The mosque of Aṣlam al-Silāḥdār

Chahinda Fahmi Karim

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THE MOSQUE OF ASLAM
AL - SILAHDAR

BY
CHAIMIKA R. KARIM

1978
THE MOSQUE OF AŞLAM AL-SILĀHDĀR

A THESIS

Submitted
to the Department of Arabic Studies
of the American University in Cairo
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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By
CHĀHINDA FAHMĪ KARĪM

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This Thesis for the Master of Arts Degree

by

Chahinda Fahmi Karim

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

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4 Rabī‘ 746/1345 at the age of twenty, Ašlam and Arūqṭāy were two of the few emīrs who helped the sultān Sha‘bān (brother of al-Ṣāliḥ Ismacīl) to take power. In the year 747/1346 the new sultān al-Muzaffar Ḥājjī increased the iqtā‘ of both emīrs.

Bahā‘ al-Dīn Ašlam died on saturday 10 Sha‘bān of the same year, i.e. 747/1346 and was described by al-Maqrīzī as Aḥad al-Mashāyakh (one of the leading šaykhhs), a pious man who sits at the head of halqas (teaching circles) and who was a kind man known for his good deeds. This last description of the emīr Ašlam as a šaykh who sat at the head of halqas is unusual considering his essentially emīrial career, but it recalls al-Maqrīzī’s description of the emīr Sanjar al-Gawli as a muftī (who gives formal legal opinions) for the Shāfi‘ī school. Thus the preoccupation of some mamlūk emīrs with religious studies did occur but was unusual and therefore deserved special mention by al-Maqrīzī.

The available sources are clearly inadequate for a complete biography of Bahā‘ al-Dīn Ašlam. For example, there is no mention about the place and date of his sale or coming to Egypt, or about his youth and military training, or even of the sources of his wealth when he became an emīr. There is little on his career as a dawādār for Salār or silāḥdār to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad or as an emīr 100 muqaddim 1000. The sources also show contradictions on the length of his imprisonment, about his departure for the Yemen and about his
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURES AND PLATES

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have been added to complement the text.

The system of transliteration adopted is that of the first Encyclopedia of Islam with the following exceptions: q instead of ḫ and j instead of dj. The orthography of mamluk names follow that of the arabic sources and the adoption of one particular spelling, where divergent forms exist reflects its most commonly cited form in the modern literature. The sources sometimes conflict, however, both internally and with local modern forms: to avoid embarrassment of forms I have used certain double forms where these diverge markedly from the "original" or received orthography eg. Gūkāndār / chūkāndār (actually chawgāndār), Gāshnekīr / chashnegīr, et.

In the bibliography each reference has an appropriate abbreviation which will be used in the note section found at the end of each chapter. The numbers added after the date of monuments mentioned in the text are those of the Index to Mohammedan Monuments in Cairo Survey of Egypt 1951. These are usually only added the first time a monument is mentioned in the text. Arabic technical terms used are underlined and given a translation only the first time used in the text. Following is a short glossary of Arabic terms whose translation was not added the first time mentioned in the text.

Niyāba = provincial rule.
Na'īb = governor of a province
ABSTRACT

The subject of the present thesis is the mosque of Ašlam al-Sīlahdār, founded by the emir Bahā’ al-Dīn Ašlam al-Sīlahdār and dated in the foundation inscription 746/1345.

There is very little either in the primary or secondary sources on the founder and his foundation and the extant building presents many problems of structure, decoration and building sequence. The present thesis is therefore divided into four parts. Chapter one is a historical review, based mainly on primary sources of the founder and his foundation including a brief topographical survey of the area where the foundation was built.

The second chapter describes the monument as it stands including the restorations done by the Comité. The third and fourth chapters are concerned mainly with problems of structure and decoration, because the mosque presents many unusual features for the Baḥrī Mamlūk period. Hence, the comparison of the various elements with contemporary Cairene monuments, separating thus the original from later additions and restoration work, and showing the originality of several decorative and architectural features of the mosque.

Plans of the area, a groundplan of the mosque as well as plans of the different floors with elevations and photographs
nā'ībal = salṭana = the emir who replaced the sultan in Cairo during his absence.

ḥōsh = courtyard

khaṭīb = the shaykh who says the Friday sermon in a mosque.

dekka = raised platform used by a shaykh in a mosque for the Friday sermon. It is also called dekkat al Mubbalegh.
CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Founder

The history of the founder is based mainly on comparison and evaluation of primary sources, because these often differ and contradict. The following account may thus appear tedious and even unsatisfactory for evident truth (i.e. of his importance as emīr, governor, soldier and even shaykh) is simply not attested in them, but is still important for it throws some light on his biography.

Aṣlām, al-amir Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-silāḥdār1 was one of the mamlūks of al-malik al-Manṣūr Qalaʿūn al-Alfī. When the mamlūk al-sultāniye were distributed during the nīyāba of Kitbughā, after the assassination of al-malik al-Ashraf Khalīl b. Qalaʿūn and the succession of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalaʿūn, Aṣlām was given to the emīr Saif al-Dīn Aqquṣīh al-Manṣūry, then he became one of the mamlūks of the emīr Salār.2 Ibn Taghribirdī mentions, regarding the return of al-malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalaʿūn to the sultanate of Egypt for the third time3, that when al-malik al-Muzaffar Baybars abdicated and left Egypt for al-Atfiḥiya on Tuesday 16 Ramadān 709/1309, prince Salār sat in the hall of the nīyāba at Qalʿat al Gебel (Citadel) and gathered around him all the remaining emīrs to guard the citadel.
He also released the mamlūks of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and others imprisoned in the citadel, then rode down to announce the return of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as sultan of Egypt. Salār then sent Ağlam al-Dawadār with a message to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in which he told him about the escape of al-Muẓaffar Baybars. Ağlam was preceded by the emīrs Baybars al-Manṣūri al-Dawadār and Bahādur Āṣ; but he carried the nimchā⁴ (Persian word meaning a sword musket or bow) evidently a symbol of official power to assure al Nāṣir Muḥammad of the truth of the message.

While Baybars was abdicating, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad left Damascus heading for Egypt, stopping on the way at Gaza to gather more troops. Ağlam, Dawadār Salār, reached him with the nimchā, just as he was leaving Gaza and returned with him to Egypt where Salār had gathered all the people to meet their new sultan.

Al-Maqrīzī⁵ and Āli Pāshā Mubārrak⁶ add that al-malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad appointed Ağlam emīr 10 when he handed him nimchā al mulk and told him about the escape of Baybars. Ağlam was then promoted to emīr 100 muqqadem 1000, but no mention was found in the sources concerning the time of his promotion, except that on saturday 13 of Shawāl 720/1320 the mahmāl with kiswa (covering for the Kaʿba carried by camels and given yearly as a present from Egypt) left Egypt led by the emīr Bahāʾ al-Dīn Ağlam al-Silāḥdār.⁷ The same source also mentions that on Saturday the second of Safar 722/1322 some emīrs left towards
Ayaâs including the emîrs Jamâl al-Dîn nàîb Karak, Sanjar al-Jumuqdâr, Aşlam, Torha, and Ülmâz al-Hâjib; in total five emîrs muqqadim 1000.

This fairly tedious account shows that if the sources do not throw enough light on the position of Aşlam or of his importance, it appears at least that he was promoted to the rank of silâhÎ dâr during the third reign of al-Nâṣir Muḥammad, instead of a dawadÎr for Sâlîr. One may also conclude that Aşlam was promoted from emîr 10 to emîr 100 muqqadim 1000 sometime between 709 and 722/1309 and 1322. During those years nothing is mentioned of his career except that he was sent once to Qus in 714/1314 without giving reasons and that in 720/1320 he headed the mahmal caravan to Mecca.

His origins are also mentioned in the foundation inscription of the southern entrance to the mosque when he is called Aşlam ibn ʿAbdallâh. Ibn Taghribirdî adds that he was of Qipchâq origin and that he and his brother Qurmûghi and some other Qipchâq Turks were arrested in Jumâda I 727/1326 on the orders of the sultan. The reason for this was that Aşlam had exhibited his arms and remained in his stables preparing his horses; some of his enemies saw him and wrote a note to the sultan warning him that Aşlam was preparing to overthrow him. The sultan who was known to believe rumours, turned against Aşlam and sent Ülmâz/Yîlmâz al-Hâjib to question him. Aşlam explained that he had bought new arms and was trying
them on the horses. This answer did not convince the sultān who ordered his arrest along with his brother and all his compatriots (Ahl-Jinsūḥ) amongst others, and they were all taken to Alexandria with emīr Śalāḥ al-Dīn Tarḫān. Aṣlām was sentenced to solitary confinement in a tower of a citadel in Alexandria. His iqtā' was given by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to the emīr Ḫusayn b. Jandār upon his return from Syria. This was on 3 Jumāda al-Ākhira 727/1326.

Ibn Taghribirdī10 and Zetterstéen11 both mention that in the year 734/1333 the sultān ordered the release of the emīr Bahāʿ al-Dīn Aṣlām and his brother as well as Baktūt al-Qaramānī; the period of their arrest was thus six years and eight months. This conflicts with al-Ṣafādī12 who mentions that the period of their imprisonment was around five years after which Aṣlām was returned to his former position.

Regarding that period, al-Maqrīzī13 states that Aṣlām was among the army sent to Yemen and when he returned back, the sultān alarmed by the rumours which had reached him, ordered his arrest for five years. After his release, he returned to his position, then was sent as nāʾib of Safad. Ibn Ḥajjar al-Ṣaqaṭlāni14 contradicts some of the facts and dates mentioned in the previous sources, since he mentions that Aṣlām al-Qipchāq Bahāʿ al-Dīn al-Silāḥdār served first with Salār, then became a young emīr when al-Nāṣir Muḥammad returned from Karak, then was promoted to emīr 100 muqqadim 1000 around the end of
al-Nāṣir's reign. He adds that during that period, Ağlam was sent on the Yemen campaign of 735/1334 and upon his return he was arrested and imprisoned in Alexandria for about seven years, then finally appointed nā'ib (governor) of Şafad where he remained until al-Nāṣir Muḥammad died, and then he was appointed in Egypt emīr 100. This of course does not agree with al-Maqrizi or the dating of Ibn Taghibirdi regarding the period of his imprisonment, nor the date of his leave to fight in Yemen, nor his appointment as emīr 100 muqqadim 1000 during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. But it is known that Ağlam was appointed nā'ib of Şafad to replace 1Awad Aqsunqur al-silāḥdar 15 who was transferred to the niyāba of Caza and that the decrees of their transfer were announced on Wednesday 18 Ramadan 741/1340 and Ağlam left for Şafad on Tuesday 24 of the same month. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad died during Ağlam's stay in Şafad.16

Al-Şafadī adds 17 that after the death of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the emīr Qawṣūn asked both the emīrs 1Alā' al-Dīn Alṭunbugha nā'ib al-Shām and Ağlam nā'ib Şafad to march to Aleppo to arrest Taṣhtimur Ḥommōs Akhdar, but on the way between Şafad and Damascus, Quṭlubugha al-Fākhri arrived with orders for Ağlam's recall. Ağlam remained with al-Fākhri until they went together with the Caskar (guards) of Damascus to Egypt when the new ruling sulṭān, al-Nāṣir Aḥmed ibn al-Nāṣir Muḥammad allowed him to remain in Egypt retaining his
title of emīr 100 muqqadim 1000 and to take part in the mashūra (highest council of emīrs). Ibn Taghrībirdī confirms this event and he specifies the date of the event, namely 29 Rajab 742/1341. He also mentions that Ašlam, nāʿib Safad was in favour of al-Nāṣir Ahmed against emir Qawṣūn.

Ibn Taghrībirdī states that on Thursday 13 Shawwāl 743/1342, the new sultān descended from the citadel in great ceremony, accompanied by those emīrs who came from Syria, including Ašlam nāʿib Safad who was replaced two weeks later by Baybars al-Aḥmadi as nāʿib of Safad.

On Saturday 25 Safar 744/1343, Baybars al-Aḥmadi and emīr Quqāy together with those deprived by al-Ṣāliḥ Ismaʿīl of their ranks marched to al-Karak, the emīrs rode against them while Ašlam besieged the city. The emīrs informed the new sultān al-Ṣāliḥ Ismaʿīl that he should send reinforcement to help Ašlam to maintain the siege and ensure that al-Nāṣir Ahmed remained imprisoned at al-Karak. The sultān chose some of the privileged emīrs who marched with 4000 horsemen to help Ašlam. But on tuesday 17 Jumāda I, emīr Ašlam together with ʿAbū Bakr b. Arghūn and Aronbogha returned without leave from al-Karak on the excuse of their weakness and the wounds of their soldiers. The sultan accepted this.

Since Ašlam was one of the emīrs of the mashūra, it happened that when al-Ṣāliḥ Ismaʿīl died on the night of
promotion in his career. Hence the preceding comparison and
evaluation of the contemporary sources. There is, however,
o doubt that his emīrial career was an important one for he
was muqqadim 1000\textsuperscript{25} and was allowed to sit in the mashūra,
which was the highest council of emīrs.

The greatest event in the history of Aṣlam is probably
his appointment of nāʿīb of Ṣafad. It is thus essential to
study such nīyābas, their size, importance, the rank of those
who occupied the office of nāʿīb there and the relation between
the nāʿīb and the reigning sultān in Cairo. In this aspect,
Gaudefroy, Demombynes\textsuperscript{26} states that the nāʿīb is the one who
represents the sultān and replaces him in the provinces. He
was in many cases an emīr silāḥ (he who carries the arms for
the sultān in receptions, meetings and general occasions and
who supervised the army stores in the capital). The provinces,
during the mamlūk period were divided into wilayāt ruled by
emīrs, but in general there was no wāli where a nāʿīb ruled.\textsuperscript{27}

The nāʿīb of Ṣafad was selected from the leading mamlūk
emīrs because it was the fifth largest city in the Syrian
kingdom. Ṣafad had a citadel with gardens overlooking the
lake of Tiberias and was surrounded by mountains and valleys.
The nāʿīb lived in the citadel and he received his orders
directly from the sultān in Cairo. Even the nāʿīb as-saltātana
in Cairo had no influence on him.\textsuperscript{28} He was like a little
sultān who had, to some extent, the same retinue as the reigning
sultan in Cairo. In fact the whole administrative system at the sultan's court was reproduced on a smaller scale in Safad and in the other Syrian provinces.²⁹

Ibn Taghribirdi³⁰ adds that the nā'ib of Safad could sometime be an emīr ¹⁰ and not an emīr Ṭablakhāna or Silâhdār, for the sultan withdrew emīr Baktamur al-Ḥusāmi al-Ḥājib from the niyāba of Safad at the beginning of 718/1318 and when he returned to Cairo, the sultan promoted him emīr 100 muqqadim 1000 in Egypt, but that seems to have been an exceptional case.

1.2 The Foundation

For the buildings founded by the emīr Bahā’ al-Dīn Aṣlam al-silâhdār there are three main sources: mediaeval literature, the architectural remains and the waqfiyya (endowment deed).

1.2 A Primary sources

Al Maqrizi³¹ states that the emīr Bahā’ al-Dīn Aṣlam al-silâhdār founded in 746/1346 a mosque inside the bāb al-Maḥrūq³² and beside it he founded a nice house (٣) and ḥawd māʾ lil-sabil (charitable drinking trough). He adds that teaching took place in the mosque, which was one of the best, and it had awqāf (endowment deeds).

⁴Ali Fāshā Mubāryak³³ mistakenly cites al-Maqrizi mentioning that the mosque was built outside Darb al-Maḥrūq.
Ibn Taghrībirdī\textsuperscript{34} pointed out that this mosque lay "outside Cairo" in the Sūq al-Chanam (sheep market), that is to say outside the southern walls of Cairo and Bāb Zuwaḥiya. But he then contradicted this in the Manhal al-Ṣāfi\textsuperscript{35} where he says that Ašlām built a madrasa in Cairo at Bāb al-Maḥruq near to his dār where Friday prayer used to take place. From this, one can conclude that the madrasa was in fact Maqrīzi's jāmiʿ (mosque), and that it lay in Cairo near bāb al-Maḥruq, or in other words, inside the walls.

Al-Ṣafadi\textsuperscript{36} mentions that Ašlām founded at al-Barqiya near his istabl (cavalry barracks, often attached to a palace or town residence) a madrasa malīha ila al-ghāya i.e. of great beauty, a turba (mausoleum), rāb\textsuperscript{c} (tenement building) and a hawd maʿ lil sabīl. It is worth noting that al-Ṣafadi is the first to mention Ašlām's rāb\textsuperscript{c} and Turba. Evidently, the complex of Ašlām al-silahdār consisted of a dār, an istabl, a mosque, mausoleum, rāb\textsuperscript{c} and hawd for a sabīl. Only the mosque (madrasa)\textsuperscript{37} and mausoleum are still standing and they form the topic of this thesis, while the remaining parts of the complex will be dealt with briefly in the next section 1.2 B.

None of the sources give a description of the mosque or the other establishments built by Ašlām, and very little has come to light concerning the later history of the foundation. The name of the mosque only occurs twice in relation with events in Cairo at two different periods, namely:
On Thursday 29 Rajab 853/1451 (over a hundred years after emîr Aşlâm’s death), ibn Taghribirdî38 mentions that people were standing in the streets of Cairo from Bāb Zuwayla to the citadel, shouting and threatening for unknown reasons. One of the emîrs, Abul-Khayr al-Nahâṣ was being followed by the people who were beating him. He managed to escape and reached jâmi’ Aşlâm at Khaṭṭ Sûq al-Chanam where a man hit him on the head throwing him off his horse. Abul-Khayr threw himself into bâyî (house) Aşlâm which was near the mosque and which was inhabited at this time by Yashbak al Khâṣikî al-Zâhirî Jaqmaq.

This was the last mention of dâr Aşlâm, since the next event, mentioned by al-Cabarti39, describing the troubles which took place in Cairo in 1123/1720, between the Circassian Turks and al-Câzâb, mentions that a group leader known as Ḥasan Jâwîsh Gulûb lived (rû) inside the mosque of Aşlâm. The dâr, evidently, therefore no longer existed.

People buried in the mausoleum

None of the sources mentioning Aşlâm al-silâḥdâr specify his place of burial, but since he died in Cairo after the inauguration of his mosque, Ḥâṣan Ğâdîl thanked Ğâhîd Ğalîlî’s assumption that he was undoubtedly buried in his mausoleum. ĞAli Pâshâ Muhârîq41 referring to al-Sakhâwî mentions that a grandson of Aşlâm was buried in the mausoleum. He was ĞOmar ibn Khâlîf ibn Ḥâṣan a son of ĞAlîf, the daughter of Firâm Khatûn the
daughter of Aśلام who died in Ramadān 888/1483 and was a great scholar.

1.2 B Architectural remains of the dependencies

There are architectural remains which suggest that the ṭahā was adjacent to the mosque on the north side, i.e. abutting onto the ablution area. Some of the original dressed stone and brackets (Pl. 1) form the lower part of the existing house. The entrance of the house (Pl. 2a) leads to a corridor in the right wall of which are the remains of an arch which probably formed a direct entrance to the maydā'a(ablation area) of the mosque. Turning left (Pl. 2b) at the end of this same corridor, one finds oneself in an open courtyard surrounded by tenement flats (Pls. 1 & 3). Here again the layout and the brackets (Pl 1) and the stonework suggest a date close to the foundation of the mosque. In one corner of the courtyard is a small room covered by a cross-vaulted roof which corresponds to a cross-vault in the bent entrance of the northwest portal to the mosque.

At the north end of this tenement building, overlooking the shārī Fatma al-Nabawiyya is a carpenter's shop. At the back of this shop one can see what appears to be the remains of a shadhīrwan (Pls. 4a, 2b) suggesting the hawd ma' lil sabil. The wooden ceiling of this shop also shows remains of paint which corresponds to the painted iwān ceilings of the mosque (Pl. 5). This shop is now topped by a late inscription panel (Pl.6)
Beside the carpenter's shop, still on the north side, is now a grocer's shop on top of which one can see an old kuttab (school for orphans) used today as a flat (Pl. 7). This appears to have been the northern limit of the complex on the shari'ah al-Nabawiyya.

