebook.com/pg/historiccairo/photos/?ref=page_internal

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Figure 4.33. On the left: One the epigraphic medallions on the side of the entrance of Istabl Qawsun (1335-1337).
On the right: One the epigraphic medallions on the side of the entrance of the Madrasa of al-Ashraf Barsbay (1423-4).

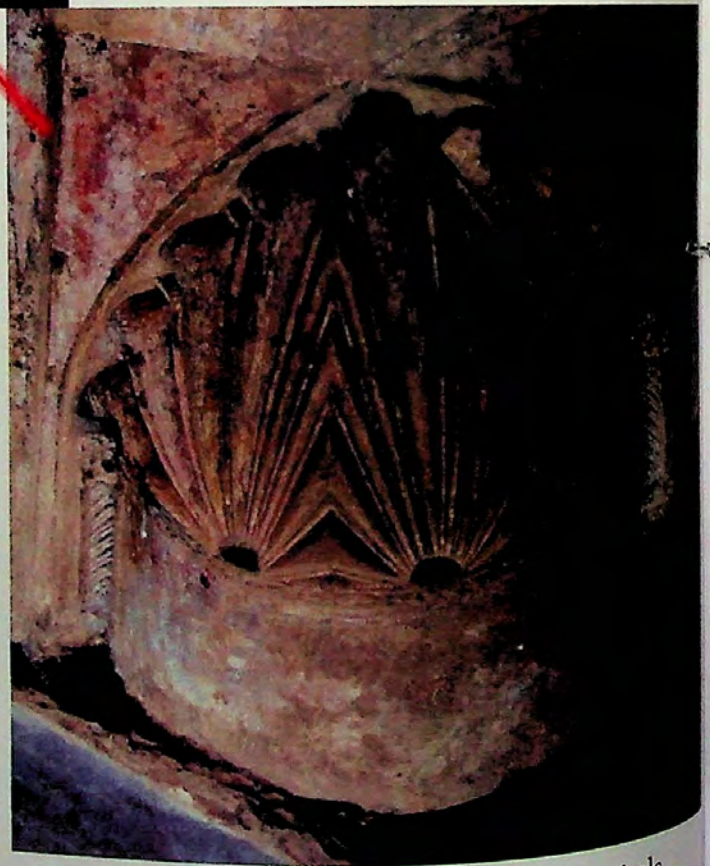
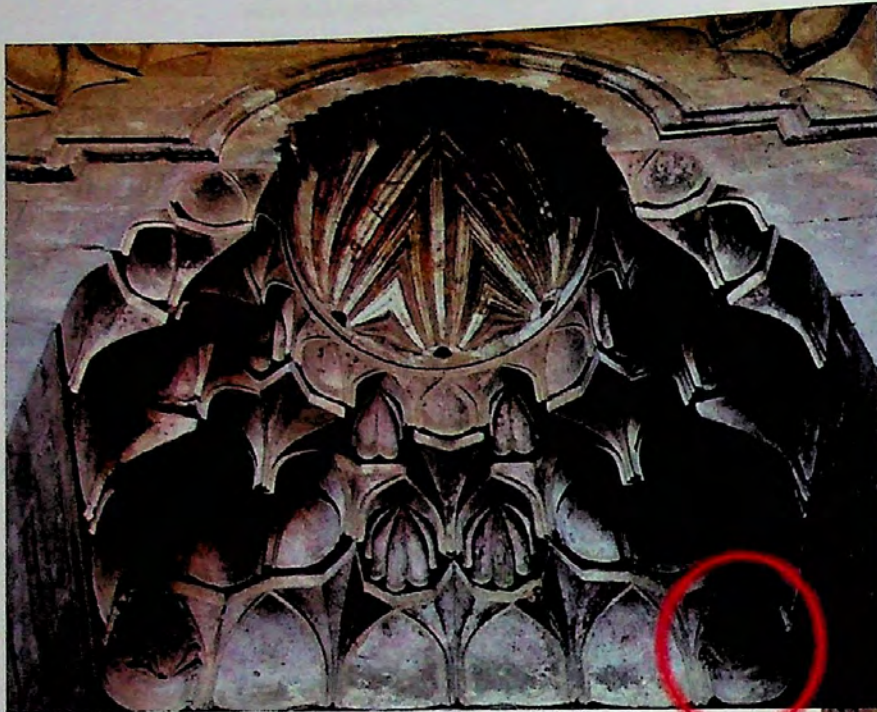


Figure 4.34. A detail of the squinche of the 'inner' muqarnas portal with miniature columns and capitals.

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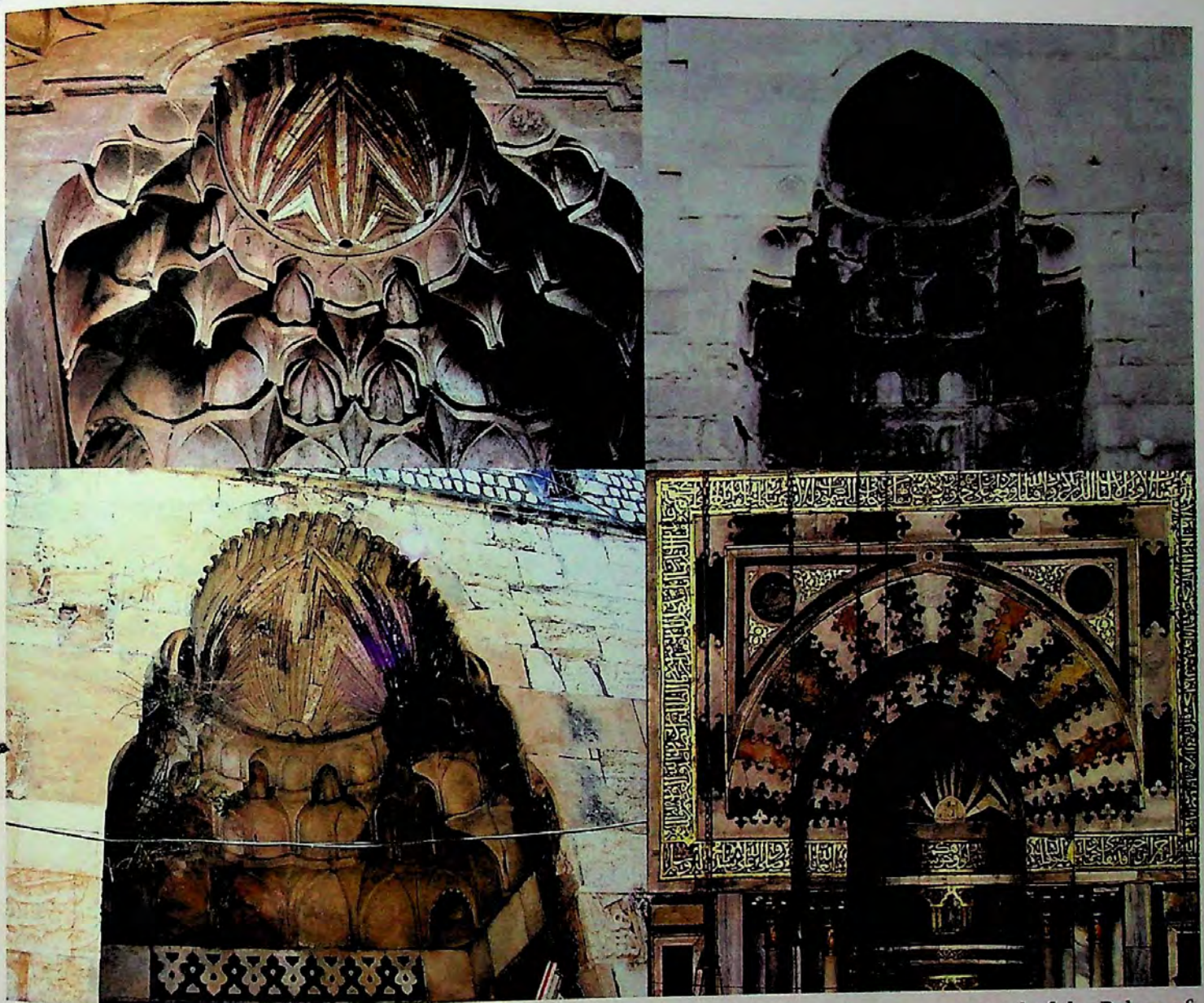


Figure 4.35. On the top left: The sunray motif on the half dome of the 'inner' muqarnas portal of the Palace of Qawsun.

On the top right: The sunray motif on entrance of the Madrasa of Sunqur Sa'di (after Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, neg. EA.CA.4763. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library Source).

On the bottom left: The sunray motif on entrance of Madrasa al-Tankiziyya in Jerusalem (after Abdallah Al-Azza & Kamal Al-Munayyer, 1983). Archnet.org

On the bottom right: The sunray motif on the hood of the mihrab of the Madrasa of Sultan Hasan (after Flickrriver).



Figure 4.36. The signatures of Muhammad ibn Ahmad ... Ahmad Zaghlis al-Shami.



Figure 4.37. Bab al-Qattanin in Jerusalem (after Lara R. Jones, the Aga Khan Visual Archive, MIT, 1994).



Figure 4.38. Mosque of Tankiz in Damascus.
<https://goo.gl/images/mT6vgh>



Figure 4.39. On the left: The portal of the Mosque of Bashtak (1336) (after O'Kane, "James Wild").
In the middle: The portal of the Sallamiyya Madrasa in Jerusalem (1338) (after al-Natsheh, *Al-Madrasah al-Sallamiyya*).
On the right: The portal of Istabl Qawsun (1335-1337).

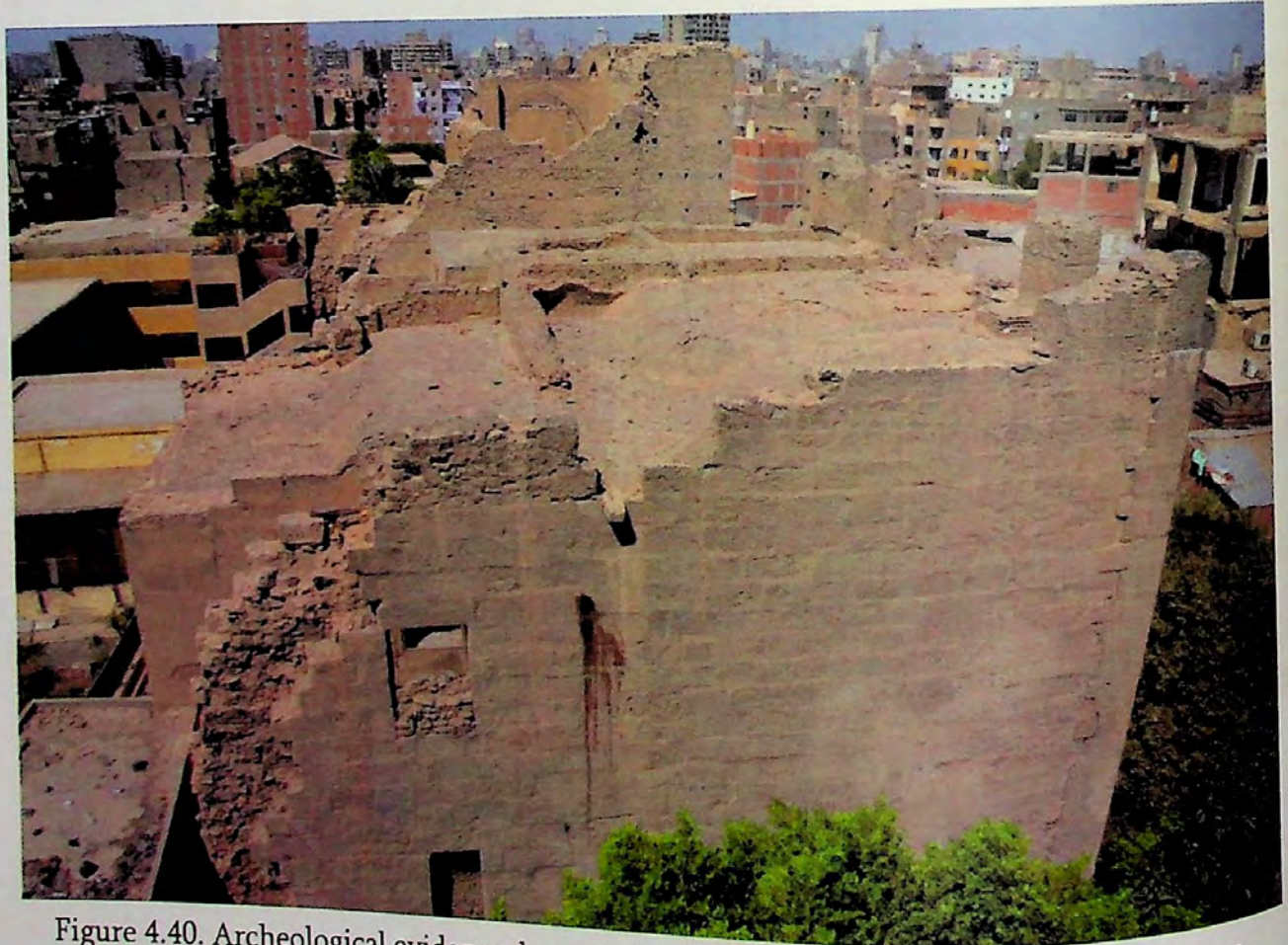
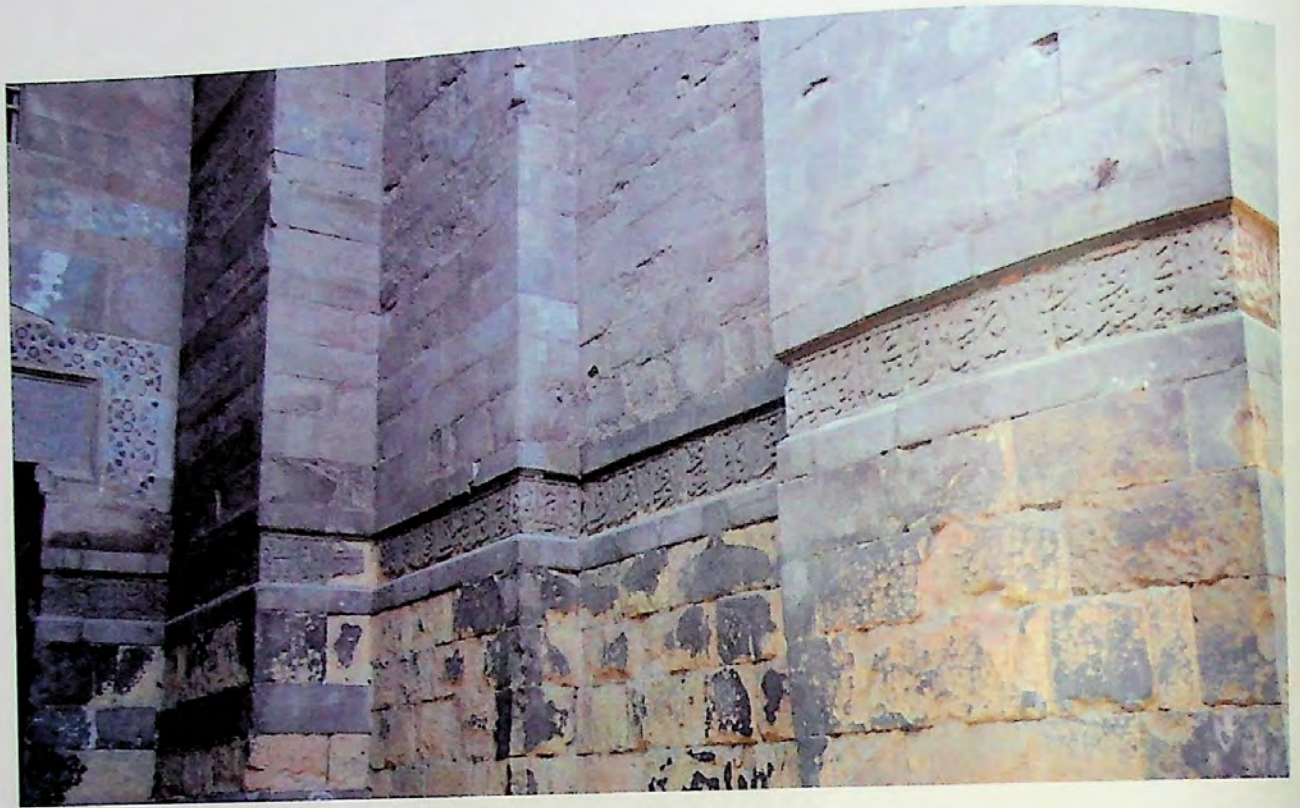


Figure 4.40. Archeological evidence do not indicate that the portal was built on two stages.

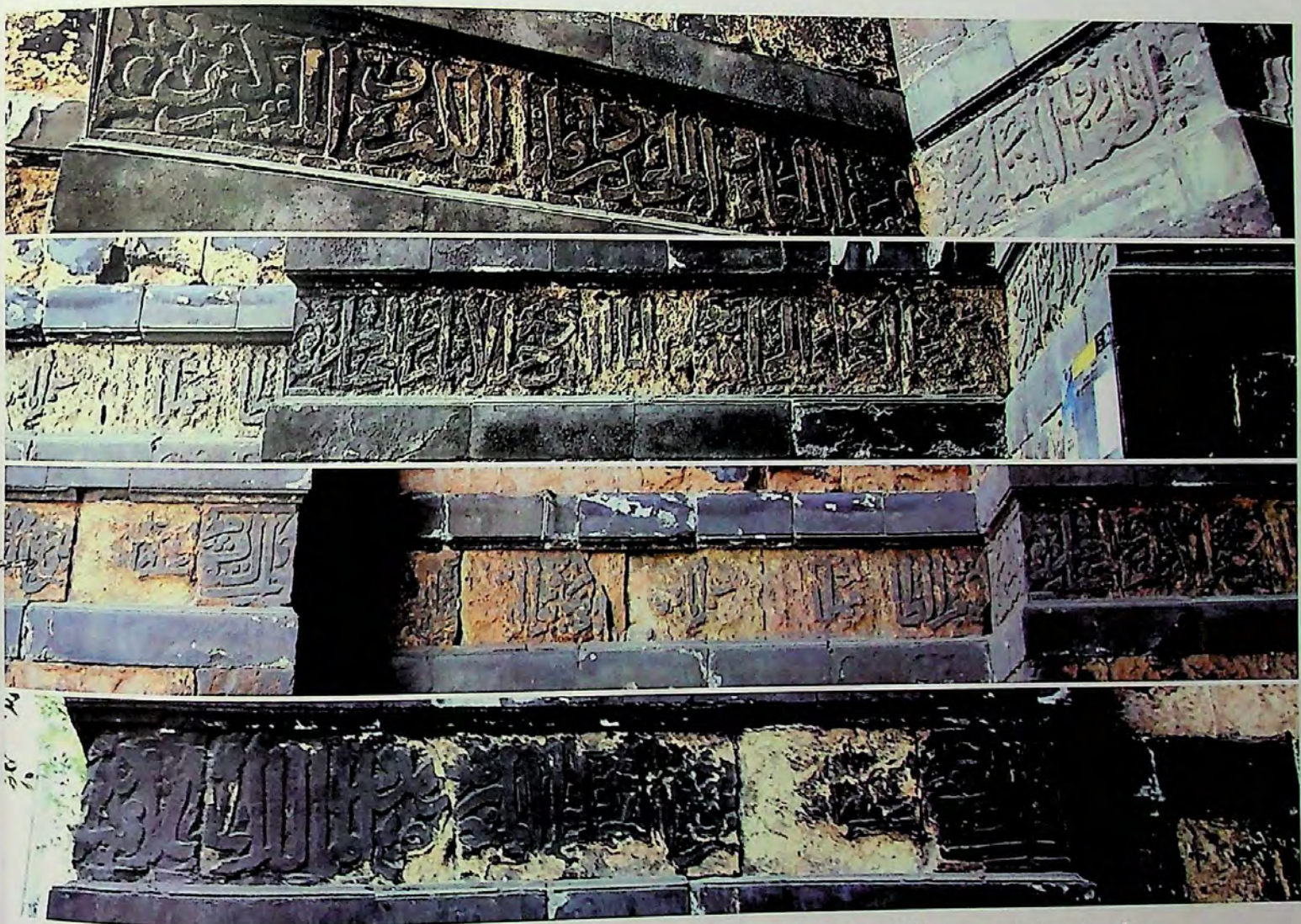


Figure 4.41. Different fragments of the inscription band showing different carving depths.



Figure 4.42. The title *al-isfahsalari* used in the 14th century.

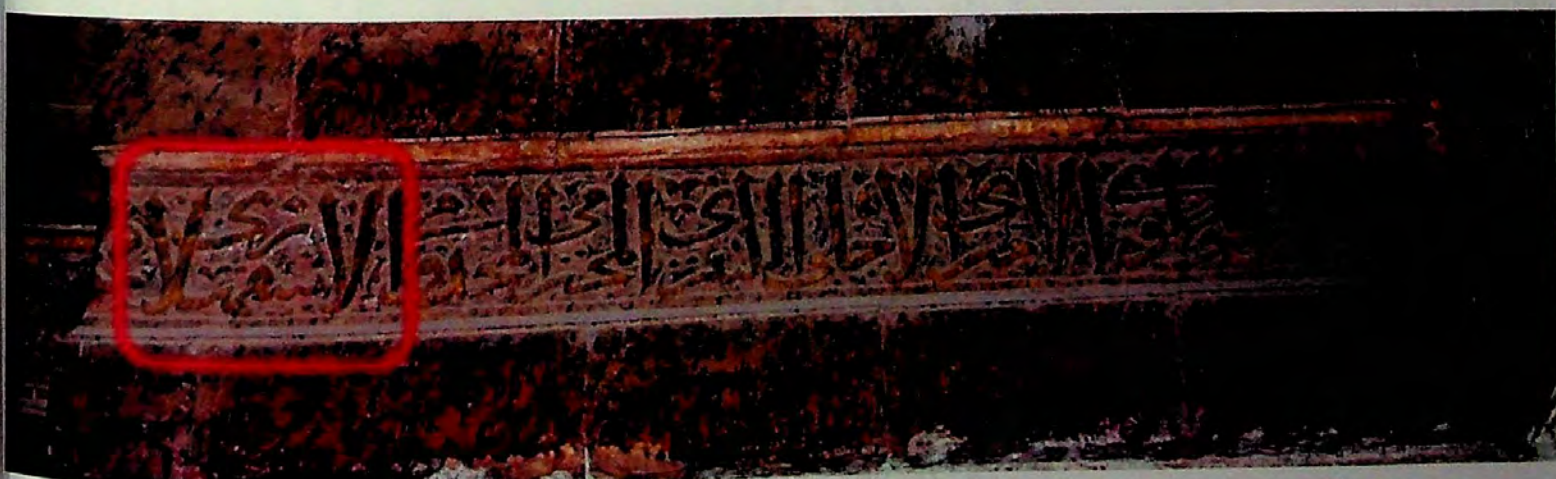


Figure 4.43. The title *al-isfahsalari* used in the 14th century on the portal and in the vestibule.

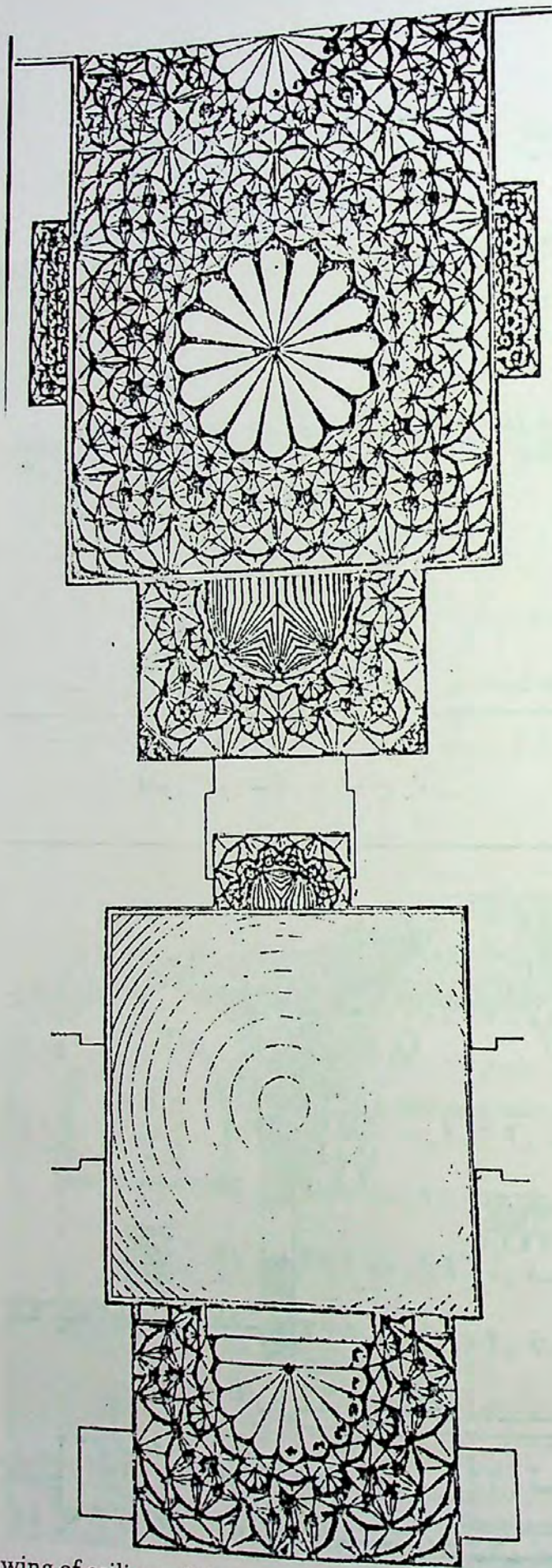


Figure 4.44. A complete drawing of ceilings of the portal and the vestibule of the Palace of Qawsun (after Rizk Atlas).



Figure 4.45. The vestibule of the palace.

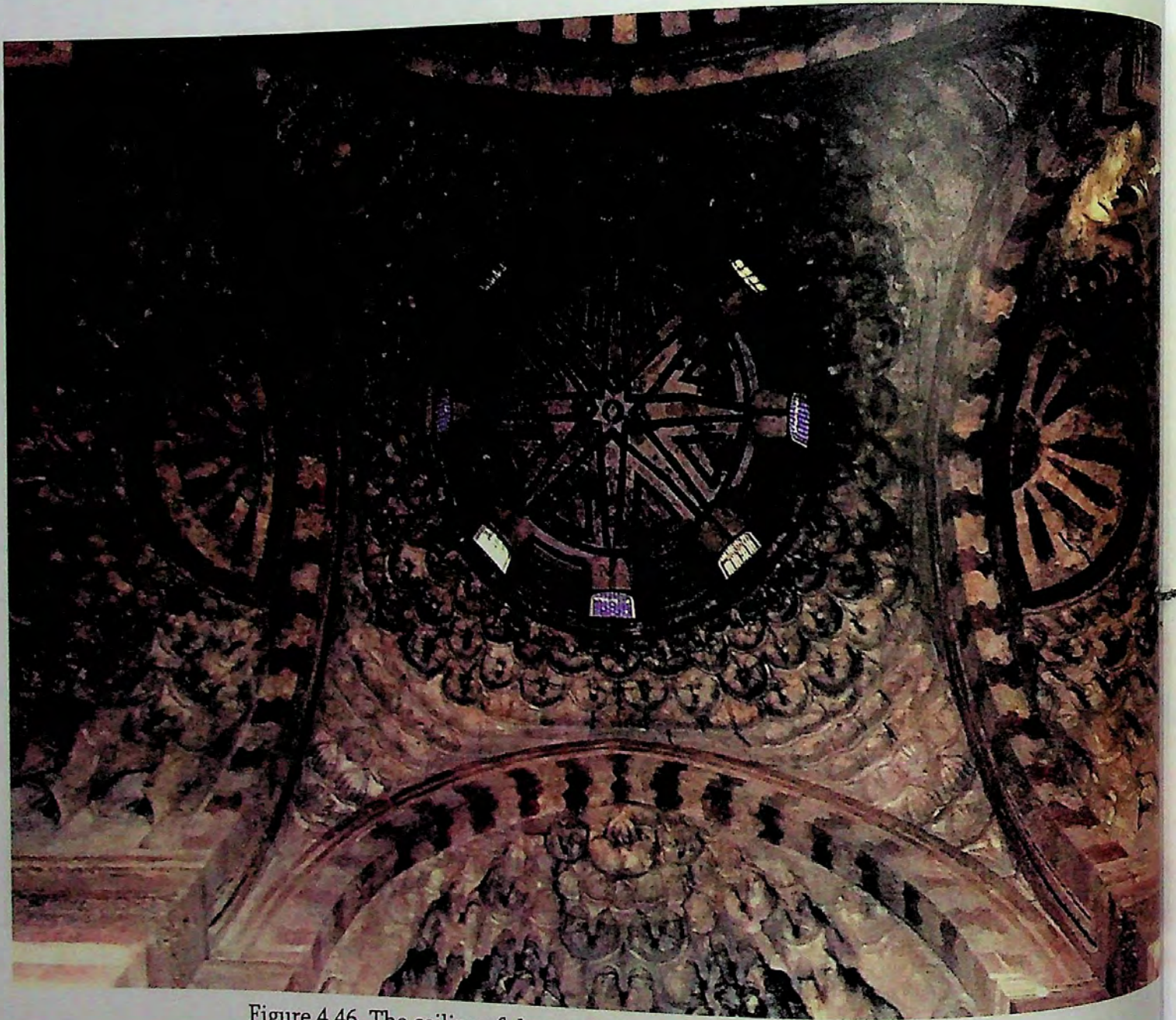


Figure 4.46. The ceiling of the vestibule of the Complex of Sultan Hasan.



