Al-Madrasa al-Firdaus
in Aleppo:
a chef-d'oeuvre of Ayyubid architecture

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CONGRATULATIONS

Just as Paradise is not accessible to him who has not died and been reborn, so is the Paradise of Gnosis closed to him whose soul is not dead to the world, to the desire to act in it, to choose, to possess and enjoy it - who is not dead to everything except God.¹

This work is dedicated to

Shaikh Muḥammad Nāzīm al-Haqqānī Ṣaqqāh

Just as Paradise is not accessible to him who has not died and been reborn, so is the Paradise of Gnosis closed to him whose soul is not dead to the world, to the desire to act in it, to choose, to possess and enjoy it - who is not dead to everything except God.¹

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INTRODUCTION

The Firdaus al-‘Alâ is made of a sea of Light. For this reason the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has said: 'If you desire paradise, ask for the Firdaus al-‘Alâ, because its roof touches the Throne of the All-Merciful'.

The Syrian Ayyubid architecture of the thirteenth century reflects outstanding architectonic qualities of harmony and proportion. This study intends to demonstrate how the Madrasa al-Firdaus is a chef-d’oeuvre of this period.

After placing Madrasa al-Firdaus in its historical context, we will proceed to analyse the location of the madrasa within the topographical context of Aleppo and its environs. This will lead us to an examination of the particular relationship the Firdaus quarter, and so, the madrasa, had with the seat of government and the city proper.

In the second half of our study we will be concentrating on showing how, the various functions which the madrasa fulfilled, as madrasa-mosque, mausoleum, and ribâţ, were part of and further developments of existing historical institutions. This involves taking a look at how these functions were reflected in the particular architectural space and decoration of the madrasa.

Through the striking aesthetic qualities of this monument and the ‘feel’ of the space, one begins to understand the depth of perception and understanding which the

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1 Quoting further from the Prophet, peace be upon him, "The Almighty Creator, exalted be He, created paradise from Light, and He created it eightfold. It is now situated in the seventh heaven. And even as the seven heavens are separated from each other, so also are the eight divisions of paradise distinct and separate. One is at a higher level than the preceding one. The highest of all is the Firdaus-i-Ala, the Highest Paradise, the loftiest garden of paradise.

The name of the first paradise is Dar-us-Salam, the Abode of Peace. The second is called Dar-ul-Qarar, the Abode of Constancy. The third paradise is named Dar-ul-Khuld, the Eternal Abode. The name of the fourth is Jennat-ul-Ma’wa [the Garden of Refuge], that of the fifth Jennat, the Gardens; the sixth paradise is the Jennat-un-Na’im, the Garden of Delights, the seventh Jennat-ul-‘Adn, the Garden of Eden, and eighth is the Firdaus-i-Ala, the loftiest garden." Maulana Firaqi, Forty Questions, trans. by R. Shukrullah. Sri Lanka: Arafat Publ., 1988. p. 21-22.
founders and builders must have had of the interaction between the physical and spiritual worlds. This finds its clearest manifestation in the geometric harmony and proportions of the madrasa.

The final step will then be to place the Madrasa al-Firdaus within the line of developments both prior and subsequent to its building. It will be clear that the Madrasa al-Firdaus represents a culmination in the Ayyubid style of Aleppo, and although there are certain specific architectural influences which reverberate into the monuments of later periods, the Ayyubid style also does not continue into a developed tradition but rather marks its end.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Reign of al-Malik al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi

Born in Cairo on the 5th of Ramaḍān, 568 A.H./20th of April, 1173 C.E., his full name was Abū al-Fath al-Ghāzi. His kunya was Abū Mansūr and his laqab al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Ghiyāth al-Dīn Ṣāḥib Ḥalab.

The events that concern him begin to unfold with the conquest of Aleppo by Ṣalah al-Dīn in Safar 589/May-June 1183. At first, Ṣalah al-Dīn decided to appoint his brother al-ʿĀdil as ruler of Aleppo, but, according to Ibn al-Athīr, upon being advised that this might compromise the succession of his own son, al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi, al-Malik al-ʿĀdil was sent to Cairo as a tutor of al-ʿAziz, a younger son of Ṣalah al-Dīn, thus clearing the way for al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi to receive the kingdom of Aleppo in 589/1193 (see Table I, page 6).

The kingdom of Aleppo stretched from Maʿrash and Raʾban in the north to Barin in the south, and from the Euphrates in the east to the Jabal Ansāriyya and the Amanus mountains in the west. It included the districts of Aleppo, Birah, Kafartāb, ʿAzāz, Ḥārim, Shaʿizar, Bārin and Tell Bāshir. (See Maps in figs. 1, 2, 3).

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1 Hijri and Christian Era dates will be written (wherever available) in this format: A.H./C.E.
2 E. Herzfeld, Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum, 2e Partie; Syrie du Nord, vol. 2. (1954-56), pp. 251-2. (Hereafter Herzfeld, MCL)
5 The frontiers of the Ayyubid kingdom remained roughly the same until the Ottoman period. See "Ḥalab", Encyclopedia of Islam, 1971. p. 87.
Soon after his appointment as ruler of Aleppo he married his cousin Ghaziyah Khatun. However, Ghaziyah was soon to die, without bearing him any male successor. Thus, in 609/1212, he married a sister of Ghaziyah's, Dayfa Khatun, who eventually bore him the required son and heir, al-Malik al-'Aziz Muhammed.

With particular regard to al-Malik al-'Aziz Muhammed and the question of succession, there seems to have been another son born before al-Malik al-'Aziz Muhammed, whose name comes down to us as al-Salih Ahmad of 'Aynatab. Ibn Khalliqan says that al-Salih's mother was a jar'ya or concubine and adds that people later chose al-Malik al-'Aziz Muhammed as a successor although he was younger than his brother al-Salih because of al-'Aziz Muhammed's mother Dayfa, who was the daughter of al-'Adil. Herzfeld, basing himself on Ibn al-Adim, presents us with the reason for such a preference: "Ainsi il préférerait 'Aziz, né en 610, à son fils aîné al-Malik al-Salihi, né en 600 (fin de 1203) mais d'une mère de naissance moins illustre [emphasis mine]." Humphreys also mentions "al-Salihi Ahmad of 'Aynatab, al-Aziz's older brother....".

With his combination of ambition and the exceptional qualities of a statesman, the kingdom of Aleppo flourished under the rule of al-Zahir al-Ghazi even in the face of competition of such kingdoms as Egypt and Damascus. In fact, he found in the rivalry among his brothers and cousins the chance to increase and spread the power of his own rule, and acquired for himself the title of Sultan, a title which had previously been reserved by the Seljuks for themselves.

The most remarkable consequence of the politics of al-Zahir al-Ghazi was the flourishing of commerce and industry. Relations with the Seljuks of Konya and Upper

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2 Herzfeld. MCI. pp. 251-2.
5 Humphreys. From Saladin, p. 229.
Mesopotamia as well as the opening of the European market due to the cessation of hostilities with the Franks, favored the exchange of commodities and trade.\(^1\) It is within this climate of economic prosperity and political expansion, that an outstanding architectural and artistic activity was initiated, one which continued under the reign of al-Malika Dayfa Khatun.

Before his death al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi declared his son al-Malik al-ʿAziz Muḥammad his successor and asked al-Malik al-ʿĀdil (the maternal grandfather of the prince) to 'swear to uphold this agreement'.\(^2\) After al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi's death at the age of forty-three, (25th of Jumāda II 613/10th of October 1216) it was the loyalty and fidelity of his Turkish slave, Shihāb al-Dīn Tughrīl, who acted both as regent and atabeg for his minor son, that eventually preserved al-Ghāzi's line.\(^3\)

The Reign of al-Malika Dayfa Khatun

Ibn al-Adim says that she was the dearest of the daughters to al-Malik al-ʿĀdil. Before she married al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi, many of the kings (mulūk) had asked for her hand and she had once been engaged to al-Malik al-Kāmil.\(^4\) Her marriage with al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi greatly improved the tense relations between her husband and her father in the previous two decades.\(^5\) She seems to have arrived in Aleppo in the middle of Muḥarram in the year 609/1212.

It was the sudden death of her son al-Malik al-ʿAziz, ruler of Aleppo at the time, in Rabiʿa I 634/Nov 1236 at the age of twenty-three, that gave her the opportunity of becoming the real ruler of Aleppo, a power which she exercised for the following six

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5 Humphreys. *From Saladin*, p. 155.
years. However, we should note that a regency council was established at the same
time. In consisted of the Amirs Shams al-Din Lu'lu' al-Amini and 'Izz al-Din 'Umar
ibn Mujalli, the Wazir Jamāl al-Din al-Akram ibn al-Qiftī, and a eunuch of the Queen
named Jamal al-Daula Iqbāl al-Khatūn. ¹

According to her contemporaries Dayfa Khatūn exhibited a great deal of
cleverness in a reign which was troubled to some extent by the Khwarizmian threat. ²
Her political line was a continuation of that of her two predecessors, al-Ẓahir al-Ghāzi
and Shihāb al-Din Tughril. She maintained the same reserve in the face of the rivalries
which were dividing the Syrian princes and continued the earlier alliance with the
Sultans of Konya.³

She died on the 11th of Jumada I 640/ 6 Nov 1242 at the age of fifty-nine from
an ulcer in the stomach. She was buried in a sarcophogas (ṣaffa) which faced that of
her son al-Malik al-ʿAzīz in a room in the Citadel (raḥamahum Allāh).⁴ Thus ended
one of the rare instances in the history of Syria in which a woman held the reins of
power. In Egypt the only other case was that of Shagarat al-Durr.⁵

Upon her death, the very young Amīr (he was only 12 years old) Yusuf II was
to rule. However, because of his youth the reins of government passed into the hands
of the regency council, specifically the Amir Shams al-Din Lu'lu' al-Amini. ⁶ Under the
influence of his counsellors, the young prince dissipated the fortunes of the state. Also,
unlike his predecessors, he took part in his cousins' rivalries in Egypt and Syria. At this
time, the Khwarazmians, fleeing from the onslaughts of the Mongols, were coming
through Upper Mesopotamia and Syria and devastating everything in their path. At this

¹ Humphreys. From Saladin, p. 229.
² M. Kurd 'Ali, "Athār al-Shahba wa al-Fayha wa Madrassa Dayfa Khatūn," Majallāt al-Majma' al-
³ Sauvaget. Essai, p. 133.
⁴ Adim. Zubiẗāt, p. 266. Herzfeld. MCT, says "et fut enterrée soit dans sa madrassa soit 'dans la
citadelle en face du sarcophage de son fils al-malik al-ʿAzīz'."
juncture, Yusuf II decided to go to war agains: Egypt and weakened himself to the point that he was unable to stand up to a subsequent Mongol onslaught.¹

Although the last years of Yusuf II’s reign were disastrous, the previous half-century under al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi, Shihāb al-Dīn Tughril, and Dayfa Khatūn had created a historical ‘milieu’ which was of decisive influence on the past and future prosperity of the city of Aleppo.²

**Aleppo in Ayyubid Times**

"Ḫalab", the arabic for Aleppo, became the capital of the kingdom of Aleppo in Ayyubid times for a variety of reasons. Idrisi says that it was a 'cross-road' city (see fig. 4) and that it lay on the high road to Iraq, Fārs and Khurasān and thus became the Muslim center for commerce with Persia and India.³ In contrast to the first centuries of Islam when the city was of only secondary importance being, as it were, squeezed between Antioch, the main city of northern Syria at the time, and Qinnasrin, the administrative capital of the province, it also became the political center for the rest of the Ayyubid kingdom. Its political importance was enhanced because of its central (perhaps more accurately, frontier) role in the warfare against the Frankish crusaders of Antioch and invaders from the Euphrates and Cilicia.⁴ Situated at the limits of an agricultural region its 'frontier' role was further emphasized by serving as the ideal place of exchange between sedentary and nomadic populations. Therefore, beside the political and economic factors, the geographical location and the composition of the

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ethnic populations of the city, were to determine its destiny, as we shall see later.\(^1\) It is especially this latter factor which will be reflected in the planning of the city and will be one of the determining elements in the later structure of the suburbs (See pages 14-21).

Despite a series of natural catastrophes, such as the earthquakes of 1144 and 1170, and a succession of destructive raids and wars, for instance, the siege of King Beaudoin in 1131 and the Mongol invasions of 1260 and 1280, Aleppo was able to emerge as a great cultural center. It came to be a meeting place between East and West and followed only Damascus and Cairo in importance as a main center of Sunni thought in the Arab world.\(^2\) Then, in Ottoman times, it became the third major city in the empire, after Istanbul and Cairo. It became the warehouse of European commerce with India\(^3\) and the city expanded tremendously at that time.

It was the cleverness of its rulers, beginning with al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi and continuing with Ḍayfa Khatūn, in combination with the elements mentioned above which favored its prosperity and enhanced its intellectual and cultural dynamism, and which was to be most strikingly reflected in tremendous architectural activity, particularly in the building of madrasas. This made Aleppo a point of exchange. It exercised an architectural influence on all of Syria and also served as an intermediary for the transmission of certain architectural elements, (some having their origin in Upper Mesopotamia, and the Anatolian plateau, as well as the concept of the madrasa itself), to Cairo.\(^4\) In the course of this study we will see how the Madrasa al-Firdaus in particular, and more generally Ayyubid architectural style and aesthetics, followed a pattern to be found in the buildings and churches of the Antioch region.\(^5\) Also, we will see that some elements of the Aleppine architectural vocabulary travelled all the way to Konya. However, in spite of these contacts and exchange, we hope to show that

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2 Humphreys, *From Saladin*, p. 2.
Aleppine architecture kept a homogenous, intrinsic and very personal character of its own.

**TABLE I**

**CHRONOLOGY OF THE AYYUBID DYNASTY IN ALEPPO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>589 / 1193</td>
<td>al-Ẓahir al-Ghāzi ibn Salāh al-Dīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>613 / 1216</td>
<td>al-Malik al-ʿAzīz Muḥammad ibn al-Ẓahir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>634 / 1236</td>
<td>al-Nāṣir Yusuf ibn al-ʿAzīz Muḥammad or Yusuf II (until 640 under the tutelage of his grand-mother Dayfa Khatūn bint al-ʿĀdil; after 648 resident in Damascus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>648 / 1250</td>
<td>al-Muʿazzam Tāranshāh ibn Salāh al-Dīn (the nāʿīb, or deputy, for al-Nāṣir Yusuf ibn al-ʿAzīz Muḥammad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>658 / 1260</td>
<td>Mongol occupations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Humphreys, *From Saladin*, p. 382.
TOPOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF THE MAQĀMĀT AREA

The significance of 'maqām' in the development of the area

The historical sources say that Aleppo was one of the way-stations of Abraham. He stayed there after having left Harrân. It is said that Aleppo (Ḫalab in Arabic) received its name because, according to Ibn al-Adim he milked (ḫalaba) his sheep there and then distributed the milk to the poor. This milk was known as 'ḫalab Ibrahim' or the milk of Abraham.