(Fig. 2) is a schematic map of the area indicating the suggested location of the different elements, namely the dār, rābī' and hawd ma' lil sabīl, which formed part of the complex of Ağlam al-silāḥdār. The position of Ağlam's dār remains speculative and requires a detailed study of the area for architectural remains, which is beyond the scope of this research. But, two suggestions can be put forward. First, as shown in (Fig. 2e) adjacent to the mosque on the site of the bakery and a modern building. A chamfered corner on the Häret Jāmī Ağlam (Pls 8 a & b) as well as large brackets behind it (Pls 9 a, b & c) reinforce this suggestion. Beside the suggested location of the dār on (Fig. 2e) is a passage way leading from Häret Jāmī Ağlam to the maydā'a of the mosque. This is based on (Fig. 1) which is the oldest plan available of the mosque drawn in 1304/1886 and found at the Department of Antiquities. This passage no longer exists, but its remains can be seen on (Pl. 10).

The second possibility for the location of dār Ağlam can also be seen on (Fig. 2 f), opposite the entrance in the southern facade of the mosque. This suggestion depends not
on architectural remains, but on the direct entrance to the mosque on this side. This will be discussed in fuller detail in chapter 4.

1.2 C The search for a Waqfiya

An essential source for the dating and description of a monument is the endowment deed or waqfiya, but the search for an original has so far been in vain, despite the fact that al-Maqrizi mentions its existence and ʿAli Pāshā Mubārak confirms this and adds the name of al-Uṣṭa Sulaymān al-Sandabīsī appointed nāẓir al-waṣf by a court decree at his time, namely 1305/1887. He also states that the total revenue of the waṣf which was 12064 piasters including 11996.5 piasters rent for places and 67.5 piasters from lease, of which 4411.5 piasters were spent for salaries while the rest was kept for repairs.

A comparison of these revenue sums and expenses with two contemporary mosques in the same area, namely al-Maridānī and Shaykhū, shows the following:

a) The mosque of al-Maridānī 740/1340 near Khaṭṭ al-Ṭabbāna outside bāb Zuwaīla; the yearly total revenue amounted to 5210 piasters and the expenditure only 213 piasters on salaries.46

b) The mosque of Shaykhū 750/1349; the yearly total revenue was 10982 piasters and the expenditure 7811 piasters.47
Thus, the total revenue of the waqf of the mosque of Ašlām al-silāḥdār at the time of ʿAlī Pāshā Mubārak can be considered quite high.

The search revealed only a secondary waqfiya which includes the exchange of 11 sahm (plots of cultivated land) in Beba, Upper Egypt, in favour of Ašlām's waqf and in return, the ruined ḥāsh at darb Choghlān near the mosque was given to Maḥmūd Ahmad al-Kutubī.

1.3 The Area In Which The Mosque Is Built

The mosque of Ašlām al-silāḥdār is situated southeast of Cairo, outside Bāb-Zuwaṭla in the Darb al-ʿĀḥmar area. It is a roughly triangular area bounded by Bāb Zuwaṭla to the northwest, the walls of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to the west, the Aqsunqur complex to the south and roughly the mamlūk Darb al-ʿĀḥmar in the East.

According to al-Maqrīzī, the area outside Bāb Zuwaṭla towards the qabāl (citadel) was a desert at the time of the construction of al-Qāhirah. The first to build there was al-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalāʾi 555/1160. There was no construction standing between the mosque and the citadel until people began to use it as a cemetery. Ḥarrāt were then built. When the citadel became inhabited, this area began to be built up little by little. He adds that whoever built in that area, found, when digging for the foundations, the bones of people who had been
buried there. After 713/1313, the emirs built their mosques and palaces there, as well as a number of suqs (markets). Al-Maqrīzī mentions several street names in the area, but the only ones that still are recognizable are: Khatt al-Darb al-Ăhmar, Khatt Suq al-Ghanam, Khatt Bab al-Wezir, and Khatt Suwqet al-C-Ezzi.

Ibn Taghrībirdī points out that the mosque of Ašlām is near the Sūq al-Ghanam, which at his time 'used to be' in this area. From the name Sūq al-Ghanam and shāri`C al-Tabbāna, we can posit an early cattle market before 1313 when the area began to be built up, since cattle markets are traditionally on the outskirts of towns. According to Raymond, the principal cattle markets in the mamluk period were situated outside the town walls, south east of Bab Zuwayla between the Darb al-Ăhmar and the mosque of Ašlām, in a region where there are still bits of free space. As the area became more and more inhabited, the cattle market had to be moved to another area, and its place became known as the ancient cattle market

The choice of this area to build a complex , is in fact strange. Although it was only the privilege of sultāns to build their funerary complexes on the qasaba, the city’s main boulevard, most of the emirs had the choice of sites in streets of secondary importance, such as that connecting Bab Zuwayla with the old government centres Fustāţ and al-Qata`iC,
the present qasaba Ridwān and those leading from Bāb Zuwayla to the new government centre in the mamlik period, the citadel, namely the Darb al-Aḥmar and the Tabbāna and "that running from the maydān below the citadel to the ancient canal bridge on the Khalīdj, i.e. the Šalība." Ašlam was not a minor emīr since he was a silāḥdār and an emīr 100 muqaddim 1000. His years of prison may have led to financial problems and this allowed him to procure land only away from the centres.

No monuments are mentioned as having been built on the site before the foundation of Ašlam. It also appears that this area never attracted the attention of later emīrs. Only two sabīls were built there, that of Mostafa Muṣallī Shurbagī 1127/1715 (Index No. 232) and the sabīl of Muḥammad Katkhuda 1131/1718 (Index No. 150). Three mausolea are also mentioned in this area, namely, the tomb of Abul Yusufīn c. 730/1325-30 (index No. 234) and two tombs not listed in the Index, that of Ābdallāh al-Guwaynī and Sidi Ambar El Nūr. Āli Pāshā Mubārak54 gives a detailed description of the area however, citing a very large number of no longer extant qubbas and zāwiyas (burial places). Thus, until his time, the area still retained its funerary character, not in large mosques as the Darb al-Aḥmar, but in more popular smaller tombs. In fact, his is the last written record of the funerary continuity of the area. He also mentions a bath in the area, not extant today and the house of a certain Mazhar Pāshā near a madrasa of Um Anūk.
The change in the area from a desert to a cemetery is a 14th century phenomena. The change from a cemetery one to a slowly developing habitation area seems however to have begun only in the 18th and 19th centuries. Today it can be described as a marginal area with no physical separateness and no centre, mainly involved in cottage industry for a living. The main thoroughfare today as in the 14th century is still the Darb al-Ahmar and its continuation.

NOTES

1 al-Ṣafadī, *Lexicon*, 285
3 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* IX, 3
4 Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary*, 1445
5 al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat* II, 209
6 Mubārak, *Khīṭat Jadīda*, IX, 3-5
7 Zetterstéen, *Beiträge*, 171-172
8 See page 38 of this thesis
9 Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm* IX, 89
11 Zetterstéen, *Beiträge*, 319
13 al-Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat* II, 309
14 al-ʿAsqalānī, *Durār*, 389
al-Zahirî, Zubdat, 106 points out that a sultan needed to consult others on a difficult problem, he would consult amîr al-mu'minin (religious leader), Qâdi al-Qudâh (supreme judge) wezîr (minister) and the emîrs muqqadim 1000 and their atabeks.

Gaudefroye-Demombynes, Syrie, LV

Ibid., LXVII and LXIV cited from al Qalqashandi Şobh al-aṣbaḥ IV, 65

Ibid., LXIV

Soberman, "Mamlûks" EI III, 218

Ibn Taghrîbirdî, Nujûm IX, 56

al-Maqrîzî, Khitaṭ II, 309

The bâb al-Mahrûq is one of the gates in the eastern wall of Cairo.

Mutârak, Khitaṭ Jadīda IV, 59 and 74

Ibn Taghrîbirdî, Nujûm X, 174

Cited in Ibid., 174 footnote 1

al-Ṣafâdi, Lexicon, 285-286
Ibid., calls the foundation a madrasa and not a jāmiʿ.

Ibn Taghribirdī, Nujūm XV, 398
al-Jabarti, Ḥaṣā'ib I, 42
Abdel Wahhāb, Jāmiʿ Aglam, 480
Mubārak, Khitāt Jadīda IV, 59

A shadhirvān is a shallow recess which runs from the floor of the ceiling at the rear of a sabīl. This is discussed in details by Sophie Ebeid, Sabīla, 67 and 86.

The inscription panel above entrance to carpenter’s shop was found difficult to read but the script and surrounding double bands which loop at regular intervals suggest a later date, either in the late 7th century Mamlūk or Ottoman period.

al-Maqrīzī, Khitāt II, 309
Mubārak, Khitāt Jadīda IV, 59
Ibid., V, 36
Ibid., V, 59
Waqfiyya No. 2052 dated 17 Safar 1322 produced from the mahkama Shari‘iyya.

al-Maqrīzī, Khitāt II, 136
Ibid., 136
Ibn Taghribirdī, Nujūm X, 174
Raymond, Artisans I, 311
Kessler, Funerary Architecture, 261-262
Mubārak, Khitāt Jadīda IV, 59
CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF THE MOSQUE AS IT NOW STANDS

2.1 Situation

The Mosque of Aqlam al-Bahā'ī is situated off the Darb al-Aḥmar southeast of Fatimid Cairo, close to the wall of Šalāḥ al-Dīn between the Ayyūbid Bāb-al-Mahrūq and the Bāb al-Wezīr. The Mosque has two facades, the southern on the present Darb al-Choghān "square", and the northwestern on the present shārīj al-Mabawiyya (the former shārīj jāmīj Aqlam)¹ which is a continuation of the present Darb al-Mahrūq (Fig. 1). The Mosque occupies an area of 454 square meters (Fig. 4 groundplan). Its longest side (28 m.) is the northwestern facade. The southern facade is 21.9 m. long. The third side on the Šāret Jāmīj Aqlam is occupied by one facade of the mausoleum, therefore only 7.3 m. then it abuts a baker's shop. The Mayda'a (ablution area) occupies the northeast side now largely occupied by a tenement building.

2.2 Description of the Facades

2.2 A The south facade (Fig. 5)

The main facade is now to the south (Pl. 11). At the southeast corner is the fluted dome of the mausoleum (Pl. 12).
Below the fluting are the remains of a band of faience mosaic with a Qur'anic verse in dark blue on a white ground. The thuluth inscription is enclosed in lobed oblong panels separated by lobed decorative medallions and topped by ceramic crenellations of which only one is still in situ (Pl. 13). To the right of the entrance, almost at the southwest corner is a minaret (Pl. 14). The square brick socle is separated from the octagon by a pyramidal transitional zone on the exterior. The octagon is built of brick and is cut by open and blind niches, framed by pointed hoods and by two columns cut by vertical and horizontal zigzag lines at the sides. The open niches form windows opening onto the inner minaret staircase. All the hoods of the niches are decorated with keel arched flutings radiating vertically from a central keel-arch. Immediately above the pointed frames rise four tiers of stalactites supporting a wooden balcony, then a short circular shaft with a pointed hood and pierced with plain windows.

The crenellations (Pl. 14) consist of an elaborate five-lobed leaf and decorate the tops of the three facades except the southwest corner around the minaret. The whole facade of dressed stone is framed below the crenellations by a moulded cornice.

The portal arch (Pl. 11) is 0.7 m. deep by 3 m. wide with a trilobed profile and a plain hood. Above the entrance
is a large white rectangular marble panel (Pl.15) with
coloured marble inlay of a central oculus surrounded by
interlacing bands enclosing trefoils. This marble panel
is framed above and below by inscriptions, the former
Qur'anic and the latter a foundation inscription. The
intricately joggled voussoirs (Pl. 15) are of black and white
marble framed on each side by small marble panels (Pl.15)
inlaid with coloured marble. The pattern consists of a
central six petalled whirling rosette where the lines of
the petals extend to form a simple angular interlacing
pattern. A further Qur'anic inscription runs below the plain
marble lintel and across the two door jambs. A moulded band
frames the portal up to three quarters of its height and a
double band of the same moulding frames the mastabas (Pl. 11)

The southern facade is broken by three niches (Pl. 11),
one on each side of the portal and a third niche at the east
end below the dome of the mausoleum. The two niches on either
sides of the portal are, strangely, not identical. The hood
of each is plain, without stalactites, but that to the left
of the portal has a rosette at the centre (Pl. 11). The Ṭirāz
inscription which runs along the whole facade below the hoods
of the niches is missing. The upper windows are trilobed
enclosing an oculus above two arches supported on three columns.
Both windows are framed by a band with a loop at its apex,
but while in the niche to the right of the portal, the
marble of the window is two coloured, black and white, that
to the left of the portal shows only black marble and stone. The lower windows are topped by black and white marble joggled voussoirs, relieving arch and black and white marble joggled lintels.

The third niche at the east corner of the south facade, differs from the others. First, it springs slightly above ground level (Pl. 11). Secondly, the hood has five tiers of stalactites. Thirdly, the frame of the trilobed window which is entirely of stone ablaq does not loop at the apex so that the window appears smaller. Finally, the joggling of the voussoir and lunette is plainer in design but includes black and white marble. The corresponding niche at the west of this facade below the minaret is missing, which makes the whole facade appear asymmetrical.

2.2 B The northwest facade (Fig. 6)

The main feature of the northeast facade is the portal 1.8 m. deep and 3.3 m. wide (Pls. 16 & 17). The profile of the portal is again trilobed, here framed by a doubled moulded band with a loop at the apex of the arch filled with a piece of blue faience. The door itself is above street level and was reached by three steps. The rounded foliate naskhi foundation inscription runs across both sides of the porch (Pl. 19) above the mastabas. The blocks at the top of the jambs bear a double moulded profile (Pl. 18). This same feature can be seen on the portal of
the south facade but in marble (pl. 11). The stone lintel shows intricate surface joggling and is framed on three sides by a narrow band of fleur de lys (Pl. 18). The joggled stone voussoirs are intricately inlaid with polychrome marble fragments (Pl. 18) and are topped by a small rectangular window with a lintel of three tiers of stalactites. The conch of the arch contains five tiers of stalactites crowned by a miniature conch decorated with five radial bands. The sides of the trilobed hood are filled with flat stone arabesque. A moulded band frames the whole portal and the two mastabas (Pl. 20) and shows interesting stone joggling at regular intervals (always red stone is joggled) up to niche hood level.

The northwest facade is broken by a single central niche between the portal and the chamfered southwest corner, and five shops, two between portal and niche and three between niche and chamfered corner (Fig. 6). The facade has four tiers of windows. The lowest above the first two shops are two plain square openings topped by a third rectangular opening which open onto a room (Fig. 8 b). Above these openings are three windows of one of the rooms of the upper floor of the mosque (Fig. 9 d), and then a level higher, two windows opening onto the inner sahn (courtyard) of the mosque. The joggled voussoirs and lintel of the niche of this facade are of stone and black marble. The upper window is trilobed and of stone
ablāq and the hood of the niche is covered with four tiers of stalactites. Finally, the three other shops occupy the area below of the minaret block and above these are three rectangular and one square openings which give onto the staircase leading to the roof.

The third facade which is the Qibla (direction towards Mecca) side (Fig. 7) is partly hidden today by a baker's shop and only the mausoleum remains free standing (Pl. 21). The two niches on this side with windows opening onto the mausoleum are very similar to the niche of the mausoleum on the south facade (Pl. 11). However, while the stalactites of the latter are pointed, those of the Qibla facade are rounded, and the inscription running below the stalactites actually starts above the right niche of this facade. The joggling above the lower windows of both these niches still have remains of very dark green marble. An oculus surrounded by stone joggling can be seen between the niches at upper window level. Fragments of the intricate wooden panels of the windows can still be seen (Pl. 13) with an inscription mentioning restoration work in 1320/1910 during the reign of Ḥalmy II.

Part of the inscription can be seen on the first window and the other part on the second window (Pls. 22 a & b).
2.3 **Description of the Interior of the Mosque**

The ground plan (Fig. 4) shows a cruciform mosque with a covered courtyard. The portal of the south facade gives directly into the mosque, but the portal of the northwest facade gives as is usual in cruciform buildings, first into a vestibule, from which a right-angled corridor leads into the **saḥn**. Two large symmetrical arched iwāns on the east and west open onto it. The **Qibla** iwān is 7 m. wide by 7 m. deep (Pl. 23) while that opposite is 5.2 m. wide by 5.2 m. deep (Pl. 24). The shallower and lower north and south iwāns (9 m. wide by 4.7 m. deep) are closed off by small arcades of three low arches on Coptic marble columns, one fluted and three round on high bases with Corinthian capitals (Pls. 25 & 26). The **Qibla** iwān and that opposite are thirty cm. above courtyard level, the side iwāns are only fifteen cm. above courtyard level, but the southern iwān is cut by a central passageway leading to the **saḥn** at the same level (Pl. 25).

2.3 A. **The Mausoleum**

The mausoleum is at the southeastern corner of the mosque. It is entered from inside the mosque to the right of the south portal. Its portal is built and decorated like an exterior entrance (Pl. 27). The entrance bay is 80 cm. deep with the usual mastabas and a rectangular hood of three tiers of stalactites. The **Maskhi** inscription on both sides of the portal (Pl. 28) is entirely Qur'anic. The black marble
lintel is framed by a small narrow band of fleur de lys (Pl. 28) topped by a relieving arch and joggled voussoirs of black and white marble. Below the stalactites of the hood is a plain rectangular window framed by a carved wooden frieze. The whole portal is surrounded by a double moulded rectangular band up to three quarters its height including its mastabas.

Inside, the mausoleum is 5.5 square meter. The apex and base of the dome are surrounded by an inscription band\(^13\) (Pl. 29). The drum is cut by twenty windows. The transitional zones are squinches with three tiers of pointed stalactites (Pl. 30) and in between are, on each side, six windows, three on the lowest level, topped by two then one window (Pl. 30), decorated with a foliate stucco design and filled with coloured glass. Two plain wooden friezes frame the upper walls of the mausoleum. Both Qibla wall and the wall opposite have a stucco roundel and two stucco windows between the two wooden friezes, while the side walls are decorated with a circular stucco window each. The roundel of the Qibla wall (Pl. 31) shows in the centre a six-lobed leaf from which radiate the \textit{alifs} and \textit{lāms} of a Qur'ānic inscription.\(^14\) Coloured glass\(^15\) fills in the empty space between the letters of the inscription. This is then surrounded by a large stucco foliate band. The two windows of this wall (Pl. 31) are framed by a Qur'ānic inscription band\(^16\) forming a semi-circular arch. A horizontal inscription band\(^17\) also cuts the windows in two at about 2/3
its height. The centre part of the windows above and below the horizontal inscription band shows a foliate stucco design filled with coloured glass. The wall opposite the Qibla shows similar stucco decoration excluding the coloured glass filling (Pl. 32).

The medallion decorating the side wall (to the right of the Qibla wall) shows in the centre a deeply carved foliate design surrounded by a large band also of foliate design, but less deeply carved (Pl. 33). The medallion on the other side wall (left of the Qibla wall) was probably identical except for coloured glass, filling empty spaces within the foliate stucco centre, since it opens onto the trilobed window of the mausoleum niche on the southern façade (Pl. 11). Unfortunately the whole of the central part is missing.

The lower part of the Qibla wall is cut by a mihrab (Pl. 34) with a window on each side. The mihrab has a pointed stilted arch with a slight return supported on two marble twisted columns with bell-shaped capitals. The conch and the spandrels are decorated with a stucco arabesque framed by a Qur'anic inscription band and the lower part shows remains of marble panelling (Pl. 34). This mihrab will be discussed in fuller detail in chapter IV of this thesis with the remaining stucco of the mosque. On each of the lateral walls is a deep, pointed arched niche with a window, the right overlooking the rahba in front of the southern façade, and the left overlooking the
Qibla iwān of the mosque. The door opposite the mihrāb is also set in a deep, pointed arched niche corresponding to the pointed arch of the mihrāb.