Figure 4.47. The wall opposite the doorway features a recess topped with stalactites and a ribbed half dome.

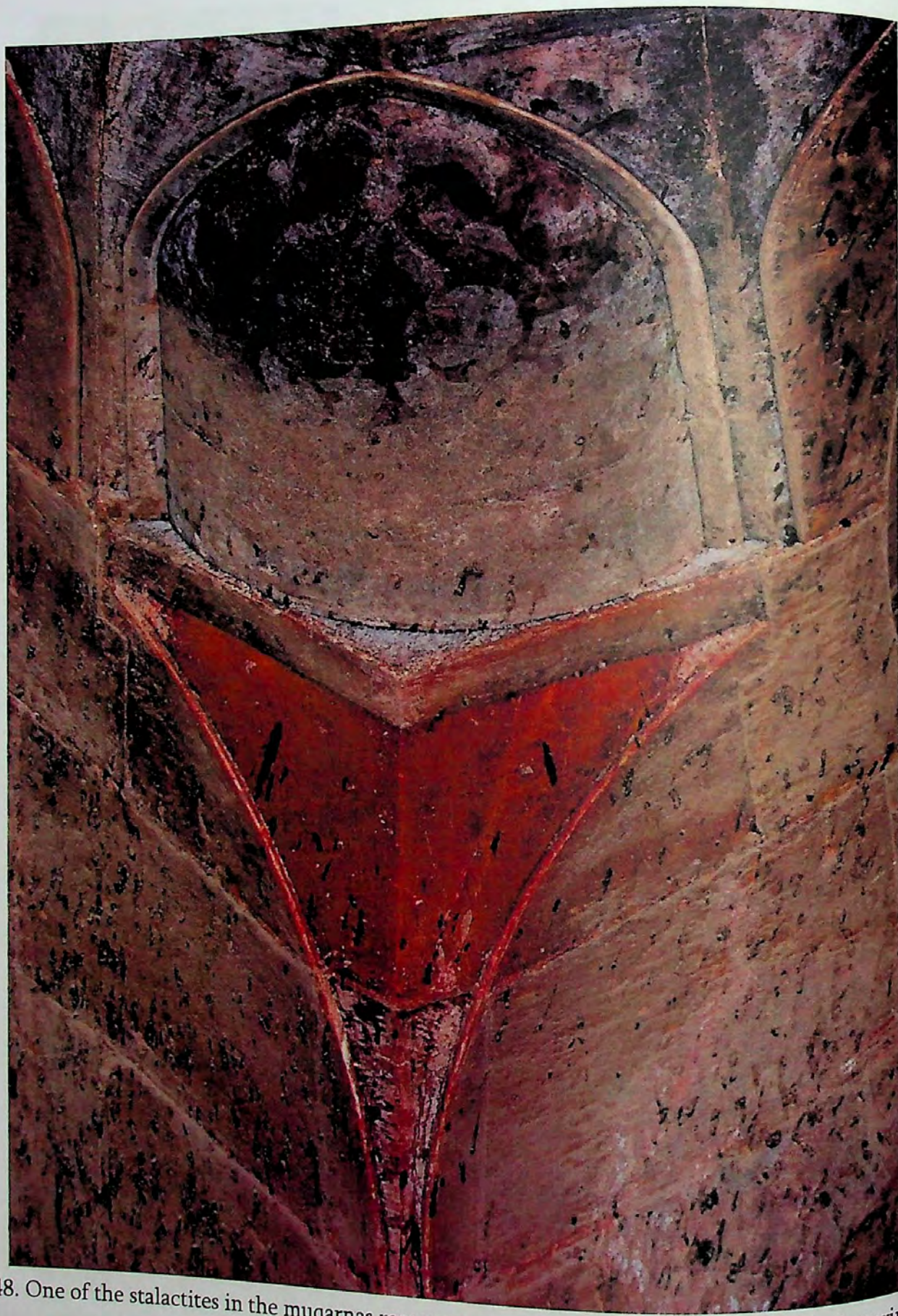


Figure 4.48. One of the stalactites in the muqarnas recess opposite the entrance in the vestibule featuring traces of floral ornaments.

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Figure 4.49. A parallel to the painted muqarnas element can be found in the Sabil of Faraj ibn Barquq located nowadays outside Bab Zuwayla.

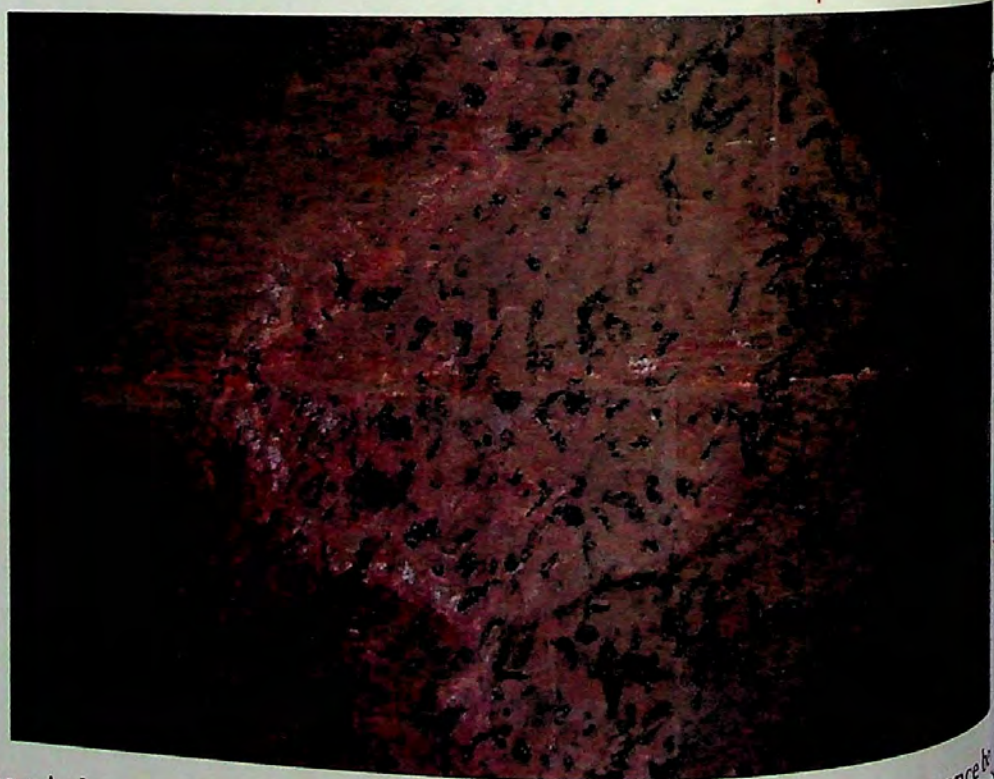
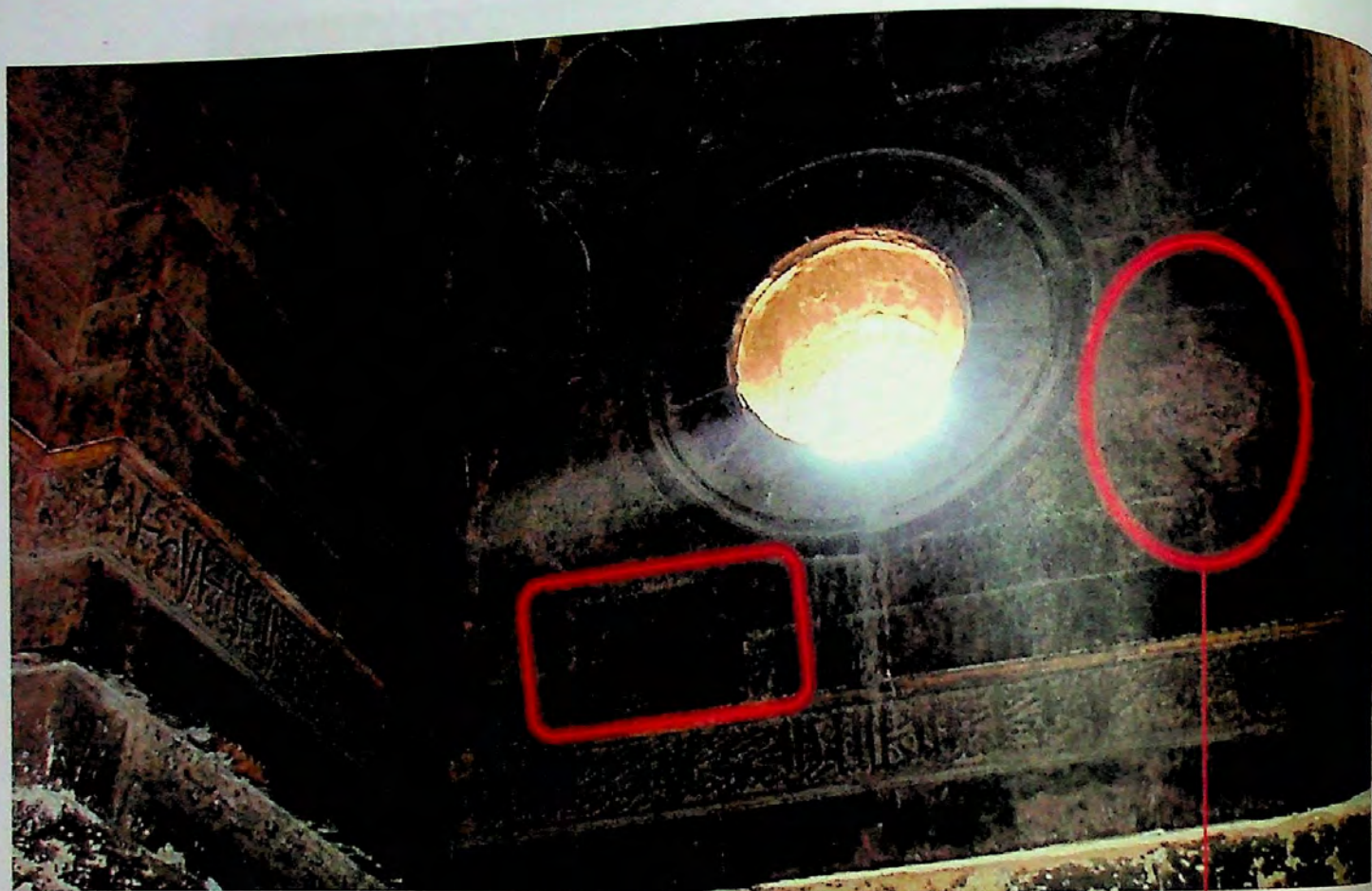


Figure 4.50. On the either side of the window are traces of two Mamluk *bukhariyyas* that may have been once painted and below them round traces of the blazon of the resident of the palace.



Figure 4.51. The *mastaba* in the vestibule of the Complex of Sultan Hasan.



Figure 4.52. The 'Qalawun-set' of windows in the vestibule of the palace surrounded by a wooden frame for support.



Figure 4.53. The inscription band in the vestibule with traces of yellow gilding still visible on some parts.



Figure 4.54. Before the space that would have contained the name of Yashbak, we find سيف السيفي still readable. Succeeding it, the space that may have included the name Yashbak or Emir Sayf al-Din Qawsun al-Sayfi al-Malik al-Nasiri al-Saqi.



Figure 4.55. The central arch beam that supports the 'room of the guard' on the left.

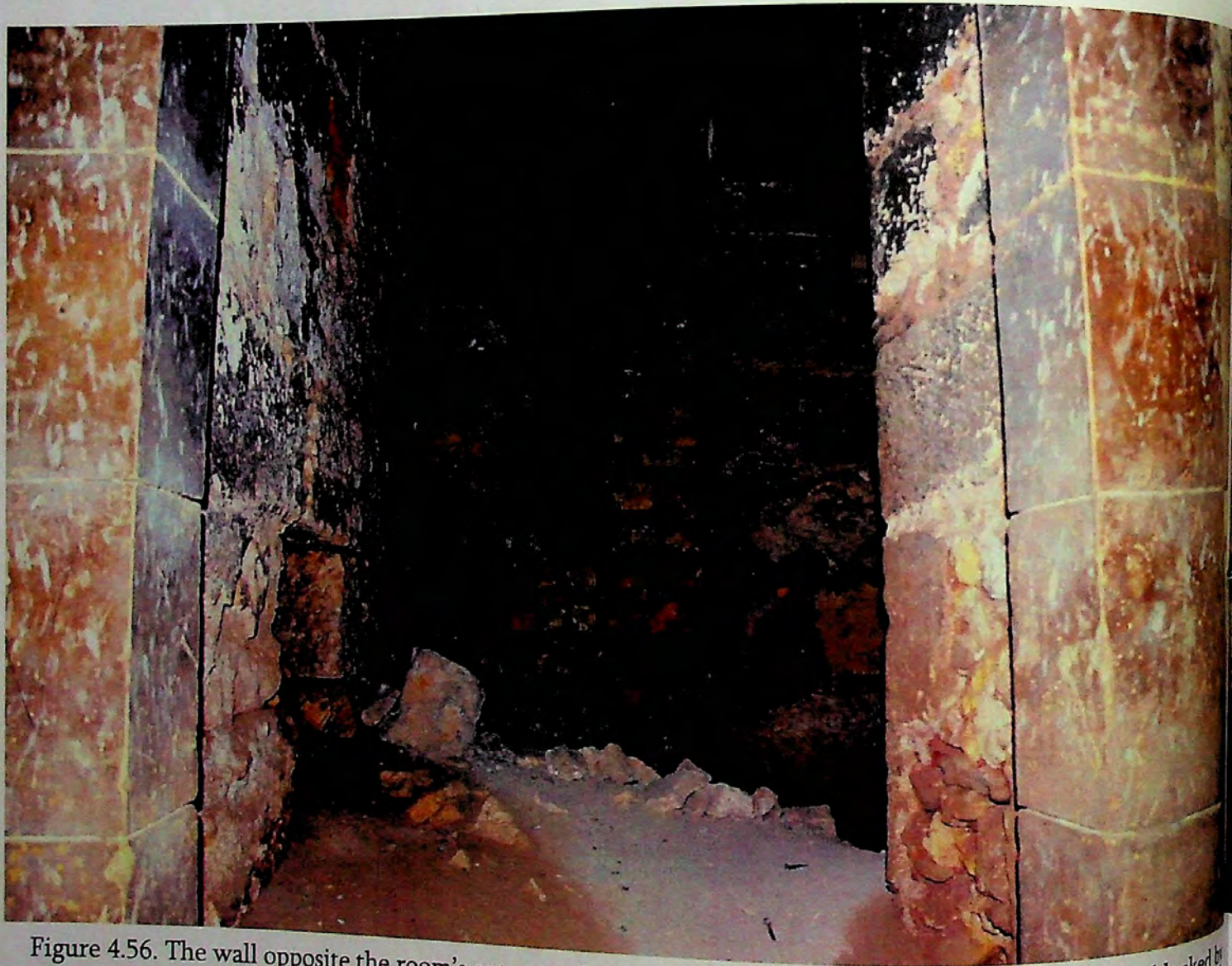
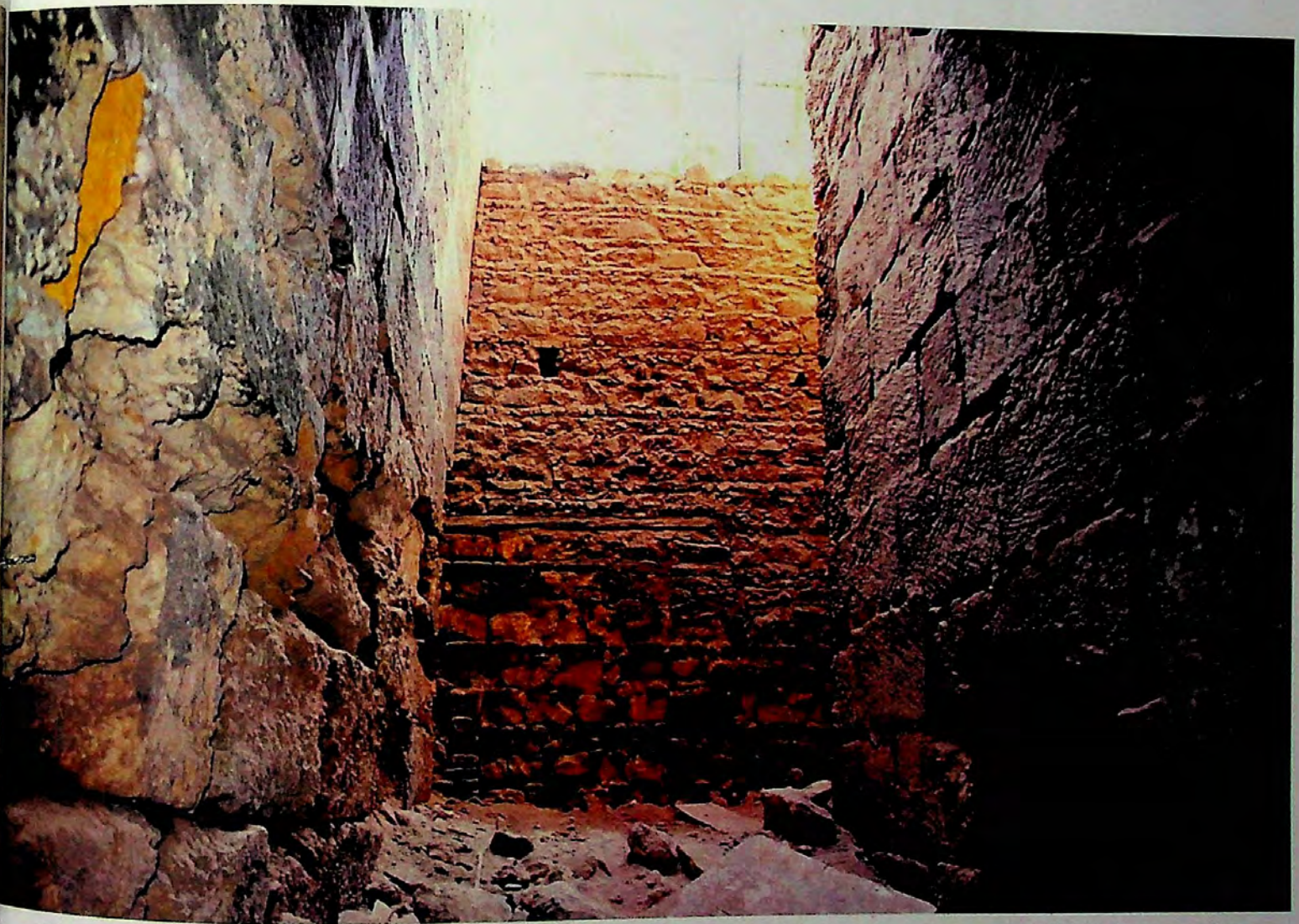


Figure 4.56. The wall opposite the room's entrance that may have once lead to a corridor is currently blocked by wall of alternating courses of stones and bricks.

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blocked by
Figure 4.57. The corridor that led to the stairs of the palace is now blocked by a recent wall built between the palace and the school of 'Uthman Mahir.



Figure 4.58. The corridor is topped with a flat wooden ceiling at its beginning with bare beams that are modern

Figure

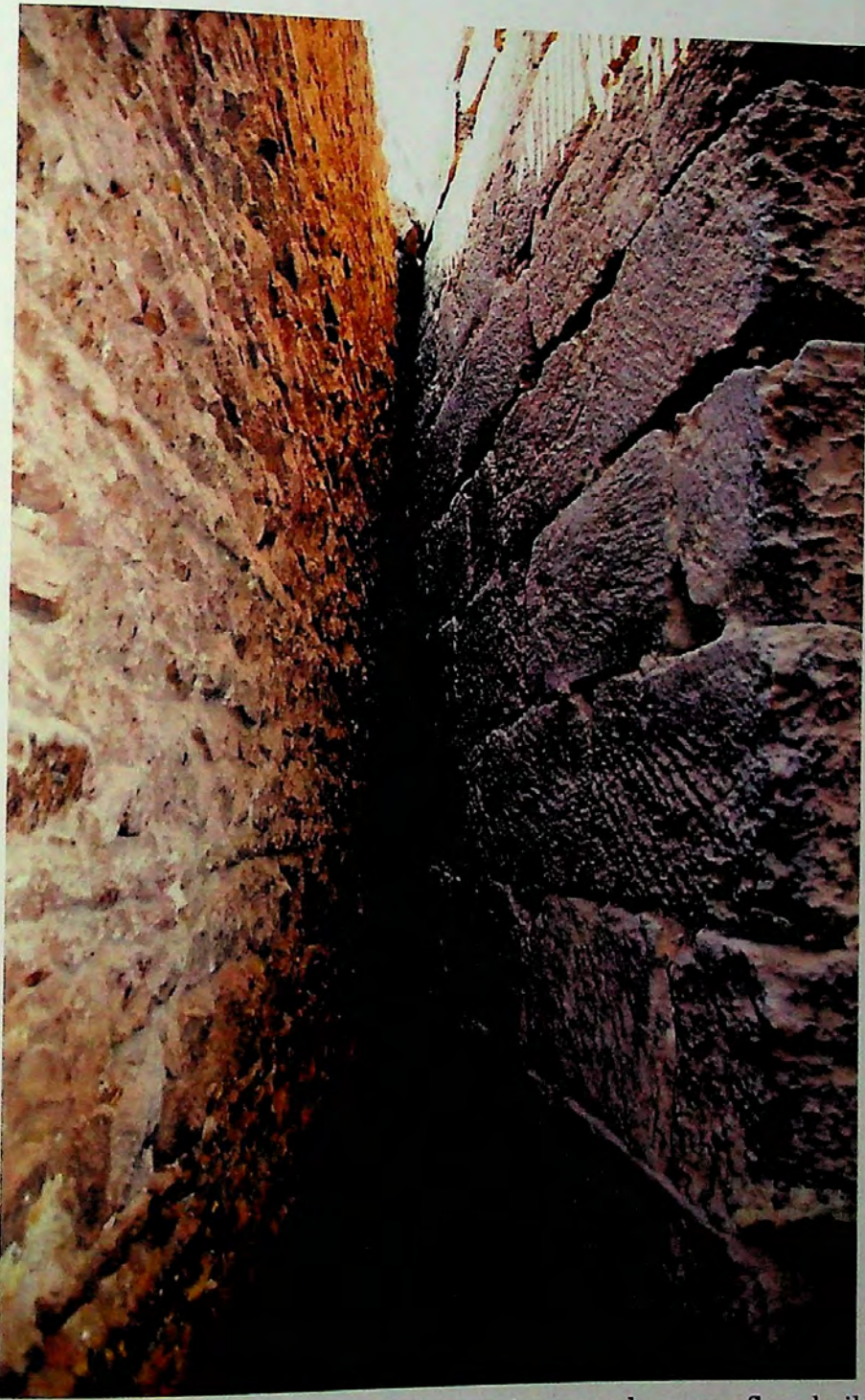


Figure 4.59. The bent wall that would have once carried the staircase to the upper floor built at an obtuse angle in comparison to the palace's regular grid.

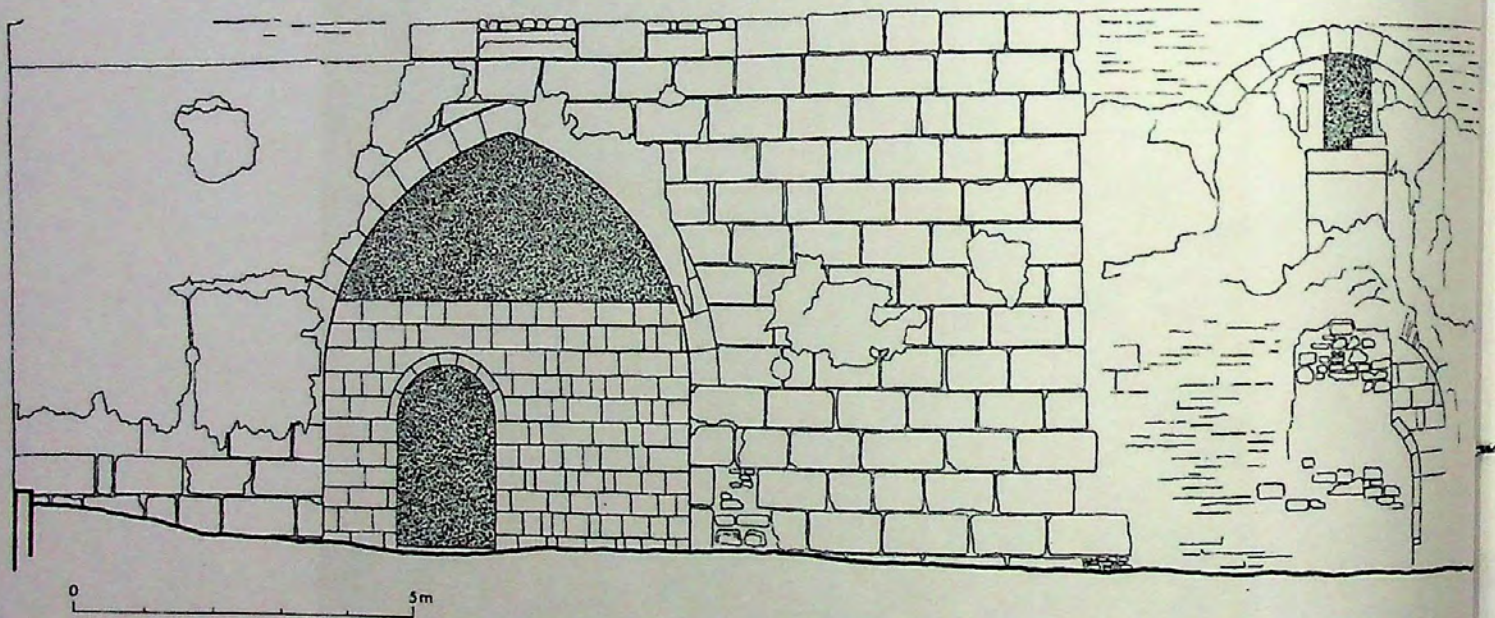
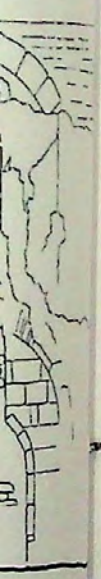


Figure 4.60. The entrances to the first lower hall (after Garcin, Revault, Maury et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire*).



Figure 4.61. The entrance that was once right beside the portal (after Tavernari, *L'évolution du Qasr Qawsûn-Yashbak*).



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Figure 4.62. On the left: The entrance of the first lower halls partially blocked (after Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, neg. EA.CA.2734. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library, Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library).
On the right: A closer picture on the arched entrance to the first lower halls (after Revault and Maury, *Palais des maisons du Caire*).

Figure



Figure 4.63. The higher rounded arch on the outside (after Tavernari, *L'évolution du Qasr Qawsûn-Yashbak*).



Figure 4.64. The higher rounded arch on the outside that may have once been composed of two levels of cross vaults.



Figure 4.65. The lower halls of the palace of Bashtak labelled in *Palais et maisons du Caire* as a portico.



Figure 4.66. The first lower halls: one of the aisles running East-West (by Muhammad Emad).



Figure 4.67. The vaulted halls of the first lower halls: one of the aisles running on the North-South axis.