In another tradition which has come down us from 'Abdallah Ibn 'Umar al-Khaṭṭāb, son of the second caliph, and is quoted from Ibn Shihna by Sauvaget, it is said: "Parmi les meilleurs hommes de la terre, les meilleurs sont ceux qui habitent les étapes [mahājīr] d'Abraham." That there is special significance attached to the resting place of any prophet we may find in practically every religious tradition. It is a 'sanctification of place'. This sanctification manifests itself most clearly in the names that become associated with that place. Thus, we find three places in Aleppo that specifically refer to a place where Abraham rested; 1) the lower Maqām Ibrahim, 2) the upper Maqām Ibrahim (both located in the Citadel) and 3) the Maqām Ibrahim in the Ş aliḫin area. There is also a Maqām Ibrahim located in the village of Nawā'il just outside Aleppo.

The term 'maqām' has several levels of meaning. In Arabic it has the meaning of being a standing place, the place of the feet, and by extension in time, a place of residence or abiding. Among the Sufis 'maqām' as defined in an early text:

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... denotes anyone's 'standing in the Way of God, and his fulfilment of the obligations appertaining to that 'station' and his keeping it until he comprehends its perfection so far as lies in man's power.\(^1\)

The naming of a place as a maqām therefore has two main thrusts in meaning. On the one hand, it describes the place where a prophet, or other holy person, rested or stayed and on the other refers to the spiritual power that is to be found in that 'station'. That the prophets in general, and Abraham in particular, occupy the highest spiritual stations in the Islamic tradition can be shown in examples too numerous to be mentioned in detail here. Suffice it to say that the most well-known Maqām of Ibrahim is located within the sacred precincts of the Ka'aba and a footprint in rock marks the place where two cycles of prayer are to be performed after the seven ritual circuits of circumambulation. "Take to yourselves Abraham's station (maqām) for a place of prayer." (2,125)

Although we have cited Islamic sources in order to demonstrate the significance of the maqām, the other religious traditions also held such places in great veneration. Commemorative shrines for prophets of the Old Testament were common in Syria. These included ones that were built on previously Christian holy places, e.g. St. John the Baptist in Homs, John in the Ḥauran.\(^2\) Of the maqāms of Ibrahim in Aleppo, the one in the Maqāmāt area as well as the one near the village of Nawā'il, show evidence of pre-Islamic origin.\(^3\) According to Ibn Sha'īdād the two other shrines dedicated to Abraham in the citadel remained Christian until the middle of the eleventh century, five centuries after Aleppo had fallen to the Muslims.\(^4\)

We should remember, however, that it is the spiritual power, or presence, which is associated with the maqām that determines behavioural, and, more specifically,

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3. Tabbā'a. *Architectural Patronage*, p. 239.
4. Tabbā'a. *Architectural Patronage*, p. 239.
building and settlement patterns around these areas. People wished to benefit from this spiritual presence and 'baraka' (or blessing) by being as close as possible to the holy place. Even in pre-Islamic times living near such a place would have been desirable. According to Saouaf ⁱ, the first evidence of habitation near Aleppo were caves, many of which are located next to the Bāb al-Maqām (Ibrahim), in the area called al-Maghā'ir (see map in fig. 6). During the Islamic period, it was the proximity to the prophet after death which determined the particular growth of the Maqāmāt area.

Its location outside the city walls

The Maqām Ibrahim in the Şāliḥin quarter contains a colossal footprint (emphasis mine) of Sayyidina Ibrāhim and was considered one of the "wonders of Aleppo". Physical proximity to the maqām was probably the major factor for the burial of early Muslim martyrs ², as well as other saints, in the cemetery which grew up around the Maqām, and which gave the cemetery, and by extension, the area, its name: al-Şāliḥin (the righteous and good). ³

As has been mentioned, the Maqām Ibrahim in the Şāliḥin quarter was not the only commemorative shrine dedicated to Abraham in Aleppo. However, this shrine was to acquire special significance because of one very specific circumstance: it was located outside the city walls. This fact made it possible for the area to serve a) as a burial ground or cemetery and b) as a spiritual retreat

Whereas in western Christian cities cemeteries are often placed in the heart of the city, around the main church, in the Islamic world they are generally placed outside the city walls. ³ Each great city may have a number of cemeteries but they are generally

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found outside the city gates. 1 Marçais remarks the particular patterns which can be observed in the cemetery:

Parmi les tombes...quelques monuments se dressent, des qoubbas, sépultures de personnages vénérés. L'une de ces qoubbas fut le noyau autour duquel la nécropole s'est cristallisée. Il arrive aussi que la qouba s'élève toute seule à proximité de la porte de la ville et qu'aucun cimetière ne l'entoure. Ce saint isolé ou environné de morts plus obscures, c'est une sorte de génie protecteur de la cité. On compte sur son pouvoir tutélaire pour empêcher le malheur d'y entrer...cet intercesseur, ...cet Ami de Dieu, généralement un ascète, un mystique....²

Already at a very early date we also find many princes and members of the nobility buried near Maqām Ibrahim, some of the earliest belonging to the Artuqid and Seljuk nobility (early 12th century). Although there are pre-Islamic remains of buildings at this site, the first Islamic commemorative building was built by Malik Shah, supposedly upon the wish of his son and heir. Only a Kufic inscription remains of this building. ³ Until the time of Timur "on aime être enseveli dans cette region, et elle était parsemée de mausolées et de sanctuaires funéraires." ⁴ Al-Malik al-Afdal, from the Ayyubid period is also buried just outside the Bāb al-Maqām.

One practice which is of particular interest to us was the burial of princes outside the city walls although a mausoleum had already been prepared for them inside the city walls or in the citadel. There seems to have been a strong superstition which prevented the body from entering the city if it had happened to die outside the city walls. In the Madrasa al-Atabikiya, built by the regent Tughril, a section of the inscription reads: "... and if God should will that he dies outside the city of Aleppo, then he should be laid to

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¹ Marçais, "L'Urbanisme," p. 231.
³ Tabba'a, Architectural Patronage, p. 243, and Herzfeld, MCI, pp. 177-79.
⁴ Herzfeld, MCI, p. 175.
rest in it .... "1 This belief led many rulers to build two mausolea; one inside the city and one outside the city walls. 2

Physical proximity to the holy person for his baraka as well as the quiet needed for contemplation and devotions were two of the main reasons why many khanqahs and ribâts were built around Maqâm Ibrahim. The practice of locating these spiritual retreats outside the city walls was common all over the Islamic world.

1 Herzfeld, MCI, p. 286.
Rabd and Hādir

The modern concept of a suburb of a city did not exist in Ayyubid times. The delimitations of a city were expressed and materialised with reference to the city walls. One thought in terms of Barra, or outside, and Juwwa, or inside; this, of course, from the perspective of the city dweller. The former referred to what was extra-muros, or beyond the city walls, and the latter referred to Intra-muros, or what was within the city walls. (See fig. 5.)

Contemporary sources of the Ayyubid period used a specific set of terms to describe certain parts of the city which were located outside the city walls. Two terms which are of special relevance are rabḍ and hādir.

Originally the word rabḍ defined an area where animals, usually sheep, collected and rested.

"رَبْضٌ كَبِّرَتْ فِي مَرْضِبِهِمْ لَعْلَمَ الْمَرْضِبِ الْقَرَامِ ِهِمْ سَيَامَةً فِي مَرْضِبِهِمْ."

2

Its meaning then came to include the collection of people:

"دَلْبِينَةُ السَّمَاَطَةَ مِنَ الْعُمَامَةِ وَالْمَالِ مِنَ السَّمَاطَةِ لَا يَلْتَبَسُ."

3

Finally, the definition came to mean the area outside a city, meaning both empty areas and built-up areas around cities or fortresses. According to Yaqūt, this meant an area which is connected with the main settlement and does not include isolated suburbs.

Therefor, we have to understand the word rabḍ as used in the contemporary sources such as Ibn Shihna, Ibn Shaddād, Sibt al-‘Ajamī, Ibn al-Adim, etc., as referring to those built-up areas and empty areas, i.e. consisting mainly of gardens, which are

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1 Hamidé, Alep, p. 42.
located around the city, on condition that they are connected with the city and are not isolated. In Ibn Jubair's description of Aleppo (1185) he says "Suburbs be all round the city, with numberless khâns and gardens."  

The term hâdrîr, in the original meanings, stands in contrast to the word 'al-bââdi', the bedouin. In the terminology of the nomadic bedouin it signified a people who had taken up residence next to a constant source of water and remained there (this in contrast to hâdirat(un) signifying that they are staying next to this source of water only temporarily, i.e. in summer, and move on as bâdiyat in cooler weather). The Hâdir outside the city of Aleppo was also referred to as the 'Great Quarter' (al-Ḥayy al-ʿAdhîm) or 'the People' (al-Qawm - a synonym of ḥâdir meaning a tribe, or great tribe, probably referring to the bedouin). In the Tai al-ʿArûs the term is applied specifically to a district outside Aleppo.  

Variety and Development

Encampments. The ḥâdir, as defined above, was an encampment. This is confirmed by Ibn Shihna who describes the Ḥâdir thus:

[Le Ḥâdir] était une grosse agglomération en dehors d'Alep. D'une manière générale, ce nom s'applique aux campements importants.... Il groupait toutes sortes d'Arabes, Tanoukh, etc... ceux-ci combattirent les habitants de la ville qui les forcèrent à l'évacuer. D'autres Arabes virent y camper, et il devint une grosse agglomération.

According to Sauvaget, the Ḥâdir located South-West of the city already existed in Byzantine times (see fig.9) and was originally a Bedouin encampment. But,
later it acquired a distinct character, (see fig. 10). The Ḥaḍirs came to be named for encampments of mercenaries - Turcomans, Kurds, Persians, Mamluks, etc. The mercenaries were thus effectively separated from the settled population of the city, foreigners separated from natives, and the peasants separated from city dwellers, but were still integrated into the overall structure economically and militarily. These encampments of mercenaries also served as a defence against enemy attack.

These encampments, in time, turned into living agglomerations and quarters. These later retained the names of the original encampment and/or the mercenaries who occupied them. For example, the Yāruqīyya takes its name from the Mamluk soldiers of Yaruq. The Nāṣirīya and the Zāhīriya, on the other hand, take their name from the rulers who established these encampments, al-Malik al-Nāṣir and al-Malik al-Zāhīr, respectively. 3

In some of the sources we see how these encampments developed, flourished, or were sometimes completely destroyed and deserted usually arising out of political factors. Ibn al-Adim narrates one incident:

Les Yaroûkis et leur commandant Dilderim, prince de Tell-Bâshir, se conduisent d'une manière orgueilleux et maladroite envers al-Malik-ath-Thâhir.... Quand al-Malik-ath-Thâhir devint souverain d'Alep, ils continuèrent à se conduire envers lui d'une façon aussi insensible qu'au paravant. Aussi ce prince fit-il emprisonner leur chef Dilderim dans la citadelle d'Alep et le fit charger de chaînes, el chassa le reste des Yâroûkis d'Alep, confisqua leurs fiefs.... 4

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2 Two rulers bear the Isaqb, or agnomen, 'al-Nāṣir' in the Ayyubid line. One is Şalāh al-Din al-Ayyūbī whose full name was: al-Malik al-Nāṣir Şalāh al-Din Yūsuf Ibn Ayyūb. The second is al-Nāṣir Yūsuf Ibn al-'Azīz Muhammad, otherwise known as Yusuf II and to whom the reference is made in this context. (see earlier Ayyubid geneology table)
Later on, al-Malik al-Zahir ordered the renewal of the Rabi' al-Zahiriyah outside Bab Qinnasrin (that is, between the Bab and the river). The Yarughiyah was destroyed and most of its inhabitants moved to the new Zahiriyah quarter. 1

Other camps that developed into agglomerations later on were the al-Rabiya and Jurar Jaffal. 2 In the case of the encampments, there were clear reasons for locating them outside the city walls. Although mercenary encampments outside the city walls were in the main a defensive measure, such a large concentration of military power was always a threat to the ruling power, especially in the case of mercenaries. Thus, we understand the immediate and forceful destruction of the Yarughiyah quarter, the dispersion of its inhabitants and the imprisonment of their leader by al-Malik al-Zahir.

In addition to the foregoing, by keeping such foreign elements outside the city walls, the citizen's private sphere was safeguarded. 3

It is for very similar reasons that foreign armies of visiting kings were always kept outside the city, namely for security and for reasons of space. The visiting rulers themselves frequently took up residence in palaces outside the city, of which Ibn al-Adim mentions several such instances. Once the sultan, brother of al-Malik al-Zahir, 'Khidr', stayed in the Yarughiyah. 4 Similarly, al-Malik al-Ashraf was also given the Dar of al-Malik al-Zahir in the Yarughiyah. 5 At another time, al-Malik al-Ashraf arrived in Aleppo in the year 620, coming from Egypt, and al-Malik al-'Aziz met him and stayed in his tent south-east of the Maqam [Ibrahim], 6

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1 Ibn Adim, ed. Dahan, Zubdat, p. 166.
2 Sauvaget, Alep: Essai., p. 146, footnote no. 529.
3 Gaube mentions the fact that until very late, foreign merchants had to reside outside the city for the same reason, i.e. the protection of the privacy of citizens. Gaube, Aleppo, p. 69.
4 Ibn Adim, ed. Dahan, Zubdat, p. 170
5 Ibn Adim, ed. Dahan, Zubdat, p. 185.
6 Ibn Adim, ed. Dahan, Zubdat, p. 194.
Palaces. The nobility of the city often owned land outside the city walls and frequently built palaces there. 1 Ibn Shihna mentions palaces already existing during the Abbāsid period. 2 The following is taken from Ibn Adim: "Lorsqu’Abou Moslim revint de Syrie, Al Mансوûr nomme Sâlih, fils de ‘Ali fils de ‘Abd Allâh fils d’Al-‘Abbâs, gouverneur d’Alep,.... Il s’installa à Alep et bâtit en dehors de la ville un palais, appelé Bityâs, près d’an-Nayrab...." 3 After the construction of a palace, the built-up area around the palace frequently increased. Yaqût adds, with reference to the Bityâs palace; "il y avait là un palais, mais village et palais [emphasis mine] sont maintenant ruinés." 4 Further evidence is provided by Ibn al-Shihna when speaking of the Two Palaces (al-Darânt) built outside the Antioch Gate by the Banû Sâlih : "...et il avait construit autour un faubourg...." 5 These palaces, therefore, by causing a small agglomeration to appear, later may have developed into a kind of rabâd and the area subsequently came to be called after the palace which was originally built there. An example of this type of development was the development of al-Sulaymaniya quarter, a quarter SW of the city whose remains indicate (as mentioned earlier) that it already existed in Byzantine times.