The woodwork of the cupboards on either side of the entrance to the mausoleum shows a plain linear design filled with a trilobed leaf (Pls. 35 a & b) framed by a carved ivory band. The outer framing bands of the cupboards also have carved trilobed leaves without ivory inlay. (Fig. 14).

The wooden cenotaph is placed today in the corner of the mausoleum. Signs of restoration work are apparent since most of the panels are plain (Pls 36 a & b). The inscription band is entirely Qur'anic.19

2.3 B Interior disposition

Facing the portal of the mausoleum, in the west wall of the south iwān, is a blind window probably to preserve symmetry. The exterior niches on either side of the south portal open each on one side of the entrance passage toward the south iwān. In the interior, the lower windows form plain niches. The upper windows inside fall immediately below the wooden ceiling. That on the mausoleum side shows a stucco grille of circles filled with coloured glass (Pl. 37). The grilles of the other window are missing but this shows that the inner windows are lower than the outer ones (Pl. 38). Inside, the wooden south door is framed by a high pointed
niche. The ceilings of all the iwâns are flat, wooden and painted with blue, gold and red (Pl. 39). Immediately below the ceiling is a wooden frieze bearing a naskhi Qur’anic inscription enclosed in oblong cartouches separated by lobed medallions.

The iwân opposite the south portal is cut at its end by three rectangular blind windows (Pl. 40) and one blind window at each side.

Both the Qibla iwân and that opposite have side niches with pointed arches. The niche at the right of the Qibla iwân has a grilled entrance opening onto the mausoleum (Pl. 41) but the opposite one is blind. The same arrangement can be seen in the iwân opposite, where the niche on the right has a grilled entrance into the entrance corridor and a blind one opposite. The walls of both these iwâns are decorated with stucco roundels (Pls. 42 a,b,c, 43 a,b,c) considered below (P33).

Finally, for the interior arrangement of the ground floor, to the right of the bent entrance into the sahn is a small staircase leading to a room (Pl. 44) (Fig. 8) with two windows overlooking the street and one overlooking the corridor of the bent entrance. Facing the corridor, above the grilled window which overlooks the iwân opposite the Qibla there is also an oculus (Pl. 45).
Two staircases lead to the upper floor, one from the sahn which leads to the roof and the other from the mayda'a (ablution area) leading to the rooms above the north and north-western iwāns. The spiral staircase to the roof is entered by a keeled arched doorway (Pl. 46) to the left of the south entrance. This leads first to a narrow wooden balcony 1.5 m. wide in the iwān opposite the Qibla (Pl. 47) and then to two landings (Fig. 8) each with a small room off it (Pl. 48 a, b) (Fig. 8 a). Then comes a long room (Fig. 9) above the shallow iwān on the south overlooking the sahn through three small windows (Pl. 49). The walls of the room are now plain brick. The three circular openings of the upper windows of the three niches of the south facade open into this room (Pl. 11). The same staircase then leads to the roof near the minaret.

From the mayda'a (Pl. 50) the staircase leads directly to an open landing or balcony overlooking the mayda'a (Pl. 51 a, b). On the right, two steps higher is a long room overlooking the sahn (Fig. 9) and indetical to that on the opposite side (Pl. 52) except that instead of the three circular windows on the street, there are three plain rectangular openings onto the mayda'a (Pl. 53). Opposite, at same level as the landing is a small almost square room with shelves (Pls. 54 a, b), a cell or storage area (Pl. 54 b) and four windows overlooking the shāri‘al-Nabawiyya (Pl. 54 c). A landing further up this same staircase is a corridor (Pl. 55 a, b)
which leads to a balcony (Fig. 10). The ceiling of the corridor abuts the centre of one of the crenellations decorating the top of the northwest facade, (Pl. 55 b) thus indicating restoration work, and the floor which is built of wood and rubble (Pl. 55 a) has a big hole in its centre. The balcony is built of bricks and overlooks the sahn (Pls 56, a, b), but is also lit by windows overlooking the shāri‘ al-Nabawiyya. It has a small cell or storage area (Pl. 56 b) as well as shelves (Pls 56, a, b) and is undecorated. The wooden lantern ceiling of the courtyard is new.

2.3. C Interior decoration

The decoration of the interior of the mosque is varied and includes stucco, marble, faience mosaic and wood. The facades of the sahn above the iwāns are decorated with circular and lozenge-shaped stucco medallions and topped by carved stucco windows (Pl. 57). The medallions are decorated in their centre by pointed stalactites radiating from either a pointed or a circular centre. The lozenge shaped medallions are framed by bands of linear designs, the circular ones by bands of undulating foliate stems. The windows (Pl. 58 a, b) are contained in stilted keel arched recesses surrounded by bands of kufic inscriptions.21 The conches of the keel arches are supported on columns with bellshaped capitals and are filled with ribs radiating from central keel-arches. The stucco of the courtyard will be discussed below.
The Qibla iwān is decorated with three large stucco medallions, one above the mihrāb and one decorating the apex of each side niche. The circular stucco medallion above the mihrāb (Pl. 42 a) has a central six petalled flower of green faience mosaic. Radiating from this are the alifhs and lāms of a circular thuluth Qur'anic inscription. Outside this is a bold foliate band consisting of curving stems and leaves. The larger leaves have centres of trilobes of dark red and green faience mosaic.

The side medallions are similar. Their centre bears a pierced interlaced foliate design to which green and red faience pieces have been added. The border is a naskhi inscription broken by six almond-shaped medallions filled with 6 petalled rosettes (Pls. 42 b, c).

The walls of the iwān opposite the Qibla are also decorated with stucco medallions. The medallion facing the medallion above the mihrāb of the Qibla iwān shows a foliate stucco grid filled with coloured glass (Pl. 43 a). The design consists of stylized leaves forming six circles around a central triangle formed by three tri-lobed leaves. This grid is surrounded by a narrow band of flat cut undulating half palmettes. The outermost border is another band of curved stems and leaves. The two side medallions of this iwān are very similar to the side medallions of the Qibla iwān (Pl. 43 b, c).
Their centres also bear a pierced interlaced foliate design but here with surrounds of narrow bands of flat cut undulating half palmettes then the outer border of Qur'anic Mskhi inscription²⁴ here broken by six roundels of linear designs instead of six petalled leaves.

A broad wooden band of thuluth Qur'anic inscription mostly illegible except on the Qibla side²⁵ runs below all the medallions then rises to frame the miḥrāb. On the courtyard facade this same wooden band of inscription frames the three arches of the side iwāns. Strangely enough, this band covers part of the two lancet rectangular openings on both sides of the iwān opposite the Qibla, one giving light to the staircase leading to the minaret and the other to the bent entrance (Pl. 24) suggesting probably a later addition.

The miḥrāb on the Qibla side is 134 cm. wide by 110 cm. deep and is framed by a pointed arch. Remains of marble panelling can still be seen at the base of the miḥrāb (Pl. 59). including alternating strips of black and white and a larger green panel topped by small pieces of red and white marble. This marble panelling reaches to 105 cm. from the floor. The couch of this miḥrāb, unlike the stucco conch of the miḥrāb of the mausoleum, is painted today in green, yellow, blue and red. The two marble faʻsceted columns of this miḥrāb have Corinthian capitals with wooden cushions above.
The wooden minbar (Pls. 60 a, b) is undated but contemporary to the mosque and was restored by the Comité in 1903. It is different in structure from earlier minbars because there is immediately below the throne of the Khatīb an open passage. This, Gloria O’hanan²⁷ points out, is the first occurrence in Egypt of a wooden minbar with an original opening and it is taken over from earlier Syrian wooden, stone and marble minbars.²⁸ The opening is undoubtedly original because the same side frames also border the opening passage. The strapwork ornament is based on al-Maridānī’s minbar,²⁹ namely based on a 12 pointed star in the centre with half and quarter systems occupying the rest of the space. The panels show carved foliate arabesque with bordering lines of ivory and small ivory panels carved with a palmette. The jambs are carved in rising arabesque while the transverse plants and the frames on the sides have scrolls in a horizontal design. The inscription on the portal is entirely Qur'anic.³⁰

The two cupboards on each side of the minbar (Pl 61 a,b) are similar, but not identical, to the cupboards of the mausoleum. The design consists of angular interlacings (but not from a central 6 sided star) filled with carved three lobed leaves surrounded by a 5-pointed ivory star framed by a band of ivory. The design of the shutters of the window overlooking the mausoleum (Pl. 41) consists also of angular interlacings but the central motif here is a 10-sided star with
carved foliated filling. The right shutter bears in its upper part a restoration inscription dated 1321/1910.

The wooden dekka in the iwān opposite the Qibla (Pl. 47) shows a different woodwork tradition, namely mashrabiyya, and scratched linear designs. This will be discussed in fuller detail in chapter IV.

The marble floor has been greatly restored by the Comité. The design consists of squares, lozenges and circles in grey, red, black and white marble (Pl. 62 a, b) but since only little marble was found from the original there is little probability that it is an accurate copy of the original.

2.4 Inscriptions

2.4 A Foundation inscriptions

The two portals of the Mosque bear foundation inscriptions. Above the entrance in the south portal is a panel of three lines of of mamlûk Naskhi

1 — اِنَّمَا اِنْتَصَرَ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَأُوْلَى الْخَيْرَةِ رَبِّنَا أَطَأْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنْبَعَثْنَاهُمْ عَلَى الْأَزْمَيْحَةِ — الله تعالى وجل عظيمه العبد الفاتني إلى الله تعالى أصل ابن عبد الله السلحدار الملكي الصالح

2 — وكان ابتدأ عمارته ابني جمادى الأول سنة خمس وأربعين وسبعمائة وفترة

3 — في ربيع الأول سنة ست واربعين وسبعمائة

(1) ... has ordered the construction of this mosque...

(2) Ağlam ibn Abdallâh al-silâhîr al-malîki al-şâlihi
(3) The beginning of the construction was on Jumāda I in the year 745 and it was finished in the month of Rabī‘ al-awwal in the year 746.

The use of the term ḫAbdallāh in the second line indicates like most mamlūks that he was a convert to Islam. To belong to the mamlūk elite, a mamlūk had to be a convert to Islam, not of Egyptian origin, preferably from the Qipchāq steppes in the Bahri mamlūk period, and to have been purchased at a young age. Mamlūks born in Egypt were in general considered an inferior class. Since all mamlūks of the elite were converts, the use of the term ḫAbdallāh in the inscription is strange and unusual. Aslam's Qipchāq origin is mentioned in the sources but nothing is known about his purchaser. He appears on the scene as the mamlūk of Qala‘ūn, therefore probably a royal mamlūk.

The nisba al-maliki al-ṣālihi refers to the sultān al-malik al-Ṣālih Isma‘īl who reigned until Rabī‘ II 746/1346 a few days after the inauguration of the mosque. It was the usual practice of emīrs to use the nisba of the reigning sultān on their foundation inscriptions. Il malik al-Gūkandār for example was one of the emīrs of al-Mansūr Qala‘ūn, yet his foundation inscription bears the nisba al-Nāṣirī and not al-Mansūrī, because the foundation time corresponds to the reign of the first and not the latter.
One notices that on the third line of the inscription he mentions the beginning and ending of the building period. This is not unusual in the bāḥri mamlūk period; for example, al-Maridānī’s foundation inscription. It was started in 739/1339 and finished in 740/1340. The starting date is mentioned on the east portal and the finishing date on the tirāz band of the southeast corner of the building. Al-Mansūr Qala’ūn’s complex foundation inscription also mentions that the madrasa mausoleum was begun in 683/1284 and finished in 684/1285.

The inscription band on the jambs of the door of the northwestern facade is in a rounded foliate mamlūk naskhi script on a scroll background (Pl. 63 a, b).

وكان ابتدأ عمره ذلك والفراغ منه في

The Qur’anic verse is Sūra IX verse 18 and appears on the right of the entrance portal: at the end, it says "Has ordered". On the left of the entrance portal, the inscription continues "the construction of this blessed mosque the poor slave of God al [.....] Aṣlam al silāhdar... and the work was finished Rajab 745/1346.

The laqab which precedes the name of the founder is partly illegible. Van Berchem points out that one can see
It is known from al-Maqrīzī40 that the founder’s name was Bahā’ al-Dīn Ašlam. The name al-Bahā’ī appears therefore certain since the relation (laqab) which immediately precedes a proper noun is often “formé sur le surnom en ad-dīn”41. The mosque is called today by local people Ašlam al Bahā’ī, but it appears that popular tradition has reversed the two terms. If al-Bahā’ī follows the noun it becomes a nisba of ownership which cannot be here the case since he is never called Ašlam al-Bahā’ī in his biography. In short, the inscription should be read (pl. 64)

al-Bahā’ī Ašlam al-Silāḥdār

since al Bahā’ī preceeds and does not follow the name Ašlam it must be his laqab and not the nisba of his owners.

From the two foundation inscriptions one can conclude that the construction of the mosque was begun in Jumāda I 745/1344 and was finished according to the first inscription on Rabī’ I, and according to the second on Rajab 746/1345. The question naturally arises why the discrepancy in both dates. Probably the southern portal was finished first (It is much simpler in its decoration) to be used for the inauguration of the mosque. The northwestern portal was then finished several months later and therefore the second date was added. Van Berchem42 adds concerning the second inscription that the nisba al maliki as-ṣāliḥi does not figure in the second text because in Rajab 746/1345 the sultan Ṣāliḥ Isma’īl was already
dead. Also in the second inscription Van Berchem reading the name al-Bahā’i Aślam but not al-silāḥdār, claims that Aślam does not bear any titles because he had retired from political life. Ḥasan ṣAbdel Wahhāb on the other hand reads the title al-silāḥdār, but omits "al-Bahā’ī". In fact it is clear from the inscription that the name and title reads al-Bahā’ī Aślam al-silāḥdār. (Pl. 64).

2.4 B Qur’anic Inscriptions

- Inscription in brass on the door leaves of the southern portal Ṣūra XXXIX (al-Zumur), āya 73

- Inscription in stone on the door jambs of the south portal, mamūl Thuluth on a scroll background and the letters have a scratched foliate design.

- Inscription on the door jambs of the mausoleum portal in Thuluth

- Stucco inscriptions on the mihrāb of the mausoleum in Thuluth, outerframe: Ṣūra XIII (al-Raʾd), āya 15, enclosed
in lobed cartouches

band at base of conch: Sūra XXII (al-Hijj) aya 77

enclosed in oblong cartouche

band framing inner arch: Sūra II (al-Baqara) aya 144

strangely enough the last two words do not form part of
the aya.

The windows of the mausoleum appear to be inscribed with
Āya al-Kūrsi in a thuluth script.

- stucco roundel above mihrāb bears in its centre an
  inscription Sūra XXII (al Hijj) aya 77 where the aliphs
  and lāms radiate from a central 6 leaf rosette.

- stucco band surrounding the stucco roundel of the left
  wall of the Qibla iwān looking towards the mihrāb.

Sūra XXII (al Hijj), aya 41, thuluth script.

- stucco band surrounding the stucco roundel of the right
  wall of the Qibla iwān looking towards the mihrāb.

Sūra IX (al-Tūba), aya 112

الذين ان كنتمم في الأرض أقاموا الصلاة وأتموا الزكاة وأمربا بالمعروف ونهوا
عن المنكر والله عنيه الأمور

الناهون عن المنكر والحفظين لحدود الله وبشر المؤمنين
The stucco bands surrounding the stucco roundels of the side walls of the iwān opposite the Qibla. Şūra IX (al-Tūba), āya 18

- The wooden cenotaph in the mausoleum is restored but retains part of a Qur'ānic inscription
Şūra II (al-Baqara), āya 255 (al-Kūrsi)

- Inscription painted on wood immediately below the ceiling of the southern iwān, enclosed in oblong cartouches.
Şūra V (al-Rahmān), āya 1 to 21

- Inscription painted on wood immediately below ceiling of the Qibla iwān, enclosed in oblong cartouches
Şūra II (al-Baqara), āya 255 (al-Kūrsi)

- Inscription painted on wood immediately below ceiling of the iwān opposite the Qibla.

- Inscription painted on wooden frieze which frame all the iwāns but which can be seen only on the Qibla side.
(Pls. 65 a, b). Şūra LXVII (al-Mulk), āya 1-5.

- Bands of Kufic inscriptions framing the archivolt of the niches decorating the four walls of the courtyard above the iwāns.
2.5 Restoration Carried Out by the Comité on the Mosque

The first mention of the mosque of Ḍālam al-Bahā’ī is in the volume of 1887\(^{44}\) in connection with the application by the nāẓīr of another waqf (endowment deed) to build a house against the eastern facade. The second mention is in the volume 1900\(^{45}\) and concerns the shops adjacent to the southern facade of the mosque and belonging to the waqf (endowment deed) which were to be removed. From the same volume\(^{46}\) it seems clear that at this time the courtyard was still uncovered although signs of an earlier roof were visible. It was therefore decided to cover it by a light wooden lantern to provide protection for the interior decoration.

The volume of 1903\(^{47}\) reports the reconstruction of the māyīšā (ablution court) and the restoration of the minbar (pulpit); and the volume of the next year\(^{48}\) reports marble workers as working on the marble of the mosque though no details are given as to which parts were being restored. The shops abutting against the northwestern facade were demolished in 1911\(^{49}\) and a plan for the expropriation of shops abutting the southern facade was presented a year later.\(^{50}\) This was not executed until 1916.

The Comité’s report of 1915\(^{51}\) states that the shops abutting against the southern facade almost entirely covered the windows of the mosque and the mausoleum (Pl. 66). The interaction of filth, dust and humidity in the crevices between
the shops and the monument had caused the complete disappearance of carved ornament which enriched the shutter frames of the windows. The only remaining signs of this decoration are unfortunately not enough to re-establish their original design. The mosaics in the inlaid panels had also disappeared. The bay of the entrance portal on this same side had also been subjected to considerable mutilations. The mastabas and the masonry of the jambs were missing. It seems that the base of the whole south facade was greatly damaged because of the shops which abutted against it. The clearing of this facade was finally done in 1918-1922 and necessary repairs were immediately carried out. The replacements of the mastabas were carried similarly to those of the west porch.

Some repairs were also carried out in the interior of the mosque. The most important was the re-laying of the pavement of the mausoleum, at its original level. The floor level had risen so much that the lower part of the wooden cenotaph was invisible under the fill. The height of the covered part of the cenotaph permitted the establishment of the thickness of the fill, and a new pavement at its original level. Insufficient marble remained from the original paving of the courtyard to restore the original design. So the original marble fragments were filled in with limestone slabs. Some minor repairs were also carried out to the limestone paving of the iwans and to the door leaves of the south portal.
It thus follows that the Comité found the building in reasonably good condition. No major repairs seem to have been carried out on the fabric - staircases, iwaṣṣa, upper rooms, mausoleum and minaret. The southern facade was however restored because of the damage it had suffered from the shops built against it. There is no mention of any repairs to the two other facades. Here one must mention the inscription on both windows of the southern facade of the mausoleum (Pls. 22 a, b) mentioning restorations carried out in 1320/1918 under Helmy II. No repairs either seem to have been carried out on the interior stucco decoration, although the wooden ceiling of the courtyard and the mayqā'a is the work of the Comité. Finally, except for the minbar, no mentioned restorations were carried on the woodwork of the mosque.

NOTES

1 Mubārak, Khīṭat jadīda II, 99 calls it ṣāḥīḥ jāmīṣ Aṣlām, but adds that the name goes back to jāmīṣ Aṣlām, founded by Aṣlām al-Bahā'i and known to people as jāmīṣ Aṣlām. The street is 342 m. long and starts at ṣāḥīḥ al-Ṭabbāna towards jāmīṣ ʿAref Pasha near Suwēqet al-ʿEzzi and ends at Darb al-Mahruq.