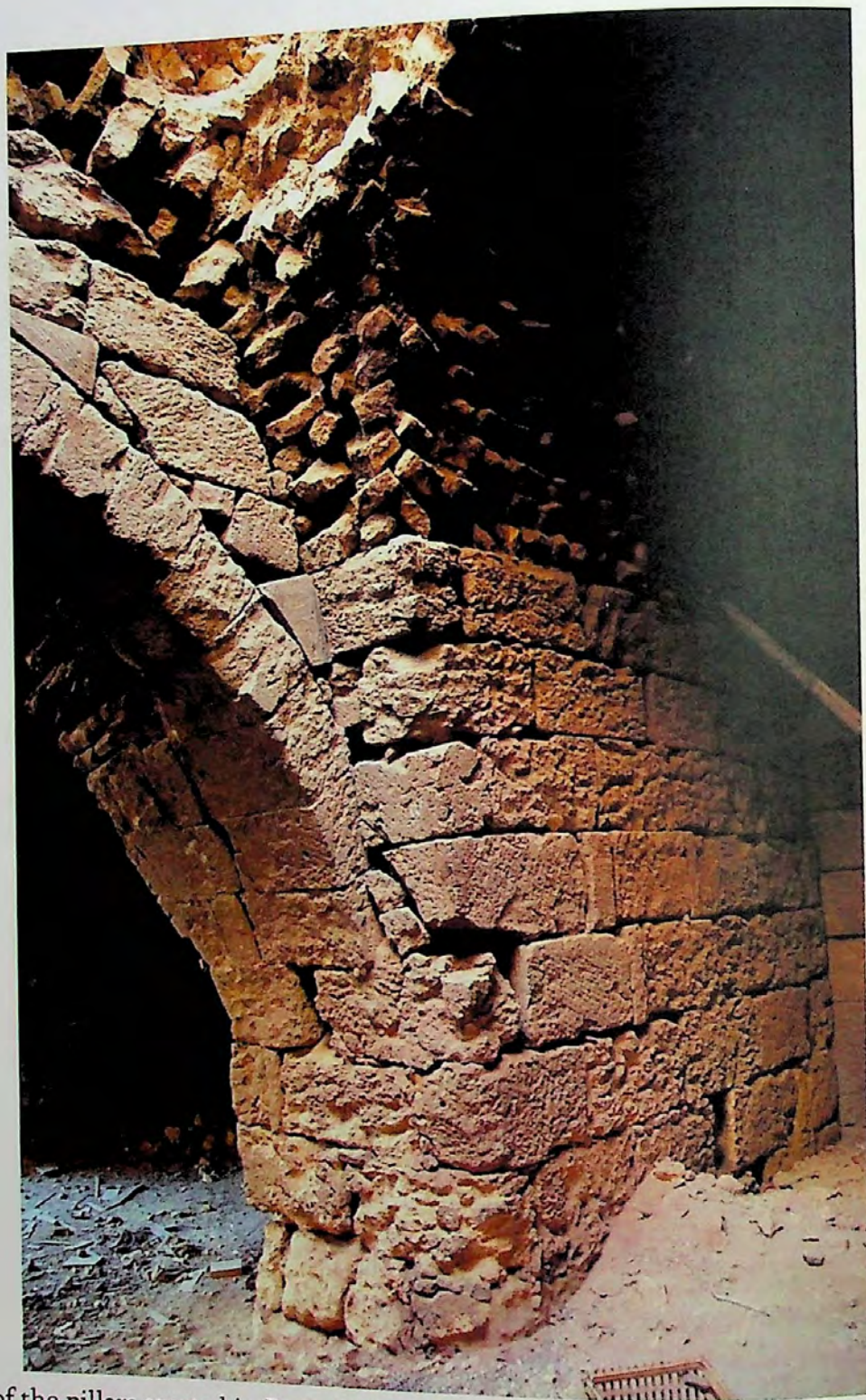


Figure 4.68. One of the pillars erected in Period I (Plan A). A detail of the different construction methods and materials.

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Figure 4.69. The arch that may have once opened up to the other parts at the southern end of the palace is interrupted by a massive pillar that nearly blocks its opening (no. 8 a on Plan E)

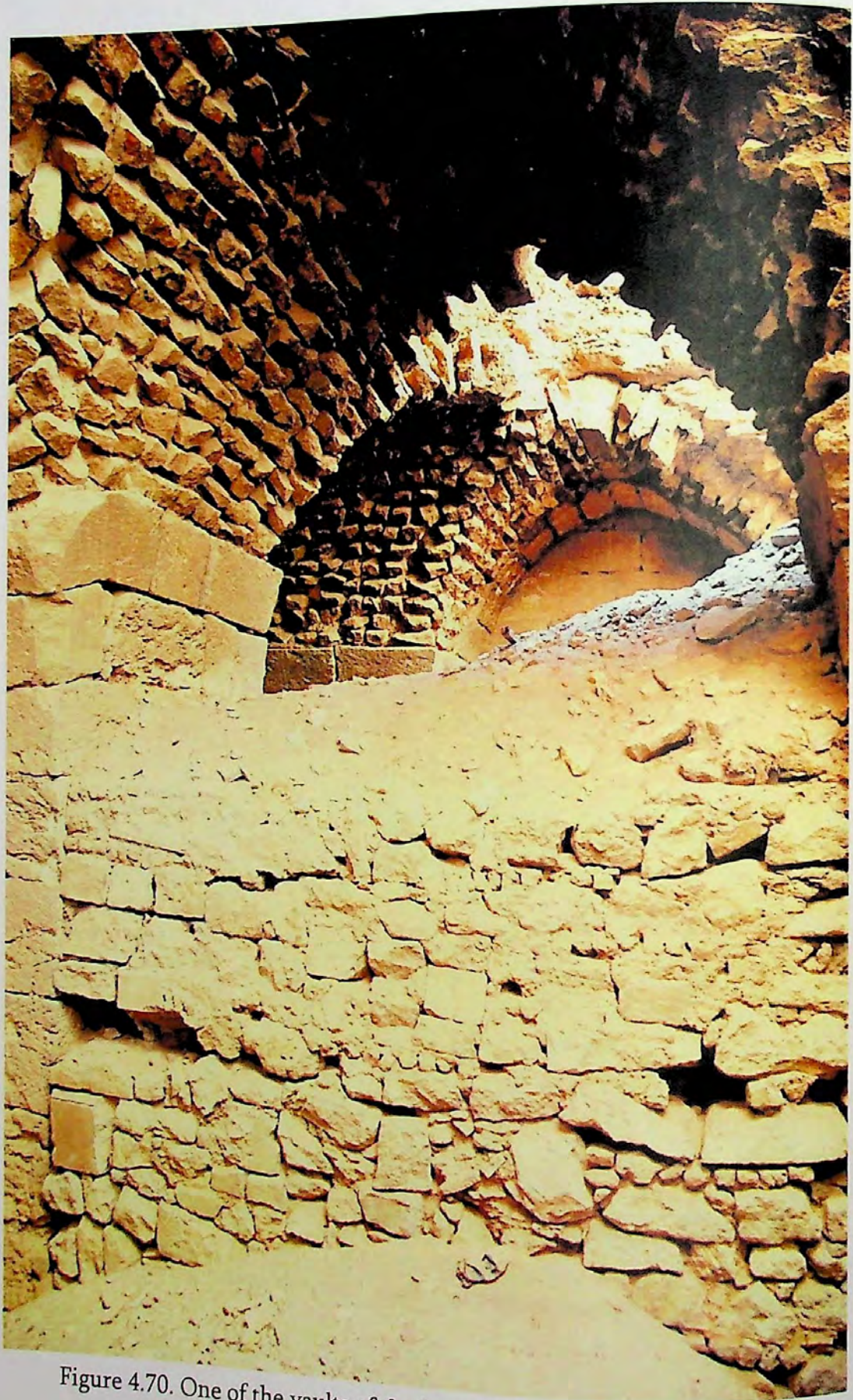


Figure 4.70. One of the vaults of the lower hall appears to be built up.

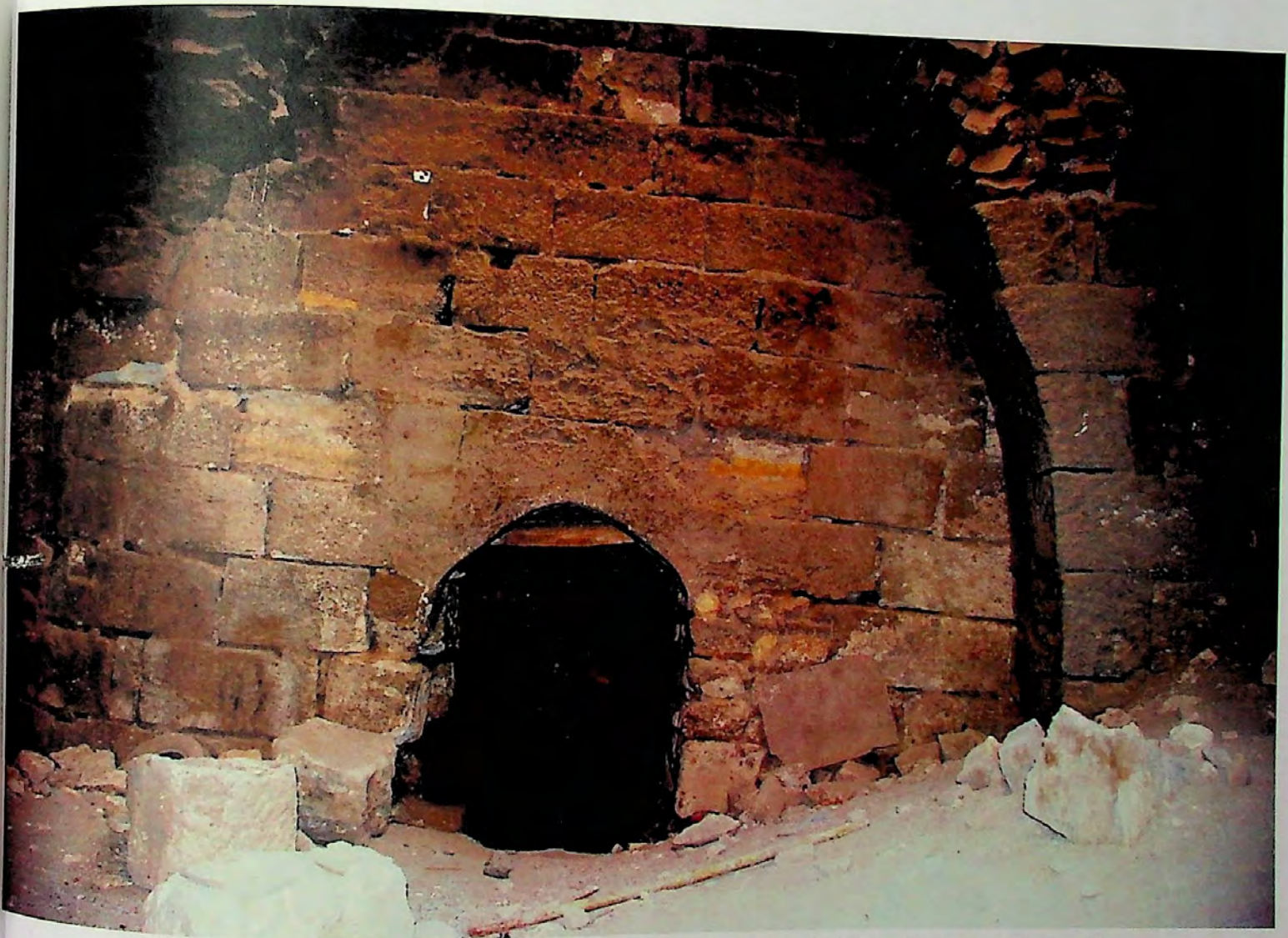


Figure 4.71. The peculiar room at the end of the first lower hall (by Muhammad Emad).

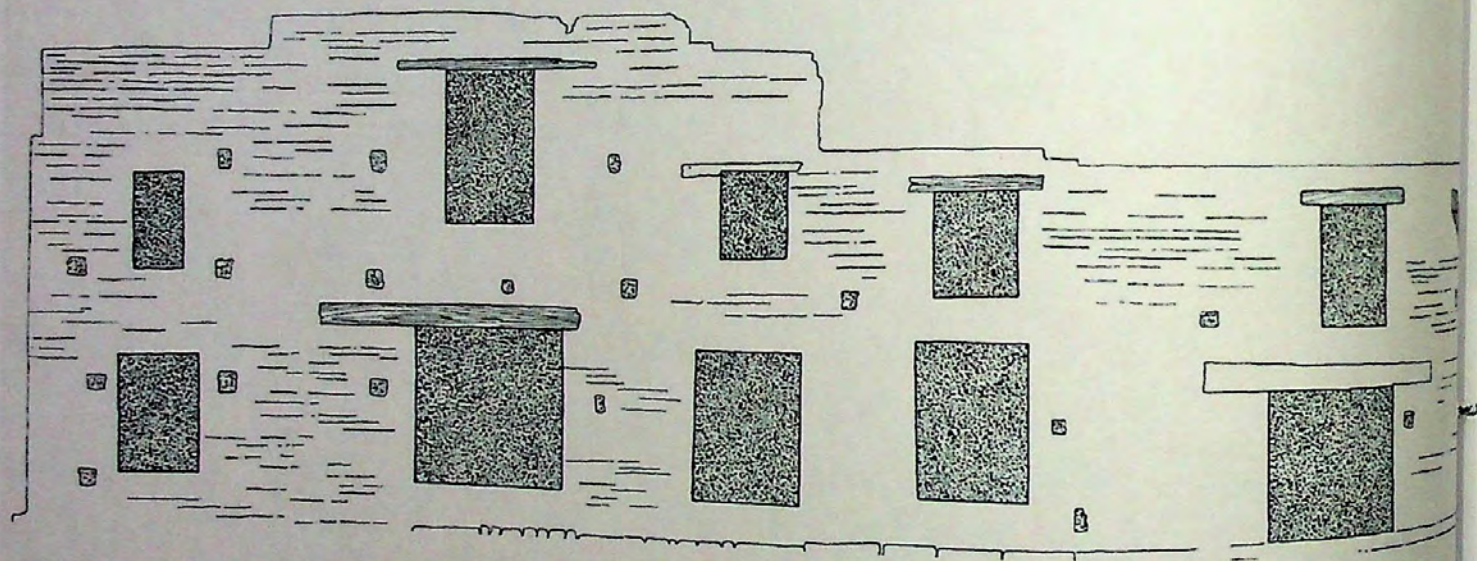


Figure 4.72. The first upper halls (after Garcin, Revault, Maury et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire*).

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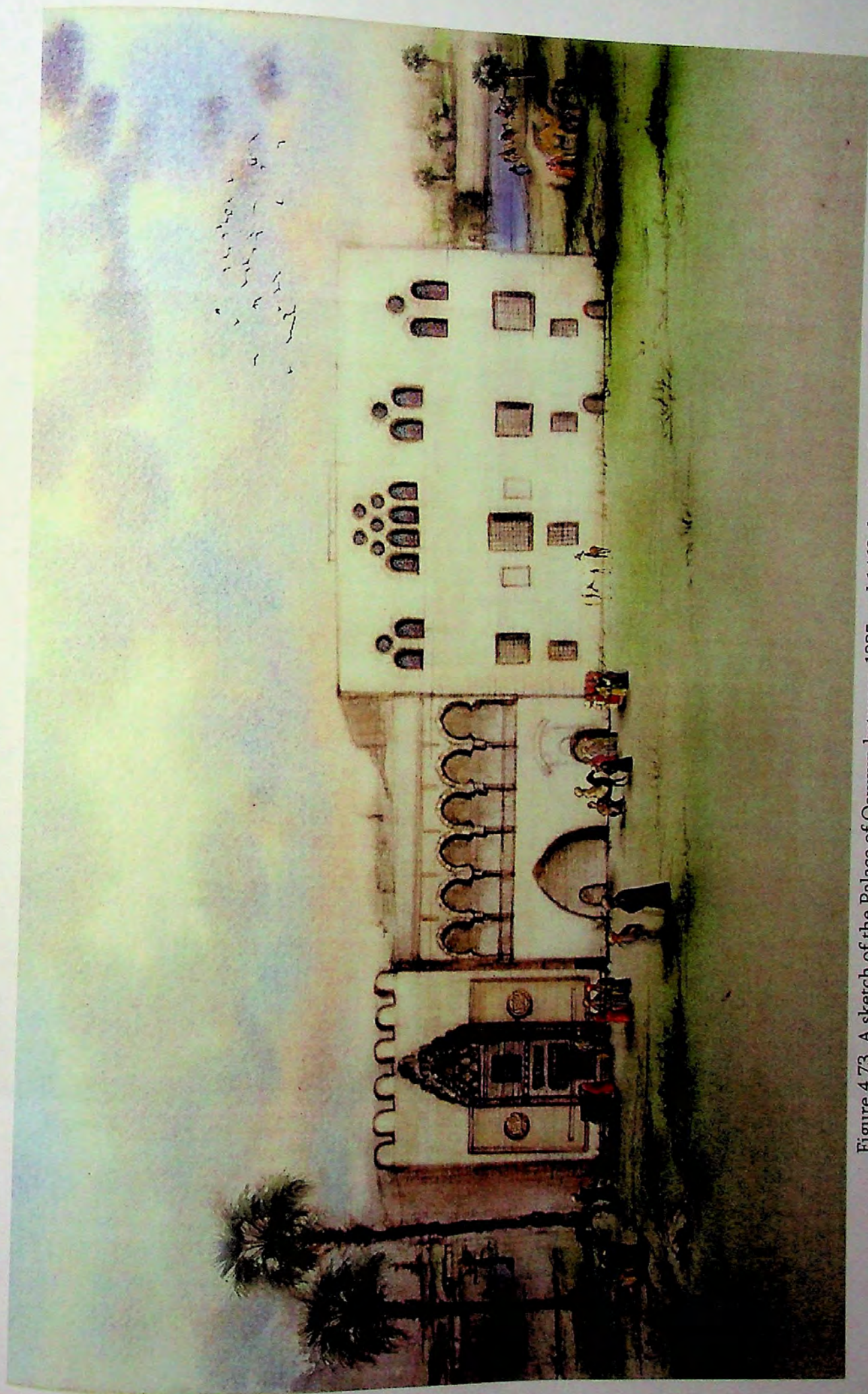


Figure 4.73. A sketch of the Palace of Qawsun between 1335 and 1468 showing the *maq'ad* that may have once been in place of the later Ottoman dwellings. (Sketch by Dana Al Deeb).

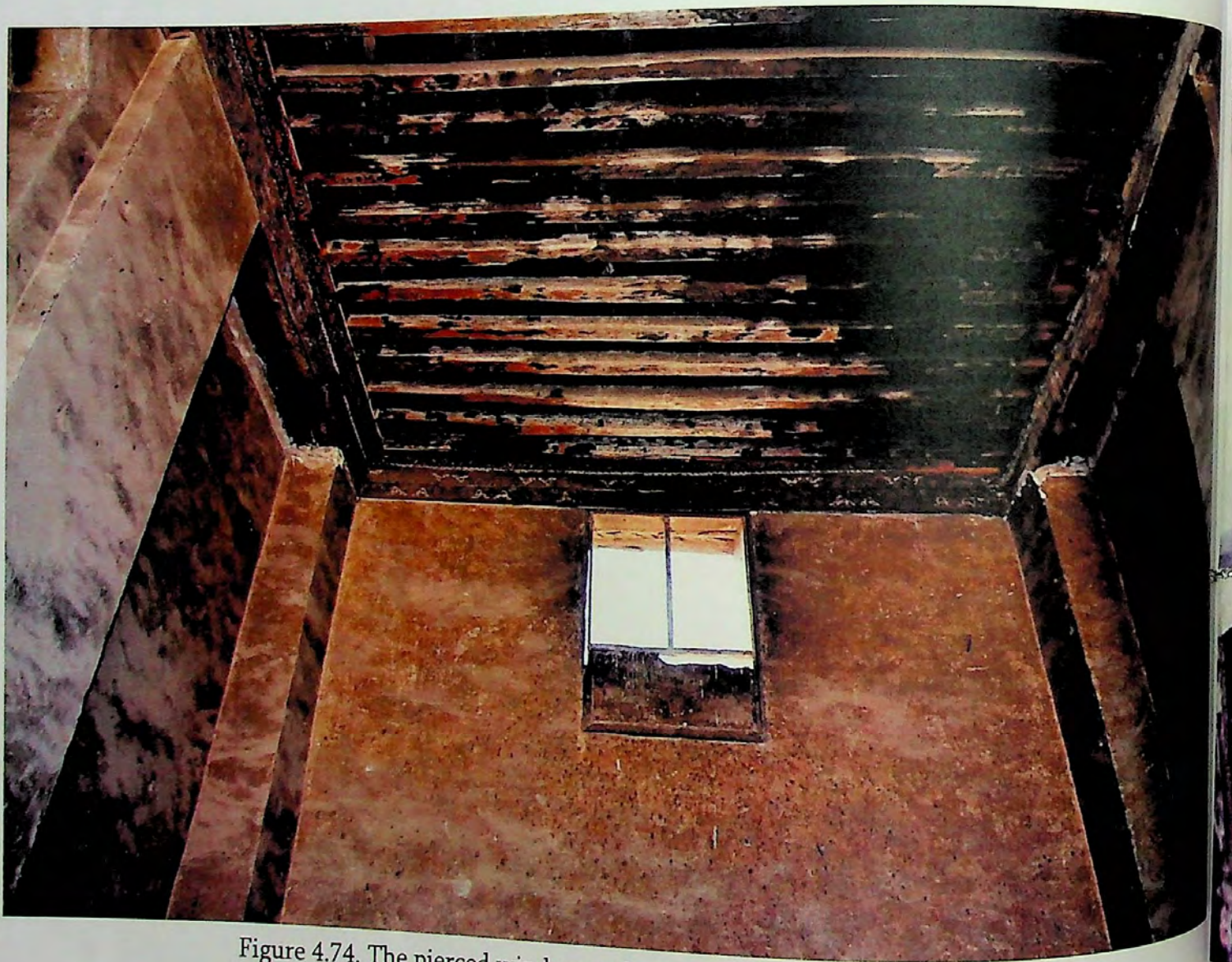


Figure 4.74. The pierced window at the rear of the *qa'a* (no. 22 on Plan G).



Figure 4.75. The ceiling of the *qa'a* in the first upper halls before parts of it collapsed (after Tavernari, *L'évolution du Qasr Qawsûn-Yashbak*).

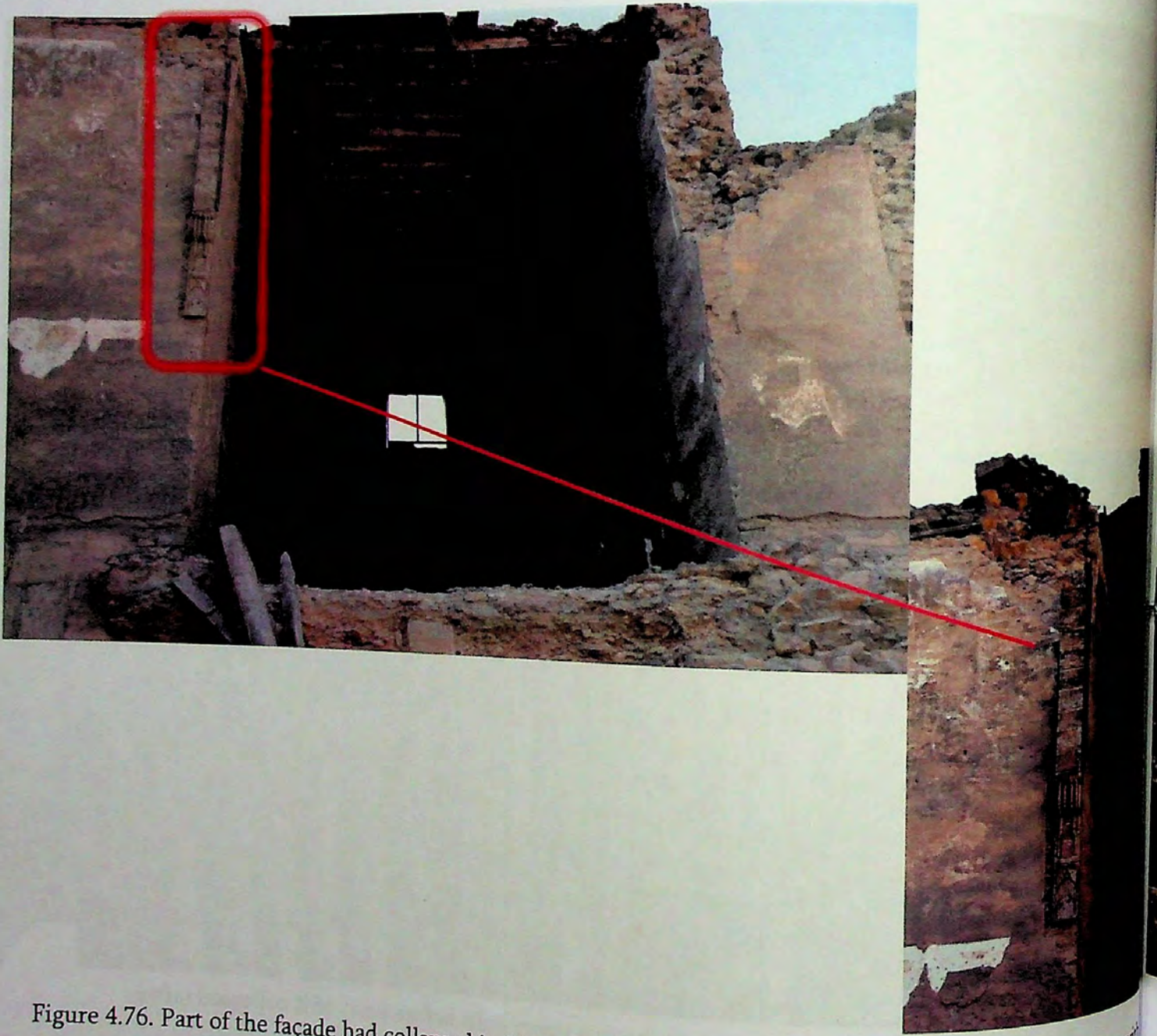


Figure 4.76. Part of the façade had collapsed in 2012 revealing the muqarnas frame and the wooden ceiling with projecting ribs of the first upper hall.



Figure 4.77. Details of the floral ornamentation on the wooden ceiling.



Figure 4.78. The ceiling in the sabil of the palace of Emir Taz built by 'Ali Aga Dar al-Sa'ada (1671).

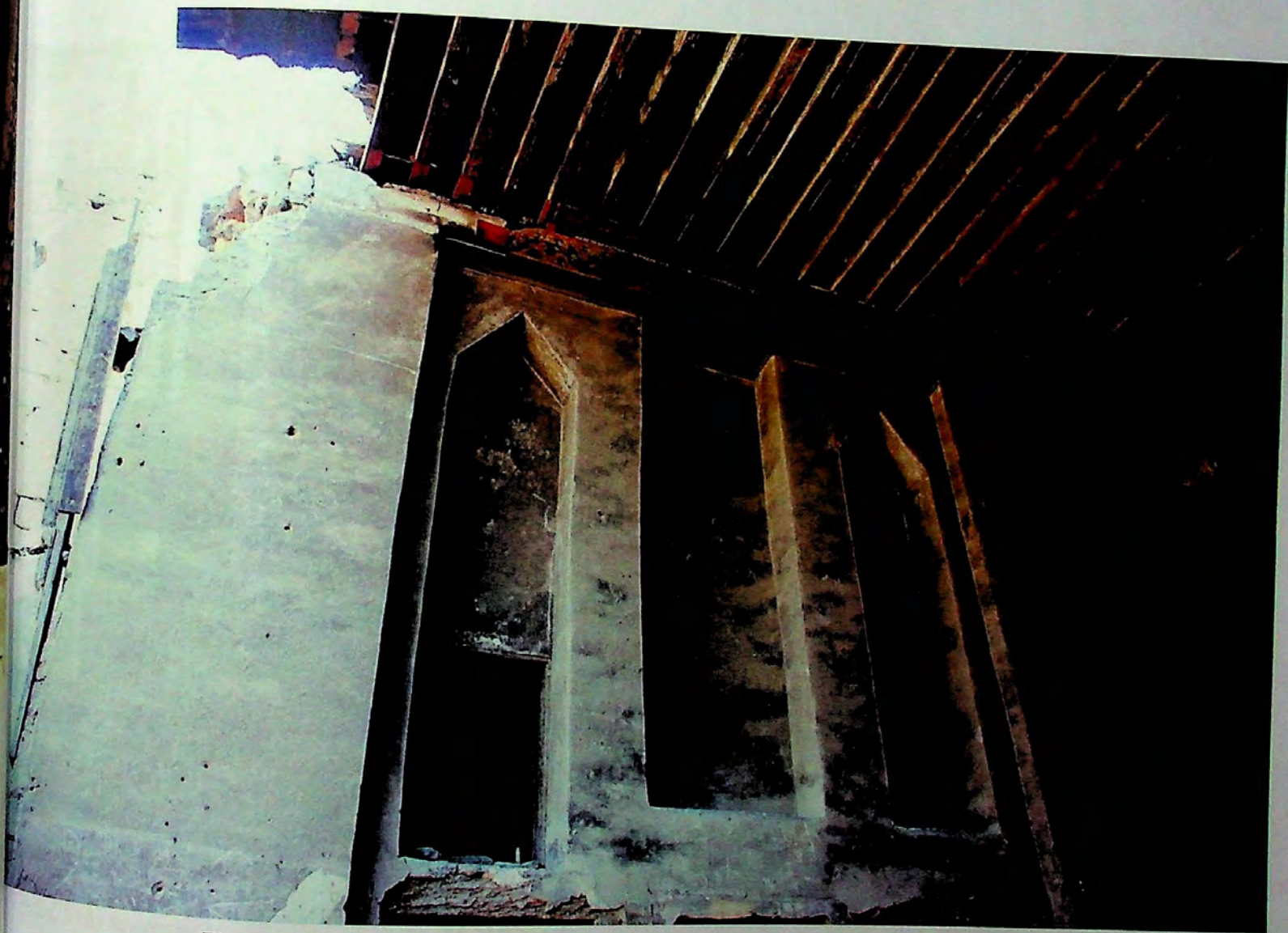


Figure 4.79. A view of the blind keel arches on the sides of the first upper hall.