Aboû Ahmad al Mowaffaq...construisit en dehors de la ville d’Alep un palais magnifique... c’est de ce palais que tire son nom l’endroit, sis à la porte d’Antioche, appelé 'les Deux Palais' (c’est-à dire ce palais-là et un autre qu’avait construit antérieurement Muhammad fils de ‘Abd al-Malik de Salih).... Un des deux palais, s’appelait as-Solaymaniya, d’où le nom de Ḥâdîr as-Solaymaniyy que est le Ḥâdîr d’Alep.... 6

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1 A tradition still to be found in modern times when the land-owing bourgeoisie would spend some of their time on their country estates (both houses and whole villages) in order to enjoy nature and the pleasure of hunting.
Although Yaqūt says that we cannot know where the quarter got its name ¹ and Gaube attributes the name of the ḫādir to Sulayman, the brother of the Umayyad Caliph al-Walid (715-717 C.E.) ², the most logical explanation does seem to be that the area took its name from the palace that was built there. This palace took its name from the Emir Sulayman, brother of al-Walid. "Un de ces palais avait été bâti au ḫādir par son frère Solaymān fils de ‘Abdal-Malik, lorsqu'il était gouverneur : ....C'est de ce château que tire son nom le ḫādir Solaymān." ³

**Pleasure Grounds.** In addition, to the more formal palaces, there were pleasure grounds that served a variety of purposes. We find less formal country-side houses, pavillons, gardens, small pleasure-palaces and hippodromes. The area around these buildings was frequently used as a hunting ground. Many of these areas were to be found next to the river. Ibn Shihna mentions that the Mirdasīds lived outside the city in palaces. Šayf al-Dawla stayed in al-Ḫalba, west of Aleppo, next to the river, where the air was healthy, the land fertile and there were two hippodromes. ⁴ Ibn al-ʿAjami mentions the zawiya of Sheikh Khıdır on the banks of the Quwayq river. "La zaouila du Cheikh Khider au bord du Qouwayq, au nord d'Alep. Elle avait été fondeé ... comme pavillon de plaisance. Il se trouve aussi un īwan dans lequel des fenêtres sont ménageés vers le Qouwayq et les jardins." ⁵

These extra-muros areas served the general populace as pleasure-grounds as well. Ibn Shihna describes the Bāb al-Maqām area as one of the 'lieux de promenades' and these "sont fréquentés seulement les jours de fêtes et de réjouissances et réunissent

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toute la population, grands et petits... on y fait toutes sortes de tours d'adresse et des cercles s'y forment autour de bateleurs; on y vend toutes sortes de victuailles."  

**Trades and Commerce.** Certain quarters in and outside the city came to be known by the names of the trades that predominated in an area and also by the tradespeople that lived there. These included al-Zajjājīn, or those who supply the straw for the feeding of horses in the sūq al-tibn, and the Qawwāsīn, the weapons makers. The trades that were practiced outside of the city walls were intimately linked to the groups who had already established themselves there, for reasons mentioned earlier.

La formation d'un faubourg à cette date paraît dès l'abord insolite: il existait encore à l'intérieur de l'enceinte assez de place libre pour loger des habitants. Pour s'être ainsi fixés hors-les murs, se privant ainsi de la protection du rempart, les nouveaux venus ont dû obéir à une nécessité pressante, que j'eût mettrais volontiers en rapport avec les besoins de leur profession.  

Further professions and trades grew up to service the various commercial activities which also took place extra-muros. Aleppo was a center for commerce. As a meeting place between sedentary and nomadic populations we find that transactions between these two groups generally took place at the periphery of the city. The exchange between the agricultural areas and the city required markets and sūqs. The sūqs were located in the vicinity of the Bābs, these being the extensions of the main arteries of the city  and the preferred places for the transaction of business.  

Also, foreign merchants were often lodged outside the city walls (see page 13, footnote 4) which explains Ibn Jubair's traveler's account of the extra-muros quarters in which he mentions the "numberless khans..."  

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accommodation of these travelers and their foreign caravans, the storage of their goods and the stabling of animals.

The variety in the development of the rabıds and ḥādirs around Aleppo indicate that there were a number of factors characterizing these areas, particularly the suburban agglomerations. People of the same origin, ethnically and/or linguistically tended to form their own groupings 1, e.g. the Turcomans created an area of Turcoman character, the settled peoples from further east created the 'Mashāriqa' quarter, etc. A confessional division occurred in the Christian northern suburbs whereas economics played the decisive role in grouping people according to crafts and professions. 2

Overall Perspectives

Simply put, in Ayyubid times, the Aleppines lived inside the city walls, a shot away outside the walls lived the arabised Turcomans and further away, the foreigners. 3 The formation of the city was but the reflection of a concept of different zones of privacy, familiarity, safety and integration. The Arab city had clear principles delineating the private, semi-private, and public spheres and this found its expression in everything from the designs and patterns of circulation in houses, to streets and quarters. It is clear that the areas outside the city walls, for a variety of reasons, were not considered part of the city intra-muros on some levels. The division between the two areas, intra-muros and extra-muros, reflects a delimitation of zones in terms of safety and privacy. That explains why, according to the sources, we can gather that the Ḥādirs were economically, socially and politically almost independent entities. In a description of the Ḥācir al-Sulaymāniya by Ibn Shihna this is clearly expressed. "Il n'y

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1 Sauvaget. Alep: Essai., p. 128.
3 Gaube. Aleppo, p. 98.
a là qu’un jami' d’ailleurs beau, où l’on fait la khotba et la prière en communauté. Les Souks sont nombreuses et on y trouve ce que l’on désire. Le Ḥādir a son gouverneur.”

The solidarity of these quarters in Aleppo was re-inforced by certain administrative structures, i.e. military encampments for communal defence, a governor responsible for safety and order within the quarter, and an ʿĀrif al-Rābiya, or special prefect of police. In addition, all facilities for the needs of the inhabitants in a specific quarter were secured, allowing them to function independently. These included a Friday mosque, a school, a public bath, and local markets and suqs.

On other levels, we can see that the extra-muros quarters were an extension of the city. They were the meeting-place between the people of the city and the countryside and provided areas for the people of the city to engage in a variety of leisure activities. Certain quarters even acquired reputations. Ibn al-ʿAjami mentions the quarter outside Bāb al-Nairāb where one could find alcohol and singers. Some quarters were known as pleasant “lieux de promenade” (Bāb al-Maqām mentioned above), or places where feasts and games were held, or where special markets might be found.

There was a military as well as an economic interdependence, as was shown above. The extra-muros quarters were a vital element necessary to the economic health of the city without whose existence the city would not have prospered. We have, therefore, to keep in mind that there was a fluid movement between the two rather than a sharp division.

It is clear from later developments in the history of Aleppo, that this physical division was mainly one seen as necessary at the time for safety and security. During the Ottoman period, the suburbs became part of the city  and we witness that by then

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3 For the conditions necessary for a quarter to be independent, see J. Antoniou. Islamic Cities and Conservation, p. 27.
4 Gaube. Aleppo, p. 95.
5 Gaube. Aleppo, p. 113.
the city walls had lost their original meaning and purpose. Aleppo was then part of a powerful empire and there were no more threats of attacks or razzias, and the walls were no longer important. We saw, also, that the walls served to segregate natives from foreigners, nomads from sedentary city dwellers, and peasants from citizens. In Ottoman times, Aleppo was part of a larger empire and had lost its character as a city-state, and its citizens felt that they belonged first to the Turkish Empire and second, to the city of Aleppo.

Under the Aleppoite the city changed remarkably. Because the city of Aleppo had, by then, become a commercial center. The same areas were, nevertheless, still used for agricultural activities. The southern part of the city was still predominantly residential, with a great number of houses and buildings. Under the Mamluks, the city became a center of Islamic culture, with a significant increase in the number of mosques and madrasas. A study of the name of Aleppo (Fig. 11) and the analysis of the Madrasa al-Mansur shows that the Madrasa al-Mansur was initially located in the eastern part of the city, near the market. The Madrasa al-Mansur was, therefore, an important institution for education and religious studies.

1. The Madrasa, according to Engels, was located in the eastern part of the city. (See also H. Engels, "Die Moscheen der Stadt.
2. The Madrasa al-Mansur was located in the eastern part of the city. (See also H. Engels, "Die Moscheen der Stadt.
3. The Madrasa was located in the eastern part of the city. (See also H. Engels, "Die Moscheen der Stadt.
4. The Madrasa was located in the eastern part of the city. (See also H. Engels, "Die Moscheen der Stadt.
5. The Madrasa was located in the eastern part of the city. (See also H. Engels, "Die Moscheen der Stadt."
THE FIRDAUS QUARTER IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Pre-Ayyubid and Ayyubid (before 1260).

We have already discussed earlier the first instances of extra-muros developments. Beginning in Byzantine times (see fig. 9 and fig. 10), the establishment of military encampments and the building of palaces and pavilions, give us a general picture of smaller and scattered agglomerations.

Under the Ayyubids the ḥādīrs flourished tremendously because the city of Aleppo had, by then, become a rich center for commerce. The extra-muros areas witnessed a great expansion and extensive building projects took place there. The existence of these huge madrasas outside the walls is proof of the immensely populated areas at the time. Ibn Shaddād mentions that the number of hammāms was still not sufficient for all the people at the time he left Aleppo in 1259. 2

A study of the maps of Aleppo (see fig. 11) and the sources all show that the Madrasa al-Firdaus was actually at the border of the Žāhiriya quarter. There was, therefore, no real self-sufficient agglomeration created immediately around the Madrasa. 3 Although we cannot say that the Madrasa al-Firdaus and its immediate

1 Ibn Shihna, according to Sauvaget, lists the following ‘oratoires’, (actually ‘masjīd’ in Arabic):
110 dans le hādīr Solaymān,
168 dans ar-Rābuja et Jūrāt Jaffāl,
99 dans az-Zāhiriya,
34 dans ar-Ramādā...
13 dans Banqūṣa,
12 dans al-Hazzāz
31 en dehors de la Porte d’Antioche.
16 dans al-Moudīq.

Ibn al-Shihna, trans Sauvaget. Perles Choisis. pp. 97


3 The few houses that exist at present (see figs. 80 A and 20) were built at a much later period, probably in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. They may have been attached to the building to house the caretaker of the mosque and his extended family.
vicinity were an independent and self-sufficient quarter, we can say that al-Firdaus and the gardens around it could be considered a rabđ of the city in the sense defined earlier as being an empty area connected to the city proper. (See figs. 6, 34, 35, and 80 C relative to the pistachio plantations surrounding it)

Although the Firdaus quarter is somewhat isolated (ideal for the meditation and concentration of the students in the madrasas) it is, nonetheless at a walking distance from all the necessary facilities of the Žahirîya quarter. (see fig. 11) These included a sâq just outside Bāb al-Maqām and numerous hammams.¹

Under al-Žahir al-Ghâzî’s rule, as was mentioned earlier, the Žahirîya quarter was renewed and increased greatly in the number of inhabitants and correspondingly in importance. In fact, it became the second most important hâdîr after al-Sulaymaniya, especially after some of the other areas decreased (viz. the destruction of the Yâruqîya quarter). The Žahirîya is the heart of the Maqâmât area (see fig. 11) and a reflection of the importance gained by the quarter during this period is indicated by the number of major monuments built in and near the quarter. These included al-Madrasa al-Žahirîya, al-Madrasa al-Firdaus, al-Madrasa al-Kâmiliya, and other minor madrasa-mausolea mentioned in the sources.² The special importance of the Žahirîya and Maqâmât area is also seen in the fact that water was brought outside Bāb al-Maqām, near the Madrasa al-Jamâliya (located in the Firdaus area).³ (See fig. 75.)

Ayyubid (post 1260)

By the time Ibn Shaddâd returned to Aleppo, however, he says that the total number of hammâms in Aleppo was not even 10 for the whole city! Most of the rest

¹ Ibn Shaddad mentions eleven. Ibn Shaddâd, Al-A’laq, p. 155.
² Ibn Shihna lists the numbers of mosques in the various quarters: among others, 110 in the Sulaymaniyc and 99 in the Žahirîya. Ibn al-Shihna, trans Sauvaget. Perles Choisits, p. 97. Ibn Shaddad lists the number of mosques in the Sulaymaniyc and Žahirîya at 171 and 100, respectively and the number of hammâms at 22 and 11 respectively. Ibn Shaddâd. Al-A’laq, pp. 70-81 and 134-138.
³ Ibn al-Shihna. trans Sauvaget. Perles Choisits, p. 160. Also see fig. 29 which shows examples of old houses probably dating back to the Middle Ages. Note the level of the street. Possibly these were houses in the Žahirîya quarter. Compare with fig. 28 of Bāb Qinnasrin.
seemed to have fallen into ruin.¹ This was a direct result of the Mongol invasion of 1260 which caused destruction inside and outside the city. Ibn Shaddād adds, in Sauvaget's translation of Ibn Shihna: "Depuis ce temps on a relevé beaucoup de ces établissements de bains, mais beaucoup sont restés délabrés. On en construit ensuite un grand nombre, tant à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur de l'enceinte."²

**Mamluk**

The city started to recover after the Mongol destruction when another calamity befell it: the plague of 1348. Still reeling and attempting to consolidate itself by the late fourteenth century, it was then given a devastating blow by Timūr in 1400 who plundered and destroyed much of the city.³

The extra-muros quarters had almost totally disappeared after the thirteenth century, naturally, because of their vulnerability in any attack on the city. This vulnerability was further enhanced by the fact that most of the extra-muros buildings were mud constructions and disintegrated very quickly.⁴ The limited availability of flowing sources of water outside the city and the dependence on cisterns, led in times of epidemics, to a rapid spread of disease. More significantly, these areas suffered because of Aleppo's diminishing importance as a center of commerce between the 13th and 15th centuries.⁵

During this time there was also a significant shift in the extra-muros quarters as a whole. The South-west area, the Sulaymaniye and Rabiya, and the southern area in general lost their pre-eminent positions and there was a major shift to the North of the city and somewhat to the East.⁶ (See figs. 12-13.)