2 ʿSūra II, 255 (ayāt al-Kursi)

3 ʿSūra IX, āya 18 until ʿāmat al-ṣawā'

4 See above p. 37

5 ʿSūra XXXIX, āya 73

6 See below p. 75
7. See below p. 73
8. See below p. 39
9. See below p. 72
10. Sūra XXXIV, āya 1-9 up to 
11. See below p. 85-86
12. Sūra XV, āya 46 and 47
13. Both inscription bands are too high to read properly.
The attempt to photograph them with a flash and a photolens proved unsuccessful.
15. See below p. 57
17. Ibid.
18. Sūra XIII, āya 15
20. Sūra LV āya 1-21 on south iwān and probably Sūra XXXIV on Qibla iwān but too high to ascertain.
21. All my attempts to read these inscriptions were in vain but they all appear to be Qur’anic.
22. Sūra XXII, āya 77
23. Sūra XXII, āya 41 and Sūra IX, āya 112
24. Sūra IX, āya 18
25. Sūra LXVII, āya 1-5, the rest illegible.
26. Comité (1903), 76
27. Gloria Ohan, Minbars, 83
28. Ibid., 88. Note 1 mentions the wooden minbar of Qarasunqur 703/1303 (see CIA Alep Pl. LXVId) and the marble minbar of Aljububugha 710/1310 (see CIA Alep Pl. XXXI e and p. 324). In Egypt the extant marble minbars of this type are all later.


31. Comité (1915-19), 95

32. *Ibid.*, 95-96

33. Menage, *Chancery*, 112-113

34. Ayalon, *Esclavage*, 24 although there are important exceptions like Qawṣūn.

35. al-Maqriṣi, *Khitat* II, 309


37. Van Berchem, *CIA* Egypte I, 131

38. *Ibid.*, 128


40. al-Maqriṣi, *Khitat* II, 309

41. Van Berchem, *CIA* Egypte I, 196 and Qalqashandī Sulh al-aʿshā V, 444

42. Van Berchem, *CIA* Egypte I, 196

43. ʿAbdul Wahhāb, *Jāmiʿ Aslam*.

44. Comité, (1887), 6

45. *Ibid.*, (1900), 7

46. *Ibid.*, 48

47. *Ibid.*, (1903), 76


49. *Ibid.*, (1911), 56

50. *Ibid.*, (1912), 83


CHAPTER III

ARCHITECTURAL AND DECORATIONAL DETAILS OF
THE EXTERIOR AS RELATED TO CONTEMPORARY
MONUMENTS IN CAIRO

The mosque of Ağlam al-silāḥdār is characterised by
the fact that many of its architectural and decorative features
do not seem to match features of religious buildings of the
same period in Cairo. Other elements such as the minaret,
definitely rebuilt at a later period, are neither mentioned
in the sources nor in restoration inscriptions. Thorough
research was thus, deemed necessary to show that the
novelty in either of the studied features lies mainly in the
use of the different prototypes found in other buildings of
the same period, and that the mosque itself does not introduce
a new prototype. The features studied in this chapter are
namely, the dome with its ceramic decoration topping the
mausoleum, the rebuilt minaret, the crenellations topping the
facades of the mosque, the shape and decoration of the two
portals as well as the niches, the ṭīrās band and the trilobed
windows which appear on the facades.

3.1 The Dome of the Mausoleum, Structure and Decoration

3.1 A Structure
3.1 A **Structure**

The dome topping the mausoleum is made of brick and is coated with plaster. It is constructed of convex ribs with angular fillets between them, all tapering. C. Kessler\(^1\) points out that this is the only decorative device developed for the brick dome architecture of Cairo. The ribs can be compared to the brick domes of the mausolea of Taštimur 735/1334 (Index No. 92), Qawṣūn 737/1336 (Index No. 291) and Khawānd Tughāy before 748/1348 (Index No. 81).

It is worth noting that brick was mainly used for building domes in the first half of the 14th century when square stone was introduced.

3.1 B **Ceramic Decoration**

At the base of the ribs of the dome is a cavetto moulding topped by fleur-de-lys crenellations in green, white and blue faïence mosaic (Pl. 12) of which only fragments remain\(^2\). Crenellations above the drums, around the bases of domes appear rarely in mamlūk architecture. Their first extant occurrence is at the base of the bulbous top part of the east minaret of the mosque of al-Māṣīr Muḥammad at the citadel 735/1335 (Index No. 143) (Pl. 67). These crenellations are merlons of triangular form, covered with green faïence tiles, framed by a thin white and blue band. Their next appearance is around the bases of the ribs of both the domes of Aṣlam and Khawānd Tughāy (Pl. 68). Whether Aṣlam introduced this
feature of crenellations around the bases of the brick domes, or Khawând .getCode{Tughây} who was a favourite wife of al-Nâṣir Muḥammad, is difficult to say but H. getCode{Abdel Wahhâb} dates Tughây earlier.  
But one must point out here that in both of the above mentioned examples, the crenellations are combined with the use of ceramic revetment. In either case, there is a band of Qur'anic inscription of faience mosaic surrounding the base of the dome immediately below the ribs which is topped by a row of ceramic crenellations. The interesting aspect here is the use of minarets as trial ground since the first appearance of crenellations around the bases of ribs of domes can be seen on the east minaret of the mosque of al-Nâṣir Muḥammad at the citadel. It has been demonstrated that many of the decorative schemes which can be seen on the exterior of Circasian Mamlûk stone domes are derived from the decoration of earlier minarets. It does seem then that even in the Bahri Mamlûk period, minarets were considered trial ground for dome decoration.

Another minaret which shows crenellations around its topmost part is the minaret of the mosque of Beshtâk 736/1336 (Index No. 205) which was built immediately after the mosque of al-Nâṣir Muḥammad at the citadel. There the crenellations are of stone forming a sort of balcony railing, not just a decorative feature as in the earlier buildings. The shape of the minaret on the other hand shows no attempt inimitating the minarets of al-Nâṣir Muḥammad.
Immediately below the cavetto bearing the crenellations around the base of the ribbed dome is a faience mosaic band of Qur'anic inscription (Şūra II, 255, ayāt al-Kūrṣf) where the letters are in manganese black on a white ground framed first with a narrow band of green and blue faience on a white ground then with a green border (Pl. 69 a,b). Only fragments of this ceramic inscription are still in situ. The inscription does not run right around the drum but is enclosed in oblong lobed turquoise cartouches separated by octagonal medallions filled with a dark blue arabesque motif and joined to the oblong cartouches by a loop. Above this ceramic band and below the crenellations is a plain cavetto which was covered with ceramics of which only small parts still remain.

According to Creswell⁵ faience mosaic on Cairene Bahri Mamluk buildings can be divided in two types, namely plain green tiles about 25 cm square and faience mosaic where the letters of an inscription or the motives are in faience of one colour, cut to shape and set in a background of another colour. M. Meinecke⁶ has identified 13 Bahri Mamluk buildings in Cairo bearing tiles and faience mosaic decoration, namely:

709/1310 Khanqāh of Baybars al-Gāshankīr/Chāshnagīr minaret
719/1319-20 Mosque of al-Gūkandār/Chūkandār, Qibla wall
730/1330 Mosque of Qawṣūn, minaret
734/1334 Iwān of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, dome.
735/1334 Mausoleum of Ţashtimur, drum of the dome
60/1335 The so-called mausoleum of ibn Ghurāb,7
735/1335 drum of the dome.

735/1335 Mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, minaret
740/1340 Mosque of al-Maridānī, window grill
60/1340 (?) Khanqāh of Nizām al-Dīn Ishāq, portal frieze8

746/1345 Mosque of Aṣlam al-Silāḥdār, exterior drum
of dome and interior of iwāns.
747/1346 so called sabīl of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad,9 drum.
before 748/1348 Khanqāh of Khawānd Ṭughāy, drum of dome
762/1361 Mosque of sultan Ḥasan, window lunette.

Prost in his listing of the monuments with faience mosaic in
Cairo between 718/1318 and 749/1348 mentions only extant
monuments leaving out the mausoleum of Ibn Ghurāb since its
foundation inscription dates it to 1356.

It seems clear from the above mentioned list that the
use of faience mosaic on buildings was chiefly popular in
Egypt between 1330 and 1350, although its first appearance
was on the minaret of Baybars al Gāshenkīr/Chāshnegīr 709/
1310 (Index No. 32) where the top part was covered with
turquoise green tiles.11 In the mosque of al-Cākandār/Chūkandār
719/1319-20 (Index No. 24), the faience mosaic pieces are
added to the stucco decoration of the interior. The faience
pieces when discovered by Patricolo12 in 1917 were covered
by a layer of paint. A thin band of turquoise blue faience
frames the stucco decoration above the mihrāb niche and two
or three pieces of the same colour can be seen inserted in
between the letters placed at the south angle of the east
iwān. In both of the above mentioned cases, the use of
faience mosaic is limited in space and colour.

In the years between 1330 and 1350, on the other hand,
a number of buildings with faience decoration exist and this
according to M. Meinecke may be explained by the peace
treaty of the year 722/1322 between the sulṭān al-Nāṣir
Muḥammad and the Ilkhanid ruler Abu Saʿīd and can further
be proved by al-Maqrīzī who mentioned a bānnaʾ (builder)
from Tabriz building in Cairo the minarets of the mosque of
Qawṣūn to look like those of ʿAlī Shāh in Tabriz, showing thus
an exchange of craftsmen between the two countries.

The use of faience mosaic becomes in fact very popular
during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad 693/1294 – 741/1341.
The dome of his iwān at the citadel collapsed in 928/1522 but
was described in the primary sources. It was made of wood
and covered with green tiles. The ceramic decoration on both
minarets of his mosque at the citadel is more interesting for
our purpose because it shows great resemblance to the mosaic
decoration on the dome of the mausoleum of Aṣlām al-silāḥdār.
The northwest minaret was built in 718/1318, the date of the
building of the mosque, but the faience mosaic covering its
top part was added in 735/1335 during restoration and extension works on the mosque. The second minaret is attributed to the latter date also. The tops of both minarets are ribbed and are bulbous with projecting sides covered by green square tiles. Below the dome is a band bearing a Qur'anic inscription (Sūra III, 256) in faience mosaic. The letters are in Mamlūk thuluth composed of pieces of white faience cut and put on a purple faience background. The east minaret is surrounded below the inscription by two superposed mouldings of unequal width and covered with green tiles. The shaft between these mouldings and the upper gallery of the minaret shows fluting and a large band of green faience tiles. The green faience revetment of the second minaret at the northeast angle consists, on the other hand, of hexagonal tiles in the lower parts and square tiles on the top part of the dome. Two torus mouldings covered with green faience tiles surround the shaft of the minaret below the inscription, then another moulding formed by a row of white square faience tiles. The ribs here are separated one from the other by a framing band of white faience and decorated in its centre and upper parts by a narrow fillet of purple faience. At the base of the ribs there is a circular crowning constituted by a cornice of six sides equally covered with green faience with ornaments in blue and white.

The faience mosaic decoration on both minarets is important for the present study, not only because they are
the first examples of faience mosaic where the letters of an inscription and the motives are in one colour set on a background of another colour, but also because once more it shows that Cairene minarets serve as trial ground for Cairene domes. The next examples showing this technique of faience mosaic are drums of the domes of the mausolea of Aslam and Khawand Tughay, and on the sabil of al-Nasir Muhammad attached to the complex of Qalatun, 747/1346.

A more simplified ceramic band covering the exterior of the drum of domes can be seen on the two mausolea of Tashtumur 735/1334 and Ibn Churab c 1335, where instead of a stucco inscription, as in the dome of Sunqur Sachedi there exists a band of turquoise green tiles.20

After the death of al-Nasir Muhammad in 740/1341 both the mausolea of Aslam al-silahdar and Khawand Tughay were built imitating the ceramic decoration of the minarets of al Nasir Muhammad at the citadel and M. Meinecke,21 therefore, claims that their decoration can be attributed to the unknown banna from Tabriz22 even though in the mosque of Aslam, the inscription is enclosed in cartouches, which is a local Egyptian feature which can also be seen on the mausoleum of Sunqur Sachedi. In fact, ceramic decoration in the mosque of Aslam is not limited to the exterior of the drum, but can also be seen in the main iwan. The stucco rosette over the mihrab
shows faience pieces in green and red (Pl. 42 a). The two rosettes on the side walls of the same iwān show red and green faience and this goes back to the decoration in the mosque of al-Gūkandār/Chūkandār 719/1319. A small piece of turquoise faience also fills the loop at the apex of the arch of the main iwān and the opposite one (Pl. 70).

The sabīl of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad 747/1346\(^{23}\) attached to the madrasa of Qalaʿūn was built immediately after the dome of Ašlam al-silāḥdār and shows faience panels covering the octagon projecting above the roof which was crowned by a wooden dome.\(^{24}\) Although the colours used are the same as those on his minarets at the citadel and on the dome of Ašlam, the technique is different. It is only a field of plaster in which the scrolls and letters are set whilst in the former buildings, the background is also composed of faience.

The last monument showing ceramic decoration on a large scale in the Bahri Mamlūk period is the Khanqāh of Khwāнд Ṭughāy. The mausoleum is not dated but she died in 749/1348.\(^{25}\) The drum of the dome of this mausoleum (Pl. 68) is covered by a large band of faience Qur’anic inscription in large Mamlūk naskhi. The letters are in white set on a background of purple and a turquoise green arabesque in the background. The cavetto above the inscription is also covered by faience and topped by faience crenellations. Thus the technique, colours and decoration of the dome resemble very
much those of Aṣlam, only in the former, the inscription is not enclosed in oblong lobed cartouches, but runs all around the dome. 27

To sum up, one might conclude that the idea of using faience mosaic to decorate the exterior of religious monuments started in Cairo with the minarets of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and both these minarets served as a trial ground for contemporary exterior dome decoration. The next appearance of faience mosaic can be seen surrounding the drum of domes, first one colour and without inscription at Tāshtimur's mausoleum 734/1335, then three colours with an inscription on the next three monuments, namely Aṣlam’s dome 746/1346, Khawānd Tughāy’s dome before 1348 and the sabīl of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. The above mentioned monuments 28 show high quality work, probably, M. Meinecke has argued, made in the same workshop under the supervision of the same craftsman, the craftsman from Tabriz brought by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to build the minarets of Qawṣūn. 29

Strangely enough, only the mosque of Aṣlam al-silāḥdār was neither built by a sultān nor at the orders of one. 30

3.2 The Minaret and its Position (Fig. 11)

The minaret stands at the southwest corner of the mosque (Pl. 14). It does not appear original with its plain pointed hood. The square socle is of brick covered with plaster and the transitional zone between socle and octagonal
area is shaped like an upright pyramid on the exterior. This appears unusual compared to the usual inverted pyramid one encounters in bahrī mamlūk minarets, but it is not unique, for it appears on the 14th century minaret (Index N. 293) in the small Qarāfa (cemetery) of the Imām al-Shafī‘ī.

Whether the base and octagonal sections are original or not, it is difficult to judge. The fact that it is built of brick is not definite assurance that it is a restoration, since all of the upper part of the mosque is built of brick. There are, however, two factors in favour of a later date:

1. The octagonal brick zone is too short compared to minarets of the same type and period. Minarets of the early 14th century are mostly of the square, octagonal, circular type, for example the minaret of Qawṣūn 735/1335-6. After this the square shaft becomes much shorter and can be regarded as a reinforcement of the wall of the mosque, above which rises the octagonal shaft surmounted with a small lantern, i.e. a dome supported on columns. Examples of this minaret are al-Maridāni’s 739-40/1339-40, the Aqbughwaiya madrasa 740/1340, Aslam’s judging from what remains of the minaret, the mosque of Shaykhū 750/1349 and his Khangāh 756/1355 and finally sultan Ḥasan’s only surviving minaret 757-64/1356-62. So, comparing the height of the octagonal area of the minaret of Aslam to the minarets
of the same type and period, it appears rather short.

2. The decoration of the brick octagonal area. It has eight windows, four blind and four open in a keel-arched frame. The hoods of the arches have flutes radiating from a central keel-arched recess and ending in small keel-arched stalactites. The niche hoods are supported on stucco columns incised with vertical and horizontal zig-zag lines. The level of the central keel-arched recess from which the flutes radiate is slightly higher in the blind windows than in the open ones, but there are no horizontal flutes below them. All the hoods of the niches are framed with a double band of moulding forming pyramids with loops at the apex. Immediately above the loops begin the four tiers of stalactites supporting a wooden balcony and above it a short circular area with a pointed hood. The ensemble of the decoration of the octagonal area and the short circular part of the wooden balcony with the pointed hood point toward a late restoration date in the Ottoman period. The pointed hood was introduced early in the Ottoman period and therefore, it is difficult to date, but probably around 1135/1725 with al-Mihmandar’s, rebuilt by Sulaymān al-Qazdoghli.

The fact that the minaret collapsed at an unknown date and was rebuilt is clear not only from its shape and decoration,
but also from the wall supporting its foundation. The corners of the south and west wall as they meet show re-used stone and mosaic tiles in their upper parts, placed haphazardly, some bearing inscription but placed upside down as well as rough and not dressed stone as in the rest of the facades.

As for the position of the minaret in the southwest corner of the mosque, it is in fact difficult to find a module for the position of minarets in the Bahri Mamluk period. In town, their position varies from being placed at the far right end of the facade attached to the mausoleum, for example Qala'ūn's complex 683-84/1284-5 (Index No. 43); on the right jamb of the vestibule also attached to the mausoleum as in Salār and Sangar al-Gāwli 703/1303-4 (Index No. 221); above the entrance vestibule not attached to the mausoleum, for example the Khanqāh of Raybars al-Gāshenkīr/Chāshnegīr 706/1306-10 (Index No. 32), the mosque of emīr Husayn 719/1319 (Index No. 233) and the mosque of Shaykhū 750/1349 (Index No. 147) on the left jamb of entrance like the tomb of Hasan Ṣadaqa 715/21/1315-21 (Index No. 263), the mosque of al-Maridānī 739-40/1339-40 (Index No. 120), the madrasa of Sarghatmish 757/1356 (Index N. 218); at the corner of the building like in the mosque of Aqsunqur 747-48/1346-47 (Index N. 123) and the mosque of Arghūn Shāh al-Īsmā'īlī 748/1347 (Index No. 253).
The position of minarets in cemetery buildings does not really vary much. One finds it at the left of the entrance vestibule as in the case of the vestibule of the enclosure of the mausoleum of Tankisbughā 764/1362 (Index No. 85); on the right of the entrance at the mosque of Asanboghā 772/1370 (Index No. 185) and on the right entrance vestibule in the mosque of Ulgāy/Ūlchēy al-Yūsufī 774/1373 (Index No. 131).

It seems from the above that it is the street directions that dominate the position of the minaret. If the whole facade is on the main street, then minaret can be placed on the entrance jamb. But if the building has two facades on two important streets, then the minaret is placed at the corner of both facades, dominating both, like in the mosques of Aşlam33, Aqsunqur 747-48/1346-7 and Arghūn Shāh al-İsmā'īlī 748/1347.

One problem arises when one looks at the position of the minaret of Aşlam as related to the staircase leading to it. As one leaves the round staircase leading to the roof, one notices that the staircase continues two steps further and the wall surrounding the round staircase continues several meters above the roof level (Pl. 71), suggesting that the staircase continued. The question arises, was the minaret originally placed above this staircase, with its staircase a continuation of the round staircase leading to the roof? One can only present this hypothesis as a suggestion. If
placed above the staircase, the minaret would then dominate both approaches to the mosque, i.e. the approach from the citadel side coming on the shāri‘c al-Nabawiyya towards the mosque of Aslam, and the approaches to the northwest portal.