71).



Figure 4.80. On the left: One of the *qa'ās* in the Ribat of the wife of Inal (after O'Kane, "Domestic and Religious Architecture in Cairo").
On the right: Remains of the *qa'a* of Bayt al-Mulla (after Garcin, Revault, Maury et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire*)



Figure 4.81. A latrine topped with a groin vault decorated with a geometric star ornament.

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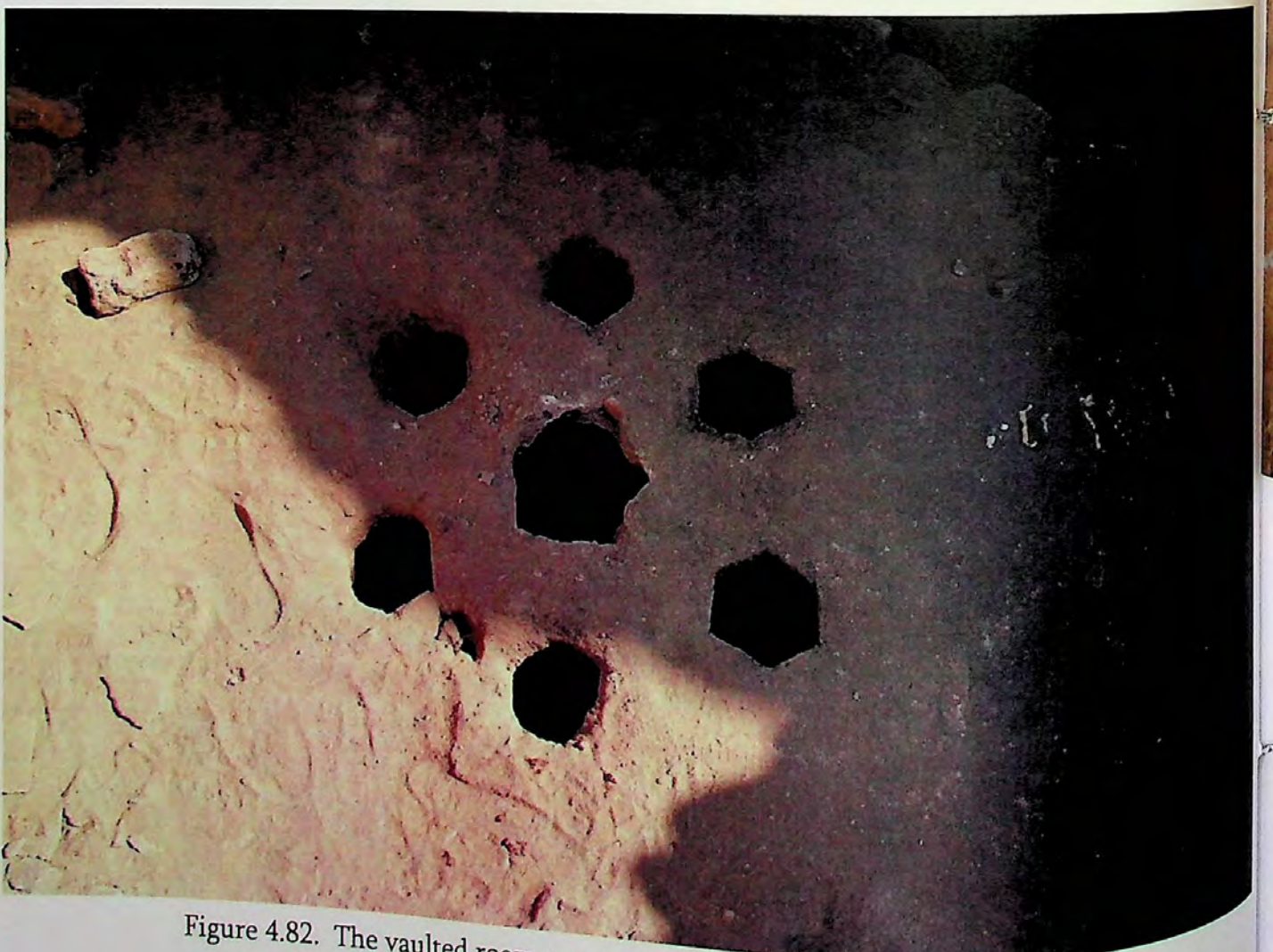


Figure 4.82. The vaulted room next to the latrine presumed to be a *hammam*.



Figure 4.83. The *qa'a* (no. 21 on Plan G) with a number of rooms arranged around it.

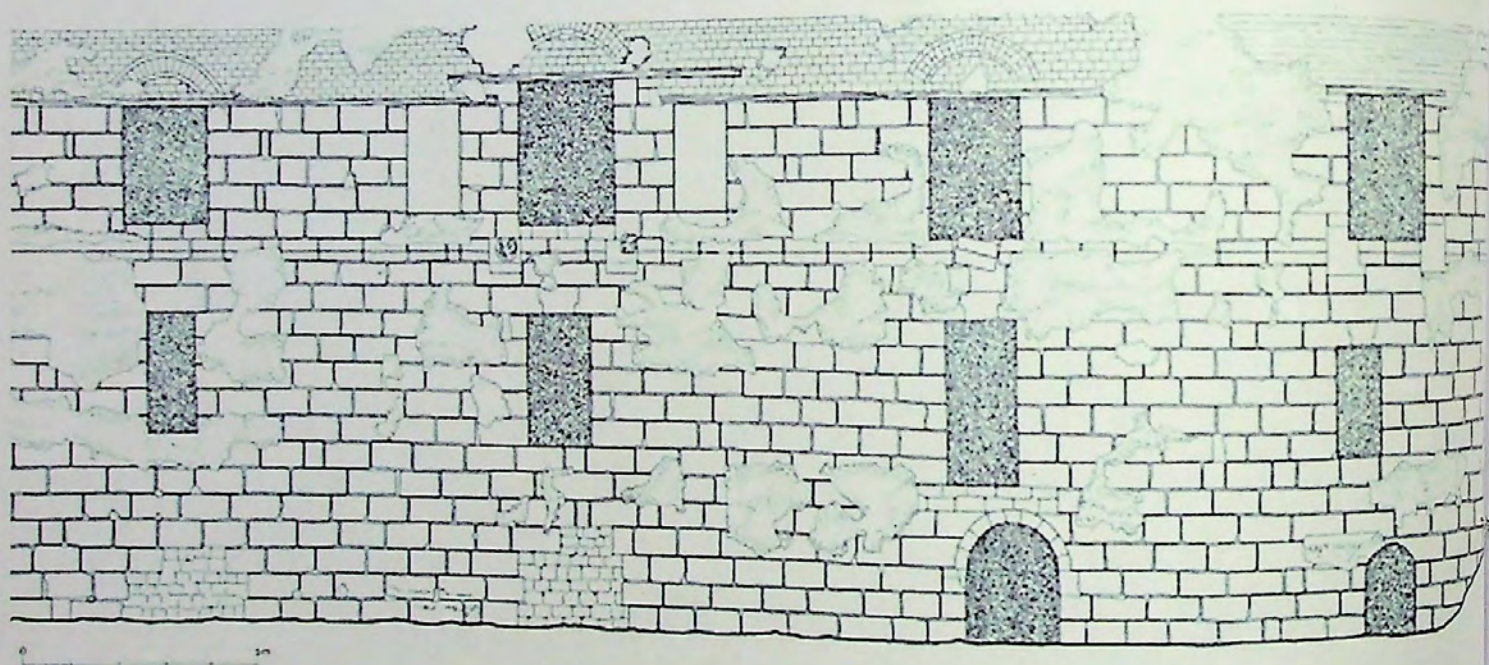


Figure 4.84. The elevation of the second lower hall (after Garcin, Revault, Maury et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire*)

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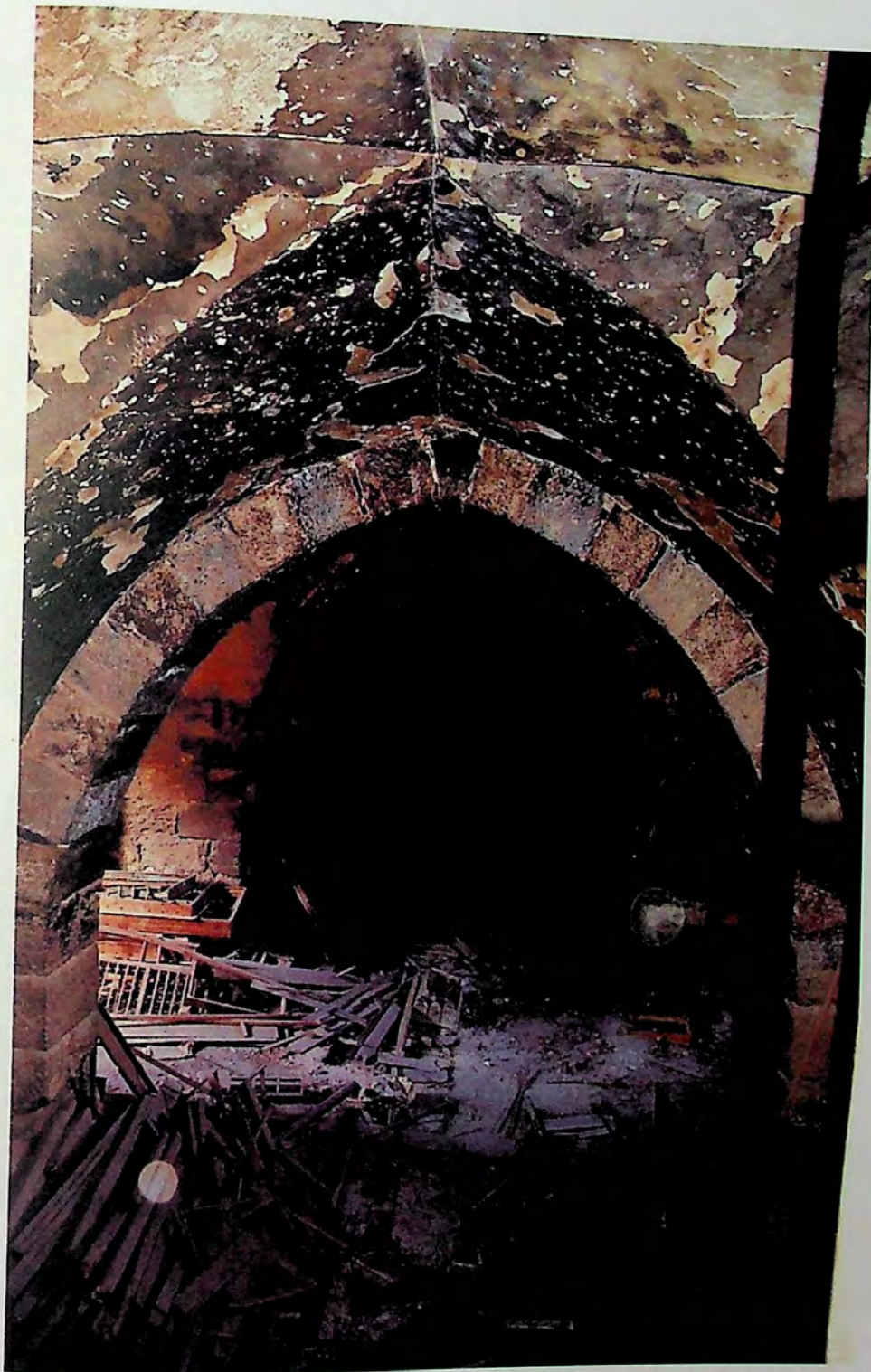


Figure 4.85. The roofing technique used for this *qa'a* composed of tunnel and cross-vaults coated with plaster.

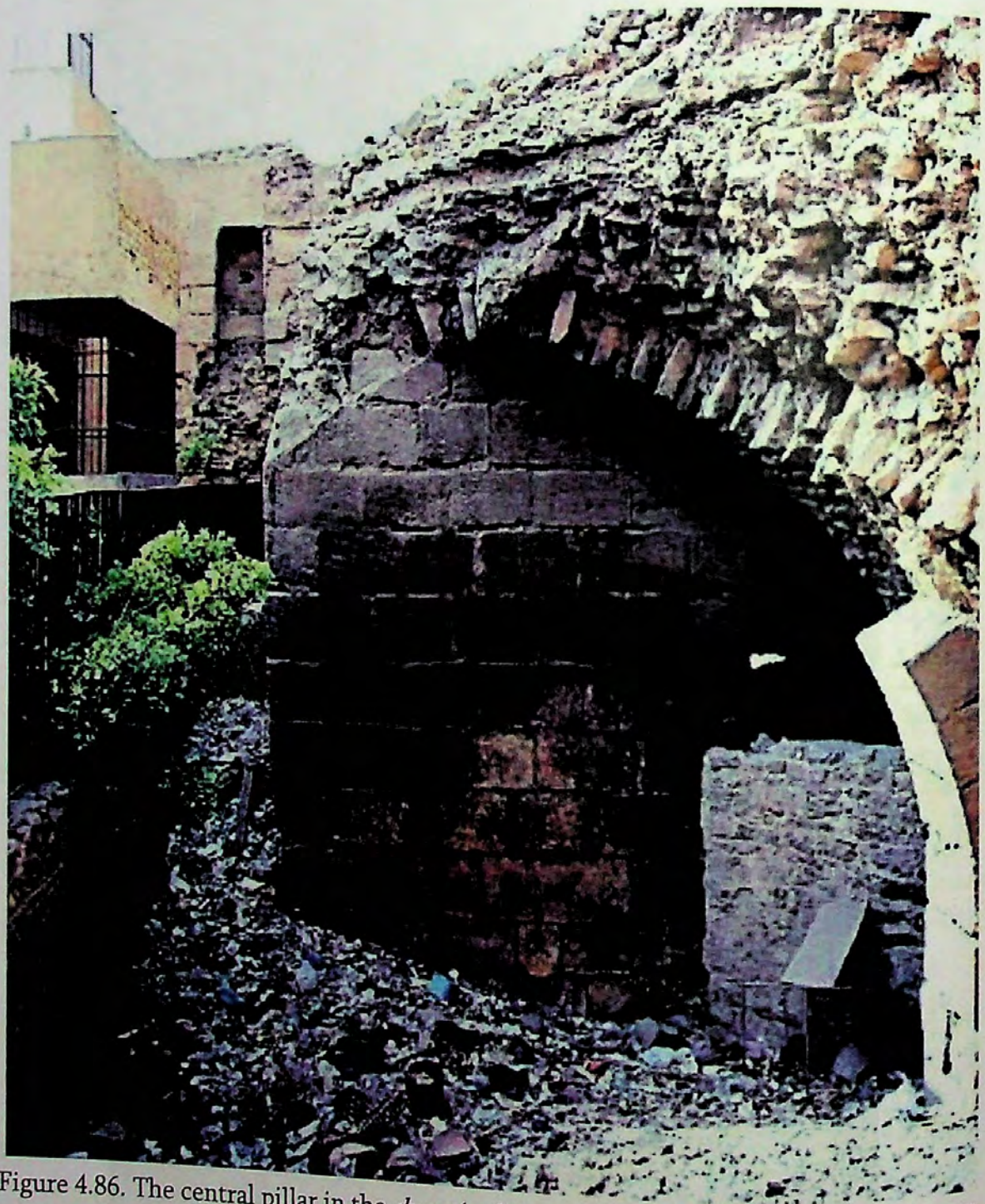


Figure 4.86. The central pillar in the *durqa'a* of the second lower hall (no. 11 on Plan E).



Figure 4.87. The corridor that once connected to the antechamber.

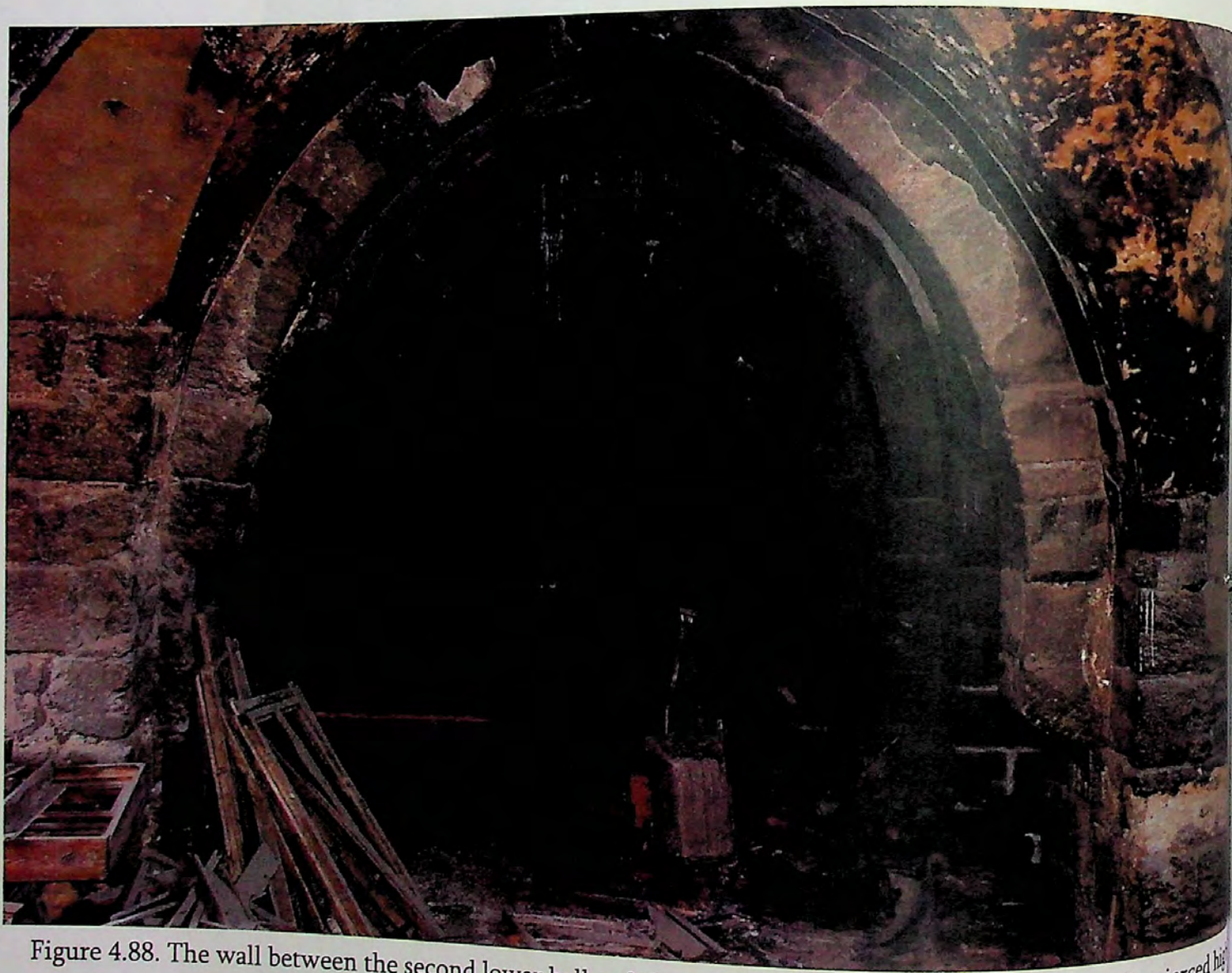


Figure 4.88. The wall between the second lower hall and the antechamber is blocked with traces of a pierced window.



Figure

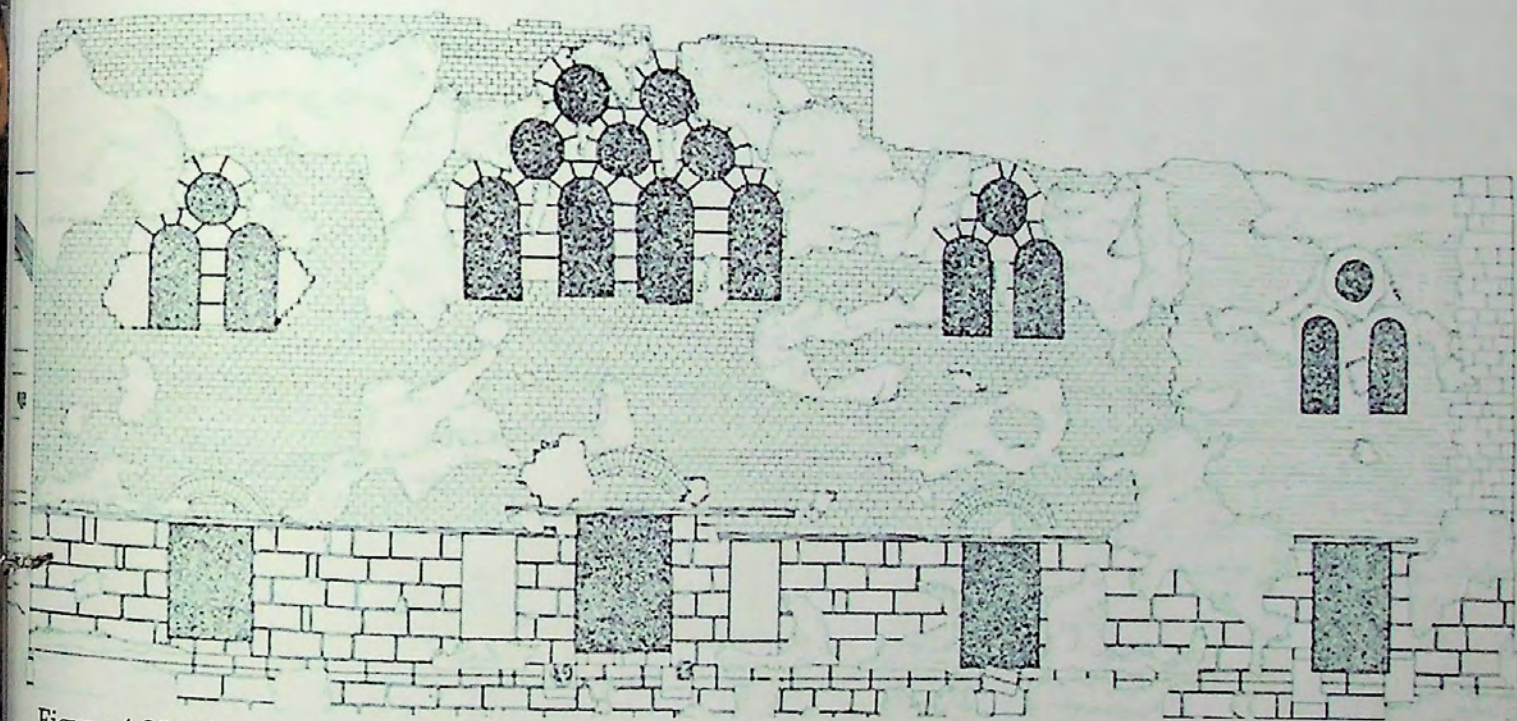


Figure 4.89. The elevation of the upper cruciform hall (after Garcin, Revault, Maury et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire*).

pierced by



Figure 4.90. The northern façade of the palace featuring different construction materials at different levels.

Figure



Figure 4.91. Beneath one of the rectangular windows we found two projecting wooden beams which may have constituted the support for a wooden structure in front of this window, perhaps a *mashrabiyya*.

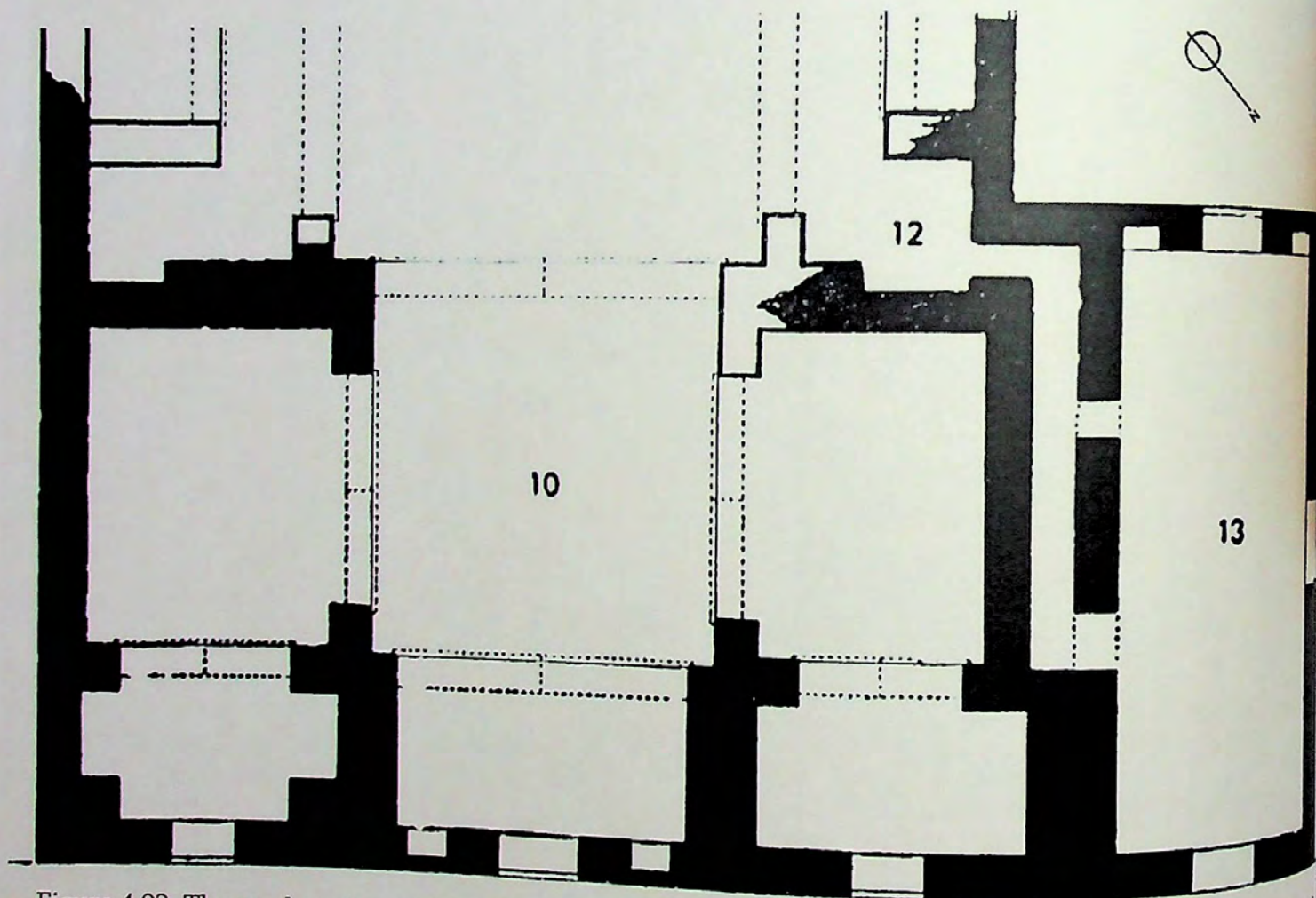


Figure 4.92. The northern iwan in the cruciform upper hall with its side recesses forming a T-Shape (after Garcia Revault, Maury et al., *Palais et maisons du Caire*).

Figure 4



Figure 4.93. The arches of the upper cruciform *qa'a* with the arches alternating in red and yellowish colors with the hook in the keystone of the arches.



Figure 4.94. On the top: The four semi-circular arched windows topped by five oculi in the palace of Qawsun.
On the bottom: A similar arrangement of the windows of the Maristan of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (1418-1420)
featuring the four semi-circular windows with five oculi on top (after Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, ref.
EA.CA.3018. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library) Archnet.org.

Figure 4



Figure 4.95. The composition of the four round arched windows and the five oculi from the inside showing a detail of the stone grills that may have once contained stained glass.



Figure 4.96. The last vestiges of roof in one of the smaller iwans flanking the northern iwan (whether authentic or not is debatable).