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³ Gaube. Aleppo. p. 103.
⁴ Gaube. Aleppo. p. 103.
⁵ Gaube. Aleppo. p. 103.
Ottoman.

The suburbs were integrated into the city and the city did not expand much further (Ottoman monuments tend to be the farthest out).

Commercial activities reached their peak in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when Aleppo was the third most important city in the Ottoman Empire after Istanbul and Cairo. It was during this period that the city grew beyond the old city walls and new suburbs were attached to it, such as Jdeidé on the north and Banqousa on the east. ¹

Also, the Maqâmat area lost much of its significance because most of the burial areas were moved to the north ², except the Firdaus cemetery area which stills remains one of the largest in Aleppo. (See figs. 7 and 19.)

Modern.

Until 1930, the southern suburbs, and Firdaus in particular, seem to have stagnated³ and it has never really regained its importance up to the present day, (see figs. 6, 14-17). Recently, the southern area was relegated to the poor and to industry (see figs. 8 and 18). "On retrouve des activités artisanales et industrielles, rarement modernisées dans les anciens faubourgs." ⁴ Thus, the modern image of these suburbs is of a poor, traditional neighbourhood where the people keep their 'aşabiya. ⁵ The extended family all tend to live together, or next to each other, forming an 'ashîra. The

² Bianca. _Conservation_. p. 113.
³ The number of inhabitants in 1926 gives us a clue to the impoverishment and ruin of the area: 42 Males and 50 Females! taken from Kâmil bin Husain bin Muhammad al-Bâli al-Ḥalabi al-Ġazzi. Kitāb Nahr al-Dhabab fi tarikh Halab, Aleppo: Maroûnî, n.d.
⁵ Hayr al-Din Asadi. _Abîya Halâb wa aswâqhâ_. edited by A.F. Rawas Qalhaji. (Damascus: Wizarat al-Thaqâfa, 1984), p. 52. (Hereafter Asadi. _Abîya_.)
areas nowadays also suffer from a bad reputation, as it is claimed that the population consists mainly of smugglers. Hamidé is more graphic in his description:

Ailleurs et, au sud-est en particulier, ce furent les égoûts qui, coulant à ciel ouvert, arrêtèrent l'expansion de la ville dans cette direction, mais il faut ajouter qu'ici, l'existence d'une foule misérable et de ruraux, d'une humeur batailleuse, rendit leur voisinage désagréable. ¹

The state has tried to create new development projects, planned since 1927 (see fig. 20). Most have been executed, e.g. a school opposite Madrasa al-Firdaus, (see fig. 21) as well as a whole area with housing, new roads, and facilities and services. But the area is still poor. The houses are mainly low-income, probably because the area was regarded as undesirable in the first place and was, therefore, cheaper. The area around the Madrasa al-Firdaus is still to a large extent burial grounds.

Although many of them have been widened, the roads have become secondary in importance in the new system of large main roads in these areas. The main road that used to go to Firdaus from Bāb al-Maqām has ceded its position of importance to the road which enters the old city through Bāb al-Paraj and traffic connecting the southern areas to the main highway to Damascus now passes by the Kāmilīya quarter, (see figs. 8,17,and 18).

¹ Hamidé. Alep, p. 71.
THE RELATIONS OF FIRDAUS TO THE CITY PROPER

Until the time of the Hamdanids, the Princes of Aleppo lived in palaces outside the city. Šayf al-Daula lived in al-Halba, west of Aleppo. He preferred to live there because the air was healthy, the land fertile, it was next to the river, and it offered the distraction of two hippodromes. He lived there until Nicephorus besieged Aleppo in 351/962-3 and destroyed his palace. After this destruction, Šayf al-Daula decided to fortify the citadel. Part of it was begun by Šayf al-Daula and continued under his son, Sa’ad al-Daula, who then chose it for his royal residence.

The Mirdasid princes who succeeded Sa’ad al-Daula, also chose the citadel as their residence, an example which was followed by all their successors. When he came to power, Nūr al-Din installed even a hippodrome inside the citadel, a highly unusual innovation since they were usually put outside the city gates. This unusual construction only serves to illustrate that the citadel became almost an independent entity, a veritable city within a city. It fulfilled a double role: it was the actual center of power and the residence of the ruler, "un symbole du pouvoir et centre administratif."

In order to put various elements that make up the Ayyubid city of Aleppo in some kind of perspective, we need to examine, among other things, the relationship that these elements had with the citadel in its double role as administrative and symbolic center of power.

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3. Ibn al-Shihna, trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisis, p. 41. There seems to be some confusion in Ibn al-Shihna. He first states that Šayf al-Dawla's son first chose to reside in the citadel. Then, on page 55, he states, in Sauvaget's translation, that the princes occupied palaces outside the city until the Mirdasids "qui furent les premiers à s'installer dans la citadelle pour y résider."
TABLE II  

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ḤAMDĀNID AND MIRDĀSID DYNASTIES IN ALEppo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>333 / 944</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sayf al-Daula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351 / 962-3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Siege of Aleppo by Nicephorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>367 / 977</td>
<td></td>
<td>Saʿad al-Daula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 381 / 991 to 392 / 1002</td>
<td></td>
<td>Saʿid al-Daula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from 394 / 1003-4 to 406 / 1015</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aleppo under Fatimid rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>406 / 1015</td>
<td></td>
<td>Saʿlih ibn Mirdās, founder of Mirdāsid Dynasty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bāb al-Maqām

The Bāb al-Maqām is a pivotal point in the movement that occurs both to and from the citadel, as well as in movements outside the city. The most important road involving movements outside the city was the road which led to the main Damascus road, which passed by Ḥoms. In Russell’s plan of Aleppo in his Natural History of Aleppo, the Bāb al-Maqām is marked as the "Damascus Gate" 2  Al-Muqaddasi mentions it as 'Bāb Hims', and was included among the seven other gates of Aleppo. 3 It must, therefore, be viewed from the following aspects.

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3 LeStrange. Palestine, p. 361.
The Hajj. This same road was used for the Hajj procession each year. According to an old sheikh in a zawya at Bāb al-Maqām, the Ṽittiradāt, or parade, for the Hajj went through this gate until about thirty to forty years ago. The parade would start from the maydān under the citadel, proceed down the street to Bāb al-Maqām, and once outside the gate, would move south in the direction of Jisr al-Hajj.  

Before proceeding in our analysis of the road that led to Jisr al-Hajj, it is necessary to add here that after the seventeenth-century Aleppo experienced an economic decline and there was a stagnation in urban growth. This meant that the original layout of the city, particularly in the southern part of the city which concerns us, remained almost untouched until about 1930. 2 A close study of the map of Aleppo in the early part of this century can therefore provide a good idea of the medieval road network. (see figs. 16, 17 and 22). The maps and the photograph make it possible for us to recreate the area and the road which went from Jisr al-Hajj to Bāb al-Maqām. This road turns out to be the road which passes by the Madrasa al-Zāhirīya, the Madrasa al-Kāmilīya and the Madrasa al-Firdaus.

Why were they placed next to this road? Two main reasons come to mind. They were placed there as symbols of power, visible to everyone passing to and from the city. They were on the road which was used by visiting kings and princes (see later discussion of royal processions) and were intended to reflect the wealth and power of their founders. Being on the road which was used by the Hajj procession, the most significant religious procession of the year, their founders secured the blessings, baraka, and invocations of the passing pilgrims.

A further look at the maps shows us that Jisr al-Hajj was the place where the main road from Damascus ended. From the Jisr there were two main roads leading into

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1 We investigated further in the area of Jisr al-Hajj. An old woman who had lived in the mill on the river Quwaiq, (in fact, she was the miller’s daughter), next to what used to be the Jisr, or bridge, informed me that the Jisr al-Hajj had been the meeting place for all the pilgrims coming from the surrounding countryside, before they started on their ḥajj journey. Today there is nothing left of the bridge, nor of the mill, and the river only barely flows in an area which is now mainly small swamps, (see figs. 6, 16, 17).

the city. One going from the Jisr to Bāb Antakia, which was the beginning of the main qasaba and commercial artery of the city. The other road, as we noted, went from Jisr al-Ḥajj to Bāb al-Maqaṣm, (see fig. 17) We may assume, therefore, that the road which led to Bāb Antakia, was probably used by the merchants, transporting goods, and who were mainly interested in the business and commerce which this road promised. The other road seems to have been more of an official and ceremonial way, which was more representative of the power of the ruler. It led to Bāb al-Maqaṣm, and from there, to the citadel, seat of power and the administration of the city.

The architecture of Bāb al-Maqaṣm bears out this theory. The sources frequently mention official processions that were quite large. In order to accommodate them and the accompanying crowds, the gate had to be large enough. It is the only Bāb with a "passage droit" ¹, (see fig. 23), and, Sauvaget adds, "qui se soit conservée intégralement."² A look at the original sources confirms this observation. Ibn Shaddād lists all the gates of Aleppo. All the gates, with the exception of Bāb al-Saghīr al-Awal and Bāb al-ʿAdl, have a number of dargās, or turns, which prevent direct movement through the gate. And even the two exceptions, as reconstructed by Sauvaget (see figs. 25 and 27) are also provided with a buffer area and therefore cannot count as straight passages as Bāb al-Maqaṣm does. Bāb al-ʿAdl went directly into Dar al-ʿAdl. These latter were the private bābs of the king and were reserved for his use.³

Bāb al-Maqaṣm fulfilled special ceremonial functions and its very form, unique in Aleppo, reminds one of a triumphal arch (see fig. 23).⁴ It was a reflection of the power and glory of the king and was created for public ceremonies. (This is in contrast

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¹ Sauvaget. Inventaire, p. 70, no. 6.  
² Sauvaget. Inventaire, p. 70, no. 6.  
⁴ The middle bay was decreased in height, (see fig. 23b), and the two side-doors were later walled-in, probably in Mamlūk times, when the Bāb was rebuilt by Barsbay in the fifteenth century. This was done for reasons of safety; the initial meaning and symbolism of the Bāb having been lost by that time. Sauvaget. Inventaire, p. 70 and Herzfeld. MCL, p. 68-69.
to the two private gates already mentioned). The door itself was very wide, with the central opening measuring four meters.\(^1\) The Bāb was planned to accommodate the movement of larger numbers of people and riders in medieval times.\(^2\)

**Ziyārā (or visiting).** Earlier we mentioned the significance of the Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, for the city of Aleppo. There was a road that led straight ahead from Bāb al-Maqām to the Maqām of Sayyidina Ibrāhīm, it being the only monument at the end of that road. (See figs. 7 and 8). Although we have no detailed description of the festivities which took place for the Prophet Abraham, an account of Ibn Shihna’s describing the visits to a mashhad in the village of Ruhin on the day of the mīlīd, can give us an idea of the size and importance of these festivities. He says that on the ‘Yawm al-Ruz’, or the Day of Rice (being equivalent to the ‘Khamis al-‘Ad’s, or Thursday of Lentils, in Egypt) people from all parts of Aleppo, from Homs, Harrāf and Bālas, would travel to this mashhad, (to the point where he says that these cities would be emptied of their inhabitants!), and participate in great festivities which competed in size with those of the people of Mecca at the time of the Ḥajj.\(^3\)

On feast days the Malik, accompanied by his court, and a large proportion of the city of Aleppo, probably proceeded to the Bāb al-Maqām, and continued to make a visit to the ‘patron-prophet’ of the city, in order to receive his baraka and blessing. The Bāb al-Maqām itself became the venue for all kinds of games and distractions, and the whole population, big and small, participated in the festivities.\(^4\)

**The Citadel.** That Bāb al-Maqām was used for these ceremonial purposes, is quite clear when we examine the roads intra-muros. There is a main artery, mentioned in the sources, which ran from Bāb al-Maqām to a large maydān, or open area, just under the citadel, (see figs. 31-33) This main artery was called al-Tariq al-Ā‘dham, or the Great Road. Every medieval Islamic city had its Tariq al-Ā‘dham, which was

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\(^1\) An old sheikh at the mosque of the Bāb informed me that in the early part of the century, the bus could only enter the city through that opening in order to go to the citadel. (See fig. 24).

\(^2\) It probably also provided a rapid and easy access to the citadel for the mercenaries lodged extra-muros, should the need arise.

\(^3\) Ibn Shaddād. Al-A‘laq, p.56.

usually many times wider than its other streets. 1 In Sauvaget's translation of Ibn al-Shihna, he says: "La mosquée de l’Eunnuque al-Ṭawāshi, située dans la grande Rue à la gauche de celui que entre à Alep par la porte du maqām." 2

It is worth noting here that it is only the earliest sources, i.e. those sources whose roots go back to the thirteenth century, that indicate the importance of this road in the Ayyubid period. (In the case of Ibn Shihna we have a source which is a compilation of different authors, including Ibn Shaddād (thirteenth century), and the ancestors of the compiler, Muḥammed Ibn Muḥammad, also called Maḥmūd Ibn al-Khitāū, and his grandfather Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Shihna.) 3 By the fifteenth century, the authors reflect the shift in concerns and importance of the various other parts of the city. Thus, Ibn al-Ajamī (writing in 818 / 1415) does not even consider it as being significant and writes simply, in Sauvaget's translation, "la rue de la Porte du Maqām". 4 Instead, he is more concerned with commerce and economics, and those parts of the city which were flourishing in Aleppo in the fifteenth century. 5

Gaube shows, in his analysis of the street patterns of Aleppo in relation to the medieval city walls, that the Tariq al-ʿĀdham, is one of three major street patterns of Aleppo and that it was the main axis of the city. 6 There are several crucial observations to be made here. The angle of inclination of the Tariq al-ʿĀdham is the same as that of the citadel entrance bridge. Because of its importance, this road affected the street

1 Shāmī, A.A.M. "Geografiya al-Mudun 'ind al-'Arab." ʿĀlam al-Fikr. Kuwait, pp. 123-161. p. 142. Another example of this type of street is the Shāriʿ al-ʿĀham in Cairo that runs between Bāb Zuwilila and Bāb al-Futūḥ, which was the main street of the city. It was also called 'Shari' al-Qāhira', and 'al-Qasāba', and is now known as 'Shari' Muʾizz al-Dīn Illī-lāh. Mohammed K. Mohammed. Asmāʿ was musammiyat miʾn Tarikh Masr al-Qāhira. Cairo: Hayʾat al-Masriya al-ʿAmma il-ʿAlī al-Kītb, 1986. p. 322.
5 Ibn al-Ajamī's focuses his attention on 1) the qasaba (la grande rue marchande de la Porte des Jardin) [p145], 2) "La Sowayaqa de ‘Ali: nom qui donnent à ce quartier les anciens historiens." [p. 151], 3) the great street of Bānqūṣa, i.e. the souk al-Kalāwī [157], and 4) and the street of Bāb Qinnāṣin, which is the main souk of the city until today [p159]. All of these streets are main business centers.
pattern of the whole eastern part of the city before it was part of the fortified city. Thus the streets in these quarters were frequently parallel and at the same angle of inclination as the main road, another indication of its importance. This eastern part, subsequent to its expansion, then became integrated into the city itself and fortification walls were built around it. (See figs. 10-12, 25 and 30).