To sum up, the present minaret is not the original. The original minaret collapsed and this one was rebuilt in the Ottoman period judging from its shape and decoration. The original position of the minaret remains a problem because of the round staircase leading to the roof which seems to have continued above the level of the roof. Two suggestions may be put forward, first that the original minaret was placed above the staircase to the roof, like in the mosque of Aqsunqur where the round staircase of the minaret begins at floor level. Secondly, the present minaret may have been built on the site of the original one. Even the base which today is in situ is built of brick suggesting that it is not original, because one would expect a mosque with such a dome and portals to have also a fine stone minaret and Hasan ‘Abdel Wahhab\(^\text{34}\) suggests a minaret like al-Maridāni’s. The evidence is, therefore, very much in favour of the first hypothesis.

3.3 The Crenellations of the Facades

These crenellations are a variation of the fleur de lys or trefoil type (Pl. 14), but with an extra lobe on each side on a base. They appeared at a first glance to be unique among Sahri Mamluk Cairene crenellation forms, therefore a
survey of these was deemed necessary to decide whether they were Ottoman like the minaret, or Bahri Mamluk.

The Bahri Mamluk period shows two kinds of crenellations on buildings (Fig. 15)\(^\text{35}\), the stepped crenellation, plain or decorated\(^\text{36}\) and the fleur de lys or trefoil on a base.\(^\text{37}\) Both types of cresting were very common during the Bahri Mamluk period and sometimes were used together in one building as in Salar and Sangar al-Cawl 703/1304. The addition of extra lobes to the trefoil shape appears early in Cairo in the joggled voussoirs of the central window of the mausoleum of the sultan al-Sali\(\acute{\text{h}}\) Negm al-Din Ayyub 647-8/1249-50; in the joggling around the mihrab of the Taybarsia madrasa; the joggled lintel of the portals of the mosque of al-Mihmandar, Qaw\(\acute{\text{u}}\)un and al-Maridani's side portal.\(^\text{38}\) This shape was then taken over to the cresting of minbar portals, namely the wooden minbars of sitt Hadaq Miska 740/1339 and Arghun Sh\(\acute{\text{a}}\)h al-Isma\(\acute{\text{c}}\)ili 748/1347\(^\text{39}\) and finally the mosque of Badr al-Din al-Ajami 758/1357.

The conclusion, therefore, follows that the crenellations topping the facades of the mosque of Aslam al-sil\(\acute{\text{h}}\)d\(\acute{\text{a}}\)r could well be original and not an Ottoman addition. Their shape goes back to crenellations topping wooden minbar portals and it is the use of this shape to decorate mosque facades which is a novelty introduced by the mosque of Aslam.\(^\text{40}\)
3.4 The Portals Shape and Decoration

3.4 A Shape

The shape of both portals, i.e., the southern and northwestern, is trilobed in profile, the first simple in shape, i.e. a plain trilobed hood without decoration (Pl. 11), the second trilobe framed by a trilobe band which forms a loop at the apex and the hood includes stalactites. Both portals seem original in shape since the development of Rāhri Ḥamlūk portal shapes was towards a full trilobe profile.

Portals between 1250 and 1380 vary in their hoods from a simple rectangle to a semi-circle to a trilobe, and from about 1350 AD onwards the trilobe is the most common occurrence.

The simple rectangle occurs in the early period in the mausoleum of Safiyy ad-Din Gawhar 714/1315 (Index N. 270), then later in the mosque of sitt Ḥadaq Miska 740/1340-40 (Index N. 252), the mosque of Aqsunqur 747-48/1346-7 (Index N. 123) and Aydumur al-Bahlawān before 747/1346 (Index N. 22).

The simple rounded arch appears occasionally between 1306 and 1349. Its first occurrence is in the Khanqāh of Baybars al-Gāshenkir/Chāshnegir 706-9/1306-10 (Index N. 32) (Pl. 72), then the mausoleum of C Ali Badr ad-Din al-Qarafī c 700-10/1300-10 (Index N. 292) the portal of the mosque of emīr Husāyn 719/1319 (Index N. 233) and finally the portal of the mosque of Manjak al-Yūsufī 750/1349 (Index N. 138).
A variation of the simple rectangle occurs only twice between 1329 and 1339, namely the mosque of Yūlmās/Ūlmas 730/1329-30 (Index N. 130) and the mosque of al-Maridānī’s main portal 739-40/1339-40 (Index N. 120).

Trilobe arches can first be seen on windows, i.e. Fatma Khatūn (Pl. 73) and Zeyn al-Dīn Yūsuf and then on the doorway of the minaret of Sanjar al-Gāwli 703/1303 (Pl. 74). The trilobe hood shape of portals is not emphasized at first, as in the high level entrance of the shāri Qal’at al-Kabsh of the mausoleum of Salār and Sanjar al-Gāwli (Pl. 75), which is related to the main entrance of the citadel mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. In both of the pre-mentioned buildings the lower lobes are neither pronounced nor framed; it is the stalactites of the two lower lobes that form the rounded sides. Belonging also to this group are the portals of the mausoleum of Sunqur Saʿdi 715-21/1315-21, the madrasa of al-Gūkandār 719/1319 (Pl. 76), the mosque of al-mihmandār 725/1324-5 (Pl. 77), the mosque of Qawṣūn 730/1329-30, and finally the mosque of al-Maridānī’s side portal 739-40/1339-40. In the mosques of Arghūn Shāh al-Ismaʿīlī 748/1347 and Mithqāl 703/1361-62 (Index N. 45) the lower lobes are more pronounced but still not framed.

A variation of the trilobe profile occurs in the palace of Yushbak c 738/1337 (Index N. 266), the mosque convent of
Shaykhū 750/1349 and 756/1355, and the madrasa mausoleum of sultan Hasan 757-64/1356-62 and later Khawānd Baraka 770/1368-69 (Index N. 125). Throughout this group the lower lobes are not pronounced and the upper lobe is elongated forming a sort of conical roof. The madrasa of Şarghatmish 757/1356 also belongs to this group, but the conical portal hood is framed with a six-lobed decorative band.

The first fully developed trilobe portal hood shape is the inner part of the madrasa-mausoleum portal of al-Nāṣir Muhammad 695-703/1285-1303 (Index N. 44) (Pl. 78)43 where all three lobes are pronounced. It then re-appears on the side portal of his mosque at the citadel, before its use on both portals of the mosque of Ašlam al-silāḥdār, Aṣanbogha 772/1370 and Ulgay/olchey al-Yūsufi 774/1372. Thus, a variety of shapes appears at different periods within the Bahri Mamlūk era, until the full trilobe becomes the most typical portal of the later Mamlūk period. Both the portals of the mosque of Ašlam al-silāḥdār, in terms of their shape, fit within the general development of Bahri Mamlūk portals and therefore cannot be considered as a novelty introduced by the founder nor as part of later restoration work.

3.4 B Decoration: marble paneling of the south portal

The stalactite decoration of the hood of the north-west portal with the radiating ablaq of the apex conforms very well to the bahri mamlūk portals (Pl. 79) and earlier example
being the mosque of al-Maridānī's side portal, but the plain hood of the south portal appears unusual (Pl. 11). Part of both the northwest and south facades were damaged when the minaret fell, but one cannot assert that the hood had earlier stalactites which fell and were not rebuilt, since a plain trilobe occurs earlier in the side portal of al-Nāṣir Muḥammād's mosque. Moreover, the main decorative feature of the south portal is not its hood, but the square panel of marble mosaic decorating the centre of the portal recess (Pl. 15).

The panel of inlay work in marble is square in shape and encloses two circles. The four corners of the square show a floral design consisting of a large central bud with a two-lobed leaf on either side in black and white marble. A raised fillet of black and white marble loops forming 32 circles to frame the large circle. The raised fillet is the basis of the filling decoration of the large circle for it interlaces forming lobed floral shapes enclosing a fleur de lys and angular shapes enclosing small pieces of red and yellow marble and small pieces of turquoise glass paste.44 The inner circle consists of raised interlacing bands forming a large rosette of 20 petals surrounding a central oculus, surrounded in turn by 10 octagonal half rosettes. Bourgeois45 points out that he can guarantee the exactitude of the design, but not the material of the central circle which could be of glass and not marble. It appears to be glass, but it is too high to ascertain.
The use of marble decoration begins early in mamlük architectural decoration. Al-Maqrīzī in his description of the mosque of Baybars 665-7/1266-9 mentions that the sultan when he demolished the citadel of Jaffa, he sent wood and marble slabs from there to Cairo to decorate his mosque. The point of interest for the present study is, however, the large marble panels or roundels decorating the exteriors of portals, for it is not a usual feature of early Bahrī Mamlük decoration. It appears for the first time on the portal of the Khānqāh of Baybars al-Gāshenkīr/Chāshnegīr 706-9/1306-10 (Pl. 72) where it is a simple bull’s eye window surrounded with black and white joggled marble voussoirs. This same feature re-appears in the portal of the madrasa of Il malak al-Gūkandār/Chūkandār 719/1319 (Pl. 76) where the oculus is surrounded by joggled polychrome voussoirs and the wall in which it is set is decorated with stripes of dark marble. In the mosque of the amīr Aḥmed al-Mihmandār 725/1325 (Pl. 77) one sees above the marble joggled lintel and relieving arch of the portal a small circular window filled with mashrabiyya work and surrounded by interlacing bands of white marble on a black marble ground. Finally, the portal of the mosque of Aydumur al-Bahlawān before 747/1346 is also decorated with an oculus framed by black and white marble joggling, and the side portal of al-Maridānī’s mosque 739-40/1340 where the oculus is surrounded by stone and not marble decoration.
The mosque of Aşlam al-silahdär basically shows this same decorative feature and comes next in the list of the above mentioned extant monuments. But while the earlier monuments show only angular interlacing bands or marble joggling around an oculus, in the marble panel of Aşlam’s mosque one sees intricate marble mosaic unrelated in design and technique to the earlier portals, but closest to the marble mosaic framing the contemporary mihrāb of the mosque of al-Bakrî dated in the index before 776/1374 (Index N. 18) (Pl. 80), the date of his death. In fact, the date on the door jambs outside on the main portal is clearly 746/1345.

therefore contemporary to the mosque of Aşlam. This similarity suggests the same workshop although no signature appears on either. The design is very similar and the colours the same i.e. black, yellow, red marble and turquoise glass paste on a white ground. Another contemporary and very similar marble panel can be seen in the mausoleum of Sultān Hasan (Pl.81).

From the above survey one can conclude that the marble panel surrounding an oculus decorating the southern entrance of the mosque of Aşlam al-silahdär shows a development of a portal decorative tradition which, although not common, already
existed in Cairo from the beginning of the mamlûk period. In technique, colour and design, the panel is related to the marble mosaic surrounding the mihrāb of al-Bakrī and the panel in sultan Hasan’s mausoleum, suggesting a workshop producing this work at that time. One final example is the panel surrounding an oculus on the portal of the madrasa of Asanboghā 772/1373. Thus, despite the repairs done on this façade, as mentioned by the Comité and Hasan ʿAbdel Wahhab, the marble panel shows a mid 14th century decorative tradition and can be considered as contemporary to the erection of the mosque. The lower part of this portal was heavily restored by the Comité but shows typical Mamlûk features, namely, lintel, joggled voussoirs, foundation and Qur’anic inscription.

3.4 C Decoration of the northwest portal

No sign or mention of restoration work were found concerning this portal. Therefore, it can be considered as original, built and decorated with the erection of the mosque between 745/1345 and 746/1346. Yet, it shows several novel features in its decoration, namely flat carved stone arabesque carving on the spandrels; a double moulding framing the tri-lobe portal hood with a loop at the apex filled with a piece of faience and framed by a rectangular double moulding above, and finally the fine foundation inscription in Mamlûk thuluth on a foliate ground.
The flat carved arabesque is enclosed in two areas, one within the lower lobes of the trilobed moulding (Pl. 82) and the second in the spandrels between the trilobed double moulding and the rectangular one (Pl. 82). The stone carving consists of an interlacing foliate scroll with elongated split leaves and broader smaller leaves. This flat carved arabesque has its precedent in the mosque of al-Maridāni 739-40/1339-40 on the inner side of the side portal where the design consists of roundels of foliate design and split leaves. The sabīl of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad dated to 746 or 747/1345 or 4655 shows, also, flat stone carving on the spandrels of the arcade56 where the design consists of split leaves within an arabesque. Thus, the portal of Ašlam al-silāḥdār shows the first occurrence of flat stone carving decorating the outer spandrels of a portal, but the design retains the split leaves and curving scroll or arabesque. The use of flat stone carving continues in the mosque of Arghūn Shāh al-Ismaʿīlī 748/1347, in the sabīl and portal of mosque of Shaykhū and in the spandrels of the portals of the madrasa of Ṣargahtmish 756/1356 and Khawānd Baraka.

The double moulding framing the trilobe portal hood with a loop at the apex then further framed by a rectangular double moulding is also a decorative method introduced by the mosque of Ašlam, but then taken over in later Ḥamluk buildings, becoming a common decorative feature of the Circassian period. The earlier mouldings framing portal hoods do not form a
trilobe, for example al-Nāṣir-Muḥammad’s door of the madrasa. This was largely imitated by miḥrāb frames, for example the miḥrāb of the emīr Faybars 709/1309. Trilobe frame mouldings similar to the one decorating the mosque of Ašlām’s northwest portal can be seen on later Ḥamlūk mosque portals, for example the mosques of Asambogha 772/1370 Aytmish al-Bağāsi 785/1383 (Index N. 250), İnāl al-Atābekī 795/1392 (Index N. 118) but without loops at the apex of their trilobe arches. One can, also, add the mosques of Maḥmūd al-Kurdi 797/1395 (Index N. 117), Gamāl al-Dīn Ustadār 810-811/1407-1408 (Index N. 35) and finally the convent and mausoleum of Farag b. Barqūq 803-813/1400-1411 (Index N. 149) etc...

Although introduced by the mosque of Ašlām, this decorative feature becomes typical of Circassian Ḥamlūk portals.

The foundation inscription on this portal has been pointed out by Moḥammad Saif al-Nasr abul Futūḥ as first appearance of foliate scrolls as a ground and interlacing with the letters of thuluth inscription bands. He also points out that the letters are unusually rounded at the sides (a technique known as “ḥurūf Musanfārā” (rounded letters) by local craftsmen), while the ends of the alifs and lāms form decorative motifs. To this, one can add that the inscription can be considered as one of the finest foundation inscriptions of the period.
The question naturally arises why more care was given to the decoration of the northwest portal compared to that on the south. This was probably the main entrance to the mosque although it is kept closed today. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, but one can point out here that it is situated on shāriʿ al-Nabawiyya (the former shāriʿ Jāmiʿ Aşlam⁵⁸) which was evidently the earlier main road since the hawd and sabil were also built on this road.⁵⁹

3.5 The Facades, Constituent Decoration

3.5 A The Niches

The breaking of facades into niches and piers was a common feature throughout the Mamlūk period, in fact, beginning as far back as the mosque of al-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalāʿiʿ⁵⁵/116⁰ (Index N. 116). Facade niches are usually crowned by several tiers of stalactites similar to those which appear on the west side niche of the southern facade of the mosque of Aşlam (Pl. 11) and the niches of the other facades. Only the two niches framing the southern portal are plain. Here again another question arises: were they originally built as symmetrical with the portal hood? or, was the whole upper part of this facade, not including the mausoleum, rebuilt, omitting the stalactites, during Ottoman period when the minaret fell? That the minaret block was rebuilt when the minaret fell seems clear because of the use of re-used stone, the lack of crenellations (Pl. 14) and the difference of stone
facing (see 3.2 above). But one cannot assert that the two niches originally had stalactite hoods since even their trilobe windows are treated differently from the other niches which show no sign of restoration work (Pl. 11). Thus, although it seems probable that both niches had originally stalactite hoods which were not rebuilt when the minaret fell, one cannot rule out the possibility of their being built originally plain to match the hood of the portal.

3.5 B The ṭirāz band

The ṭirāz band of inscription along the southern and northwestern facades is missing. Only its beginning along the southeastern facade is in situ. However, when the minaret fell the whole upper part of the southern facade cannot also have been rebuilt leaving out the inscription, because the mausoleum facade, where the inscription is also missing, does not show any sign of restoration work. The conclusion, therefore, follows that the ṭirāz band of inscription was never finished, either for lack of money or the death of the founder.

3.5 C The Trilobed windows

Trilobed windows are not common at this period. The most common niche-windows in the early 14th century are the elongated round-arched windows of the madrasa of the emīr al-Gūkandār/719/1324 and the mosque of al-Mīhmandār 725/1324 separated in the first case by a rectangular pillar and in
the second one by a column. A third type can be seen on the
niches of the mosque of Ulmaż/730/1329-30 and the mausoleum
of Taṣhtimur 735/1334 (Index N. 92), where the basic shape
is the same but the sides are made slightly larger to accomodate
an extra column each. The most common of the above three types
is the second which can also be seen on the mausoleums of Abul-
YusufeIn c 730/1329-30 (Index N. 234), Qawṣūn 736/1335 (Index
N. 290), the mosque of al-Maridānī 739-40/1339-40 and the
Zāwiya of Katbugha az-Dhahabi 748/1347 (Index N. 242).

The trilobed windows of the niches of the mosque of
Ašlam are in fact just a variation of the windows of the third
type, encountered at the mosque of Ulmaż/Ulmaż, but with an
oculus above the centre of the two long windows, then framed
by a trilobed frame. This type of windows appears early in
the mamlūk period in the mausoleum of Fatma Khatūn 682/1283-4
(Index N. 274) (Pl. 73) and also on the windows of the minaret
of the same mausoleum, but without a trilobe frame. They re-
appear in the facade and inside the mausoleum of the complex
of sultān Qala‘ūn 683-4/1284-5 (Index N. 43) and on the
minaret of the madrasa mausoleum of Salār and Sanjar al-Gāwli
(Pl. 74). Strangely enough, from 1315 to about 1330 one no
longer encounters the trilobed windows on Mamlūk facades until
their re-appearance on the mausoleum of Awlād al-Assyād c 1330-45
and then on the facades of the mosque of Ašlam followed by
several other Zahiri Mamlūk monuments 61 until it becomes a
common feature in the Circassian period.
NOTES

1. C. Kessler, Domes, 4
2. Herz Bey, Catalogue, 227-228
3. Abdel Wahhab, Masjid Aslam, 476. He dates Tughay's mausoleum to 740/1340 but gives no reason or reference.
4. Laila Ibrahim, Transitional zones, 1-23. Her conclusions are so important that I quote:
   "Undulating mouldings appear as early as 736/1336 at the base of the minaret of Beshtak. However, they first appear at the base of a dome seventy years after this, on the two domes of the Khanqah of Farag ibn Barquq (803-13/1400-11). Prismatic triangles, otherwise a half pyramid at each corner, occur in the mid. 14th century on the minaret base of Shaykh (750/1349) but only seventy five years later on the base of a dome, that of Ganibek al-Asrafi in the eastern cemetery 831/1427. The chamfering to be seen at the corners of the base of the minarets of Yilmaz/Ulmas/Alma (730/1329-30) and al-Maridani (739-40/1339-40) also occurs eighty years later as another element of the corner treatment of the base of the dome of Ganibek al-Asrafi." pp. 16-17.
   "Even some of the decorative motifs used to cover the exterior surface of the circassian mamluk domes, for example, chevrons, high relief entrelaces and star-patterns, are also to be found on earlier minarets. Chevrons first appear on the western minaret of the mosque of al-Nasir Muhammad at the citadel (part of the reconstruction dated 735/1335) and there is a second 14th century occurrence on the minaret of Um-as Sulтан Sha'bun (770/1368-9). On the other hand, the earliest dome decorated with chevrons is that of Ma'mud al Kurdi (797/1395) sixty years later than the minaret of al-Nasir Muhammad." p.17
5. Creswell, MAR II, 720
7. This mausoleum (Index N. 94) is dated in the index before 808/1406, the date of the death of Sa'd ad-Din Ibrahim ibn Ghurab. M. Meinecke Fayencedekorationen, p. 115, basing himself on the stucco and mosaic decoration dates it to the early Bahri Mamluk period.
8. This is identified in the Index (N. 140) as the mosque of Nizam ad-Din and dated 757/1356, which is the date of the
foundation inscription on the portal. Both M. Meinecke, ibid.
p. 141 and Van Berchem, C I A. Egypte I, 245, point out that
the date is isolated in a cartouche at the end of the inscription
and therefore gives the impression of being added later. Al-
Maqrizi, Suluk III /2, 401, and Ibn Iyas, Badari, 1/2, 300
call it a madrasa while Ibn Taghrribirdi, Nujum, XI, 217, calls
it a khaneqah, and Ibn Hajar al-Askalani, Inba' al-gumur
I, 243 calls it a dar. But none of them mention a foundation
inscription. One should perhaps add here that the building
is not mentioned in al-Maqrizi's Khita. The portal frieze
in question was removed in 1911 to the Islamic Museum as
mentioned by M. Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen, 1/0 (Pl. 48 p.139).
The frieze although Persian in its style was made in Egypt and
therefore must have been made between 1330 and 1350 when an
Ilkhanid influence was apparent in Pahri Mamluk faience-de-
decoration.