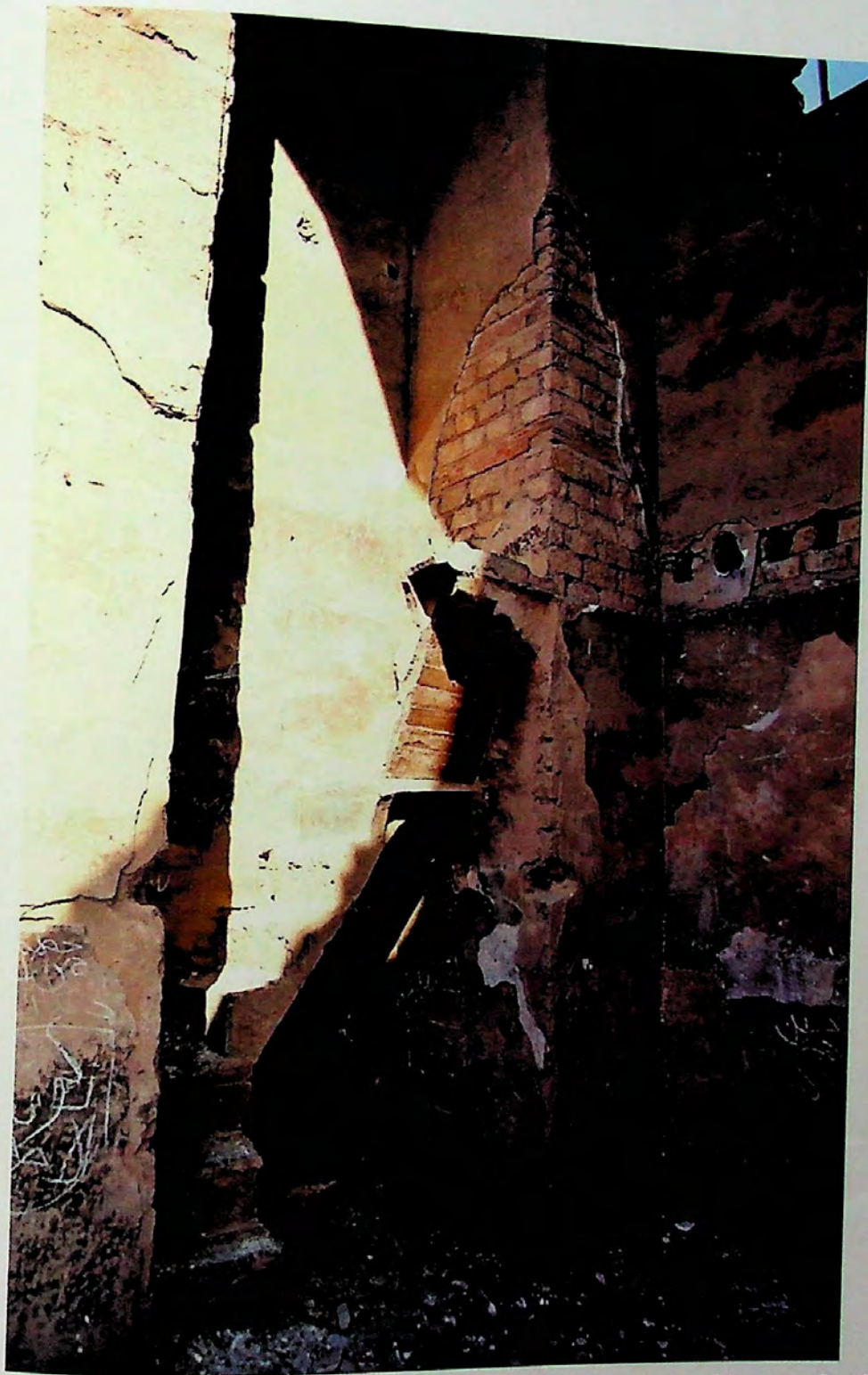


Figure 4.97. Remains of a narrow stone staircase on the left supported by wooden beams.

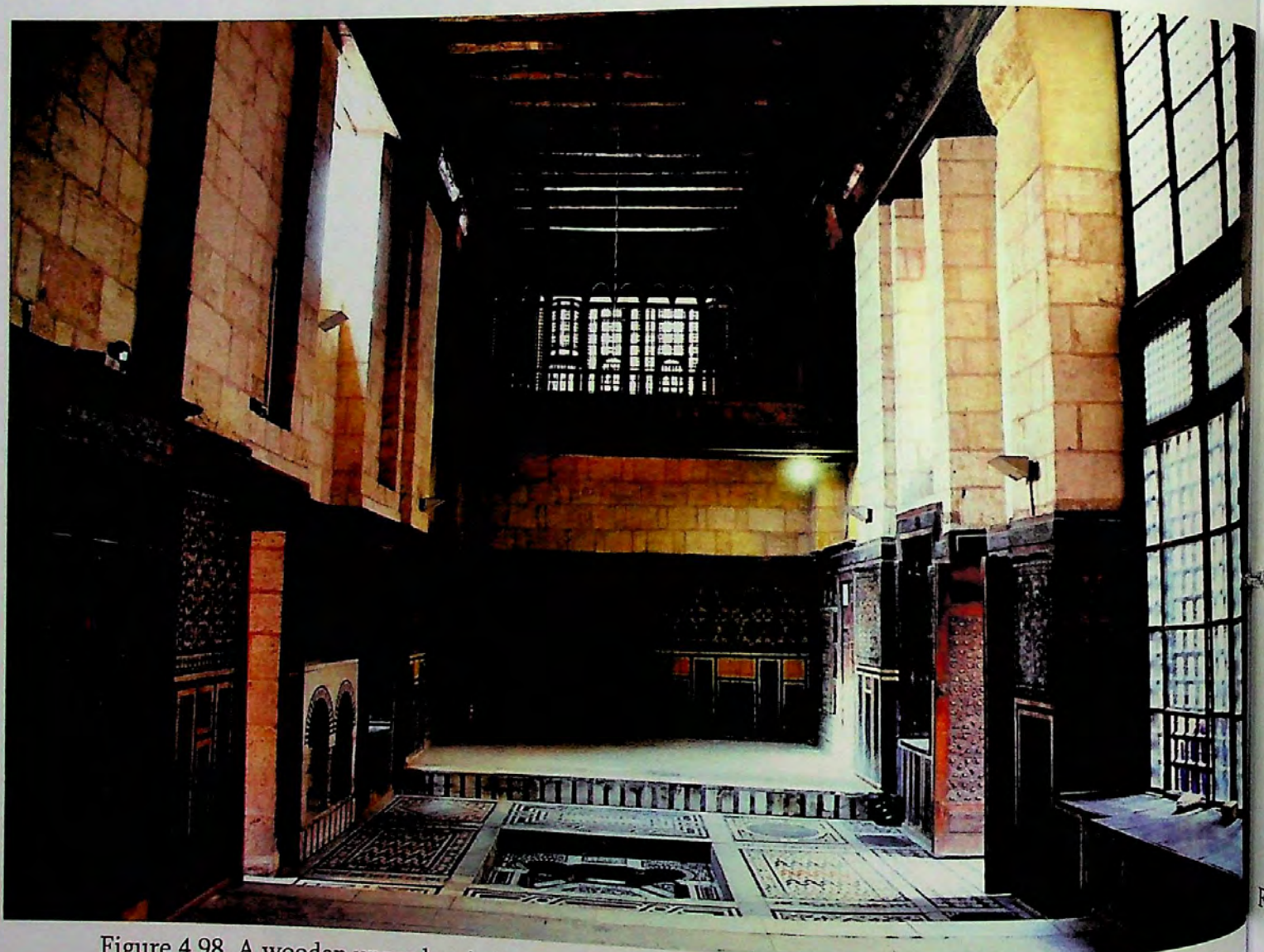


Figure 4.98. A wooden upper loggia in one of the *qa'as* of the House of Mustafa Ja'far in Harat al-Darb al-Asfar.

Figure 4

On the



Figure 4.99. On the top: Piercings in the walls of the upper cruciform *qa'a* indicating an insertion of wooden beams that once supported a small loggia.
On the bottom: The same technique used in the loggia found in the House of Mustafa Ja'far in Harat al-Darb al-Asfar.

l-Darb

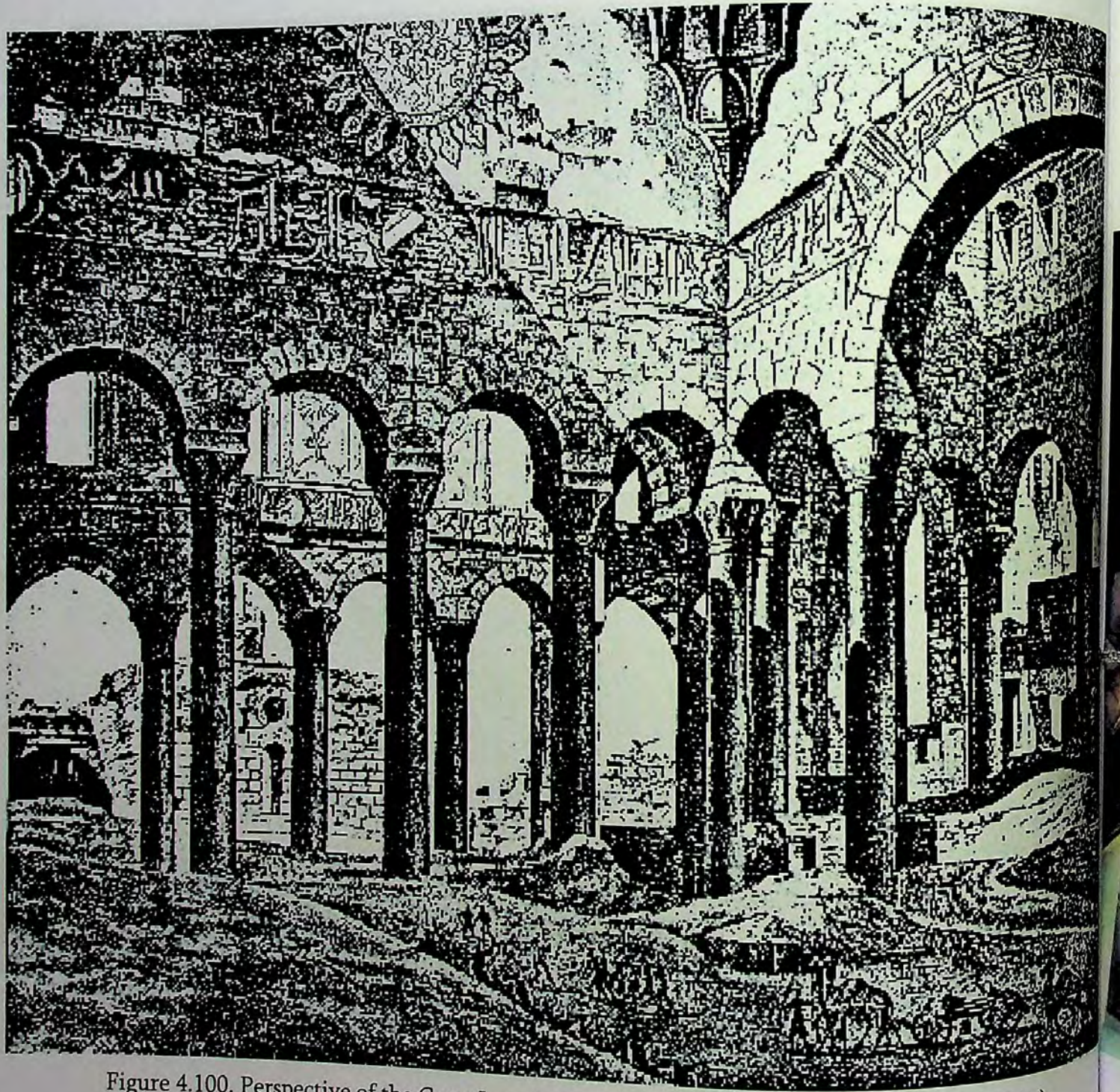


Figure 4.100. Perspective of the Great Iwan in the Citadel (after Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo*).

On the



Figure 4.101. On the left: The inscription band circling the *qa'a* of the palace of Emir Taz. On the right: One of the side recesses of the northern iwan of the palace of Qawsun with an indication of where the inscription band may have been.

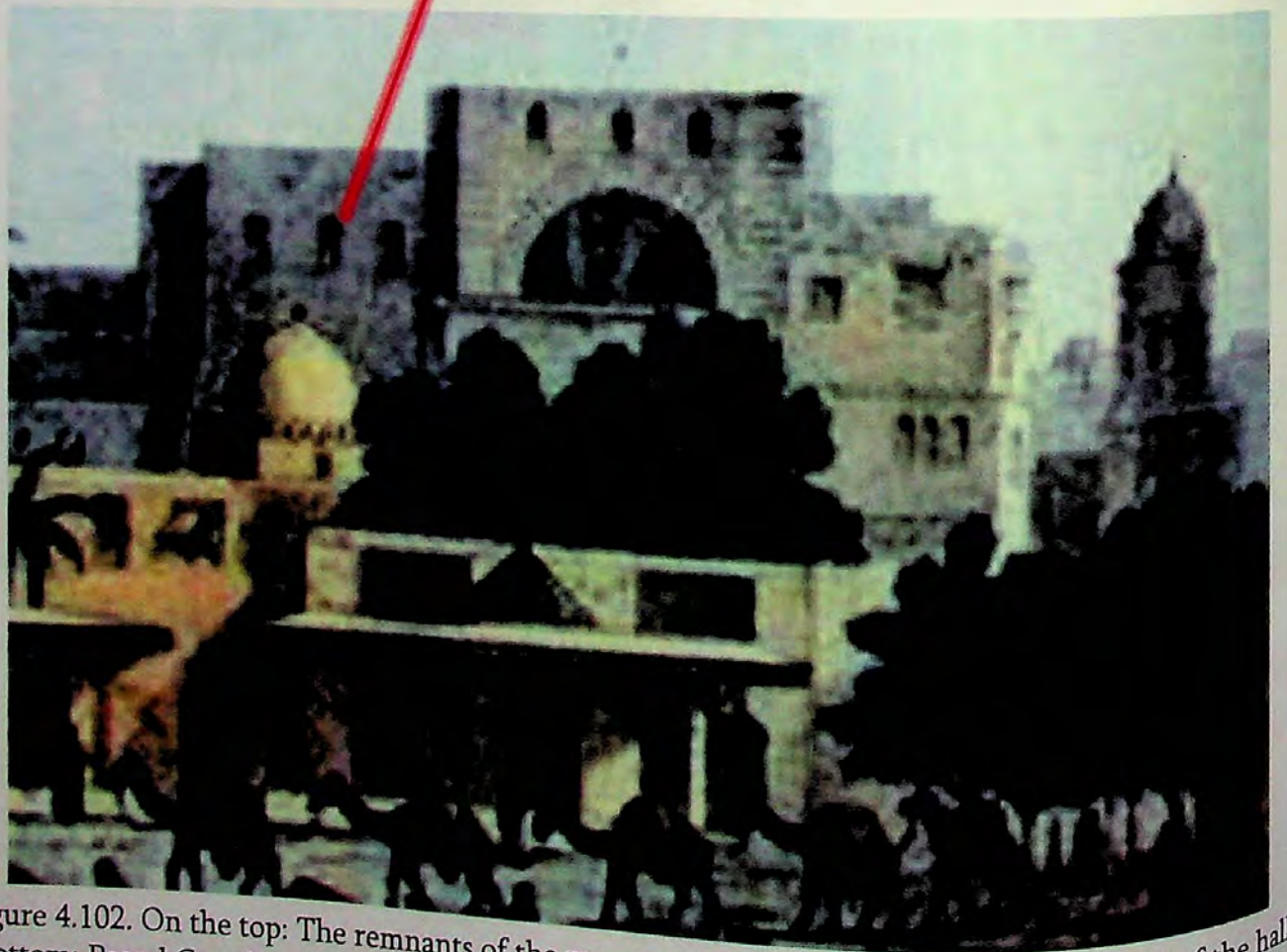


Figure 4.102. On the top: The remnants of the recesses-like structures on the western wall of the hall. On the bottom: Pascal Coste's painting referring possibly to the same recesses of the hall that were visible from outside of the palace because of the deteriorating status of the palace.

Figure

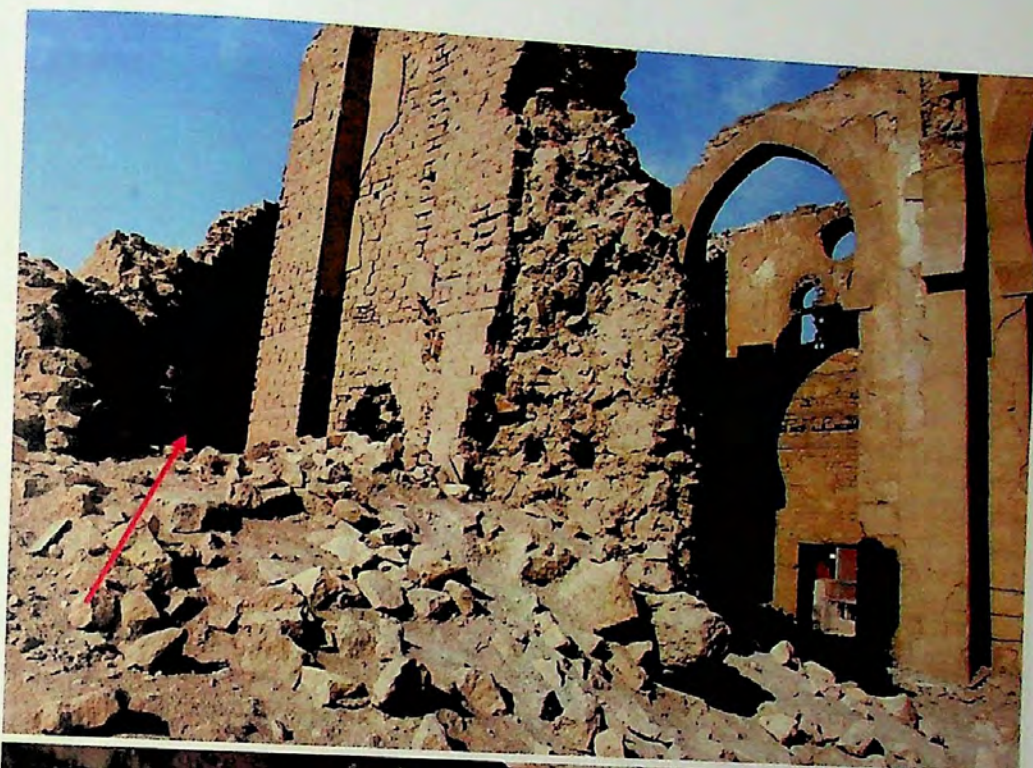


Figure 4.103. An indication of the corridor (no. 17 on Plan G) leading to the room to the west of the northern iwan (no. 18 on Plan G).

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visible from

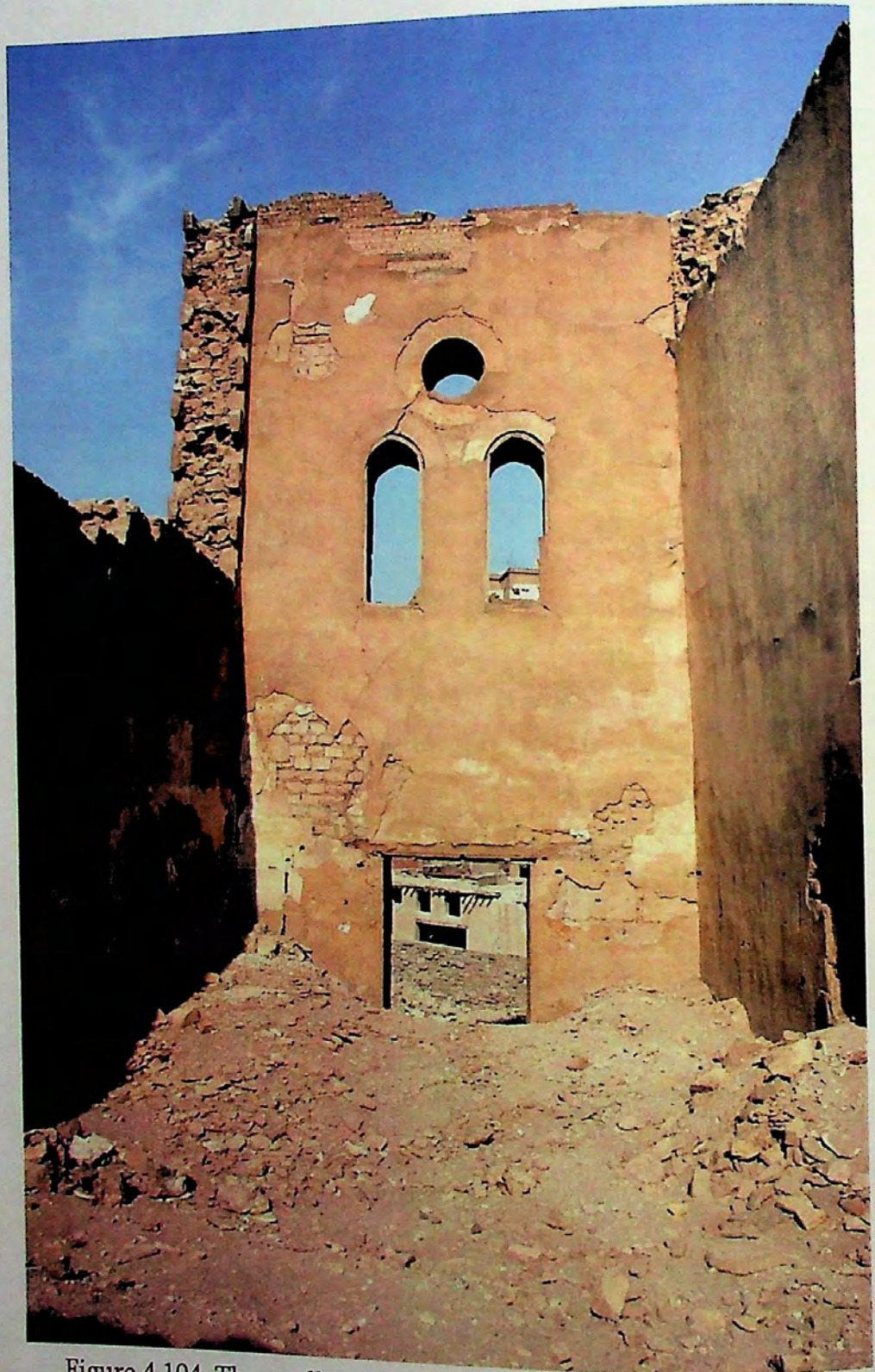


Figure 4.104. The small room parallel to the cruciform upper hall.

Figure 4.

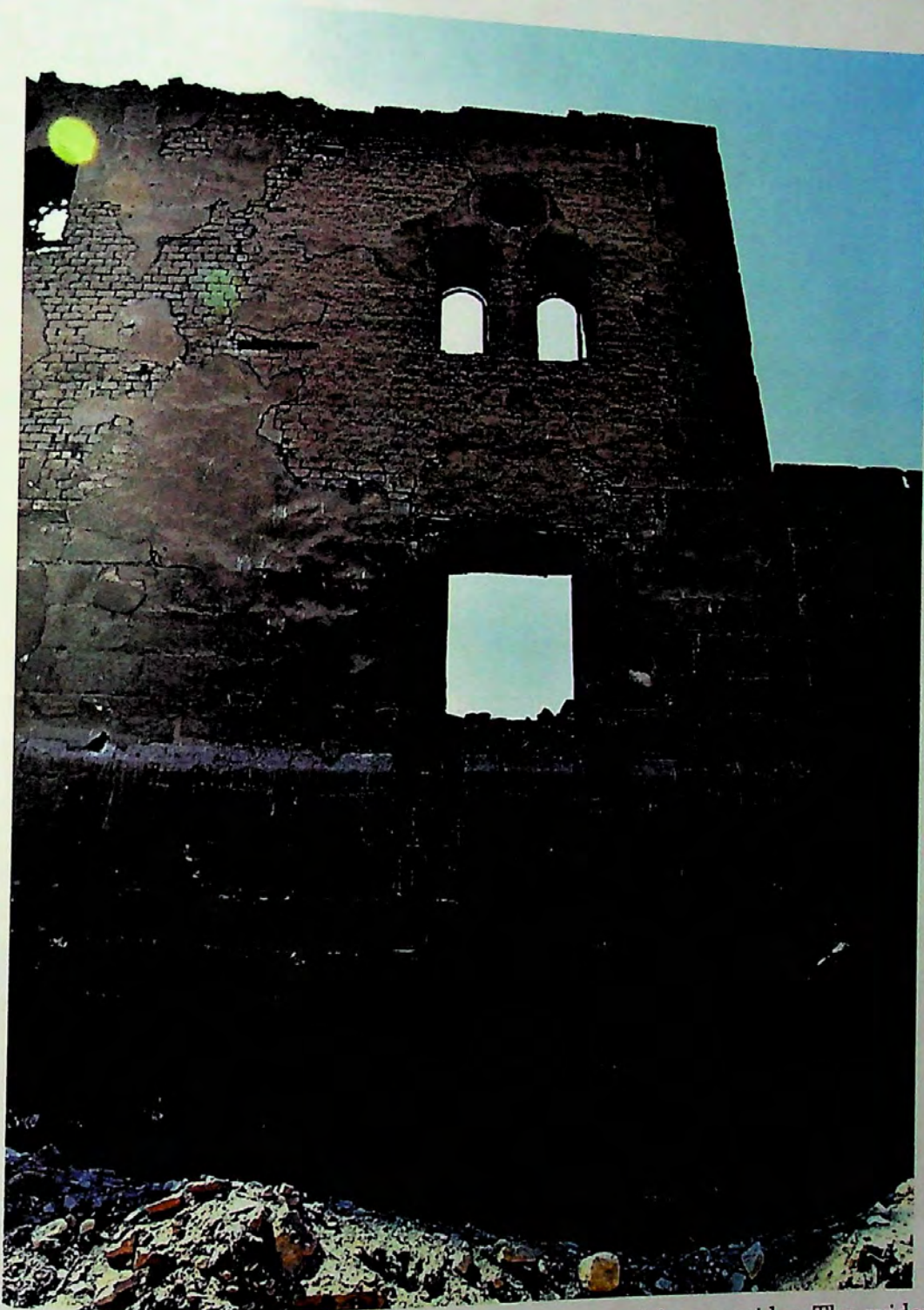
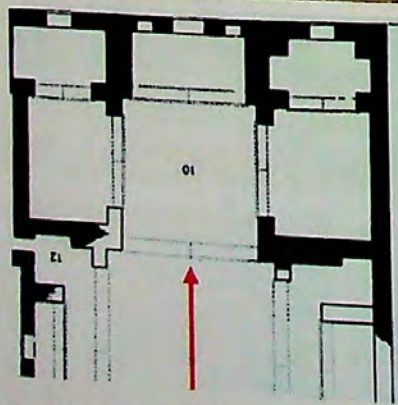


Figure 4.105. The exterior of small room connected to the cruciform *qa'a* by a corridor. The evident break in bond that may indicate that this room may have been added later.



A view looking at the northern iwan

Figure 4.106. A possible reconstruction of the northern iwan of the *qa'a* with its marble flooring, painted wooden ceiling, inscription band and furnishing. (Sketch by Dana Al Deeb).

Figure 4.

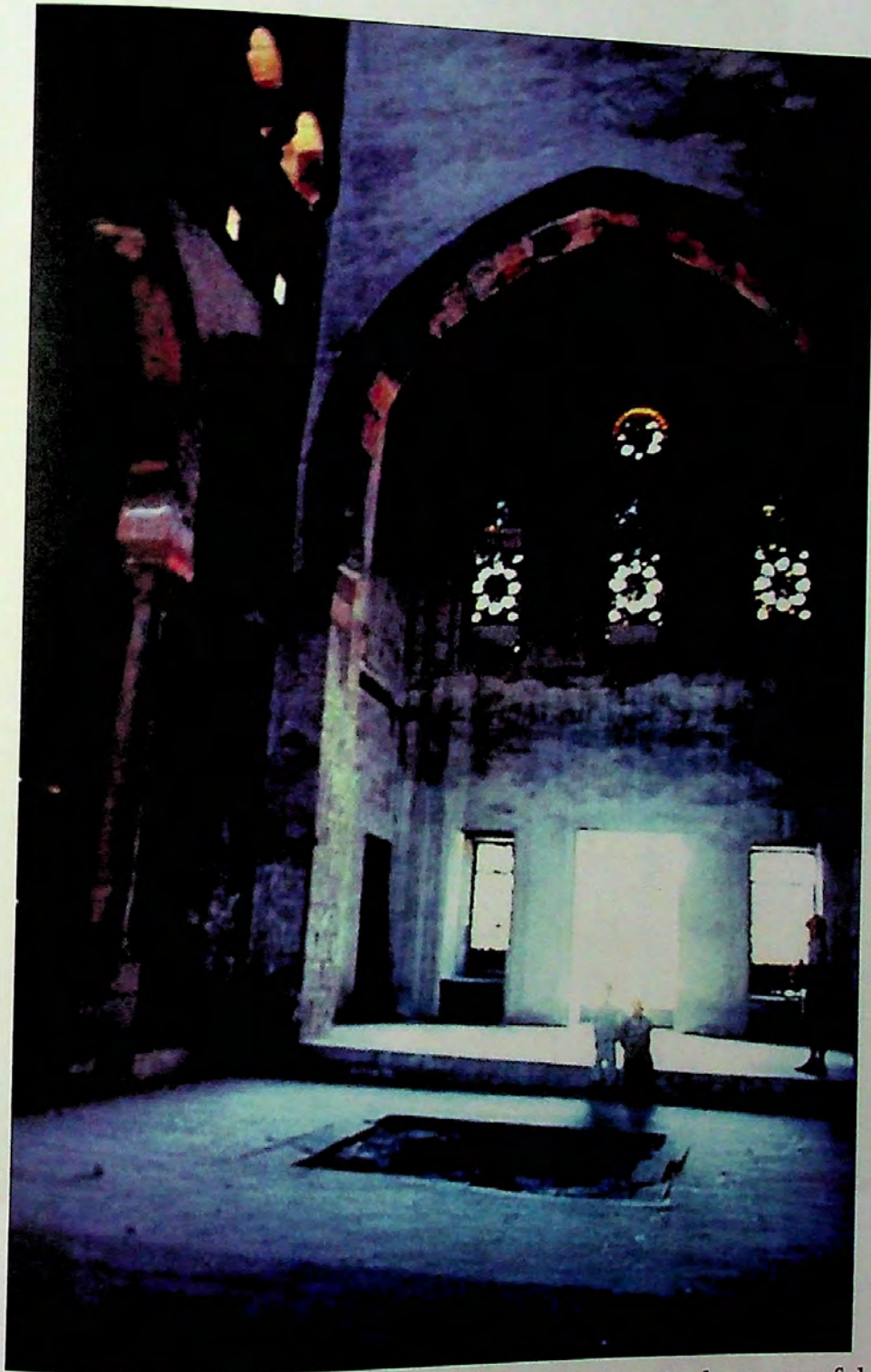


Figure 4.107. The *qa'a* of Bashtak showing one of the iwans and the fountain in the center of the *durqa'a* (after John A. and Caroline Williams, 1968-1978).
https://archnet.org/sites/2373/media_contents/6582



Figure 4.108. The smaller halls (15th century).