It was al-Zahir al-Ghazi who ordered the building of three Babbs. One of these was the Bab al-Maqqam, the other two being Bab Dar al-'Adl and Bab al-Saghir, (see figs. 25-26). The doors of the gate for Bab al-Maqqam were finally completed under the reign of al-Malik al-'Aziz Muhammad.

The Processions. We have stated that the Tariq al-'Aham and the structure of Bab al-Maqqam were the result of the necessity or desirability of creating a processional or ceremonial way between the citadel and the most significant ceremonial areas extra-muros. This is borne out in the descriptions of a variety of processions culled from the sources.

For the day of the mawkab, a twice-weekly procession by the governor when he holds public audience, we find the following in Ibn Shihna:

Entré en fonctions, le gouverneur se dirige à cheval, le lundi et le jeudi de chaque semaine vers la coupole d'al Maridâni; il est alors coiffé de la kalafa et vêtu du qabâ. Les commandants, les fonctionnaires turcs, la garnison l'accompagnent; les jâwchiya le précédent en chantant. A son retour, il s'arrête devant la Citadelle, sans mettre pied à terre, et procède à la distribution des chevaux et des terres.... Les escadrons des émirs le précédent alors jusqu'à la porte du palais de Justice: le cortège en est très long, car les émirs commandants, au nombre de huit possèdent chacun, pour l'ordinaire, une centaine de mamelouks ¹.... Lorsque le gouverneur est arrivé devant le Palais de Justice, les mamelouks royaux qui lui rendent les honneurs en mettant pied à terre, se tiennent en rang jusqu'à ce qu'il les ait salués. Le gouverneur franchit la porte. Le grand-chambellan, son baton à la

¹ Note the large number!
main s'avance et l'escorte jusque près de l'iwan 1 sous lequel il doit siéger....2

We may note here that this is only a procession for the governor of Aleppo. We can well imagine the size and splendour of the processions which involved the sovereign, or visiting royalty. That there certainly were such procession is indicated Ibn 'Adim, where, in the year 623 "Mohyf-ad-Dîn...arriva à Alep avec un vêtement d'honneur, envoyé à al-Malik al-'Aziz,... le sultan al-Malik al-'Aziz revêtit ce vêtement d'honneur et monta à cheval pour faire la parade." 3

That the processions frequently proceeded in large numbers at quite a distance extra-muros is shown by Ibn Shihna in the case of the arrival of the governor of Aleppo.

Lorsque le gouverneur arrive à Alep, l'équité exige que les cadis et les commandants se portent à son rencontre jusqu'au Khan de Toûmân, tandis que les moubâchirs, la plupart du temps, vont le chercher à Hama. Il descend à Ayn Moubâraka, et le lendemain matin il en repart à cheval, revêtu de son uniforme de cérémonie. Les cadis, toute la garnison, les fonctionnaires, les cheykhs des différents confréries et les représentants des divers quartiers accourent en foule pour le recevoir....4

According to Popper, Ain Moubâraka is 5 miles south of the city (see fig. 31). 5 As for Khân Tûmân, it is located between Kinnasrin and Aleppo, on the Damascus-Aleppo road, at what must be a distance of about 15 km south of Aleppo. 6

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1 Note the iwân as seat of honour and place of the majîls. See the later discussion of the function of iwân.
6 This can be deduced from the fact Sauvaget mentions that there are no way-stations, or 'étapes', mentioned in the lists between Kinnasrin and Aleppo. The distance between the two localities is about 30 km, further than any other relay distance on the whole road. J. Sauvaget. La Poste aux chevaux dans
The Madrasas. That the Madrasas al-Zāhiriyah, al-Kāmiliyah and al-Firdaws should be located near the road that led to Damascus seems quite logical. For their founders, they must have formed an important part of the official (and private) lives even during their lifetime. Al-Malik al-Zāhir al-Ghāzi attended the opening of his madrasa: "Le Sultan al-Malik az-Zāhir assista à sa leçon inaugurale et fit une grande réception à laquelle assistèrent les juristes." 1 That these monuments should be the object of admiration, and reflect the piety of their founders, for those who used the most ceremonials of roads in Aleppo in Ayyubid times, must have been a major consideration for their construction there, as well as the ease of access which the existing intra-muros and extra-muros roads provided. 2

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2. It is interesting to note that on the map from the municipality (see fig. 77), the road that leads from Bāb al-Maqām to Jīsr al-Ḥujj is called Shart'a al-Malik Ya'kūb Khattān. I tend to think that this is a modern naming, similar to the naming of the midān under the citadel as Sābat al-Malik al-Zāhir. In the sources both the midān, an important center of the city, and the road network extra-muros were not named as such. Other traditional names of streets or quarters were retained until the present day, therefore it seems to me that in the case of the road leading past the madrasas, we get a new name because the road lost its original importance as major artery of access to the road to Damascus. Probably it used to be called by a more functional name like Tarīq Dimashq or Tarīq Hamah. With the elimination of this function, the next logical thing to do would be to name it after one of the major monuments which is located on it.
MADRASA AL-FIRDAUS - ANALYSIS OF FUNCTIONS

The Madrasa al-Firdaus was a private foundation instituted by al-Malika Dayfa Khatun. 1 The foundation inscription is dated 639 / 1236, just before Dayfa Khatun became the actual ruler of Aleppo. It is likely that she also founded the Khanqa al-Farafra, but as a royal foundation during her reign (see Appendix A, p. 109-111).

As a royal foundation it drew its funds from the royal treasury, 2 whereas al-Firdaus was funded from her personal resources. These funds were drawn from a waqf which she established for the madrasa and which consisted of the income of the village of Kafr Zayta and two-thirds of the income from a mill. 3

From the sources we can gather that the madrasa, as founded by the queen, was intended to fulfil a variety of functions. 4 This is clearly seen in the people she appointed: Qur'an reciters, fuqaha' or jurists, and members of Sufi orders. Although not clearly separated, we can say that these people fulfilled tasks related to the religious functions of al-Madrasa al-Firdaus in the following way: the Qur'an reciters were attached to the 'Tuba or Mausoleum, the fuqaha' probably taught fiqh, sharia' and

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1 We know from al-Qalqashandi that the Khatun (plural: Khawatin) was originally a title of a highly paid government position, as well as later a lâqab, or honorific, for women, as, for example, the Sayyidat al-Khawatin fi al-'Alamin. The Khatun held great power and could even order an execution without direct approval from the Ilqan or the Amir al-Ajis. Ahmad ibn 'Ali Al-Qalqashandi. al-Subh al A'sha, 14 vols. Aleppo, n.d. p. 505, vol. 5. and pp. 425-426, vol. 4, respectively.

2 An example of this kind of financial allocation is found in Sauvaget: "...et fondé de pouvoir du Trésor (puisse-t-il demeurer prospère!) du susdit al-Malik az-Zahir pour ce concerne le wakf de la zaouia du cheikh pieux, craignant Dieu, ...de la confrérie Ahmediyye, surnommé 'le cheikh Yabraq', pour acquérir sur les fonds du Trésor...les immeubles qu'il lui plairait, les estimer et les constituer wakf au profit de la zaouia susdite, en vertu d'un acte revêtu de la signature auguste de Sa Majesté." Sauvaget. Alep: Essai, p. 260-261.


4 "...Le Paradis (al-Firdaus), fondé par la princesse, la reine Dayfa-Khatoùn, fille d'al Malik al-'Adil Abou Bakr. Cette madrasa est très importante et très grande: la fondatrice en fit un mausolée, une madrasa et un ribât, et elle y attacha une foule de récitateurs du Coran, de juristes, et de soufis..." Ibn al-Shihna. trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisis, pp. 117. Other similar references include: Ibn 'Ajami. trans. Sauvaget. Trésors d'Or, p. 79., Ibn Shihna, Al-Durr, p. 113, Ibn Shaddad. Al-A'laq, p. 108., Ibn al-Adim. trans. Blochet. Histoire, p. 235. There are two major inaccuracies in translation in this last reference. Blochet twice translates al-ra'hima, in reference to the queen, as 'défunte' although the Queen was still alive at the time. Also, he translates ribât as 'caravanserail', a term completely inappropriate in this context, as our discussion on the ribât will show.
ḥadith in the Madrasa and Dar al-Ḥadith, and the Sufis were attached to the Ribāt or Khanqā. (For a complete listing of the inscriptions of the Madrasa al-Firdaus, see Appendix B, p. 112-118)

Mausoleum

The mausoleum in the Firdaus was intended, as in most of these cases, for the queen herself, particularly in the case of her death outside the city walls. It also may have been intended as family sepulchre, and indeed her brother al-Malik al-Ḥāfiz Nūr al-Din Arslān-Shāh, son of al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, who died at ʿAzāz in 639 Dhu-l Ḥijja / June 1242, is buried there.

The placement and structure of mausolea, including that of al-Firdaus, followed certain general rules in the Ayyubid period. The mausoleum had to be placed, first of all, on a high, and clean place, far from any swamps, dirty water or waste disposal. In addition, it should be located in a holy place, this condition being met in the case of al-Firdaus by its presence in the Maqamāt area, near the Maqām of Abraham. Another general architectural rule was the presence of a mihrāb in the mausoleum. In the Firdaus this may be the simple square niche in the wall to indicate the Qibla direction (see fig. 36b).

Besides the rules for placement, mausolea were always attached to a madrasa in Aleppo. This kept the tomb under the constant effect or influence of religious activity and, in particular, Qurʾān reading, whose benefits are mentioned in a prophetic tradition: "Recitation of the Qurʾān is one of the acts of worship whose reward reaches

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1 See earlier discussion of this practice, p. 10.
3 These general rules are taken from Abu Najm. Al-Turba, pp.
5 In Damascus, people are frequently buried on or near Jebel Qasyūn, or near some saint or member of the family of the Prophet, peace be upon them all.
6 They only begin to be built separately from the madrasa in Mamluk times. Najm. Turba, p. 279.
the dead person. "There is a reward for both the living and the dead." 1 Thus, we find that, in most instances, founders allotted a waqf for Qur'ān readers in the Turba. That the founders were strongly aware of this great benefit, is shown in an inscription at the Madrasa al-Šultāniya of al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzī, in Sauvaget’s translation, in which the soul receives "de la récompense due à l'enseignement et à l'étude des sciences islamiques, et de la bénéédiction qui s'attache à la récitation du Coran." 2 Founders even went to the point of specifying the qualifications of Qur'ān reciters. It is mentioned in Ibn Ajami that a reciter at the tomb of Muḥammad ibn Qara-Songor was subject to some criticism because "il ne possédait pas les sept manières de lire le texte, contrairement à ce qu'exigeaient les conditions fixées par le fondateur." 3

As a rule, the mausoleum was intended to attract as much invocation and prayer as possible. This was achieved in several ways. One way of making sure that visitors would constantly come to the madrasa and mausoleum, would be to have a great saint buried there. His presence would both sanctify the place itself and would encourage ziyārā, or the visiting of the tombs. This also provided an added guarantee for the continued existence and maintenance of the tomb, even if the waqf should be lost. One of the mausolea attached to the madrasa is a mashhad of Sayyidina ‘Ali, karam Allāhu wajhu, (see fig. 38, Mausoleum A for location). A silk cover in situ until 1892 bore an inscription attributing the transport of his body from Najaf in Iraq in 317 to Aleppo by Ṣayf al-Dawla. Herzfeld, of course, disproves this quite clearly as a historical fiction 4, but that is not the point. The burial place of Sayyidina ‘Ali was never known in the first place, and if Ṣayf al-Dawla had really found the body and moved it, this would have been a major historical event, and would have appeared in the sources. It doesn’t. We can assume that this mausoleum is a mashhad in the similar sense as another mashhad of Sayyidina ‘Ali’s in Aleppo: "...le machhad connu sous le

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4 Herzfeld. MCL, p.300.
nom d'Ali fils d'Aboû Tâlib, sur la rive ouest du Qouwayq. On dit qu'il fût construit par un fils d'al-‘Olayqî, à cause d’un songe que l’avait visité.”

Thus, the silk cover and its inscription may be a historical fiction but the mashhad is not. This mashhad probably attracted, and still attracts, many visitors.

Increased blessings and increased invocation and prayer were probably also the reasons why the Madrasa al-Firdaus was located in the cemetery area near a main road. Muslims are always encouraged to read the Fatiha, or Opening Sura of the Qur‘ân, when passing by any tomb or cemetery, and it is said the dead feel pleasure upon hearing this reading and the living acquire merit. Within the Madrasa itself, the position of the tomb chamber was also oriented in such a way as to attract the greatest possible baraka, that is, it was in the general direction of the qibla, and close to any Qur‘ân reading that might take place during the devotions.

Certainly, the desire to provide the tomb with maximum opportunity to attract pious invocation was a major religious concern. In the cemeteries the tomb chamber was placed at the qibla side of the complex, whereas in the city it was placed always on the street side.