This is dated in the Index (N. 561) to 726/1326 but
was shown convincingly by Sophie, Ebeid, Sabila to belong to
1346. See below, p. 79 note 23
10

Frost, Les Revetuements Ceramiques, 1-10
11

These, according to M. Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen,
87, footnotes 4, are original judging from Pl. 2 which was
taken by Telelens and which shows that the tiles were made
specially for the area filled in.
12

Patricolo, Comite (1915-19), plate XXXII
13

M. Meinecke, Fayencedekorationen, 89
14

al-Maqrizi, Khita, II, 307
15

Ibn Iyas, Badari, V, 441 or Journal II, 424
16

Only Creswell M A E II, 72 and M. Meinecke, Fayencede-
korationen, 101 date the mosaic on both minarets to 735/1335
and the latter author points out that the mosaic of the N.W.
minaret built in 718/1318 is so similar to the east minaret
that it must have been added to it with the second minaret
built in 735/1335. But earlier sources like Frost, Revetements
Ceramiques, 1-3 and Bahgat and Messouli, La Ceraicme Musulmane
95 relate the mosaic of this minaret to its building period,
namely 1318.

This was identified on both minarets by Casanova,
La Citadelle, II, 622, but not by Van Berchem, C I A Egypte
172, 169
18

Description, t.I in J. pl.73 fig.6. Also Bourgeois
Precis, t VII, p.2 Pl. IV.
19. M. Meinecke, *Fayencedekorationen*, p. 100, pl. II

20. Ibid., p. 117. M. Meinecke points out that it is quite possible that these tiles were remains from the tiles prepared to cover the dome of the iwan of al-Nâṣir Muḥammad, provided that is, that one attributes the faience decoration to a royal workshop decorating sultan's buildings, or emirs whose foundations were being supported by the sultan as in Qawṣūn (ref. Laila Ibrahim, *Qawṣūn*) and al-Maridānī.

21. Ibid., p. 118

22. Ibid., 96. The same banna' who built the minarets of Qawṣūn at the orders of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and then his dome and minaret at the citadel and who must have also been responsible for the ceramic decoration.

23. The date of the sabīl has caused many discussions. Creswell *M A E II*, 72, dates it to 726/1326 and attributes it to the emir Jamāl al-Dīn Aqqūsh, nā'īn of Karak. Frost, *Céramique*, 4, however, dates it to 1335. Sophie Ebeid, *Sabils*, 17-18, basing herself on an inscription recorded by Wiet in *R C E A* XV N. 5821 which mentions the sultan as shahid dates it after 1345, the date of his death. Ibn Taghrībirdī in *S. Ebeid Sabils*, p. 19, under the year 746/1345 mentions that it was the emir Arghūn al-Ṣulṭān, the stepfather of sultan al-Kāmil Shābān who constructed and endowed a sabīl and a maktāb at the door of the maristan when he became the nāzir (director) of its waqf. The sabīl in the inscription is attributed to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, therefore one must presume that he gave orders for it during his lifetime. His death must have caused an interruption and then al-Kāmil Shābān at the instance of his stepfather (Arghūn) decreed its completion.


25. Maqrīzī Khīṭāt II, 424, mentions that Khawand Tughay built a mausoleum towards that of ʿAbātul Śāqī. This limits the building date between 735/1335 and 747/1348, since the latter was built in 735/1335.


The minarets of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad at the citadel, the mosques of al-Maridānī, Ašlām, the sabil of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and Khawānd Tughāy.

M. Meinecke, Faiencedekorationen, 127

The mosque of al-Maridānī was built with the help of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Maqrīzī Khitāy II, 306. In pp. 425-26 of the same volume, it is also mentioned that Khawānd Tughāy was a favourite wife of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and a popular beauty who retained her popularity even after her husband's death.

Creswell, Minarets, II, Pl III J.

A. Abdel Wahhab, Masjid Ašlām, 473

See below, p. 88

A. Abdel Wahhab, Masjid Ašlām, 472

Ministry of Waqf's, Mosques of Egypt II, pl. 242.

Examples of Bahri Mamluk mosques showing stepped crenellations are:

-Mosque, mausoleum of al-Manṣūr Qalā‘ūn 683-4/1284-5 (Index N. 43); madrasa mausoleum of an-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalā‘ūn 695-703/1295-1304 (Index N. 44); mausoleum of the emir Qarasungur 700/1300-1 (Index N. 31); mosque of Salār and Sanjar al-Gawli 703/1303-4 (Index N. 221); Khānqāh of Baybars al-Gāschenkīr 706-9/1306-10 (Index N. 32); mausoleum of Șaff ad-Dīn Gahwar 714/1315 (Index N. 270); mausoleum of Tāshtimur 735/1334 (Index N. 143); mosque of al-Maridānī 739-40/1339-40 (Index N. 120); mosque of Aqsungur 746-8/1346-7 (Index N. 81); mosque of the emir Shaykhū 750/1349-50 (Index N. 147); convent tomb of Shaykhū 756/1355 (Index N. 152); mosque of Şarghatish 757/1356 (Index N. 218).

Examples of Bahri Mamluk mosques showing fleur de lys crenellations are:

-Mausoleum of as-ṣawābī c 684/1285-6 (Index N. 296). Creswell in M A E II p. 214 considers these as later restoration work because they are not stepped as the previous ones and strangely enough he adds that this trefoil shape does not appear again until the mosque of Almāz 730/1329-30. In fact they re-appear on the mosque of Salār and Sanjar al-Gawli 703/1303-4 (Index N. 221) on courtyard facade (Pl. ). Creswell in M A E II p. 243 describes these "as a row of leaf-shaped merlons (Pl. 92a), the earliest of their kind in Egypt. They reappear on the madrasa of the emir Taybars 709/1309-10 (Index N. 97) around
the mausoleum. This may be later work since the shape is slightly different from the above and following crenellations. (Pl.). The mosque of al-Gūkandar 719/1319 (Index N. 24), al Miḥmandar 729/1324-25 (Index N. 115) (Pl. ). Creswell in M A E II, 273, claims the trefoil crenellations as the second of their kind in Cairo after the madrasa and mausoleum of Salar and Sanjar al-Cāwli. He seems to differentiate between the trefoil crenellations of these last two buildings and those on al-Ṣawābī’s mausoleum which he claims does not re-appear before the mosque of Ulmaz. As for the mosque of al-Gūkandar, he mentions the trefoil crenellations, but does not say whether he considers these later work or not, since they occur before the mosque of Ulmaz and also before al-Miḥmandar’s crenellations. Other buildings showing the fleur de lys crenellations are the mosque of Almaz 730/1329-30 (Index N. 130) (Pl. ), mausoleum of Qawṣūn 736/1335-6 (Index N. 290-91), mosque of Aydumur al-Bahlawān before 747/1346 (Index N. 22), madrasa of Taṭar al-Ḥegaziya 748 & 761/1348 & 1360 (Index N. 36), madrasa of Umm as-Sultān Shaḥban 770/1368-69 (Index N. 125).

38 Bourgeois, Precis, pl.67
39 Glorian O’hian, Minbars, Fig. 58

40 One of the entrances of the mosque of Ezzeldine al-Khāṭiri at Boulaq 737/1336 (Index N. 34) in Precis, pl. 48, shows similar cresting but the mosque was destroyed and rebuilt several times and Bourgeois dates the portal to the 15th century.

41 The stalactite portal of Creswell M A E II, 147-148 Creswell concludes that Zayn al-Din Yusuf 697/1296 is the first example, but Mohammed Seif al-Nasr Abu’l Futuh, "madākhil", 39, adds that the portal of the mosque of Aqsunqur Yusuf 693/1293 is four year older.

42 Comitè (1915-1919), pl. LXIV.

43 This is the inner part of the Gothic doorway brought by al-Asḥaraf Khalil from Acre, M A E II, 234-48. Muḥammad Seif al-Nasr Abu’l Futuh madākhil, 62, overlooks this portal and mentions only the side entrance of his mosque at the citadel 735/1335 which shows a full trilobe without stalactites which he considers the first example in Egypt of trilobes without muqarnas.

44 This detailed description follows Bourgeois Precis, 9, who reproduced the design, Pl. 25 II
45 Ibid., 9

Bourgeois, *Précis*, P1.62

al-Maqrizī, *Kitāb* II, 391, states that this madrasa was built by the administrator of the properties of Sultan Hasan known as Shams ad-Dīn b. Chazeid, known as ibn al-Baqri, who died in 776/1374, but mentions no date of construction.

Hasan CAbdel Wahhab, *Tawīl* CAt, 555, mentions that marble workers in the Bahri mamluk period became so proud of their work that they signed it. For example, the Qasr of Qawṣūn, where the craftsmen signed their name on both sides of the door

The mosque of Sultan Hasan shows also a large marble panel in the vestibule, but the technique is not marble mosaic. The technique for executing marble mosaic is described by Creswell *MAE* II, 203.


Comité (1915-18), 93-95.

See above p. 23

See above p. 39

See above p. 79 note 23

Sophie Ebeid, *Sahils*, P1.14

Muhammad Saif al-Nasr Abu'l Futuh, *madākhil*, 127, adds that the inscription on the south portal is also on a background of foliate scroll, but filled with foliate scratching and not as rounded or finely carved as the northwest portal. The next example of foliate inscriptions is Katbugha al-Dhahabi 748/1347 then Ṣarghatmish and the last example in the Bahri mamluk period is Tażbugha al-emir before 768/1366.


See above p. 12

See above p. 47 note 10
Mandjak al-Yusufi, 750/1349-50 (Index N. 138), the mosque and Khanqah of Shaykhū 750/1350 and 756/1356, the mausoleum of Sultan Hasan 757-64/1356-63, then later the madrasa of Um as-Sultan Sha’ban 770/1368, the mosque of Ilgāy/Ilğāy/Olchāy al-Yusufi 774/1373 (Index N. 131) and finally the mausoleum of Anas 783-4/1382 (Index N. 157).

The interior of the mosque of Ilgāy/Moqāba: Inside the mosque there is no problem such as the inclusion of the qubba in the southeast corner at the end of the main street as in the mosque of Ilgāy with its side gates opening by three arches or two colonnades along the main, the largest arcade, below which runs the line opposite the qibla at approximately mid-height. The layout and function of the minbar of the upper floor, the ceiling of the qibla and finally the varied arcade decoration, especially the fine encaustic tiles of the mausoleums adjacent to the mausoleum with enameled decoration of the qibla.

4.1 Location of the Mausoleum.

The mausoleum of Ilgāy is situated at the southeast corner of the mosque, i.e., on the qibla side and not in the southwest corner dominating the main streets as is usually the case in city mosques. Eicke in fact points out that Ilgāy is a striking feature in planning... That is the centuries the minbar chamber was placed always at the qibla side of the
CHAPTER IV

THE ARCHITECTURAL AND DECORATIONAL DETAILS OF THE INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE AS RELATED TO BUILDINGS OF THE SAME PERIOD IN CAIRO

The interior of the mosque of Aṣlam al-silāḥdār poses many problems such as the position of the mausoleum in the southeast corner and not on the main street as in city buildings, the groundplan with its side iwāns opening by three arches on two columns onto the sāhn; the hanging wooden dekka which cuts the iwān opposite the Qibla at approximately mid-height; the layout and function of the rooms of the upper floor; the roofing of the sāhn and finally the varied stucco decoration especially the fine stucco miḥrāb of the mausoleum compared to the stucco (less well executed) decoration of the sāhn.

4.1 Position of the Mausoleum

The mausoleum of Aṣlam is situated at the southeast corner of the mosque, i.e. on the Qibla side and not on the southwest corner, dominating two main streets as is usually the case in city mosques. Kessler in fact points out that it is "a striking feature in planning... that in the cemeteries the tomb chamber was placed always at the Qibla side of the
complex whereas in the city it was placed always on the street side. Pious attention, in a mere quantitative sense, would be stronger in a cemetery on the Qibla side where (in front of the mihrab) the worshippers tended to gather at prayer time; in town, it would be stronger on the side bordering the street where the passers-by represented another and more constantly flowing source of pious invocations."

The purpose of Aşlam's foundation was primarily funerary. The mausoleum was built first, for two reasons. Firstly, the highly decorated mausoleum portal (Pl.27) and secondly the blocking of three windows at the transitional zone of the mausoleum by the southern iwân of the mosque (Pl. 83). The mausoleum is entered from inside the mosque to the right of the southern iwân. The portal (see above in chapter 2)\(^2\) includes the typical stalactite hood, joggled voussoirs and mastabas of an outer portal and in fact recalls the decoration on the portal of the northwestern facade, namely a similar band of trefoils surrounds the large marble lintel of the mausoleum portal and the joggled lintel of the portal of the northwestern facade. Also, the inscription of both portals is rounded at the sides written in three tiers without the engraved foliate design on the letters which can be seen on the inscription of the portal of the southern facade. The decoration of the northwestern facade portal is
certainly more elaborate and more fitting for an outer main portal and its inscription is one of the finest foundation inscriptions on a Ẓahirī Mamlūk religious building.

There is only one other mosque in the Ẓahirī Mamlūk period with such a decorative mausoleum portal inside a complex, namely the Khanqāh of Khawānd Tughāy, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's wife who died in 1348. Little remains of this complex, but the mausoleum with one iwān on the Qibla side. The similarities between the portals and the domes of both are striking (Pls. 27 and 84). One can see on both portals the usual mastabāy; a plain slate marble lintel surrounded by a decorative band, in the first by trefoils and in the latter by mosaic decoration topped by juggled voussoirs.

Another mosque showing a mausoleum with a decorative portal inside the mosque, is the mosque of Khairbek (Index N. 248) in the late Circassian Mamlūk period, where the mausoleum was built first in 908/1502 and then the mosque was added probably in 927/1520. Although the building sequence of the Khanqāh of Khawānd Tughāy remains unclear, one can suggest that the appearance of a mausoleum portal inside a complex but decorated like an outer portal evidently indicates that the mausoleum stands first in the building sequence of a complex.

A second reason for the priority of the mausoleum of Asālām al-silāḥdār being built first, is the obstruction of one
of the windows of the drum of the dome by the southern iwān. On the way up to the roof from the staircase in the southern iwān, one sees whilst standing on the roof of the southern iwān looking towards the dome, that the three lower windows of the transitional zone are half blocked by the roof (Pls. 83 a, b) of the iwān. The other windows of the transitional zone are all free even on the Qibla side. This shows that the south iwān or its upper floor was added to the mosque after the mausoleum was built. This question will be dealt with in fuller detail in the conclusion under 'sequence of building'. It is enough for our purpose at this stage to show that the mausoleum was built first independent of the mosque, hence the need for a portal decorated like an outer one, and the placing of the mausoleum at the Qibla side as is the case with pietistic funerary monuments, for example, or Turbas (funerary complexes, especially characteristic of the cemeteries, where mausoleum, prayer place and perhaps a small room were usually situated on the Qibla side, and the dependencies opposite). One could add here, that the position of the mausoleum at the southeast corner may have been ideal, not only because of the Qibla orientation, but also because it fell at the corner of the rāhba (an open area) and Hāret Jāmiʿ Aṣlam, which though not a main street today, might have been an important one if his dār was located there (see above p. 13 and fig. 2). So in short an attempt to combine the features of city buildings with pietistic scruples.
4.2 Peculiarities of the Groundplan

4.2 A The Entrances to the mosque

The mosque of Aşlam has two entrance portals, one in the southern facade on the rahba, which leads directly through the lateral iwān into the central courtyard, and a second entrance in the northwest facade which leads through a vestibule straight to the mayda'a, or turning right in the vestibule through a tunnel vaulted bent entrance with a crossvault at the corner to the courtyard. Both portals bear foundation inscriptions and are highly decorated, but although today the portal of the south facade facing the rahba is considered the main portal, and the second one, in the northwest facade, is kept locked with the two steps in front of it used as racks for a fruit merchant, it seems clear, from its structure and decoration, that the latter portal was earlier the first main entrance to the mosque.

The portals of Bahri Mamlük mosques and madrasas, cruciform in plan, usually lead through a bent entrance to the courtyard proper as in the madrasa-mausoleum of Zayn al-Dīn Yūsuf 697/1298 (Index N. 172), the mosque of al-Cūkandār/719/1319, the mosque of Şarghatmish 757/1356 (Index N. 218) and the madrasa of sultan Hasan 757/1356-62, but there are numerous exceptions, for example the entrance of the mosque of al-Mihmandār 725/1324-25 leads straight through a corridor to the lateral iwān, then one turns right into the courtyard. Other
exceptions to the bent entrance are the madrasa of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad 695-703/1295-1304 and the Khanqāh of Baybars al-
Cāshenkīr/Chāshnegīr 706-9/1306-10 where one enters the sahn
of the cruciform plan through a long straight corridor. In
the first, the doorway leads into a passage nearly 13 m. long
which divides the mausoleum from the Qibla iwan of the madrasa.
At the end of the passage are two doorways, the one to the
right leads to the fore court of the mausoleum and the one
to the left to the sahn of the madrasa. In the latter, one
enters the sahn first through a vestibule which leads straight
to a passage leading to it. One can, therefore, conclude from
the afore-mentioned examples that the module for portals of
cruciform buildings in the Ẓahrī Mamlūk period is the
separation of the entrance from the sahn either by a vestibule
and a bent entrance or a vestibule and a straight corridor or
a plain long passage. The need for that, according to Muḥammad
Saif ad-Dīn, was to separate students and lessons from the
noise outside. Therefore, this, together with the elaborate
decoration of the portal, i.e. stalactite hood, flat carved
stone carving of the spandrels and the beautifully rounded
foundation inscription, together point towards a main entrance
to the mosque.

The southern portal, on the other hand, is unique not
only in its decoration, but also in the fact that it leads
directly into the lateral iwan and sahn. In fact, if one
looks at the marble work of the floor one finds what appears to be an attempt at producing a carpet effect in marble leading from the portal to the centre of the gahm (Pl. 62 a, b). Firstly, the entrance passage is lower than the sides of the lateral south iwān, therefore forming a passage which cuts the iwān in two parts, and secondly one sees a concentration of roundel decoration in marble from the portal to the centre of the gahm. The question naturally arises, why this attempt at producing a carpet effect in marble from the doorway to the centre of the gahm? was this the private entrance of the emīr and his entourage? The inscriptions and the primary sources have no answers to these questions. We are faced here with three problems. Firstly, the marble was greatly restored as shown above (p. 45) and therefore this carpet effect in marble could well be the result of restoration work. Secondly, the cutting of the iwān in two to leave space for a passage to the gahm was necessary, not to give a carpet effect, but because the portal leads directly into the iwān which, as shown above, seems to be a unique feature in Cairene Bahri Mamlūk mosques, cruciform in plan. Thirdly, there are no extant mosques of this period with a private entrance for the emīr. The suggestion of a private entrance for the emīr and his entourage is based mainly on the direct entrance into the gahm and on the possible location of Asham's dār opposite this entrance (Fig. 2 f) and remains thus, just a hypothesis. One can add
here that even if the dār was beside the mosque as shown in (Fig. 2 e) then the southern entrance would still be nearer to the emīr and his entourage than the northwest portal.