Figure 4.109. The lower hall of the 15th century constructions (after Tavernari, *L'évolution du Qasr Qawsûn-Yashbak*).

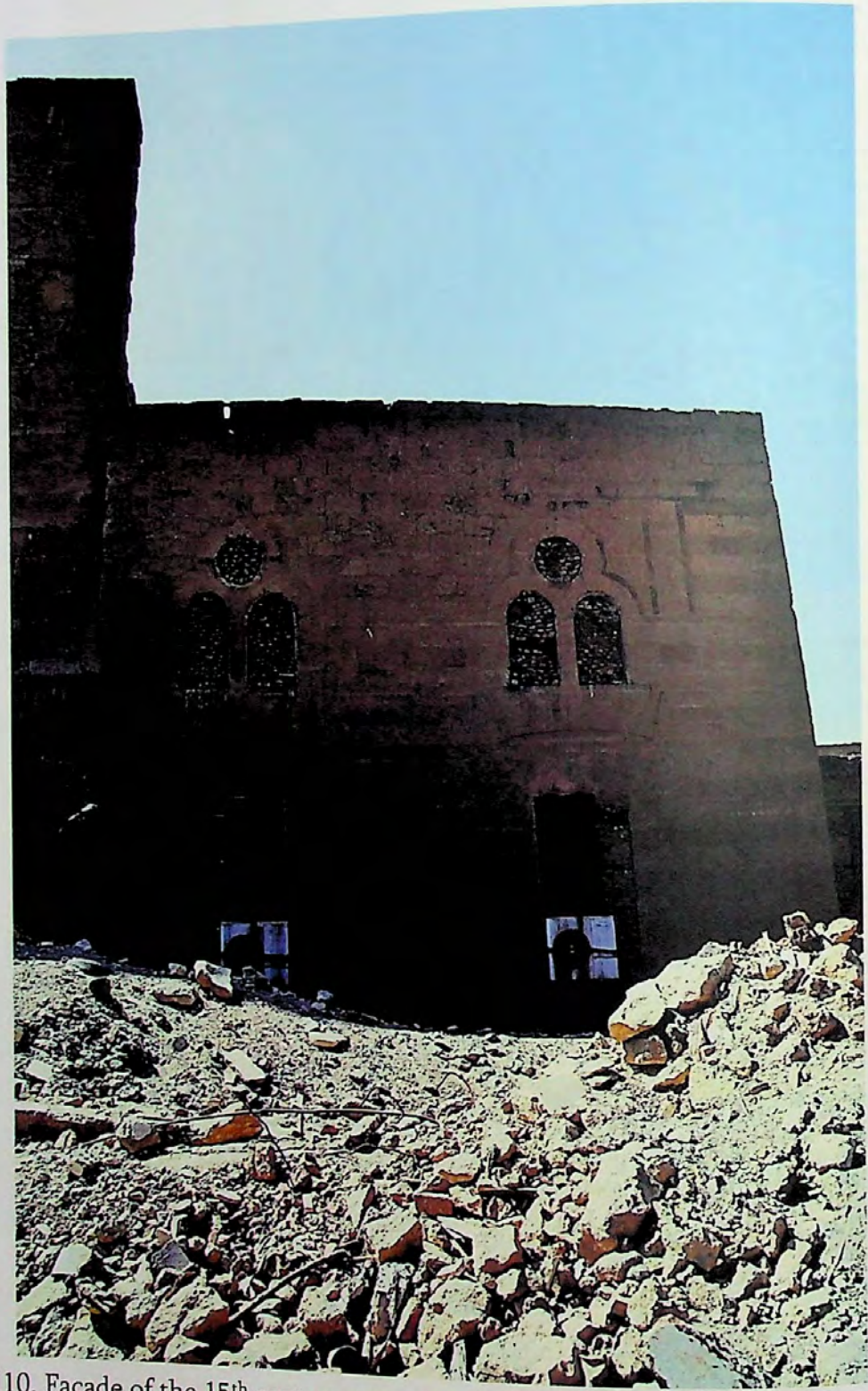


Figure 4.110. Façade of the 15th century extension featuring reddish-brown ablaq masonry.

Figure

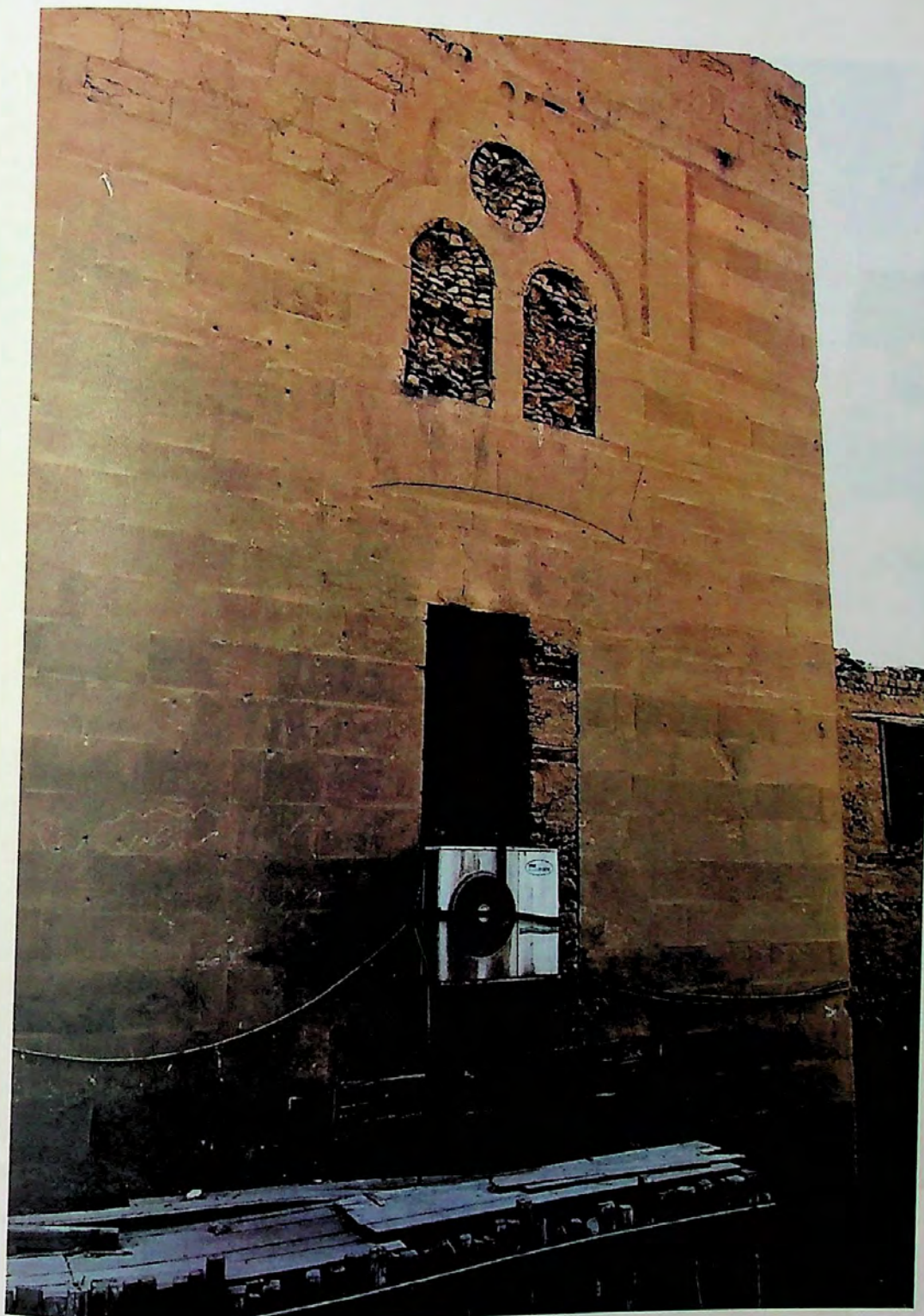


Figure 4.111. The 'Qalawun-set' of windows and lower rectangular window grills blocked and air conditioners installed for the usage of the on-site offices of the CIERA.

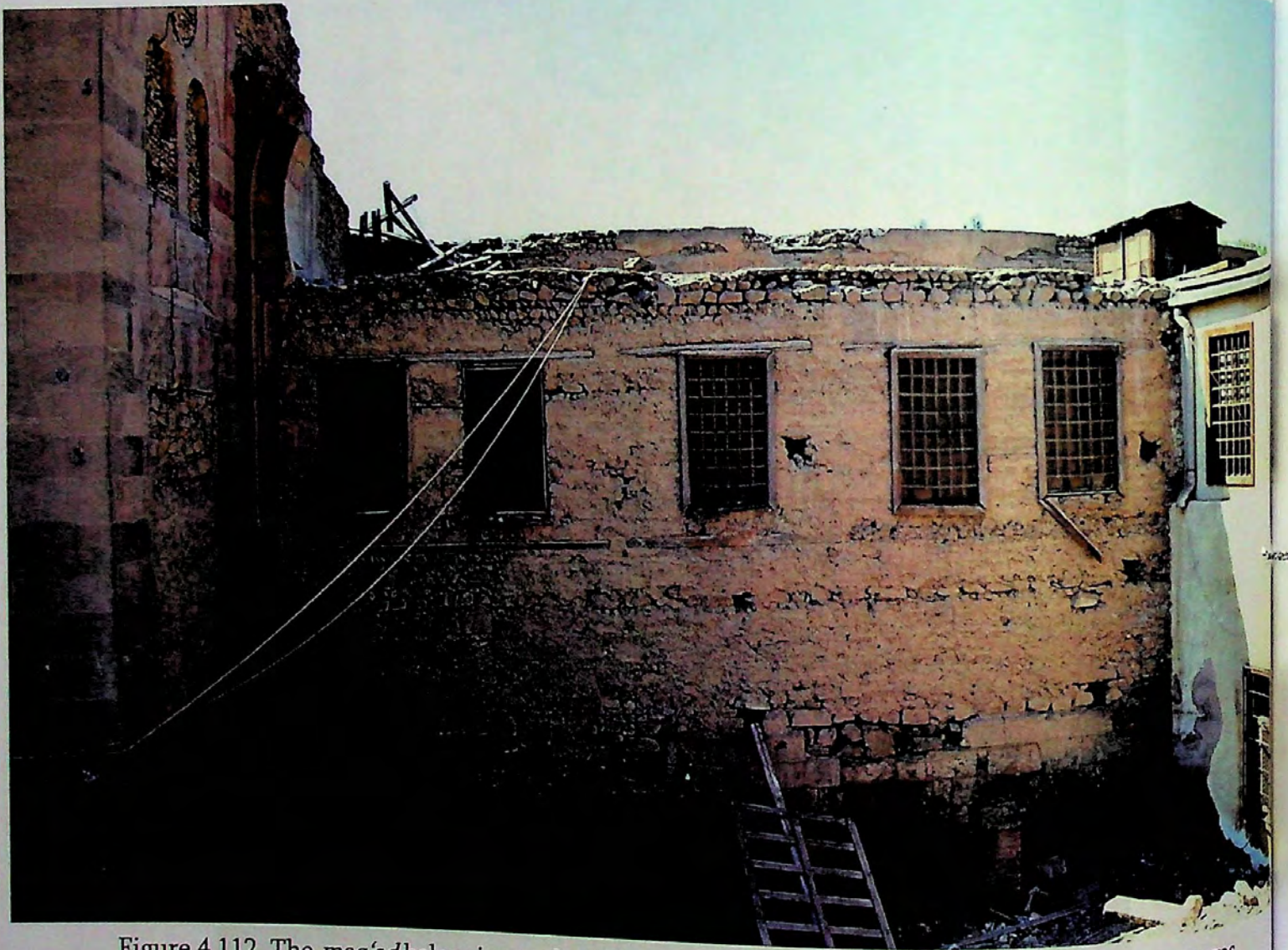


Figure 4.112. The *maq'ad* belonging to the 15th century, now built up and raised above lower rooms.

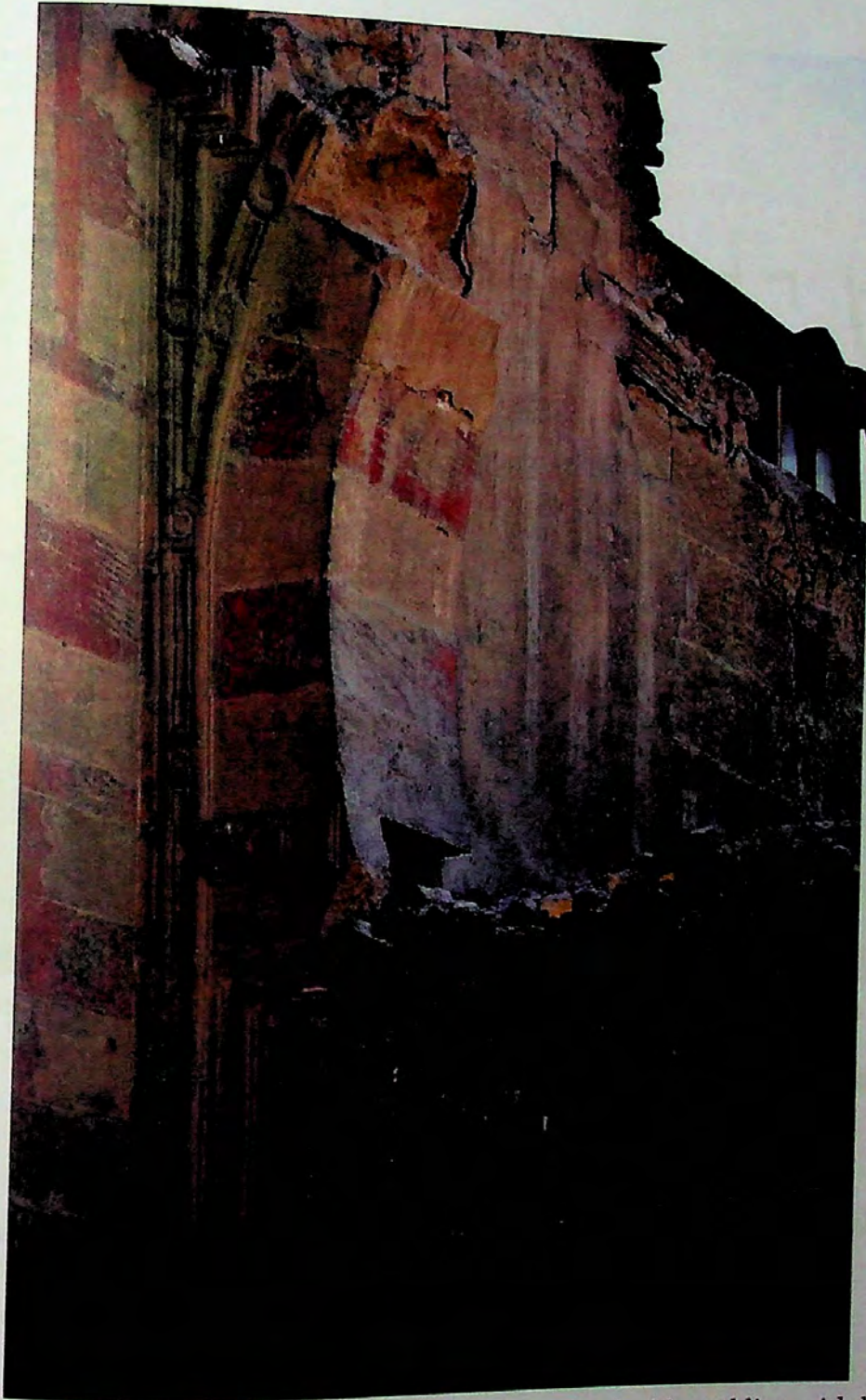


Figure 4.113. Traces of the arch of the *maq'ad* with the double molding with loops.

rooms.



Figure 4.114. The rooms below the *maq'ad* with its four-pointed arched doorways and rectangular windows.

Figure 4

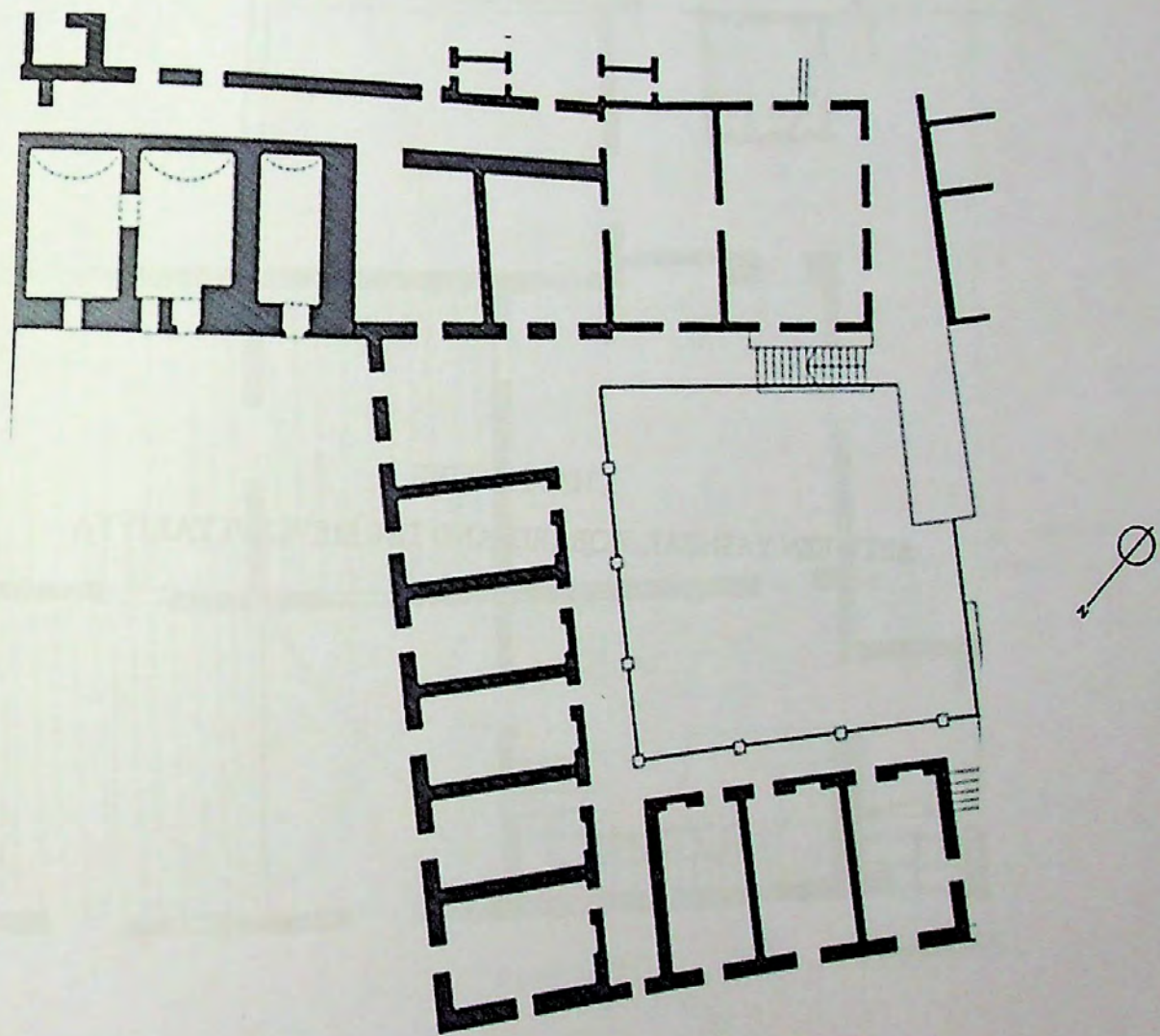
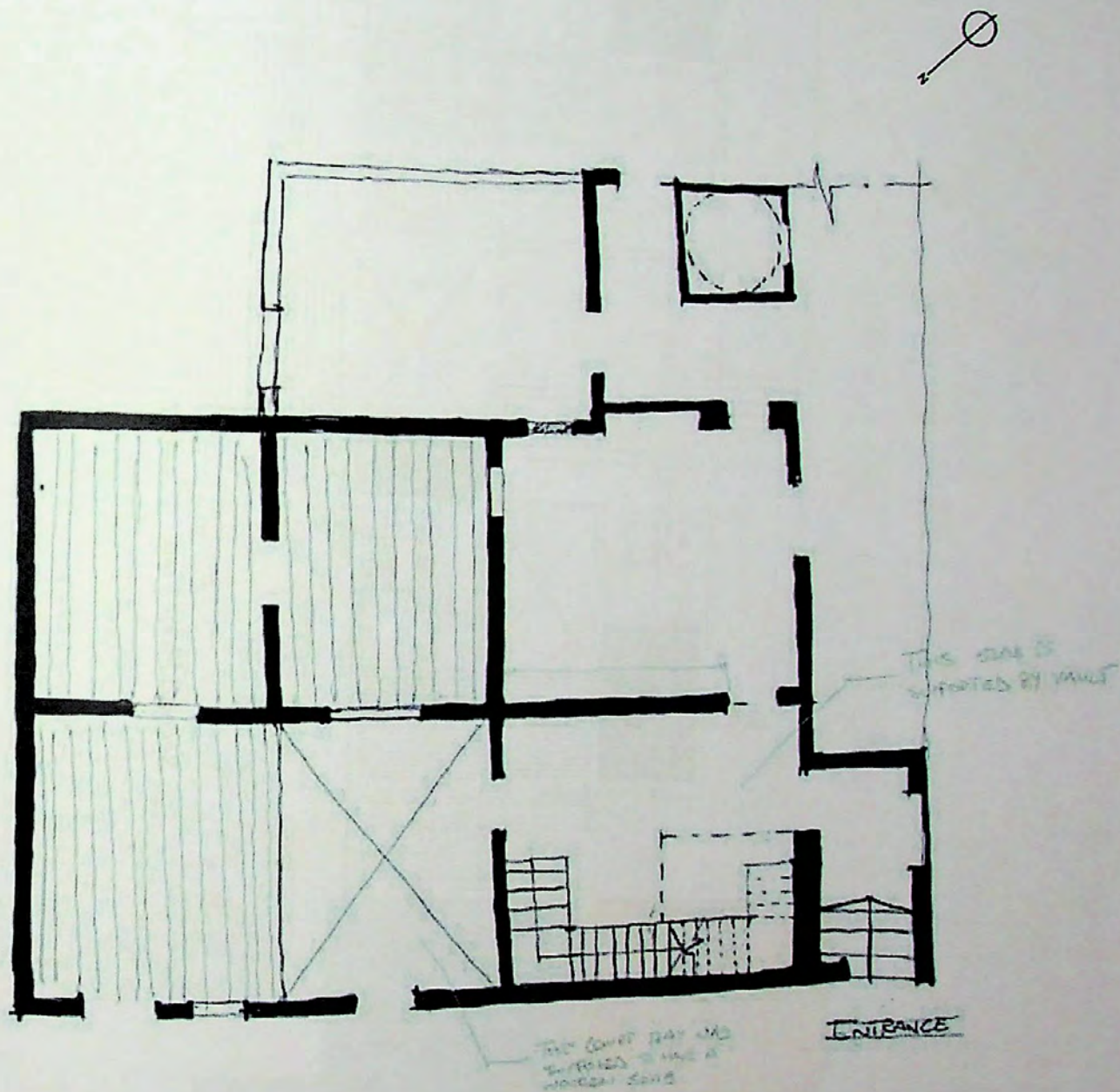


Figure 4.115. The series of rooms used by the Mevlevi convent built at a right angle to the palace (after Nouran El-Begermy).

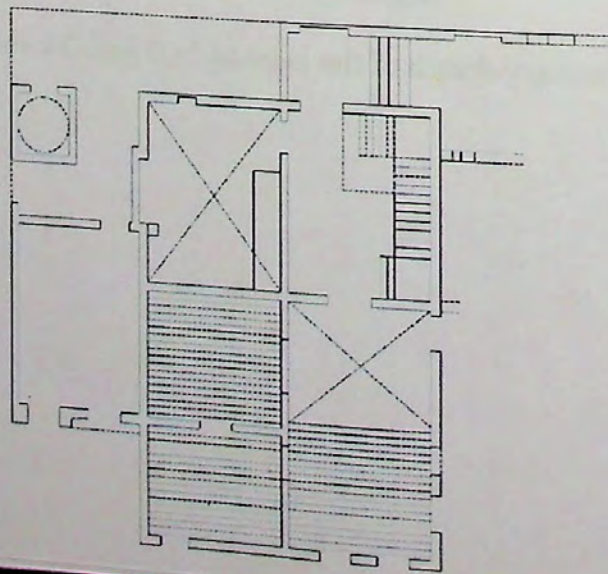
windows.

CHAPTER FIVE
BETWEEN YASHBAK, AQBARDI AND THE MEVLEVI TAKIYYA

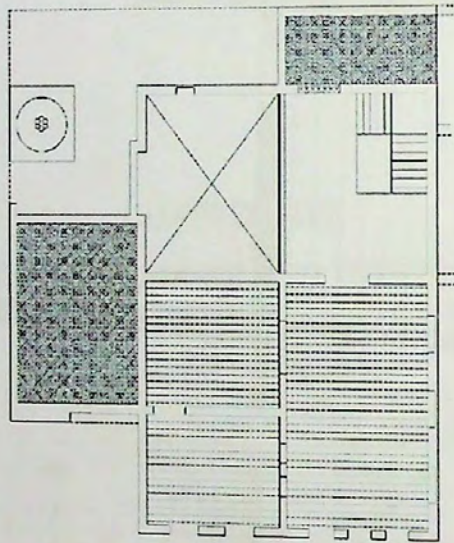


PLAN FOR THE VISITED SITE

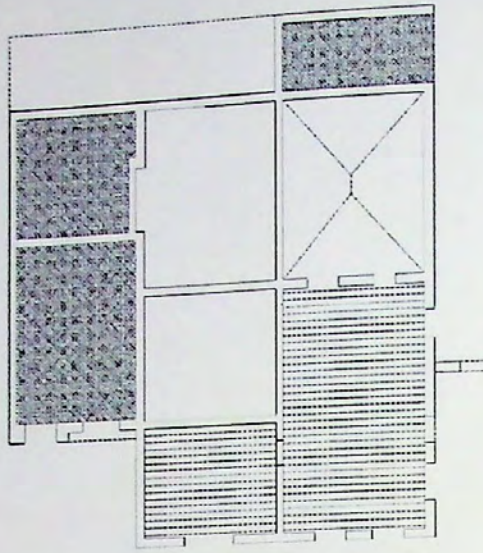
Preliminary sketch of the Jaqmaq-Inal hall (by Hosam Araby).