There are two other major saints buried in al-Firdaus. One is a Naqshbandi Sheikh buried in the mausoleum next to the mashhad of Sayyida ‘Ali (see fig. 40, Mausoleum A for location). The other is said to be the maqâm of Sayyidi Ahmad al-Bukhâri (see fig. 40 Mausoleum B for location), along with his wife, children and servant, (see fig. 36). However, in this case, I think a classic transposition in names has occurred. First of all, it is well known that Ahmad al-Bukhâri, the great muhaddith who wrote one of the seven canonical collections of hadith, is buried in Bukhara. Therefore, if this was a mashhad in the sense described earlier, where we have no body, then why would his wife, children, and servant have tombs there? If we go back

to the sources, we find that the first Sheikh who taught in the madrasa was Shams al-Din Ahmad ibn al-Zubayr al-Khābūri 1. Given the transposition in colloquial, as well as classical, Arabic between sounds such as these 2 and the fact that this Sheikh probably lived in the madrasa with his wife, children and servant, this seems to be the more likely person to have been buried there.

These tombs are still the objects of pious visits until today and while I was at the madrasa, a number of travelling Iranian pilgrims came to pay their respects and pray at the mashshad of Sayyidina ‘Ali.

**Madrasa**

**Function and purpose.** According to recent extensive research by H. Halm, it seems that we cannot pinpoint one specific building type for a madrasa before the eleventh century. 3 Instruction was simply given wherever possible. Under Nizam al-Mulk, at the end of the eleventh century, madrasas became institutionalized state foundations. None of these earliest madrasas have, however, been preserved.

The formal school, or madrasa, is the institutionalization of what was originally a traditional arrangement, whereby students collected around one learned man and lived with him in order to acquire the knowledge which he had to impart. This formal institution became a means of acquiring religious merit and was considered to be a pious deed. One of the many prophetic traditions mentioning the merits of pious deeds of this nature, in Sauvaget's translation, says: "Quand un homme meurt, son œuvre n'est préservée de la caducité que par trois choses: une œuvre pieuse qui dure, une science que profite à autrui, ou un fils vertueux qui prie pour lui." 4 Thus, Ibn Ajami, in

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2 A classic example of this type is zawaja and jawaza both having the same meaning but the consonants have been transposed.
3 Gaube. Aleppo, p. 150.
Sauvaget's translation, states even more strongly: "Quant à la construction d'une madrasa, c'est l'un des plus insignes actes de soumission à Dieu." 1

In addition to the religious merit that was sought, madrasas in Syria were probably introduced by Nūr al-Dīn as a political tool to combat Shi'ism. 2 They were also seen as another element in a general attempt at religious reform. Thus, in reviving the jihād against the Shi'a, and preserving the bulwark of popular piety by restoring mashhāds and maqāms, as well as building and repairing mosques, Nūr al-Dīn also deliberately sought to improve the image of his personal piety. Institutionalization of the madrasa meant a direct control and involvement of the ruler and his government in religious affairs. The Ayyūbid madrasa was a maturer development of this initial Nurid innovation. The functions of the madrasa haç, therefore, by this time, been well-established. 3 Strictly speaking, Firdaus is a funerary madrasa because it is combined with a mausoleum. Tabbā'a also indicates that there was more than just pious intent in the building of such madrasas. He seems to think that political motivation was more important, and says "the funerary madrasa served to reinforce the connection between the ruling dynasty and 'ulamā', and to insure their loyalty." 4

The madrasas of those times were, among other things, "mosque schools, theological seminaries to inculcate and propagate [Sunni] orthodoxy." 5 The applied sciences (Math, Medicine, Chemistry, etc.) were not taught there; their teaching was reserved for the Maristān, or hospital. 6 The madrasas were legal schools where Islamic law was taught by appointed fuqahā', or jurisconsults 7, and theology was taught by

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2 There is an account in Ibn Shihna of the Zajajiya, which according to Creswell was the first Sunni attempt at building a madrasa in Aleppo (516/1222-3), in which it is mentioned that everything which was built during the day was destroyed at night by the Shi'ites.
7 Gaube. Aleppo. p. 150.
ulamā', or theologians, and muhaddiths, or traditionists, and other specialists taught muʿāẓ and qussās, or popular sermonizing. ¹

**Waqf.**

The basic principles of the waqf are well-known: a pious intention expressed in an endowment for religious or charitable purposes or for social work; the perpetuity and inalienability of funds incorporated into the waqf, only the income being assigned to the pious deeds (the final beneficiaries of the foundation); the existence of two kinds of waqf, the charitable waqf (khayri), the total income of which immediately goes to pious, charitable or public work, and the family waqf (ahli)...²

We are only concerned here with the former, or khayri, waqf. The waqf was the financial foundation of the madrasa. It ensured its continuity in that it provided the income for the construction and the maintenance of the building, and provided the salaries of the instructors and a grant for the students.³ Ibn al-Ajami mentions an instance in which a man who in a waqf for a mosque provided for an imām, a muezzin, mats, lamps, and other items, and renewed the latrines, the ablutionaries, and arranged for the water of the madrasa to be connected to the urban supply system.⁴

The wāqīf, or ‘founder’ of the waqf, often imposed conditions that related to the appointment of the director of the madrasa, the instructors, and the legal school which was to be taught and practiced at the madrasa. Nūr al-Dīn, by endowing a waqf in which he appointed fuqahā‘ and ‘ulamā, and provided them with a place to teach and gave them an income, established the principle of direct involvement of the ruler in religious affairs.⁵ This principle was carried over into the Ayyubid period under al-Zāhir al-Ghāzi. He attached great importance to the madrasas and in the Madrasa al-

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Zahiriya, as stated by Sourdel-Thomine, taken from the original sources, the Sultan appointed Qâdi Bahê'audin and Ibn al-Ajami jointly to the directorship of the Madrasa.¹ That the Sultan would, with this policy, have a disproportionate influence on the religious affairs of the state is clear from the power and influence he would be able to exercise by founding a number of madrasas, as well as influencing others who might do the same.

**The Legal School.** The waqf specified which legal school was to be taught and the sources that there was a strict adherence to these conditions. In the case of the Dār of Badr al-Dîn Ibn al-Dayā "fondateur avait posé comme condition que l'imam appartiendrait à l'école hanéfite."² It also happened that in time the legal school in a given institution might change as in the Madrasa al-Saffâhiya: "...il [the wâqif] la constituâa waqf au profit des chaféîtes en stipulant que les hanéfites ne seraient admis que pour la prière. Après sa mort le professeur en fut un chaféîte jusqu'à ce que le cadî suprême hanéfite..., eût été nommé à ce poste." Nur al-Dîn was very careful to keep a balance between two of the legal schools, the Hanafi and Shafi'i, this policy being continued into Ayyubid times.³ There seems to have always been a slight preponderance of the Shafi‘i school ⁴, whereas the Hanbali and Malikî schools were always in the minority. ⁵ There were also the 'mixed' madrasas in which two or more legal schools were to be found. But these remained the exception rather than the rule in Ayyubid times.⁶

**Instructors.** Instructors who are mentioned in the sources and connected in some way to the Madrasa are of differing types. In addition to Shams al-Dîn al-Khâbûri mentioned earlier, there is mention of an unnamed Imam of the mosque before the

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⁵ The few schools of these last two types are listed in Ibn ‘Ajami. trans. Sauvaget. Trésors d’Or, p. 101, and Ibn al-Shîhna. trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisis, p. 133.
⁶ Examples are the Şâfiyya, the Asadiya (listed as Shafite and Hanafite), and the Sultanîyya. Ibn al-Shîhna. trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisis, pp. 113, 126 and 103 respectively.
invasion of Tamerlane. Ibn Ajami lists the khatib al-Sayyid ‘Ali al-Ḥāshimi, as well as a man from Aleppo called Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Zubayba who came and established himself next to the fountain basin of the Firdaus, i.e. that is where he taught. We know of the existence of the Qādi of Aleppo Ibn al-Zamlakāni, who stayed at the mashhad of al-Firdaus, through the verses which his arrival occasioned:

O cadisuprême, toi qui as honoré la dignité insigne qui t’a été conférée, to qui en t'installent à Alep la Blanche, l'as abreuvée d'un océan de savoir et d'une rosé inépuisable, tu habites le Paradis: tu sais maintenant quelle sere ta maison dans ce monde comme dans l'autre.

Zawiya and Dār al-Hadith within the Madrasa. The madrasa had smaller spatial delimitations in which a variety of teaching functions might be carried out. Thus, teachers would frequently choose a specific corner or mihrab in the mosque, or madrasa, (like Ibn Zubayba, above) where they would teach a ḥalqa, or group of students. Ahmed Ramadan says that the Sheikhs would frequently choose columns or other places to teach their students and after their deaths some of these places, or corners, then retained the name of the Sheikh. He mentions that al-Maqdisi listed 110 different ḥalqas in the Mosque of ‘Amr ibn al-As in Fustat.

Elisséeff says that Nūr al-Dīn established the institution of the Dār al-Ḥadith, in which Prophetic tradition was taught, to establish a solid base for Sunni doctrine. It is also clear from the sources that prophetic tradition as a science was distinguished from fiqh, or Sacred Law. This distinction was to be found either in the construction of separate institutions for each discipline, as was the case of the Madrasa al-Ṣāḥibiyya built by Ibn Shaddād, or in the separation of zawiya within in a given institution, as was

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1 Ibn ‘Ajami, trans. Sauvaget, Trésors d’Or, pp. 80-83.
2 Ibn ‘Ajami, trans. Sauvaget, Trésors d’Or, pp. 82-83.
3 Ramadan, "‘Imara", p. 75.
4 Elisséeff, Nūr al-Dīn, p. 762.
5 "Il construisit à Alep une école de tradition prophétique et une madrasa attenantes l'une à l'autre ménageant entre elles deux le lieu de sa sépulture. Les gens disaient: 'C'est une tombe entre deux paradis
the case in the Madrasa al-Firdaus, where a zāwiya for the instruction of ḥadīth is mentioned. ¹ [See later comments for suggestions concerning the possible location of this zāwiya in al-Firdaus.]

Ribāṭ and Khanqā

Definitions. There is some confusion in the early sources, as well as the later historians who base themselves on these early sources, as to the exact functions that the Madrasa al-Firdaus exercised in the context of a ribāṭ and as a khanqā. Some of this confusion is based on the fact that the two terms were used in a very specific context in Aleppo and are used in a more generalized context later.

The origin of the word ribāṭ and its later development are based on ḥadiths of the Prophet, (pbuh). One such ḥadith says that the Prophet once asked if he should tell his Companions by which thing wrong actions are forgiven and degrees [of perfection] are raised. In response to the affirmative reply of his Companions, he said: "Perfect your ablutions in spite of the difficulties [you encounter], increase your walking to the mosques and wait for the prayer, these things may be as a retreat (al-ribāṭ) for you." Thus ribāṭ meant the maintenance of state of prayer and contemplation from one prayer to the other, i.e. the obligatory prayers.

The ribāṭ was originally used to designate a military installation and, as defined by Creswell, "was a small fortified barracks built on the frontier of the territory of Islam and garrisoned with volunteers. Muslims, anxious to acquire merit by taking part in the holy war [jihād] against the unbelievers, could offer their services and pass several months in a ribāṭ, giving themselves up to religious devotion in the intervals of

warfare...." 1 It is the whole concept of jihād which links the original function of the ribāt with its later development as Sufi retreat for training in the 'war against the ego, or lower soul'. There is a Prophetic tradition which says that the Prophet (pbuh), upon returning from a battle with the unbelievers, said that they had returned from the lesser jihād to the greater jihād. Upon being asked what the greater jihād was, he replied that this was jihād al-nafs, or the war with the ego, or lower soul.

The definitions we have from the early sources for khanqā include Ibn al-
'Ājami who says in Sauvaget's translation: "...khānqāh mot emprunté au persan et signifiant l'habitation des soufis.' Les docteurs de la Loi ne font aucune distinction entre la khānqāh et la zaouïa et le ribāt, qui est un local constitué waqf pour l'accomplissement des actes de dévotions et des exercises pieuse." 2 Other definitions include those of al-Hindāwī who says that the word is composed of the Persian word khawān, meaning food, and jāh, meaning place, referring to the place where the kings used to eat. Later, this came, according to al-Maqrizi, to refer to a place for Sufis. 3 The Encyclopedia of Islam (1978) under 'khānqāh' traces the origin of the word to the Persian word kān, meaning 'table' and gāh, meaning 'place'.

Functions and Purpose. Although the general intent of khanqās, ribāts and zāwiyas was to provide a place for religious exercises and devotions, there were differences in emphasis and organisation peculiar to each. Although much has been written about the ribāt, the khanqā, and the zāwiya, I would like to suggest the following distinctions that can be made for Aleppo on the basis of the sources.

Ribat. The ribāt in Aleppo at the time was considered more of a religious retreat and a hospice for the poor. 4 Al-Maqrizi defines a ribāt as hospice for poor muslims, for the slaves of the waqf, or unemployed soldiers, and those who could join without

4 In the traditional sources there is a distinct differentiation made between the ribāt and the khanqa. This is evident because they are listed separately. Furthermore, Ibn Shihna lists three of the five ribāts he mentions as being specifically for slaves. Ibn Shihna. Al-Durr, p. 109.
having to prove that they were actually poor [i.e. a rich person could enter the retreat for religious reasons and not have to prove that he was poor in the monetary sense]. The term faqīr in Arabic has a double meaning, one who is poor in the material sense, or one who is poor in relation to the Possessor of All, [God] or wears the Sufi dress. Rules were probably simple and limited to disciplinary and moral conduct. Admission was easy since practically anybody could enter. The concerns and responsibilities of the director were not very complex and were limited to the basic spiritual needs and religious duties, as well as the more obvious and necessary provision for proper food and shelter.

Khanqā. The khanqā was considered to be a Sufi 'religious institute'. To be accepted in a khanqā, students had to comply to a set of rules imposed by the institution and in most cases students seem to have had to take religious instruction in return for any funding they were given. Therefore, the Shaikhs who taught in the khanqā were generally 'ulamā' and fuqahā'. We must remember that the people attached to the khanqā were Sufis. It is for this reason that Ibn Ajami says:

Les docteurs de la Loi peuvent habiter un ribāt et percevoir le traitement servi par son waqf, mais il n’est point permis à un soufi d’habiter une madrasa et d’y percevoir un traitement. La raison est que l'essentiel (ma’tana) du soufisme est compris dans le fiqh, tandis que l'inverse n'est pas vrai.

What Ibn Ajami is indicating here is that although the Sufis took training in Islamic law, which they considered the basis of all Sufi practice, they were not required to have as rigorous a training in the law as that of a madrasa. A Sufi could not train in the madrasa because he would have had to apply himself strictly to the religious

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3 Ḥamza, Haraka, p. 155.
sciences, whereas his whole purpose as a Sufi was to penetrate to the inner meaning of the law.