An interesting feature of the south portal is the method with which it was locked from the interior of the mosque. Inside the portal on the left hand side is a square opening in the stone faced with wood. Opposite this, on the right hand side of the portal is another opening in the stone also faced with wood, but much deeper. It goes 1.50 m. inside the stone. This, according to popular tradition, was intended to carry a long wooden arm which at night would be pulled out and fitted in the hole opposite, i.e. serving as a safety lock. The problem is that the door is 3 M. wide and the beam could not have been more than 1.50 m.

4.2 B The iwāns

The groundplan of the mosque of Aslam al-silahdār is strange and can be considered as unique in Bahri Mamluk funerary architecture (i.e. domed mausolea attached to a madrasa or jāmiʿ or ḫanqāh) because of its use of arcades or two columns for lateral iwans, opening onto the ṣaḥn. The usual plan of madrasas or jāmiʿs whether attached or not to a domed mausoleum, is cruciform (4-iwān type) where all the iwāns open by arches onto the courtyard. The Qibla iwan being larger than the iwān opposite and the side iwāns identical in
size and shape. Examples are the mosques of Şarghatmish 757/1356 and sultan Ḥasan 757-64/1356-62.

The precedent for the groundplan of the mosque of Aşlam appears to be the madrasa of the emir Ahmad al-Mihmandar 725/1325 on the Darb al-Aḥmar. Here, a corridor which is 4.5 m. long leads directly into the southwest iwān. The interior is cruciform around a sahn 7.63 m. wide and 5.90 m. deep covered by a modern roof with a skylight. The Qibla iwān is separated from the sahn "by an arcade on two marble columns with two lateral arches and a much wider horizontal opening in the centre". The mausoleum is entered from the iwān. The lateral iwāns are about 5.9 m. by 3.68 m. and are both preceded by "two very stilted arched resting on a central marble column". All the arches have wooden tie beams. So here, we meet the same variation in a cruciform plan, i.e. iwāns opening by arcades onto the sahn.

A contemporary example which must also be mentioned is the madrasa of Taṭar al-Ḥigāзиya 761/1360 (Index N. 36), although this madrasa presents problems in its building sequence which have not yet been fully solved. The plan consists of a mausoleum and a three-iwān madrasa. The entrance leads through a small vestibule to an open court with the main iwān opposite, an arcaded iwān to the right and a smaller iwān to the left. They are as in Aşlam's mosque one step higher than
the floor of the sahn. The arched side iwān has two marble columns supporting two two-centred pointed arches with two different corinthian capitals. The arched iwān has one door leading to the mausoleum and opposite a door leading to the minaret which stands completely free from the complex. The madrasa has been restored and the roof of the arched iwān was rebuilt. The groundplan of this complex shows several points of similarity with the mosque of Ağlam, namely the use of the arched iwāns, much shallower than the main iwān, giving onto the courtyard; the entrance to the mausoleum from the arched iwān, with the entrance to the minaret standing opposite. One must add here, that Taṭar al-Nigaziya was built near Qawṣūn’s palace, which she had bought after his death.¹² She, thus, had to adjust her madrasa to a limited space since the palace was a huge complex built over an area of 10 feddans. This, of course, raises the question, were Ağlam al-silāḥdār like Ahmed al-Mihmandār, dictated by pre-existing buildings. The answer is probably yes, although they were not built on the site of older palaces or buildings. In both case, the emīrs seem to have been forced to reduce the size of one or two of the iwāns to fit the available space. In the case of the madrasa of the emīr Ahmed al-Mihmandār, the width compared to the depth of the iwāns seems to have been the reason for the use of colonnaded arches opening onto the sahn. The Qibla iwān is emphasized by its larger size and the use of three
arches on two columns instead of two arches on one column as in the lateral iwān. In the case of the mosque of Ašlam, it seems to have been the size of the courtyard which dictated the use of the arched iwāns. As they stand, they are too shallow compared to the width for the use of an arched opening onto the ḍāhr. The emir Ašlam could have increased the depth of the lateral iwāns by springing his arches at the point where it springs for the Qibla iwān (Fig. 16). But this would have made the courtyard very small and the whole mosque dim and dull. Also, the lateral iwāns would have been larger than the Qibla iwān which was not acceptable for religious scruples. But what dictated the size of the Qibla iwān? The mausoleum which was built first and the necessary space needed for the remaining elements of his complex. In short, Ašlam built his mausoleum first probably with a ḥāsh, then he added his complex, fitting in his mosque in the ḥāsh between the mausoleum and the ṭabā (Fig. 2). This will be discussed in fuller detail below.

The groundplan shows an attempt at symmetry, therefore one should expect a room opposite the mausoleum on the Qibla side which is missing and occupied today by a baker’s shop. The possibility of a cistern occupying this corner (N.E. corner) should be mentioned, since the mayḍa‘a and the hawd for a sabīl were on this side of the mosque (North side) as shown (Fig.2) In fact, the wall on this side is cut by blind windows to give
the effect of a room behind it. Unfortunately, the oven of
the baker's shop occupies the wall separating the mosque
from the bakery. Therefore, an examination of the wall was
impossible.

Hasan Abdel Wahhab\textsuperscript{13} in his description of the mosque
of Aqlam al-silahdar mentions two more mosques showing a
similar groundplan, namely Khawand Moghul masjid built before
876/1474 and masjid Abu Bakr Muzhir built in 884-5/1479-80
(Index No. 49).

4.3 Peculiarities of the Upper Floor

4.3 A The Hanging dekkath

The side opposite the Qibla at the mosque of Aqlam
al-silahdar shows two balconies. The first is hung across the
iwān at approximately mid-height and the second is above the
iwān overlooking the sahn (Pl. 85). The first balcony is
built of wood. It is reached by the spiral staircase leading
to the minaret. At the first landing a simple rectangular
opening framed by a wooden frame leads onto the balcony which
is only 1.5 m. wide and goes along the whole width of the iwān.
It is definitely not a passage, since it leads nowhere. The
function of this balcony is not very clear. According to
Hasan \textsuperscript{14} Abd al-Wahhab, it is a dekkat al-Muballegh.
In fact, the small size of the mosque does not call for a
dekkat al-muballegh, and also it is situated at the west end
of the mosque so that only very few people could have stood behind it. The only possible reason for the use of such a dekka would be for those people sitting in the upper floors to follow the Friday sermon. The madrasa of al-Mihmandar 725/1325 has a similar balcony larger in size, cutting the iwan opposite the Qibla at half its height, but of Ottoman date. The question naturally arises, is the wooden balcony in Aqlam's mosque also of a later date? There are two arguments for this view. Firstly, the placing of the balcony obstructs the view of the roundels behind it decorating the three walls of the iwan. Secondly, the type of woodwork decoration used is quite different from the other wood in the mosque. The balustrade consists of square and rectangular panels. The square panels have mashrabiyya work, which will be discussed presently, while the rectangular panels have simple turned wood forming a railing. A survey of contemporary woodwork was therefore deemed necessary for the dating of this dekka (Pl. 86, 87 a, b, c).

Mashrabiyya work was popular in the Zahiri Mamluk period. The essential feature of the work is a series of wooden pieces connected together by short turned links which fit into the main pieces. "It is in the arrangement and number of these links, of which 2000 are often contained in the space of a square yard, that the variety of design is effected"15. Sometimes the main pieces are squares supported by four links or
arms forming a cross, sometimes six or eight like a star. A more elaborate style of Mashrabiyya work has the component parts carved and sometimes inlaid. The work in the balcony at Aşlam’s mosque shows a six-sided star with incised motives and the framing bands have the same sketchy design as the frame of the rectangular doorway into the balcony (Pl. 87)

It seems a general rule in early Mamlûk mashrabiyya work that the square pieces are supported by four links. This is well exemplified by Cairene minbars. In grilles and windows a variation of this rule occurs where six and eight sided pieces exist. The outer wooden grille of the mosque of Ulmaz 730/1329 (Index N. 130) shows panels of mashrabiyya work with six sided stars. But one must point out here that the woodwork of this mosque has been restored. In the case of the grille separating the Qibla riwāq of the mosque of al-Maridānī 739-40/1339-40 from the sahn, the main part of the grill panels shows ovals connected by four links. Only the upper portion below the crenellation shows panels with turned 6-sided pieces supported by six links, forming thus a six sided star. Old pictures of the grille before its restoration also show these panels, therefore one can assume that they are original.

Mashrabiyya work consisting of six-sided stars becomes popular in the Circassian Mamlûk period beginning with the
balustrade of the minbar of the mosque of Barquq 786-8/1384-6 (Index N. 187) where the balustrade is no longer one long panel but divided into square and rectangular ones.

In the light of the mashrabiyya work, it appears difficult to place the dekkā of the mosque of Aṣlām to a later date, since the possibility of the panels showing six-sided stars in both the mosques of Ulmaš and al-Māridānī being original cannot be ruled out.

Interesting in the woodwork of this dekkā is also the scratched design of the frame of the doorway leading to the dekkā (Pl. 88). The design of the doorway consists of sketchy lines forming a geometric design of upward and inverted pyramids with lines going through them and with abstract leaves, in the background. The frames of the panels of this dekkā also show the same scratched linear design, but more angular and void of leaf filling. This kind of scratched decoration on wood is rare in mamlūk woodwork but is common in the late 15th century and early Ottoman buildings, e.g. Sulaymān Pāshā at the citadel. It seems that such scratching was intended to be covered by carved composition plastered and gilt or paint. The only other Bahri Mamlūk surviving examples found can be seen on the minbar of the mosque madrasa of Uljāy/Alchēy al-Yūsufī dated like the mosque 774/1373 in the inscription of the lintel on top of the portal. The wooden frames around the balustrade
and the supports of the portal of the minbar have a scratched design resembling that of the dekka of Aşlam. The minbar was restored in 1913-14\(^1\) and the scratching on the frames appear on the pictures before restoration,\(^2\) thus one can assume that they are original.

Another example is the woodwork in the mosque of sulṭān Ḫasan 757-64/1356-64. One of the doors leading to the şahṅ shows framing bands surrounding an inscription with the same scratched linear design.\(^3\) When looking at the detail of the scratching, one will find an identical design to Aşlam’s dekka but in the latter, the design is more sketchy. Also, the window frames of the madrasa melkia in sulṭān Ḫasan’s mosque\(^4\) show a similar technique and design. It is worth noting here that the woodwork in this mosque was repaired extensively\(^5\) but following original remains. The similarity of the scratched linear design in both mosques point towards the same craftsman in the mid 14th century producing this kind of work which shows little skill. Scratched linear design on wood did not die out although it never was a popular method for decoration. For example, a panel from a dekka from the wekālat Qaytbāy at al Gamāliya, founded in 885/1480-81 (Index N. 9)\(^6\) shows also this technique.

One can, therefore, conclude that the dekka in the mosque of Aşlam al-silāḥdār could well be original. Its position is interesting. In earlier mosques, one finds the dekka placed
in the Qibla iwān or riwāq. The first appearance of a dekka
in the iwān opposite the Qibla is in the madrasa of al-Mihmandār
725/1324-25 but where it is an Ottoman addition, and it is
difficult to state with certainty whether there was originally
a dekka there or not. It should be pointed out that the
madrasa of al-Mihmandār, like the mosque of Ašlam is a cruciform
building with a covered courtyard. This of course leads to the
question: is the position of the dekka related to this type of
building? If so, then why does the mosque of al-Cūkandār/719/
1319, the first cruciform building with a covered courtyard
not have a dekka? Probably because it was not a jāmiʿ (congre-
gational mosque) and no khutbas (friday sermon) were said there.
One can therefore conclude that the dekka was used as a dekkat
Muballegh since the mosque is a jāmiʿ and its situation seems
to be related to cruciform buildings with covered courtyards.
Later mosques do not usually have dekkas, since the acoustics
in closed mosques does not really call for one.

Having discussed the woodwork of the dekka in details,
a few words should be added about the woodwork in the mosque
in general. The most interesting piece is the minbar (Pl 60 a,b)
which was studied by Gloria Ohan.25 "It is the first occurence
in Egypt of a wooden minbar with an original opening.... It is
obviously original since the same frames on the sides also
border the opening passage."26 The triangular sides show the
typical Mamlūk rosette as is very similar to the minbar of the
mosque of al-Maridānī 739-40/1339-40. The balustrade is of standard type, i.e. mashrabiyya work where the links have 4 arms and the surrounding frame shows carved foliate motives. Ivory inlay appears on the doors of cupboards in the Qibla iwan and mausoleum (Pl. 61, a, b) whilst the panels of the wooden cenotaph have been redone.

4.3 B The Rooms of the upper floor

The two long rooms overlooking the courtyard through three windows are, in fact, unique in Cairene Bahri Hamālik religious architecture. The upper floor of a mosque whether occupied by a madrasa or a khanqāh would usually have cells for students and maybe larger teaching rooms. In the mosque of Ašlam there are no cells. Beside those two long rooms are, as mentioned above, four smaller ones and a balcony with a small room or storage area opening onto it. Two small rooms can be reached from the staircase to the minaret, the first one landing before one reaches the dekka (Fig. 8), therefore probably used by the shaykh using the dekka, and the second, one landing before one reaches the long room on this side (Fig. 9), therefore probably used to serve people meeting in the long room overlooking the courtyard. A small room near the northwest portal reached by a separate staircase (Pl. 44) (Fig. 8) was probably used by the shaykh of the mosque for its windows overlook the portal and it is situated near the main entrance and the mayḍa‘a. The larger almost square
room above it with its shelves and storage area may have served as a library (Fig. 9).

The function of the two long rooms overlooking the courtyard (Fig. 9) and the balcony (Fig. 10) can only be hypothesized because of their uniqueness in Pahlī Mamlūk religious architecture, and since the search for an original waqfiyya was in vain. Before suggesting the different possibilities, an architectural fact must be pointed out. Namely, the complete lack of communication between the rooms of the south side including the dekka and the rooms of the north and northwest side including the upper balcony. Both sides are treated like separate buildings with separate entrances. It was mentioned earlier, that the south portal to the mosque could have been the private entrance of the emīr and his entourage, therefore the long room overlooking the courtyard on this side could well be a reception room which was not uncommon in Mamlūk funerary architecture. The mosques of sulṭān Ḥasan 757-64/1356-62, madrasa of Ṣarghatmish 757/1356 and the Khānqāh of Qurqūmas 911-13/1506-7 (Index No. 162) all have reception rooms in the upper floor.

The function of the long room opposite the above mentioned one seems to have been related to the northwest portal and the rabc situated on that side (Fig. 3 e). The inhabitants of the rabc could have been students, therefore
the rooms on that side were probably used for teaching, and theological discussions. Al-Maqrizi mentions under the necrologies of the year 782/1380 the death of al-Shaykh cAbbās b. Ḥasan al-Tamīmī al Shafī‘ī, the reader and khaṭīb (who says Friday sermon) of Jāmi‘ Aṣlam who taught there fīqh (religious law) and Qur’ān reading. The mention of a specific rite (Shafī‘ī) poses a problem: was the building intended for two rites? This would be an explanation for the complete separation between the rooms of the north side and those of the south side; or was the north side used as a madrasa for Shafī‘ī students while the south side was used by the emīr when he chaired ḥalqas and for theological discussions? The second suggestion appears more probable, since there is no duplication in plan for both sides of the building as would be expected in a school for two rites, and since Aṣlam is described by Maqrīzī as a pious man who chaired ḥalqas.

George Maqdisi points out that the Qur’ān and all the sciences related to it were taught in a jāmi‘, i.e. hadith, tafsir, fīqh, nahw, adab. There, also professors gave legal opinions (fatwa) and sermons (wa‘az) and held disputations on matters of law (munāzara)... There was no restrictions as to the place in which the majlis al masār or cilm (classroom or meeting of a scholar who discuss) could take place. It could be held in the home of a scholar or in one of the unrestricted institutions like halqas in a jāmi‘ and in Dār al-Kuttub."
not all jurists or theologians held such sessions and therefore biographers made particular mention of those who did. It is, thus, important to note here that a search for the name of a jurist or a theologian apart from shaykh ‘Abbās al-Tamīmī was in vain. But since the emir sat at ḥalqas, it seems highly probable that the rooms on the south side were used when he and his entourage attended the ḥalqas, while those of the north side were used for majlis al-nazar or cilm.

The rooms of the upper floor of the mosque suggest also another theory concerning their function, namely sufism. A ṭarā‘ could have been used by sufis and not students and the mention of a shafi‘i shaykh teaching fiqh and Qur‘an reading does not rule out the possibility of sufis, since they were also sunnis who had to learn fiqh and Qur‘an reading, beside sufism.

A Khanqāh can be provisionally ruled out, because in Cairo, the word Khanqāh was usually applied to constructions where sufis actually resided. Al-Maqrīzī mentions 22 Khanqas, 16 of which definitely had accommodations for sufis and on the other 6 he is not very clear. Of the seven extant monuments which bear the term Khanqāh, six have sufi cells, and the seventh, that of Mugalṭāy al-Gamāli was ruined and partly rebuilt. The mosque of Aṣlām has no cells which could have served as lodging for sufis living in a Khanqāh.
Although a Khangāh can be provisionally ruled out, a mashyakhit Šūfiya must be taken into consideration. Historians and waqfiyyas (endowment deeds) mention a considerable number of buildings: jāmiʿs, masjids, madrasa and mausoleum which had a mashyakhit Šūfiya or a ḥudūr, that is a shaykh and a group of sufis who held their ḥudūr (collective prayer and ritual gathering) in these buildings, but did not live there. The ḥudūr could have taken place in the mausoleum whose size is 5.5 meters square, therefore large enough for a small number of sufis, or also the main iwān could have been used. The upper rooms on the north side would then be for sufi discussions and teaching and those on the south side for the emīr and his entourage.

To summarise the problem as it stands, the building is called a jāmiʿ by inscription. Attached to this jāmiʿ was a ṭabr the which was inhabited by students or sufis. The sources give no help whatsoever as to the function of the rooms of the upper floor of the jāmiʿ. A madrasa or a mashyakhit Šūfiya were suggested. One should perhaps add here that the first suggestion appears the more probable because ʿAl-Ṣafadī and Ibn Taghribirdī call the building a madrasa and not a jāmiʿ and because, as mentioned before, Aṣlam is described as chairing halqas and these usually take place in madrasas.

Having discussed the possible function of the upper rooms, an architectural problem should be mentioned. The
staircase leading to the long room on the north side of the mosque does not lead all the way to the level of the floor of the room. One leaves the staircase at the level of the platform overlooking the mayda'a, then must climb over two stones to reach the room on the right as one leaves the staircase on the platform (Pl. 52 a). The question naturally arises whether this staircase was rebuilt at a later period. A lot of re-building was definitely done on this side of the mosque. In fact a landing further up, one reaches the corridor which leads to the upper balcony. The ceiling of this corridor abuts the crenellations of the northwest facade (Pl. 55 b) and the floor is hastily built of wood and rubble (Pl. 55 a). It thus seems that both the staircase and the corridor were rebuilt at some unknown later date, probably in the Ottoman period when the minaret collapsed.

The staircase raises another problem, namely the entrance to it. The oldest plan found of the mosque (Fig. 3) does not show an entrance from the mayda'a, but from the northwest iwan. Two attempts at reconstructing the staircase can be seen on (Fig. 17). The first is based on the oldest ground-plan, i.e. entrance is from the iwan and the second is based on symmetry, e.g. the staircase to the minaret is entered from the sahn, therefore in the second drawing the suggested entrance to the minaret is also through the sahn. The height from the floor of the sahn to the floor of the upper room is
6.80 m. The iwān is 30 cm higher. The level of the door will be approximately another 15 cm higher. One therefore needs a staircase 6.25 m. high. If one counts approximately 17 cm. for each step, then 36 steps are needed to reach the long room. One would have to leave the staircase three steps before to get on the platform overlooking the mayda‘a. The required number of steps can be seen in both drawings.