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

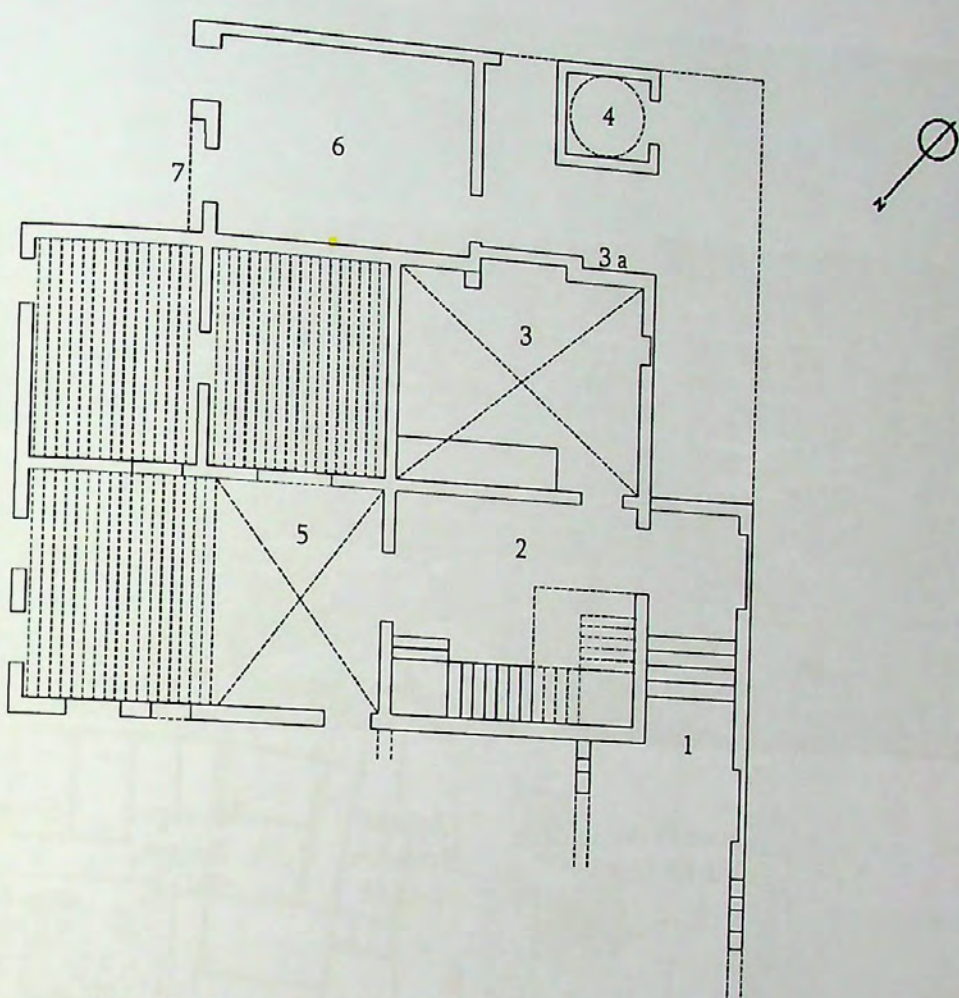


Ground Floor Plan

The three floors of the Jaqmaq-Inal Hall (by Nouran al-Begermy).

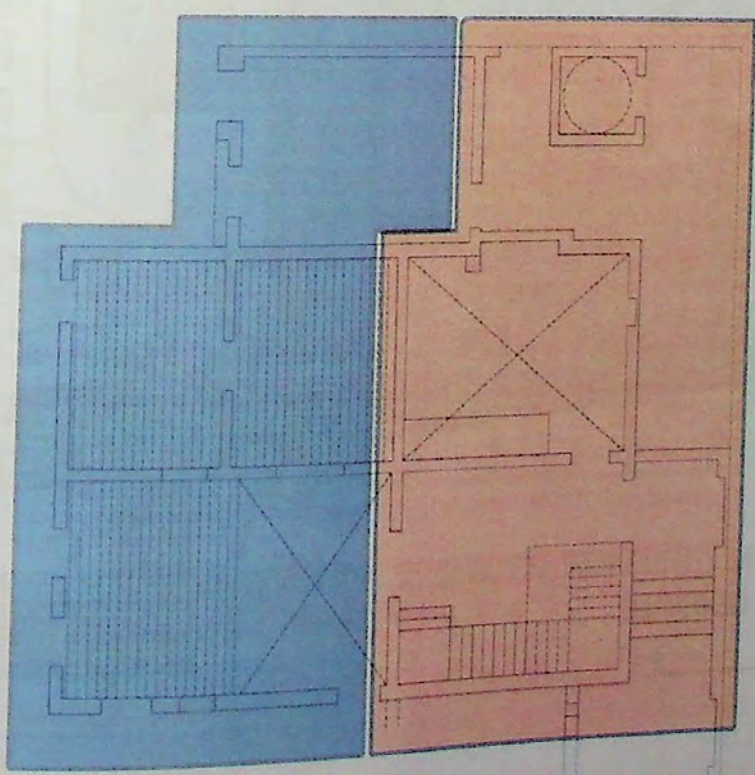
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The three floors of the Jaqmaq-Inal Hall (by Nouran al-Begermy).



Plan E of the First Floor of the Jaqmaq-Inal hall.

■ Ottoman Addition
■ Mamluk (Aqbardi) Extension





Yashbak
Gate
F4

Qusun Palace
F3-F2-F1

Aqbardi
Extension
E-C-AE

Mawlawi
Takiyya
E-C-B

Sama'khana
A

Madrasa
Mausoleum
Sunqur Sa'di
Minaret
A1-A2-A3

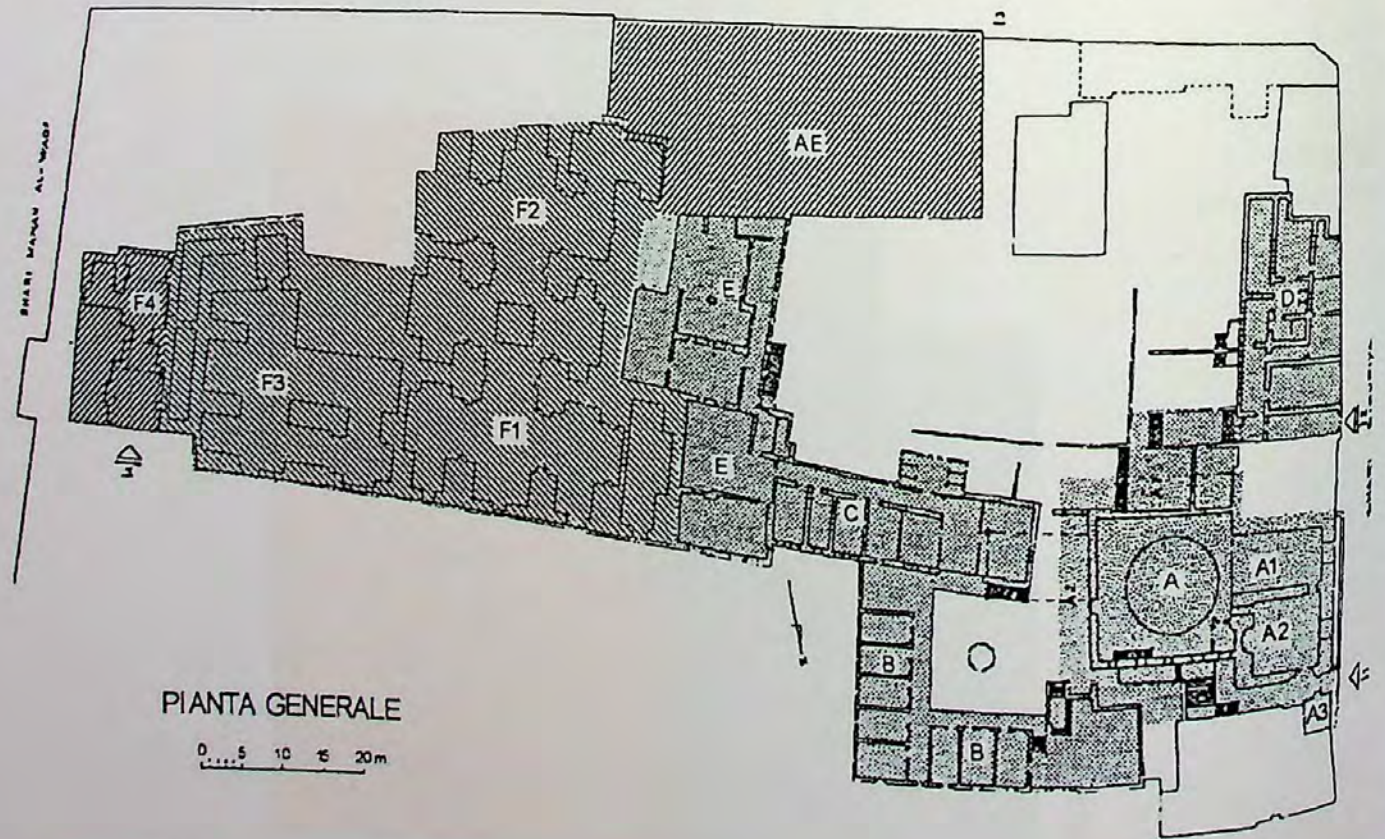
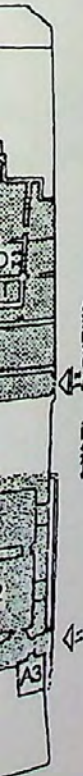


Figure 5.1. The layout, plan and elevation of the palace and the Mevlevi Complex with an indicator of each contributor to the palace (after Fanfoni, "The Preservation of Historic Cairo").



drasa
soleum
ur Sa'di
naret
A2-A3



tor of each

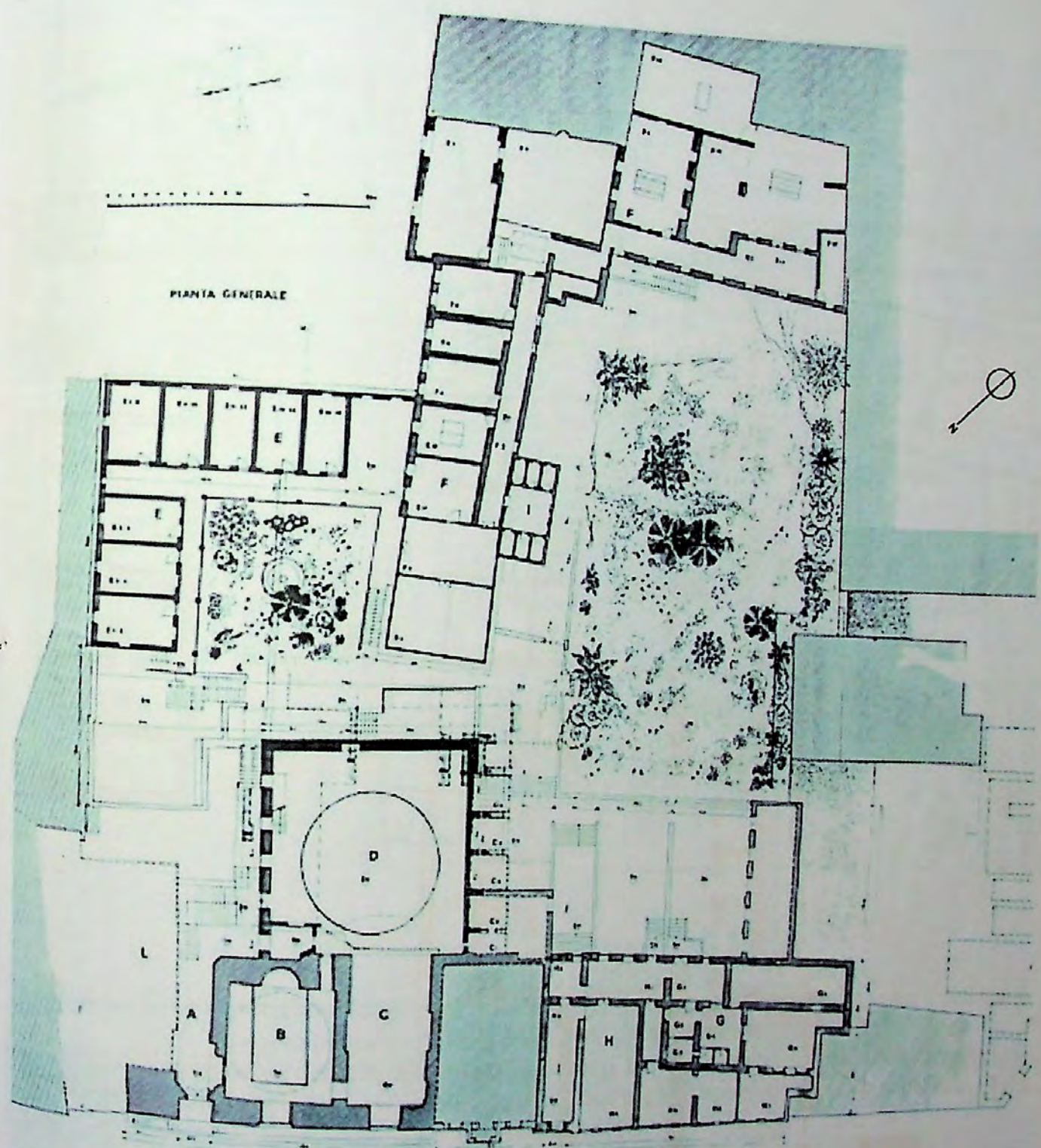


Figure 5.2. The general plan of the Mevlevi complex (after Fanfoni, *The Foundation and Organization of the Cairo Mawlawiyya*).

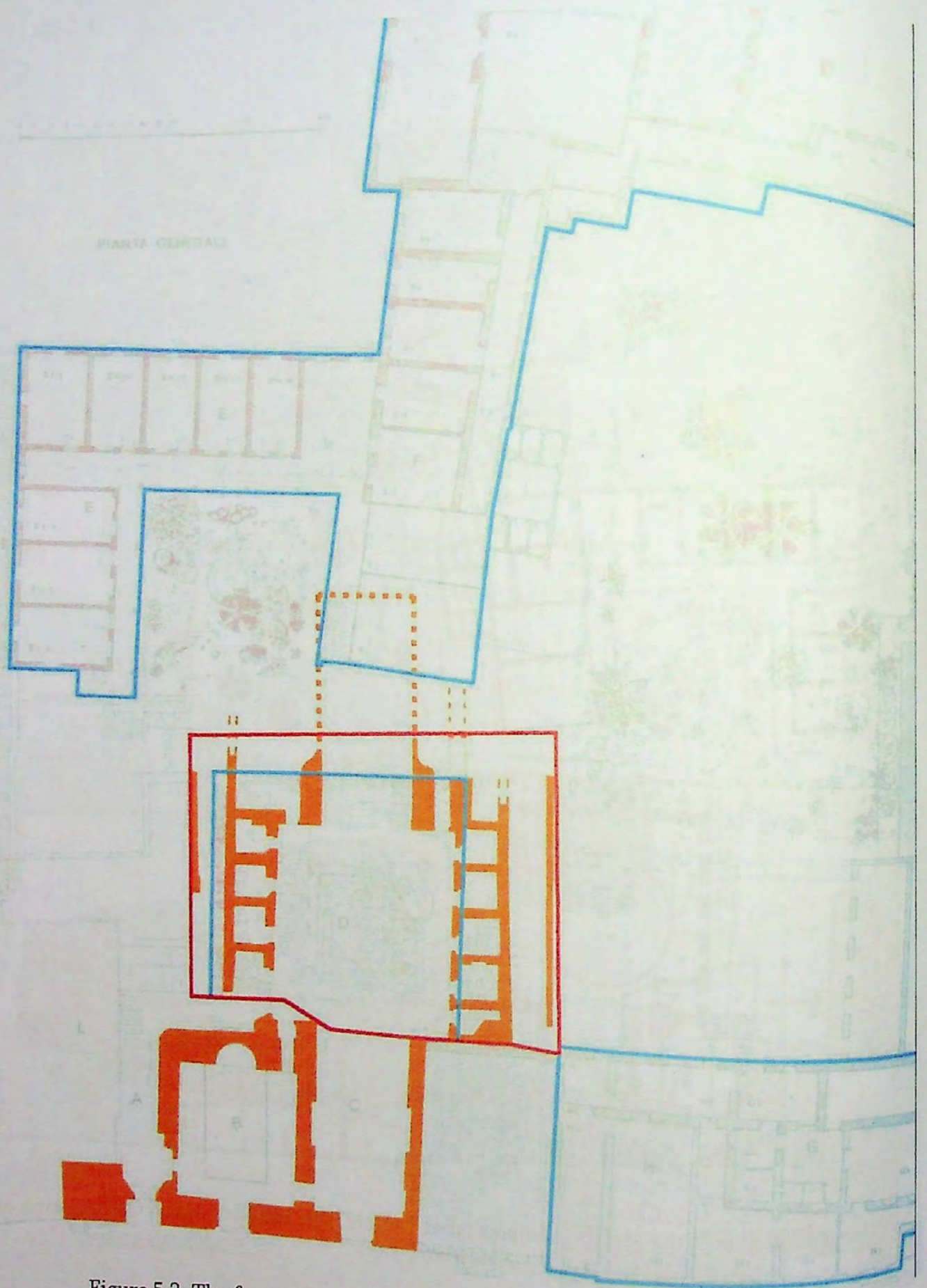


Figure 5.3. The four areas reused by the Mevlevi convent (after Fanfoni, "The Preservation of Historic Cairo").

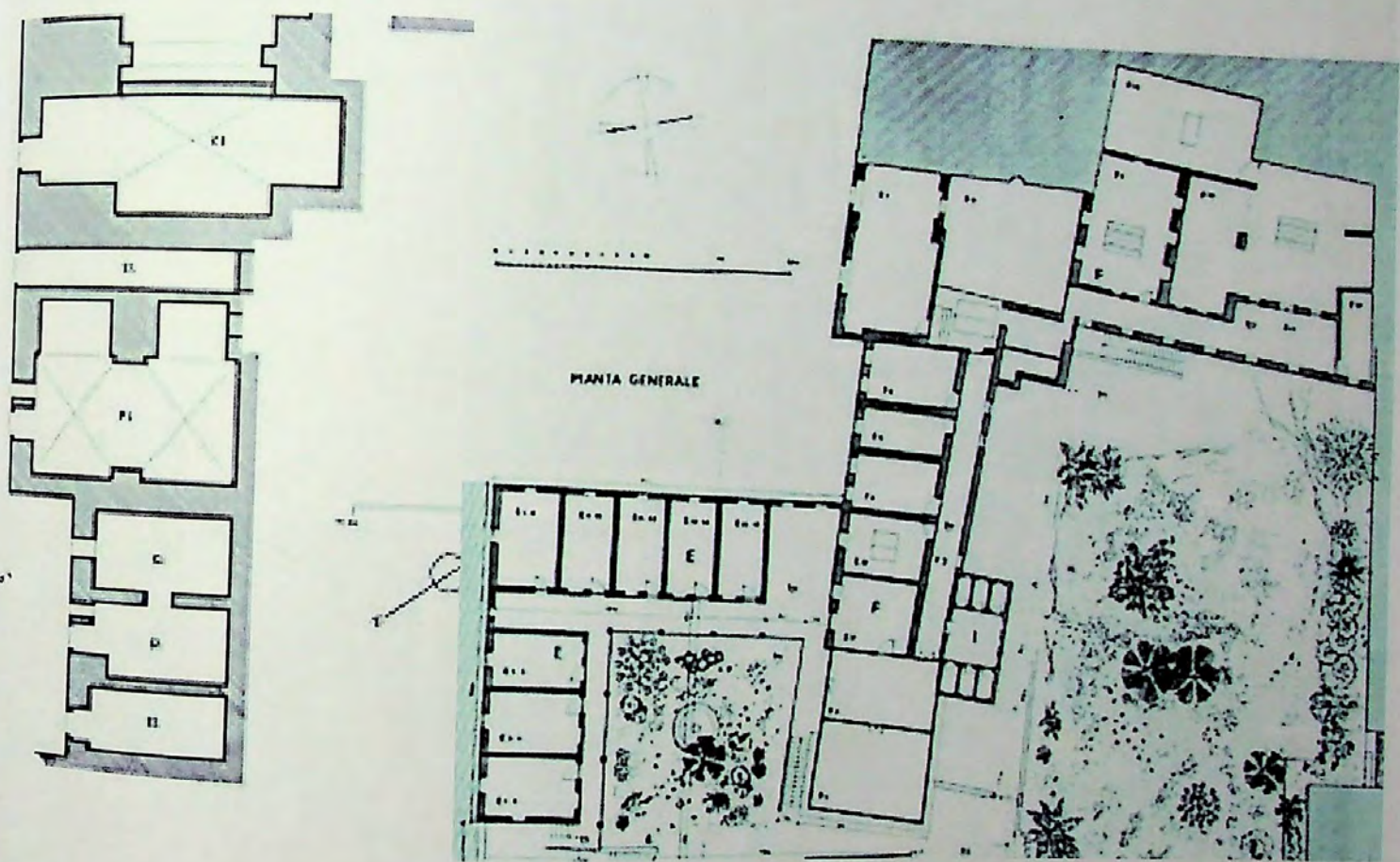


Figure 5.4: On the left: Plan showing the hall and rooms below the 15th century upper halls and their arrangement (after Revault and Maury, *Palais et maisons du Caire*).
 On the right: Plan showing the difference in arrangement of the lower rooms that included a small mosque constructed for the use of the Mevlevi convent (after Fanfoni, *The Foundation and Organization of the Cairo Mawlawiyya*).



Figure 5.5. The area south of the lower rooms added by the Mevlevi convent consisting of a series of cross vaults
(On the top: General view after Google Earth).



Figure 5.6. The Jaqmaq-Inal hall (15th century) (after Google Earth).

of cross vaults



Figure 5.7. The traces of the arches that would have resumed southwards and were abolished when the street was pierced to the rear of the palace.



Figure 5.8. An elevation of what remains of the Jaqmaq-Inal extension.

e street was

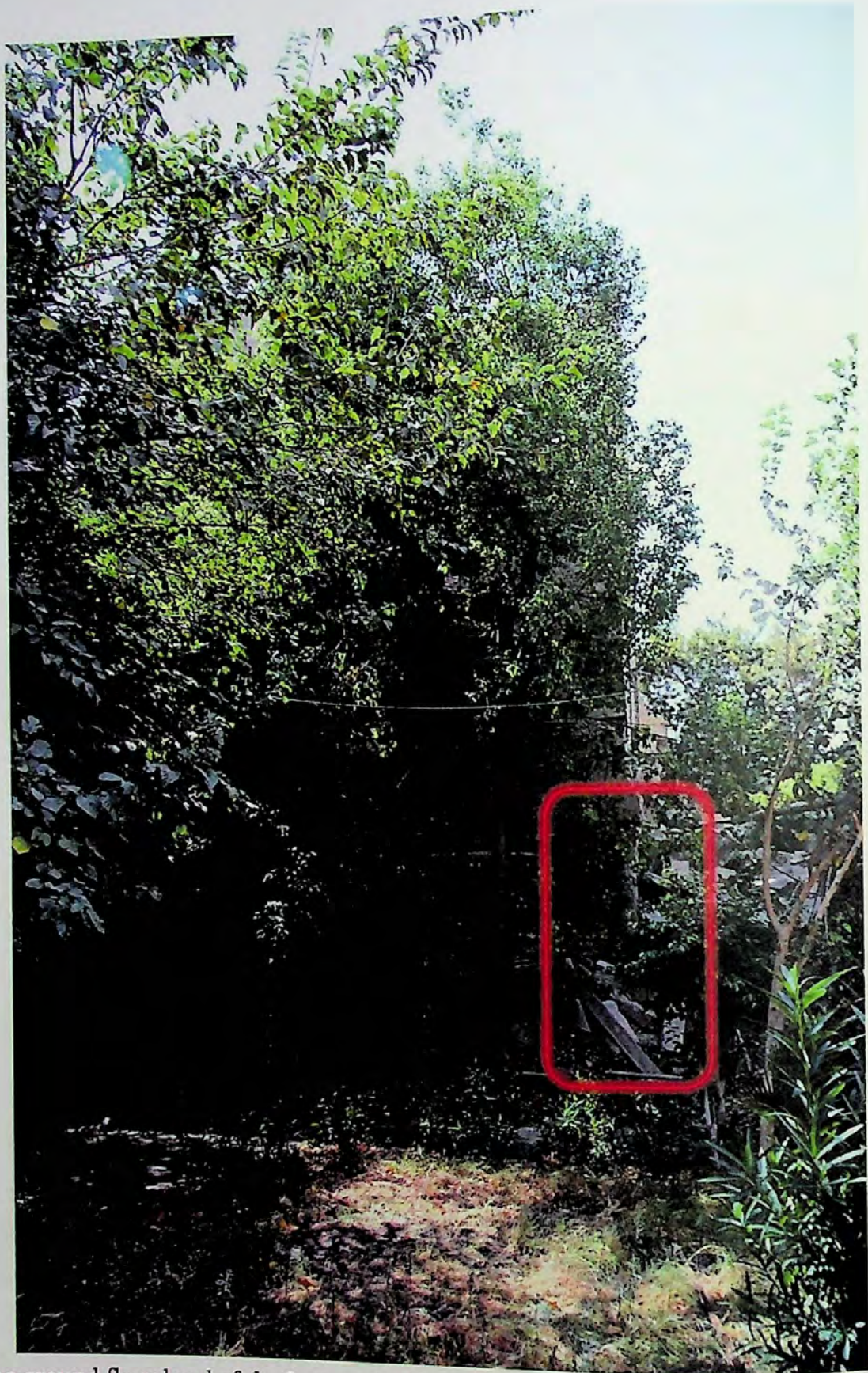


Figure 5.9. The ground floor level of the Jaqmaq-Inal hall concealed behind ruins with the corner column for support.

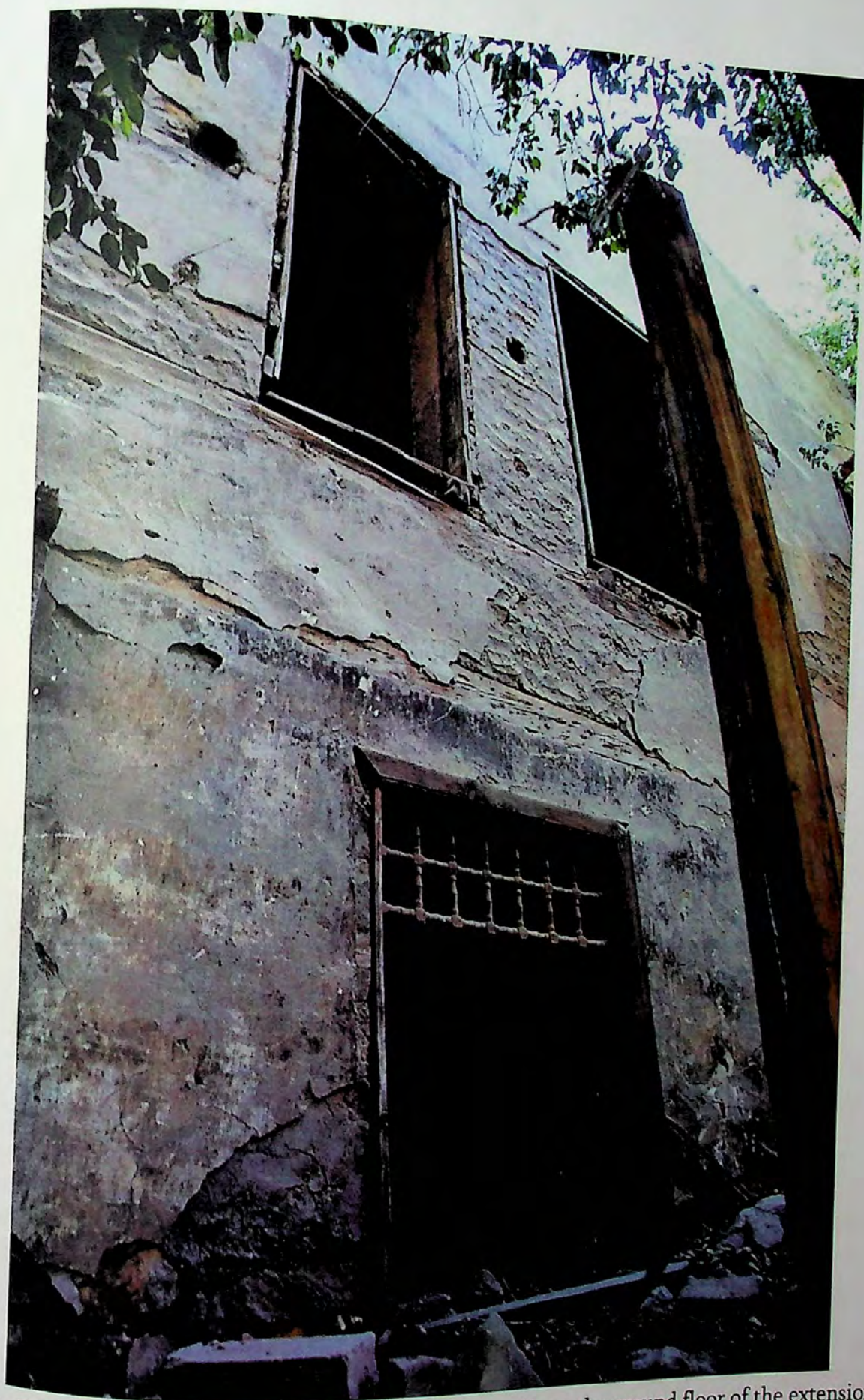


Figure 5.10. One of the windows and remnants of its grills on the ground floor of the extension.

olumn for

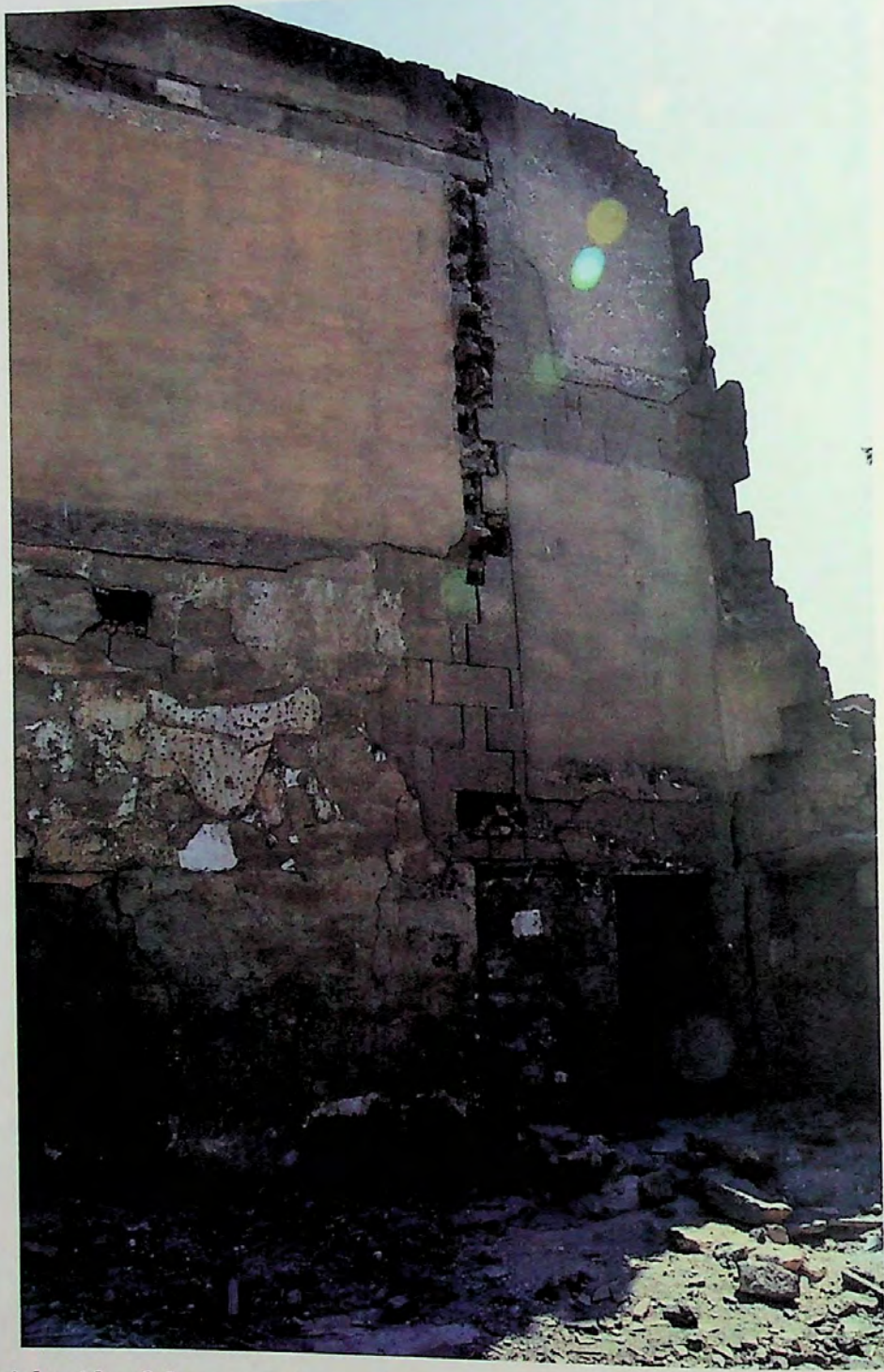


Figure 5.11. To the right side of the remaining wall is an entrance bracketed by remains of a wall with a recess, that may have been a built-in cupboard, and to the left by remains of a perpendicular wall.