[Zawiya. The zawiya was usually created around one specific instructor, or shaikh ¹ who belonged to a tariqa. The murids, or disciples, did not have to comply to a unified set of rules and behaviour in the context of the zawiya, as they would have had to do in the khanqāh and the ribāṭ. ² The shaikh dealt personally with each pupil and may have imposed specific orders on each, dealing with each within the pupil’s own context. When comparing the khanqāh and the ribāṭ to the zawiya it is clear that the latter is a much more informal institution. The former had been systematized and formalized to a much larger extent.

Women in the khanqāh and the ribāṭ. In the sources we find mention of a number of khanqāhs reserved for women. They are few in number and we can, therefore, expect that the instructional and functional distinctions between the khanqāh and the ribāṭ are not so clearly delineated. Indications are that the khanqāhs for women frequently performed the three functions of khanqāh, ribāṭ and zawiya. Commenting on the khanqāh of Fātimah-Khatūn, Abū Dharr says that she "constitué waqf ce couvent au profit des faqīrāt qui viendront y habiter, pour qu’elles y fussent les cinq prières (quotidiennes) et qu’elles y couchent. Elle a constitué wakf en sa faveur Kafr Ta’al, du Jabal Sim‘ān. Sous la direction d’Idris fils de Moḥammad." ³ We can gather several things from this reference. The term faqīrā can be understood in the double meaning mentioned earlier, poor in spirit or wealth. Therefore, both hospice for the poor and retreat are possible functions. The khanqāh was under the direction of a male shaikh because in the Hanafi legal school a woman cannot lead the obligatory communal prayer (this is so allowed in the Shafi‘i school). He probably acted as imām of the

¹ Hamza, Haraka, p. 155.
institution and may have offered spiritual guidance and legal knowledge should the women so desire. ¹

Concern for the spiritual welfare of women must have been quite strong at the time. It was allowed for women to take part in the studies offered at some madrasas in Aleppo. Ibn al-Adim says that "le collège Tömnâniyya, bâti par l'émir Hosâm-ad-Dîn ibn-Toûmân...Ibn-Shihna raconte qu'il y avait dans ce collège un endroit réservé aux femmes;..." There is also a clear awareness of the female members of the ruling dynasty in providing some spiritual instruction for women. They were the ones who founded the religious institutions for women. They included: the khanqâ of Princess Fâtima Khâtûn, the khanqâ of the daughter of the Lord of Chayzar, the khanqâ of Zumurrud Khâtûn, (a descendant of the father of Salah al-Dîn), the khanqâ of the daughter of the governor of Qûs, and, of course, the khanqâs of Dayfa Khatûn. These included a khanqâ inside Bâb al-Arbâ'in (probably Khanqâ fi-l Farâfrâ, Ribât al-Nâstirî, or Ribât Khanqân. See Appendix A for further discussion) and al-Firdaus, which in sources is listed as a madrasa and ribât. ² Even the male members of the ruling dynasty built khanqâs for women, e.g. Nûr al-Dîn who built a khanqâ in 553 / 1158-9.

Motives. We'd like to suggest a distinction between motives that led to the building of madrasas, i.e. political influence, and those that led to the building of such institutions as the khanqâ and the ribât. There seems to be some indication that the rulers who built such monuments frequently had a spiritual penchant and showed a strong personal involvement in their activities. For example, Nûr al-Dîn was sometimes

¹ It is interesting to note that in Sufi tradition it is thought that a woman cannot have a female shaikh, or spiritual preceptor, but must have a living male shaikh to follow. This is in contrast to the men, who may have a male or female shaikh, the most outstanding example being Muhyîddîn ibn Arabî, who lists several women who acted as his spiritual guides during some part of his spiritual journey.

given the epithet al-‘Ārif, usually designating one who has mystical knowledge. ¹ He was also the first ruler to use the epithet al-Zāhid (the ascetic) in his inscriptions (it occurs in six major inscriptions). ² Tabbā‘a also mentions that Abu Shāma described Nūr al-Dīn’s special regard for the Sufis. He would regularly let them into his audience where he would treat them with great respect and allow them to sit near him. ³

As for al-Zāhir al-Ghāzi, his strong ties to the famous Sufi Abu al-Futūh Yāhya ibn Hubaysh ibn Ayrak al-Suhrawardī ⁴ were well known. Al-Suhrawardī was born in Suhrawardī village in 549 and was killed in 587. al-Zāhir al-Ghāzi had met him in Aleppo in 575 and immediately formed a strong attachment to him and admired him greatly. At the time al-Zāhir al-Ghāzi had not yet taken the reins of power, and his admiration aroused the jealousy of the fuqahā’, who wrote to Sālah al-Dīn to tell him that he had better watch out for his son, who was in danger of losing his faith. They kept after Sālah al-Dīn until they made him order his death under the accusations that Suhrawardī was a zandīq, or one who acted as if he stood outside the Law (something the Sufis were frequently charged with) and a mulḥid, or heretic. ⁵ When al-Zāhir al-Ghāzi came to power he took his revenge and punished all the people involved in this affair. ⁶ A look at his audience-chamber would confirm his religious leanings. We have a description by Ibn al-Adīm (in Blochet’s translation): “Il appela auprès de lui les plus grands comme les plus humbles de ses sujets et s'attache les riches et les

¹ Tabbā‘a says: “The epithet al-‘ārif (from the root ma’rifa) refers to someone gifted with a personal - as opposed to intellectual - knowledge of God....” Al-Tabbā‘a. Architectural Patronage. p. 181. One who has intellectual knowledge might be called al-‘ālim.

² Tabbā‘a mentions a number of anecdotes from Ibn al-Athir, who remarked that Nūr al-Dīn never wore silk, gold or silver, and only spent the little money which was rightfully his. Ibn al-Jawzi added that he used to weave kaffiyas and make boxes which were sold for him secretly by old women. Al-Tabbā‘a. Architectural Patronage, p. 205. This practice of only eating and spending on oneself the money that one has earned through an absolutely halal profession, was also found among the Ottoman Sultans.

³ Al-Tabbā‘a. Architectural Patronage, pp. 204-5.

⁴ There were two famous Suhrawardī’s who were contemporaries: the other one was Shihāb al-Dīn Abu Ja‘afar, born in 539, who was a famous faqih and Sufi. Ḥamza. Haraka, p. 115.

⁵ Ḥamza. Haraka, pp. 115-6.

⁶ Herzfeld. MCl, p. 220.
pauvres.... Chaque année, une multitude de gens se pressaient à la porte de son palais, poètes, lecteurs du Kor'an, fakirs et gens semblables...."  

As for the regent Shihāb al-Dīn Tughhrī, according to authors like Ibn al-Athīr, no one better than he lived in the Muslim world (no doubt a slight exaggeration but indicative of his well-known piety). He was also known by the epithets the Pious and the Ascetic.  

Upon his specific orders, his house was turned into a khanqā and a hospice for the poor after his death.  

With such pious forerunners, it is very likely that the Queen Dayfa Khatūn had a personal and pious interest in making spiritual instruction available to the members of her own sex. The political dimension in the building of such monuments should not be ignored but the exact balance of intentions must be made between the personal piety of the rulers, which included considerations for the alleviation of social hardships for the poor, homeless and unemployed, and political manipulation. It is with these considerations in mind that we should proceed to an analysis of the Madrasa al-Firdaus itself.

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2 Herzfeld. MCI, p. 287.  
3 Herzfeld. MCI, p. 286.  
ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

PLANS OF MADRASA AL-FIRDAUS

There exist seven different plans of the Madrasa al-Firdaus. Of these, six are complete (see figs. 37-42) and one is partial (see fig. 43). Six of these plans have been published and one is a drawing by some architecture students at the University of Aleppo (fig. 37).  

Discrepancies between the plans

The main central-court complex, or sahn, is almost the same in all the plans except for minor variations. Most of the plans indicate the same openings in the Qibliya wall, except for one mistake in Herzfeld’s plan (see fig. 38) and the omission of a window opening in Creswell. Creswell drew this opening as a niche in the wall (see fig. 40). In Sauvaget’s plan the openings are not very clear, but this is symptomatic of the whole plan which is not very accurate. The eastern wall is the same in all the plans except for Creswell’s omission of a window in the middle of the wall. (See fig. 40).

Before the relatively recent restoration, only half of the floor-pattern of the sahn was left. Herzfeld seems to have made a mistake in drawing the patterns of the south-eastern and south-western corners of the sahn. In Creswell’s photograph (see fig. 63), we can clearly see there were vertical black bars in the pattern extant at that time. Herzfeld seems to have drawn only the horizontal bars (see fig. 38). In our view, the general state of the floor was rather incomplete and thus, there may be some

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1 This plan was kindly given to me by Mr. Kamel Fares. I was also able to obtain copies of the original plans from the Antiquities Department. These plans are published but much reduced in Asa’d Talas, Al-Athār al-Islāmiyya wa al-Tārikhiyya fi Halās, Damascus: Syrian Antiquity Department, 1956.
doubts about the possibility of an accurate reconstruction of the pattern. It is possible that the pattern was not symmetrical. There is also a part in the present restoration around the fountain which is incomplete. Creswell's old photograph (see figs. 60b and 60c), gives us a clue as to the exact pattern, in the corners around the fountain.

Herzfeld shows a protrusion in the back of the mihrab wall as a sort of buttress, which does not exist (see fig. 80e). In addition, Herzfeld does not show the openings between the northern and southern iwān. He simply drew them as niches in the wall. All other plans showed these opening as having been walled-in, which they actually were (see fig. 64a); eventually they were removed (see figs. 64b, 64c, 64d).

The major differences and problems that arise in the plans relate to that of the qā‘as. Parasite buildings against the walls of the madrasa (see figs. 20-Cadastra map, 68a-c, and 89a-e), have destroyed the original delimitations of the qā‘as. The differences in the plans occur mainly in the western qā‘a. Sauvaget, Herzfeld, and Creswell show the western qā‘a's eastern wall ending flush with the rest of the madrasa wall. (See figs. 38, 40, 41) The other four plans, on the other hand, show a protrusion in the wall allowing for an additional liwān and side-rooms. This latter solution seems to be the correct one. (See figs. 37, 39, 42-43).

There are other slight variations from one plan to the other, particularly the openings between one area and another. In the long room, north of the western qā‘a (see fig. 39c, room C), both Herzfeld and Sauvaget connect it by means of a door to the adjacent liwān. The other plans do not. Some provide that room with a window, whereas Creswell, Herzfeld, and Sauvaget do not (see figs. 38, 39c, 40-41). The room actually has this window but it is walled in (see fig. 70b). Herzfeld, Creswell and Sauvaget show no opening onto the garden in the south western corner of the qā‘a. The rest show an opening (see figs. 37, 39, 41-43). At present, we can see that there seems to have been a door, but the people who lived in the house have walled it in. It is not clear, however, whether this door was part of the original structure, or was added in later times. The reason we can assume the latter is that there is a cistern or well
placed immediately adjacent to the door and the room next to it most probably contained toilets (see fig. 39c, no. 3 in the plan). Also, the photograph in fig. 67 shows that the contour of the door is rough.

The eastern qā'a is a protrusion which seems to have been a later addition in order to accommodate some toilets. It is drawn in some plans as part of the original structure of the madrasa (see figs. 37,39,42). In the rest of the plans (see figs. 38,40,41), it is not considered part of the original design. After a careful study of the harmony and proportions of the plan, the perfection of geometry and design do not accord with this major protrusion, which obviously does not fit in with the concept and general lines of the building. In is also worth noting that this major protrusion is used for the toilets. A closer look at the plan of the qā'a shows us possibly more appropriate and suitable locations for the toilets. The location on the eastern wall is just under a point of collection for rain water from the roof (see fig. 76, hole Z and fig. 79a), as well as just next to the cistern of the sahn (see fig. 39c, no. 1 in plan).

If we accept the previous assumption about the re-location of the toilets, we can place the entrance flush with the northern wall of the iwān of the qā’a (see fig.39c for suggested reconstruction in red). Also the wall of the room west of the liwān would probably have run along with this same back of the northern wall of the iwān.

In addition, careful study shows a break in bond and a clear difference in masonry between the original building and what we consider a later alteration (see fig. 104a). Another later change concerns the entrance to the eastern qā’a. The one we see today (see fig. 104b), is clearly a door to part of the parasite building added on later to the madrasa.

Another minor point of difference between the various plans is the possible opening between room A and the southern side of room B of the qā’a (see fig. 39c). Sauvaget and Creswell drew an opening (see figs. 40 and 41), whereas the rest do not (see figs. 37-39,42). The door actually exists but has been walled-in.
GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Space

Our analysis of the architectural space and the plan in Madrasa al-Firdaus will base itself mainly on the conclusions of the study carried out by J.C. David on the traditional house of Aleppo. ¹ In his summary, David states that the distribution of space in the architecture of Aleppo was based on two principles: 1) **centrality**, and 2) **juxtaposition** (something which existed during all the periods). I would add a third principle in the case of Firdaus: 3) **directional emphasis**. The actual organisation of the architectural space elements was also based on two principles: 1) the **organisation of the rooms around the sahn**, and 2) the **presence of two specific architectural elements**, the **iwân and the qa‘a**.

**Centrality.** It is the main court, or sahn, which constitutes the central space. It is a space where all traffic and movement in the madrasa converge. Conceptually, the sahn is created as the center and all the architectural spaces are designed around it, and in relation to it. Furthermore, we should note that in our study of the harmony of space we demonstrate how the whole design of the central court is structured geometrically around one central point in the sahn (see fig. 128, large plan separately presented).

**Directional Emphasis.** An architectural principle which is implicitly found in all religious buildings is the emphasis towards the qibla direction. The second center of convergence, aside from the sahn, is the qibla hall. The sahn facilitates and directs the movement within the madrasa between one space and the other and provides the architectural interconnection between spaces. The qibla direction, on the other hand, is the symbolic and spiritual center of convergence. "One definition of a mosque could be a building erected over an invisible axis, an axis which is none the less the principal

determinant of its design." Therefore, the most important element in the madrasa is the mihrāb, a symbolic representation of the qibla: direction of prayer and indicating Mecca as the center of the religion. The 'invisible axis', the devotions and rituals performed in the central direction of Islam, and the architectural alignment to the axis, all serve to focus and align body and soul of the worshipper.