4.3 C The Balcony

The use of a balcony overlooking a sahn is unusual in the Bahri Mamlūk period. It appears only rarely in the later Mamlūk period, for example Zāwiyat Fayruz 830/1426-27 (Index N. 192) but is a common feature in Ottoman mosques. This suggests that the balcony may be a later addition, especially since the corridor leading to it is definitely a later addition. In fact, this cannot be the case because the ceiling of the iwān opposite the Qibla, which is the floor of the balcony shows the same painted decoration as the other iwāns (Pl. 89), a decoration typical of the Mamlūk and not Ottoman period. Thus, the balcony seems original. Its function is a problem. Popular tradition attributes its use for women praying in the mosque. Three factors stand against this hypothesis. First, there are no entrances of special areas built for women to pray in in the Bahri Mamlūk period, This is at best an Ottoman practice. Secondly, there is no mention whatsoever in the sources of the introduction of such
a practice by Ašlam al-silāḥdār. Thirdly, its present entrance, if original, is from the mayḍā‘a, and the balcony itself has in one corner a storage area or a small room, situated above the two small rooms of the southwest side of the mosque, and this would not be needed if women were intended to pray there. The balcony was thus probably used by students, shaykhs or sufis for theological or sufi discussions.

4.4 The Roofing of the Mosque

The present covering of the sāhn (Pl. 90 a,b) is a lantern ceiling which was built in 1900\(^3\)\(^4\) to protect the interior decoration. According to Īlī Pāshā Mubārak\(^3\)^\(^5\), the ancient roof was a dome that had collapsed at his time, but he does not specify whether he saw it before its collapse nor does he give the source of his information. Hāsan ĪAbdel Wahhāb\(^3\)^\(^6\) on the other hand refutes the use of a dome, but without giving reasons for his denial, and maintains that the original roofing was a lantern ceiling. The problem here is that there are no prototypes to refer to.

The mosque of Ašlam al-silāḥdār is the third extant Cairene cruciform building with a covered sāhn after the madrasa of al-Gūkandār/\(^7\)19/1319\(^3\)^\(^7\) and the mosque of al-Mihāmandār 725/1325\(^3\)^\(^8\). The sāhn of the madrasa of al-Gūkandār measures 6.79 m. by 5.93 M. and is flanked by four liwā̄ns with pointed frontal arches and flat ceilings. According to Patricolo\(^3\)^\(^9\) it is the
earliest extant example of a covered şahnl and the ceiling with its octagonal lantern was restored "après les traces retrouvées sur les boiseries subsistantes" (on the original traces). Creswell adds that it is significant that this feature should appear for the first time in a madrasa, since many of the early madrasas were qâlas converted, and qâlas are usually covered by a lantern ceiling.

In the mosque of al-Mihmandar, Creswell mentions that there are remains of what has been a good ceiling, but not what type of roofing. In 1894 the imām of the mosque asked "la réfection d'une couverture sur le şahnh" (repairs of a cover over the şahhn). This was refused until in 1907 when he complained of the heat of the sun, the şahnh was covered.

Thus, in both forementioned buildings the present covering is a modern one and the earlier roofing was suggested, but not with certainty, to have been a lantern ceiling. In the case of the mosque of Ağlâm, the remains of early corner supports (Pl.58a) eliminates the possibility of a brick dome, but not that of a wooden one. The possibility of a dome covering the şahhn must be taken into consideration since ḪAli Pāšhā Mubārak mentions it, although it would have been easier to maintain that the earlier roofing was a lantern, based on the mosque of al-Gükandar and earlier qâlas. In fact, wooden domes were also not uncommon in the mamlūk period. The best
known examples were the dome over the qāṭa of sultan Sālih on Rāda island and the wooden dome of the qaṣr Ablaq at the citadel, but both no longer extant. Even the rectangular shape of the courtyard does not eliminate the possibility of a dome because the mausoleum of Sunqur Sa'īdi is rectangular, yet covered by a dome. It appears thus, that the original roofing of the mosque of Ašlām remains a problem, either a dome or a lantern ceiling.

4.5 The Stucco Decoration

The stucco of the mosque presents a problem, not in its dating since it follows the tradition of the period, but in its variety and in the difference in execution. Stucco can be seen in the mausoleum, the mihrāb and the roundels decorating the wall. In the qibla and opposite iwān, namely six roundels, and finally windows, lozenges and medallions decorating the facades of the courtyard.

4.5 A The Stucco Mihrāb (Pl. 34)

The mausoleum of Ašlām al-Bahā'i has a very interesting stucco mihrāb which was covered by printed paper by the youth centre of the area whose main office occupied the mausoleum. Although stucco only occupies a little section of this thesis, it was deemed necessary to publish detailed photographs of the mihrāb because it is unpublished.

The mihrāb niche is a slightly stilted pointed arch which rests on two spiral fluted columns with bell-shaped
capitals and wooden cushions. The bases of the columns differ, the left column rests on a stylized bell-shaped base and the right column on an unshaped stone base. The rectangular Mamlük naskhi inscription band which surrounds the mihrāb and the inscription band which surrounds the conch are Qur'anic.

The inscription of the rectangular frame is enclosed in lobed cartouches, separated at the corners by lobed rosettes filled with a stylized leaf design (Pl. 91 a). The inscription surrounding the conch of the mihrāb is enclosed in its lower part in plain rounded oblong cartouches separated in the centre by a roundel with an interesting filling consisting of a 3 lobed leaf enclosed in a rectangular frame (Pl. 91 b,c). It may be an attempt at a very stylized kufic script of the word Allāh. It recalls the filling of the centre of the conch of one of the panels of the south side of the shaft of the minaret of Sayyidna al-Husayn 634/1237, although in the latter the letters are clearer. The corner roundel (Pl. 91 ) is filled with a leaf design. The band of inscription framing the mihrāb conch is enclosed in one plain rounded cartouche which loops at the apex and the resulting circle is filled with a 3-lobed leaf (Pl. 91).

The decoration of the mihrāb conch shows an unclustered Mamlük arabesque in flat relief. The stem is single and the leaves varied (Fig. 18). One can see split palmettes (Fig. 18, N. 1) split palmettes with sepals one extending from the
other (Fig 18, N. 2 and 3), leaves with one elongated lobe with veins, a smaller lobe and a sepal (Fig. 18, N. 4), multilobed palmettes inside a contour panel (Fig. 18, N. 5), single elongated one lobe leaves with veining and a narrow sepal (Fig. 18, N. 6), trefoils with sepals which contain composite decorative palmette elements (Fig. 18, N. 7 and 8) and finally small trefoils inside a contour panel (Fig. 18, N. 9).

This Mamluk unclustered arabesque is surrounded by a thin band of oval and round elements framed by two thick bands, then a large band forming lobed arches interlacing with a plain band forming sort of pointed loops inside the lobed arches (Fig. 18, N. 10). The outer arch of the mihrab conch above the inscription (Pl. 91 f) shows a rising interlacing band containing a 3-lobed leaf which resembles closely the decoration of the balustrade of the mosque of al-Maridani, but in the latter it is in stone carving and not stucco, and it is also a variation of the stucco decoration in the interior of the mausoleum of Sunqur Sa'di 715/1315. The spandrels of the mihrab are decorated with a flat relief stucco arabesque on a clear background but where the leaves are plain (i.e. not veined, lobed or decorated with smaller leaf elements as in the leaves of the conch of the mihrab). Finally, the lower part of the niche seems to have been covered with thin bands of coloured marble as in most Ẓahirī Mamluk mihrabs, as can be judged from the remains of marble decoration (Pl. 92) whilst the central part shows today a layer of plaster.
This mihrāb can thus be added to Creswell's list of stucco mihrābs. The elements of the decoration described above all have prototypes in the early mamālūk period beginning with the mihrāb of the Khanqāh Bunduqdāriya 683/1283-4, but in the latter the relief is higher and the stem is double. The conch of the mihrāb of Aṣlam resembles to a great extent the spandrels of the mihrāb of the madrasa al-Gukanīr/719/1319; i.e. a central motif from which radiate an arabesque design of interior lobed split leaves with two or three sepals and a simple stem, but in the earlier mihrāb, the background is not as clear as in the latter one. This unclustered arabesque in fact differentiates the mihrāb of Aṣlam from most earlier stucco mihrābs.

An interesting aspect of this mihrāb is that it seems that two different artists or workshops worked on it. The decoration of the conch differs from that of the spandrels in type and quality. This same aspect re-appears in the stucco of the iwāns and ǧāhn. The roundels of the iwāns show the typical mamālūk foliate designs with bordering Qur'ānic Thuluth inscriptions while the stucco of the ǧāhn shows the continuation of the Fatimid tradition including kufic inscription bands. Both types of stucco have prototypes in the varied stucco decoration of the Pahring mamālūk period. For example, in the mosque of Aqsunqur one encounters a stucco roundel where the alīfs and the lāms of the border inscription are elongated
forming a whirl motive, like the roundel above the mihrāb of the Qibla iwan of the mosque of Aslam (described above p. 34) (Fig. 42). The roundels of the side walls and the iwāns of the mosque of Aslam (Pls. 42/43) show also similarities to the stucco foliate design of the roundel of the iwan of the madrasa of the emir al-Gūkandār, but in the latter no inscription band surrounds it and the relief is not as high. As mentioned before (above P. 57), the use of mosaic pieces in the stucco also goes back to the mosque of al-Gūkandār/ChukanDar, where they can be seen in the mihrāb.

The stucco of the courtyard, which was also described (above p. 33) goes back to the mosque of al-Maridānī where the same lozenges, circles and niches decorate the facades of the courtyard, but in the latter these are not framed by inscription bands in Kufic script or bands of linear design as in the mosque of Aslam.

A problem arises here, namely the "sloppy" way in which the roundels and lozenges are put up. One notices from (Fig. 93, a, b) that the roundels touch the lozenges on one side, while large spaces are left on the other side. This becomes very apparent when looking from one of the rooms of the upper floor. It seems strange that while so much care was taken in the decoration of the portals, the courtyard was decorated hastily even carelessly.
Another problem arises concerning the stucco of the courtyard, the uppermost roundels and lozenges have behind them blocked up rectangular windows, which can be seen when standing on the roof (Pl. 95). Also the six niches surrounding the six windows of the long rooms overlooking the courtyard (Pl. 94) have today no windows in their centre from which the keel-shaped flutes radiate. Yet from inside the rooms one sees at this level lancet openings (Pl. 94) which have been blocked up by brick. Since it was shown earlier that restoration work was done on the rooms of the north and northwest side, the question naturally arises, just how bad was the damage when restoration was carried out, and when was it done? Is the bad placing of the gahn stucco decoration due to restoration work or due to hasty finishing at the time of foundation? One can only hypothesize, since the sources have furnished no answers.

The blocked up windows behind the stucco of the uppermost level remain a problem. One cannot suppose that the mosque was bare and that all the stucco was added later because the type of stucco used is typical of 14th century mamluk Cairo, and so much decoration would not have been added to a mosque without sources mentioning it or a restoration inscription. Two suggestions may be put forward. First, it is possible that the roundels and lozenges had an oculus or opening in the centre which was later filled with brick.
Secondly, parts of the stucco may have fallen when the roofing of the courtyard fell and in the process of putting it up again, the symmetry was impaired while the wall behind the stucco was reinforced by an extra layer of brick.

It is impossible to give a definite date to the restorations done in the north and northwest side of the mosque, but since a preliminary date of about 1720 was suggested for the rebuilding of the minaret (same time as the rebuilding of the minaret of the mosque of al-Mihmandar) the same approximate date should be suggested for the north and northwest side. In all cases i.e. minaret and stucco and staircase to rooms on the north side, restoration was probably not carried out under Khedivial patronage, since the restoration inscription which appears in the mosque of al-Mihmandar is lacking in the mosque of Ašlam. It was prompted by local piety since Ašlam al-silahdar is known today as Sīdī Ašlam al-Pahā’ī.

NOTES

1  Kessler, C. Funerary architecture, 260.
2  See above p. 27.
4  See above p. 57 for the domes.
5  Comité 1915-19, Fasc.32, pp. 164-165. The date of the mausoleum is 980/1572 and Van berchem points out that the mosque which bears no date was most probably built in 927/1520 one year before the death of the founder and four years after the Ottoman conquest, since much of the decoration shows Ottoman taste.
6. Laila Ibrahim, Zayn al-Din Yusuf, 8, explains that there are 14 extant monuments designated by inscriptions on the exterior of the building as Turbas, of these 11 are in the cemeteries and two in the city.

7. Muḥammad Saif ad-Dīn, Portals, 46, adds that the first appearance of a bent entrance is in the Ayyūbīd period in the gates of the citadel, the Bab Muderraq and Bab al-Qarafa.


9. al-Maqrīzī, Khītāt II, 399 calls it a madrasa and a Khanqāh while Creswell, M A E II, 273-274 calls it a mosque.

10. Creswell, M A E II, 273

11. Ibid.

12. al-Maqrīzī, Khītāt II, 71 mentions that Qawṣūn's palace was composed of a group of Qācas, each having its dependencies and stables. The group was intended to be seven but he was murdered before finishing them.


14. Ibid., 478

15. Stanley Lane-Poole, Saracenic Art, 137.


17. Comité (1911) Fasc. 28 p. 27

18. Plate in Creswell Collection, vol. 22A.

19. Ibid., (1913) Rapport p. 33

20. Ibid., (1913) Pls. XXIX, XXX

21. Max Herz Bey, Sultān Hasan, pl. XX, 1

22. Ibid., pl XV.

23. Ibid., p. 31

24. Max Herz Bey, Catalogue, pl. XXIV

25. Gloria Ohan, Minbars, Catalogue V, 83-87

26. Ibid., 83-84.
al-Maqrizi, *Suluk*, III, 406
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Comité (1900), 48
Hasgan ṬAbdel Wahhab, *Masjid Aṣlam*, 470
Creswell, *M A E* II, 271. On p. 272, he adds three edifices to al-Gukan Dar. This one is called a masjid in the inscription, but corresponds to his madrasa since the date 719 refers to the madrasa and not the masjid which was finished in 744.
Patricolo, Comité (1915-19), 83-34
Creswell, *M A E* II, 274
Ibid., 273-274.
Comité (1894) 52.
Ibid., (1907), 21.
Creswell, *M A E* II, 208
Ibid., 263.
Ibid., 267-268.
See above p. 41842
Creswell, *M A E* II, pl. 29 b.
Ibid., pl. 102c

Ibid., pls. 107-14.

See above p. 42

See above p. 33

Creswell, M A E II, pl. 103c.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The mosque of Aṣlam al-silāḥdār presents many problems of area, sequence of building, plan and decoration and the aim of this research is an attempt to throw light on these problems and to propose solutions whenever possible, since the sources have little to say about the founder and his foundation.

1. The Mosque is situated in the Darb al-Aḥmar, but not on the main street, i.e. the Darb al-Aḥmar, but near the Ayyūbid walls of Cairo, on a street which was formerly known as ṣhārīj Jāmić Aṣlam (today Fatma al-Nabawiyya), therefore a street which gained importance only after the complex was built. Sources mention a former Sūq al-Ghanam in the area, which indicates the outskirts of a town. In fact, the area was formerly a cemetery and started being built up only in the 14th century, but it did not really lose its funerary character before the 18th century.

2. The foundation, according to sources, comprise a mosque, rabć, dār, istaĥl and a ḥawd maṭā il sabil. Of these only the mosque, mausoleum are extant and form the topic of this thesis.

3. Sequence of building: The mosque was built in stages as can be judged from the architecture of the building.

   a. The mausoleum was definitely built first, and it
probably had a hōsh attached judging from the funerary character of the area and the lack of break in the bond at the northeast corner (Pls 96a&b).

b. The Qibla iwān was then added and the two lateral iwāns

sequence of building ground floor

break 4 break

c. the iwān opposite the Qibla was added judging from the breaks in the bond in the Southwest-northwest corners (Pls. 97 a&b)

Upper floor

d. The two staircase leading to the upper floors were then built and from there the rooms. In the case of the south side the long room was built from the staircase to the mausoleum and this probably explains the blocking of the windows of the transitional zone of the dome.

e. The facades were then added. The south facade was built first judging from the foundation inscription and then the northwest facade.
4. The present minaret is not original. The original one probably stood over the round staircase dominating thus both facades and complying with two different approaches to the mosque. One should add here that the highly decorated and rather deep portal in the northwest facade suggests a street leading to it. Otherwise, regarding the narrowness of the present shāri‘a al-Nabawiyya, the decoration would have been in vain.

5. Signs of rebuilding can be seen not only in the minaret but also the staircase leading to the long room above the north iwān. In both cases, neither history nor inscriptions were of any help. Two suggestions were thus proposed regarding the original entrance to this staircase, one from the lateral iwān, judging from an old groundplan and the other from the bent entrance, basing oneself on symmetry. It was also suggested that restoration work may have also included the stucco of the courtyard because it shows signs of "sloppiness", although this could have also been the result of hasty finish for the inauguration.

6. The plan of the mosque is original in its use of arcaded lateral iwāns opening onto the şahn. This was shown to be not unique in Cairene Bahrī Mamlük architecture, the prototype being the mosque of al-Mihmandar, and that the plan was dictated by the pre-existing building, i.e. mausleum and hōsh.
7. The two long rooms overlooking the courtyard and the balcony are unique in Cairene religious architecture of the Bahri Mamluk period, therefore their function can only be hypothesized since the sources do not throw any light on the problem. Two suggestions were put forward, either a madrasa or a mashyakhet Sufiya. The first appears more probable since the founder is described in the sources as sitting at halqas and these are related to madrasas.

8. The decoration of the mosque is very interesting for it shows originality in the use of existing decorative forms and becomes therefore a source of influence on later Mamluk mosques.

a. The use of a faience mosaic inscription around the base of a ribbed dome is new although it has a prototype in the minarets of al-Nasir Muhammad at the citadel. But Khawand Tughay may have built her mausoleum first, therefore one cannot consider this application of a minaret decorative device on the drum of a mausoleum dome as a novelty introduced by Aslam.

b. The large panel decorating the south portal was shown to be the product of a Cairene 14th century marble mosaic workshop. The novelty lies in the use of a panel in mosaic of marble on an entrance, This decorative device was taken over by Barquq for his madrasa at the end of the century.
c. The trilobed portal profile was shown to be uncommon but not original or unique. On the other hand, the framing of the trilobed conch of the northwest portal by a double moulded band which loops at the apex and this then framed by a rectangular moulding appears to be a novel feature judging from extant monuments, introduced by the mosque of Aṣlam, and then becomes common in the Circassian Mamluk period.

d. The flat carved stone carving on the spandrels of the same entrance is also original, and one sees it earlier on the inner side of the portal of the mosque of al-Maridānī. Its application on the exterior is new and becomes a source of influence to many later mosques.

e. The crenellation shape topping the facade is unusual compared to other contemporary monuments which show a trilobe or stepped crenellation form. This shape was shown to have been used as a cresting on wooden minbar portals and marble joggled voussoirs earlier.

f. The stucco decoration is varied but was shown to be contemporary to the foundation inspite of the difference in workmanship. A new mihrab was added to the list of stucco mihrabs in Egypt, for no mention of it was found in any of the sources and therefore detailed photographs of it are added.
9. The inscriptions, beside the two foundation and the restoration inscriptions of Ḫelmy II, were all shown to be Qur'anic.

The mosque of Aṣlam al-silahdar is a fine example of Cairene Bahri Mamluk religious architecture for its shows that one cannot really talk of "modules" for either plan or decoration. The plan depended on the land available and the decoration was like a jigsaw puzzle, where one puts together available scattered elements to form a new combination.
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THE MOSQUE OF AL-AMR
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