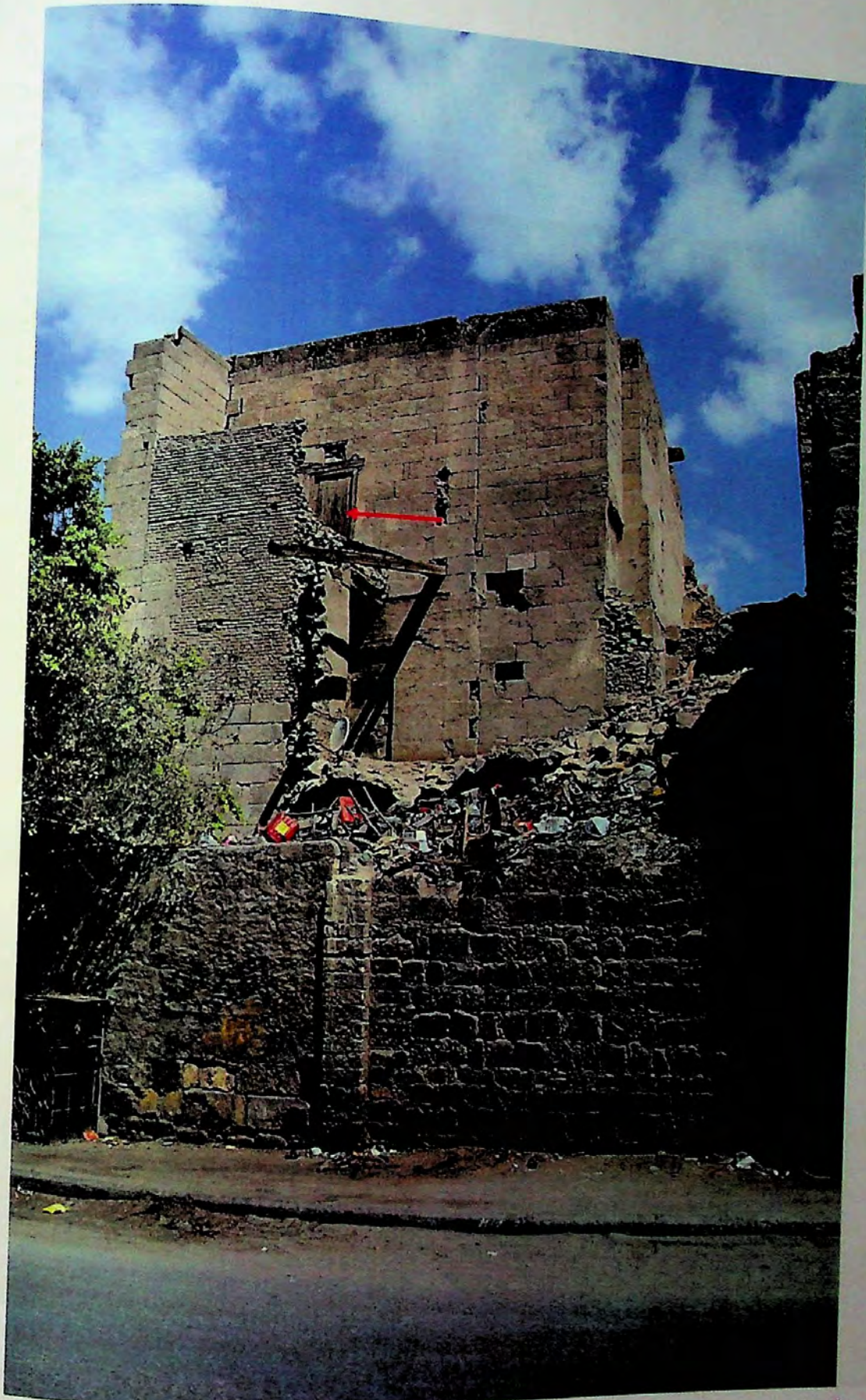
Figure 5.12. The entrance with a few stairs.

h a recess, the



Figure 5.13. After a turn to the left, the first part of the double height hall with the flight of stairs to the left leading up to the mezzanine floor.

Figure



the left leading
Figure 5.14. The doorway (now blocked) that may have once been used to access the mezzanine level of the 15th century hall.



Figure 5.15. The painted wooden ceiling with projecting joints featuring painted coffers with floral ornamentation.



Figure 5.16. A detail of one of the painted coffers featuring the blazon of the emir.

ornamentation.



Figure 5.17. On the top: A detail of the cornice of Jaqmaq-Inal hall.
On the bottom: A detail of the cornice of Maq'ad Mamay (after Muhammad al-Sadek from the Facebook page of al-Qahira al-Tarikhiyya).
<https://www.facebook.com/historiccairo/photos/a.236704486373242.56813.233719140005110/1569361486440862/?type=3&theater>



Figure 5.18. One of the sides of the double height hall with the inscription band running under the ceiling.

ook page of al-
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Figure 5.19. The blazon of the emir in a roundel between the script.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلَى مَنْ تَرْضَى خَلْقَهُمْ
وَتَقَبَّلْ مِنْهُمْ

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلَى مَنْ تَرْضَى خَلْقَهُمْ
وَتَقَبَّلْ مِنْهُمْ

Figure 5.20

مما أمر بإنشاء هذا المكان المبارك و المقر الكريم العالي المولوي الأميري الأكرمي المجاهدي
المرابطي المثناعري المؤيدي المنصوري الممجدي



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Figure 5.21

الذخري الهمامي القوي النظامي العالي المغيبي



النصيرى ... الأكملى ... عمدة الملوك و [السلطين] ...

Figure 5.23

النصيرى ... الأكملى ... عمدة الملوك و [السلطين] ...



Handwritten Arabic calligraphy on the left margin, partially visible.

Handwritten Arabic calligraphy in the center of the page, likely a transcription or analysis of the inscription shown in the photograph above.

Handwritten Arabic calligraphy on the left margin.

Handwritten Arabic calligraphy on the left margin.

Handwritten Arabic calligraphy on the left margin.

Figure 5.24. A detail of the cornice on one of the sides of the hall with an illegible inscription.

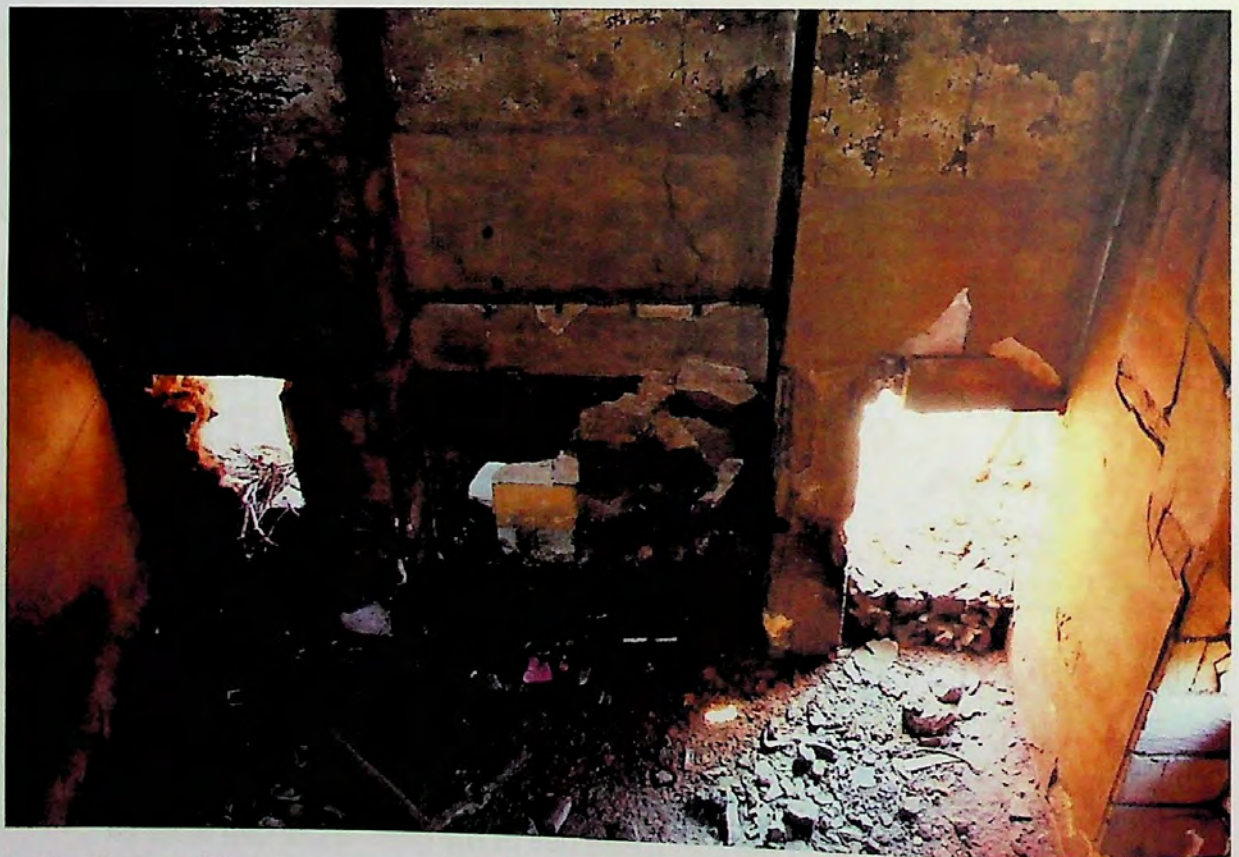


Figure 5.25. On the top: The doorway to the right of the *qa'a*'s entrance separating both parts of the hall with the built-in *mastaba* and traces of a potential inscription that was once in place.
On the bottom: A view from the mezzanine above onto the lower part of the *qa'a* showing the built-in cupboards.



Figure 5.26. The vaulted *hammam* now accessible from one of the pierced recesses of the double height hall.

hall with
uilt-in

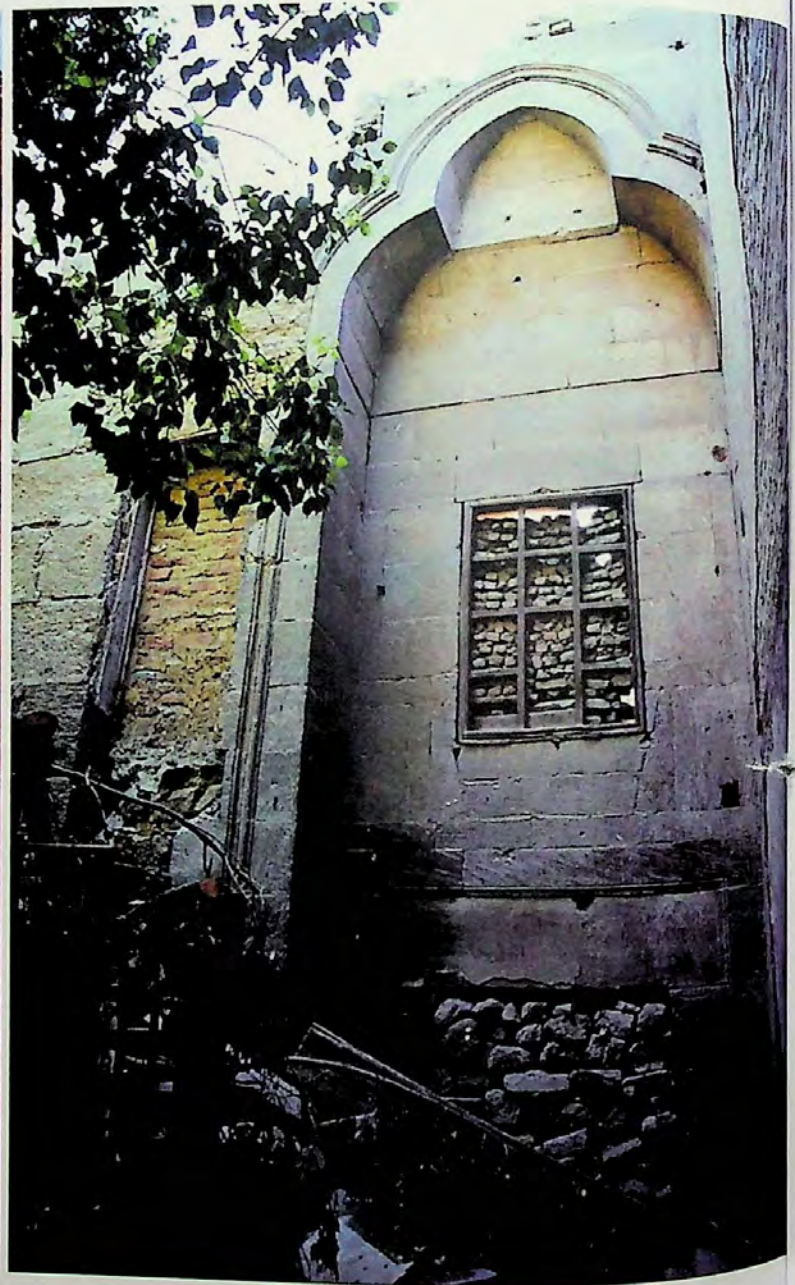


Figure 5.27. On the left: The rear side of the entrance.
On the right: The exterior view of the simple tri-lobed entrance that may be dated to the Ottoman period.

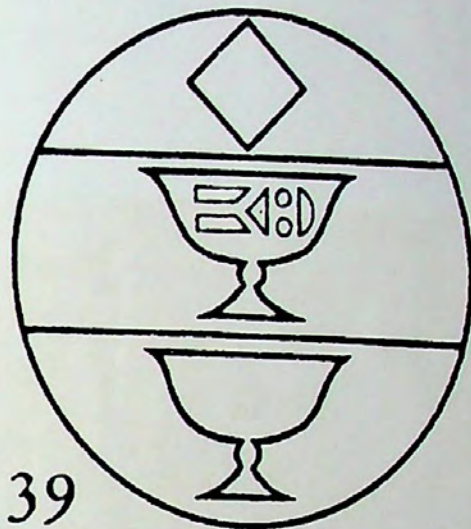


Figure 5.28. The composite blazon found in the 15th century extension (after Meinecke, "Zur mamlukischen Heraldik")



The more developed blazon more commonly found during the reign of Qaytbay

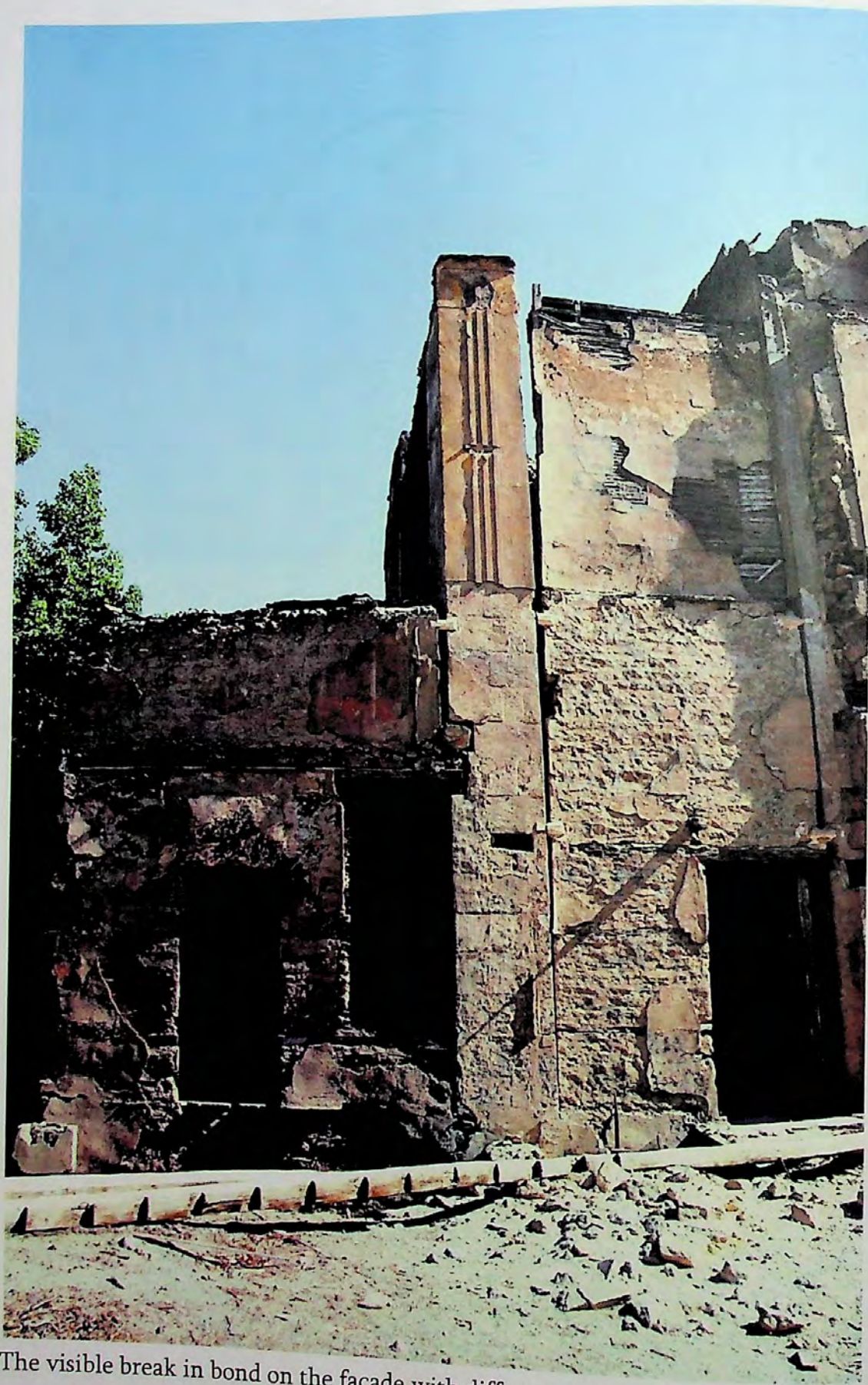


Figure 5.29. The visible break in bond on the façade with different construction materials indicating a later addition.

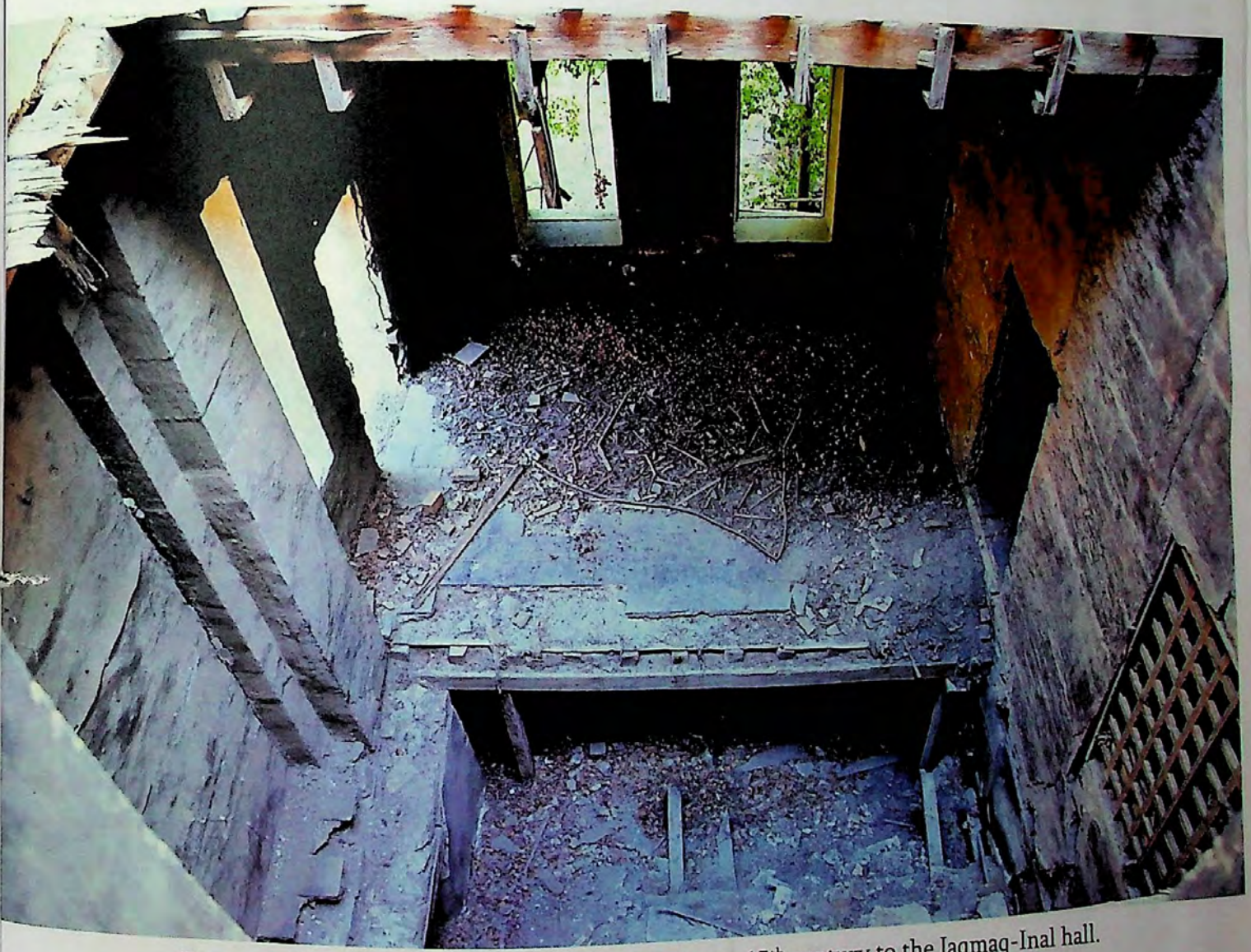
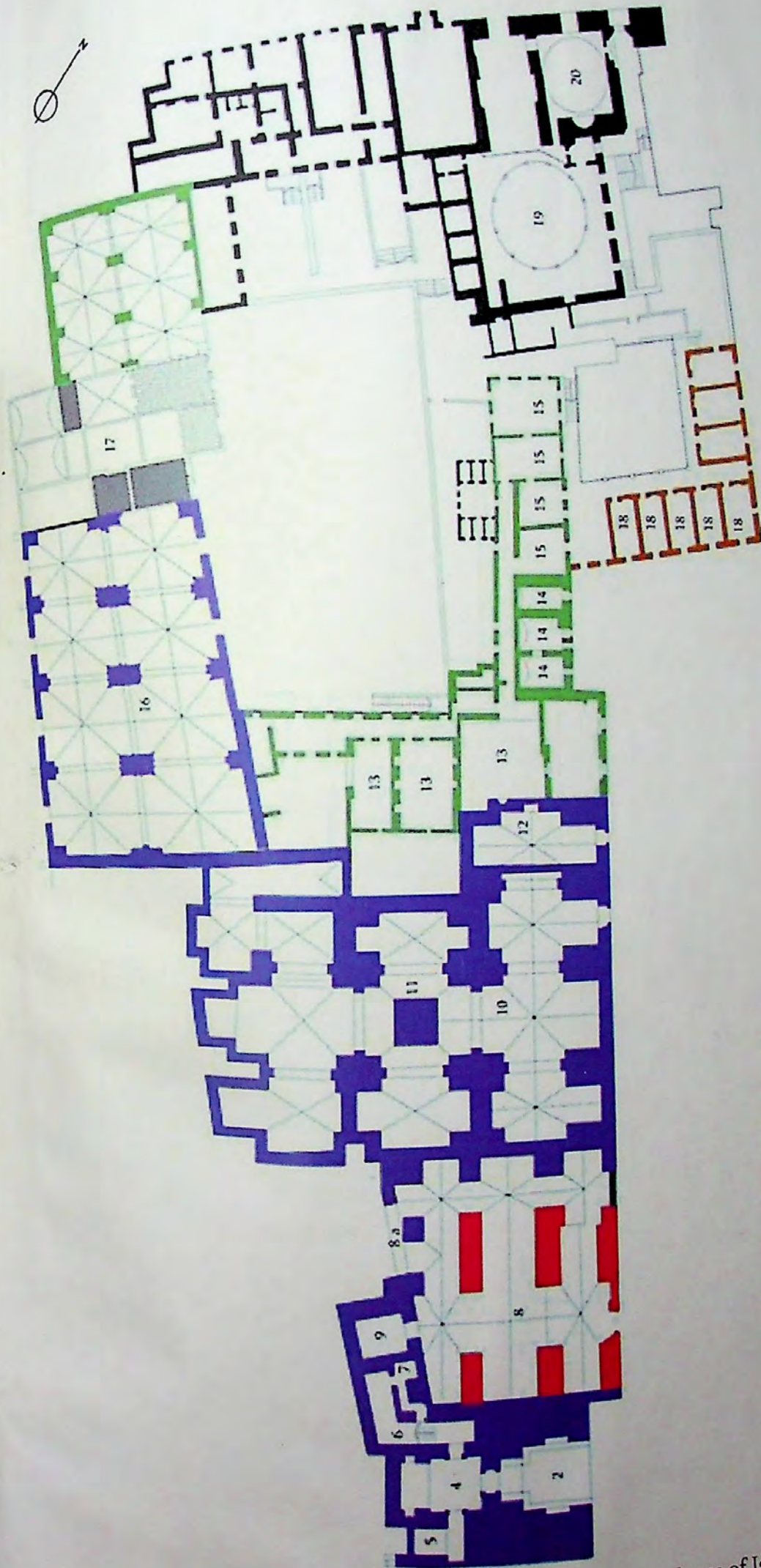


Figure 5.30. The addition that was installed post-15th century to the Jaqmaq-Inal hall.

ing a later



Figure 5.31. The upper level of the Ottoman extension.



- Period I - Phase I: Before 1335
- Period II - Phases II & III: 1335-1468
- Period III - Phase IV: 1468-1517
- Period IV - Phase VII: 1517-1800

Figure 5.32. The different construction phases of Istabl Qawsun.

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