This directional emphasis is manifested in Madrasa al-Firdaus in different ways: a general longitudinality in the design of the whole building, an emphasis in the volume of the larger mihrāb dome and, what is most important, the invisible central axis (AX) in Madrasa al-Firdaus (see fig. 40), which goes through the middle of the whole building and, of course, the mihrāb. It is this axis which creates in the first part of the building a nearly perfect axial symmetry (AO). In the rest of building the OX axis goes through the northern iwān and creates similar spaces on either side, i.e. a long corridor and a small court complex on either side. These secondary court complexes are not identical in their interior divisions and arrangements, which does not allow us to say there is an absolute symmetry. We can conclude, however, that a relative symmetry of space is nevertheless created. This symmetry of space and the directional emphasis give the building its dynamism and, at the same time, by breaking up an absolute symmetry prevents a feeling of boredom and predictability from arising.

Juxtaposition and Contrast. The second method, whereby the architect is able to escape from the monotony of a perfect symmetry and to relieve the design, is the use of contrasting architectural elements and the juxtaposition of varied architectural forms and functions. These forms include a) the juxtaposition and contrast of the open court versus the covered riwāq, b) different methods of roofing, i.e. the low, flat riwāq roof versus the high round domes, and c) the monumentality of the iwān heightened by the low and uncovered court. A more subtle example is the larger and higher central mihrāb dome and its lower and smaller neighbouring domes.

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The Rooms around the Sahn. This architectural element was a very important one in Aleppo and the whole Middle-Eastern area, in both secular and religious buildings. In the Madrasa al-Firdaus this importance is strongly reflected in the three sahns which we find in the madrasa. The main sahn, as was mentioned earlier, serves as the focus of convergence and the central element of organization for the complex as a whole. David, in commenting on the traditional role of the sahn, says: "... c'est un espace de circulation de convergence et de rayonnement." ¹ The rooms around the sahn all open on to it, in this way making it the interior center of circulation of movement.

The Main Sahn. We notice that the entrance in al-Firda’s is one that leads through a corridor, ending in the north-east corner of the sahn. According to David’s study, access to the sahn from outside is usually, with very few exceptions, in the south-west or north-east corner. The sahn also fulfills an important function as an ablutionary area because there is a fountain in its center.

The secondary sahns of the eastern and western qā‘a’s create sub-, micro-complexes and, in their own open courts, serve the same functions as the main court complex. The entrances to the secondary sahns are in the corners of the courts, and ablutionary fountains also available in these secondary sahns, creating 'madrasas' within the madrasa proper.

İwān and Qā‘a. In traditional domestic architecture in Aleppo the īwān, almost always present as an architectural element, faced north, being placed in the southern part of the sahn. This was probably done for both climatic and symbolic reasons. ² The qā‘a was usually placed on the eastern side. The Qibla in Aleppo, however, is to the south. This necessitated a reversal of the arrangement and we find the īwān in the northern part of the sahn.

As for the main qā‘a, we find it transposed into a masjid hall and in the southerly position. Ibn Shaddād says about the Mashhad al-Muḥassin (see fig.105): "Il [Nāṣir

Yūsuf] fit aussi la lanterne à fenêtres, raushān al-dā'ir, dans la qā‘a de la cour, ṣaḥn.\(^1\)

Thus, Ibn Shaddād calls the Qibliya, or prayer hall, a qā‘a. We are suggesting that the Qibliya or Masjid Hall in Madrasa al-Firdaus was a version of the qā‘a adapted to suit the specific needs of a prayer hall. In effect, it is a kind of atrophied version in which the T-plan has been reversed to become a longitudinal plan, in which the middle space opens onto two side-rooms.

According to David the two court-complexes (North-east and North-west) on either side of the īwān are qā‘as. (See figs. 39, 43). According to his definition, they represent in their design the earliest architectural expression of the qā‘a as a basic architectural module in the traditional architecture of Aleppo.\(^2\) They constitute independent architectural entities within the whole complex and their inner organization is based on the same principle as the main court and qā‘a but reduced to a minor scale. Within the context of the building as a whole these two secondary complexes, along with the northern īwān, can be considered as constituting one entity forming the other main part of the madrasa.

**DETAILED ANALYSIS**

The detailed description of the madrasa will be divided into two main parts: 1) the **central court complex** which can be considered public space and contains the heart of the building; the sanctuary comprising the mosque and mausolea, the central court and the southern īwān, and 2) the **northern īwān with two minor court complexes**: the eastern and western qā‘a's on either side which could be considered more private space. One thing to note is that the whole building is Qibla oriented.

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2. David, Systèmes, p. 46.
The central court complex

Sanctuary: Mosque and Mausolea. The sanctuary occupies the southern end of the madrasa. The mosque occupies the central space and forms a longitudinal space surmounted with three domes, the middle one, or mihrab dome, being higher than the other two. The shape of this prayer-hall is very similar in spirit to the domestic qa’a in Aleppo at that time and even later on. Traditionally in domestic architecture this qa’a is placed on the northern or eastern side. ¹(See fig. 46b for comparison.) On either side of the prayer-hall a door opens on to a mausoleum, each surmounted with a dome.

The relationship between the madrasa and domestic architecture, and the influence the latter had on the former has been discussed by a variety of scholars. ² The first madrasas grew out of the houses where the teacher used to live. Even in Ayyubid times many houses, palaces, and even pleasure palaces were donated in the form of waqfs and transformed into zawiyas or madrasas. ³ The buildings of formalised madrasas use common architectural elements and features which suggest a remnant of traditional domestic architecture, but in the new setting they have been transposed and used in a different manner more in accordance with the need of the institution. Thus, the prayer-hall in Madrasa al-Firdaus reminds one of the qa’a in houses and the mausolea may even be taken as remnants of the side qubbas, or rooms, which connect to the qa’a. ⁴ But in this situation the architectural elements have been transposed into a

¹ David, L’espace, p. 39.
³ "...le couvent as-Sahloûliya...avait été fondé, en qualité de lieu de plaisance...." Ibn ‘Ajami, trans. Sauvaget. Trésors d’Or, p. 115. Others in Ibn al-Ajami include Madrasa al-Salihiya (p. 86), Madrasa Asadiya (p. 94), the khanqa Bahâ’iya (p. 112) and the zawiya of Shaikh Khîdr (p. 116). Also, "un couvent fondé par...Ibn Chaddâd, dont c’était la maison d’habitation." Ibn Shihna, trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisis, pp. 104. And: "La madrasa ‘Osroûniya, ancienne maison d’Abû l-Hasan ‘Ahl...." Ibn Shihna, trans. Sauvaget, Perles Choisis, pp. 110. Others include a khanqa founded by Ibn at-Tinnabi (p. 102), another khanqa founded by Sâ’d al-Din Mas’ûd (p. 102), the Khanqa al-Damghâni (p. 104), a rihab founded by the emir Şayf al-Din (p. 107), and the Madrasa Futaysiya (p. 128).
⁴ David, Cahiers, p. 41.
more formalised manner. The importance of the space itself is stressed by the massive volume of the middle dome, directing the building towards the qibla. The volume of the mihrāb dome and the difference in its height creates a main central space with secondary spaces, covered also by domes, attached to it. In the development of Ayyubid madrasas we do have examples of earlier prayer-halls closer to the domestic examples of the qa‘a, whose architectural expression consisted of a main dome between two vaults. (See figs. 111-113,118,120,122). The Madrasa al-Firdaus constitutes a transposed version. In the Firdaus, the vaults have been substituted by domes and the final product is a much more formalised architectural expression of a madrasa building.

The prayer-hall opens onto the court with three arches, each approximately three meters wide. The mausolea also open onto the side aisles through arches two meters wide. The prayer-hall has two windows, one on each side of the mihrāb, that face towards the outside of the building. Each window is placed under the side-domes. On the inside, each window has two niches on either side of it which are used as khizānas, or closets (see figs. 47a-b,36b).

As for the mausolea, they each have two openings to the outside. One in the southern wall with niches on either side, and the other on the side wall.

The side aisles. The western and eastern wall is occupied by a longitudinal hall covered with three domes. These side aisles open onto the court, each with three arches, each arch approximately three meters wide. These were probably closed with wooden doors, as in the prayer hall. These aisles also have two openings on the outside walls. Windows are placed close to each end corner of the hall.

In Ayyubid times these aisles may have been used as places for teaching but in later times they were used as a burial ground (see fig. 101a and b). With the restoration of the building in modern times, these graves were paved over. Some, however, can still be found in the eastern hall. (See figs. 101a-b,102a).

The domes. Zones of transition. All the domes in the madrasa, except for the main mihrāb dome, are built in the same manner. They all have triangular pendentives
without any zone of transition (see figs. 49a-c). These pendentives are called 'Sarāwil' in Aleppo and are very typical of the Aleppo style at the time. They are to be found in many other Ayyubid monuments e.g. Mashhad Ḥussein, Meshhad Ḥasan (dikka), Madrasa al-Kamiliya, Madrasa al-Zāhiriyā, and others. These pendentives differ from the ones in Damascus, where sem-spherical squinches and a different system for the zone of transition were used.

The mihrāb dome: interior. As was mentioned earlier, this dome is higher than the rest and rests on a drum opened with twelve windows (see fig. 44a). The zone of transition is created by stone muqarnas squinches. The muqarnas is in the same style as the portal (see fig. 50), (which will be discussed later). According to Herzfeld, the stalactite combination in the mihrāb dome and the details of the vaults show no variety. He continues to observe concerning the dome that it has: "quatre rangées, avec une trompe à trois rangées à chaque coin. Les alvéoles commencent, ici et au grand portail, à perdre la variété de leurs formes et de leurs dimensions et à suivre un type uniforme; on arrive à un type 'standard'".2

Exterior of domes. The domes on triangular pendentives emerge directly from the roof. They have a slight inclination. All the domes have a pointed profile and are made out of beautifully cut masonry stones, which were then covered with a surface plaster. (See figs. 54a and c, 21) The mihrāb dome is at present not plastered but this may be the result of recent restoration work (see fig. 54c, 65a). The drum is exteriorized and expressed in two parts. The upper part of the drum is dodecagonal with each side pierced with one of the twelve windows. At the top, there is a dodecagonal cornice slanting outward. The lower part is an elevated square base, the height of which is 90 cm in size. As for the height of the drum, it is 1.60 m. (See fig. 56). The profile of the mihrāb dome is the same as the others with a slight point at the top.

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The Sahn. The sahn is a rectangle surrounded on three sides by an arcaded colonnade. The fourth side opens directly onto a large iwân. The central space of the sahn plus the riwâq forms one space and takes the shape of a perfect square. Putting a riwâq on three sides of the space created a rectangular open space for the sahn and consequently the architectural symmetry of the plan is broken. Thus a kind of monotony is avoided and most important, the directional emphasis towards the qibla is enhanced. This means that anyone entering the madrasa, and subsequently the court, is directed immediately towards the prayer-hall which is 'crowned' by the higher mihrâb dome. The presence of a fourth riwâq in front of the iwân would have destroyed its monumentality and massiveness, and the contrast it provides to the open, uncovered court.

Ibn Ajami says, in Blochet's words, that the floor of the sahn "est dallée de marbre blanc et noir." ¹ This confirmed by Herzfeld, who is a bit more specific and says that it is composed of calciferous stone alternated with a black basaltic stone, forming a simple design. (See fig.52a). As for the design itself, we really have no clue as to its meaning, but it is interesting to note a parallel explanation by Ibn Ajami concerning the floor pattern in front of the south-eastern door of the Great Mosque of Aleppo. He says, in Sauvaget's translation, that it "représente la Ville du Cuivre [ the editor's footnote explains that this is the legendary city of folklore mentioned in The Thousand and One Nights.]: si on y pénètre par une de ses portes, il est impossible d'en sortir par un autre chemin que celui que l'on a suivi pour entrer." ² Both the care with which specific stone types were chosen and the awareness of design in all parts of the mosque lead us to suspect that the design may have once had an understood meaning, but this meaning has now been lost: to us.

¹ Ibn 'Ajami, trans. Sauvaget, Trésors d'Or, p. 80. Ibn Ajami says, in describing the floor of the Great Mosque of Aleppo: "Quand au marbre qui daâle le centre de la cour de la mosquée, celui que est de couleur jaune provient des carrières de Boûâdin, en dehors d'Alep, du côté du Nord (à 5 km de la ville). (...) La pierre poudrée par cette carrière n'existe qu'à Alep: on l'exporte, par exemple à Damas et au Caire.--- La pierre noire (de ce dallage) provient des carrières d'al-Ahass..." (Plateau basilique à 35 km au Sud-Est d'Alep.)
The Riwaqs. The riwaqs of the Firdaus are paved with the same stones as the sahn but with a much plainer design, being an alternation of straight lines. The level of the riwaq is slightly higher than the level of the sahn, creating a transitional area between the low, uncovered, paved court and the covered and carpeted prayer-hall. The riwaqs help to break the hot sun in summer by preventing the rays from directly hitting the walls of the sanctuary and the side halls. They also facilitate the circulation between the different parts of the madrasa, providing shade in the summer and protection from the rain in the winter.

According to Creswell, the three side riwaqs are a further development of the Madrasa al-Zahiriya porch riwaq. I think, however, the Sharafiyah is an earlier example of such a riwaq (see later notes under Madrasa al-Sharafiyah in Appendix A). There is also mention of a riwaq in the Khanqah al-Balat (Couvent du Palais) in Ibn al-Shihna, in Blochet's translation: "Il ouvrit une autre fenêtre en face de sa porte ouest, du côté du portique (riwaq), de façon à ce que ceux qui passerait...." One could also, perhaps, trace its existence back to domestic architecture, e.g. in the Maristân Arghûn (see fig. 46a).

The arcaded colonnade. The yellow marble columns according to Herzfeld are antique monoliths holding two kinds of capitals. One is made out of calcareous stone with 'alvéoles', or muqarnas. This type of capital will later dominate the architecture of Aleppo. The other type is made out of marble, with a very stylized design of lightly carved acanthus leaves. (See fig. 48b). These columns are placed on either side of the iwan and are the first things which meet the eye of the visitor. There is a very ingenious architectural detail that can be found between the capital and the support of the

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3 Herzfeld, M.C.I, Plate CXLIII. Herzfeld dates it back to the Ayyubid period and concludes that it was originally an Ayyubid Palazzo. Herzfeld, M.C.I, p. 333.
4 Herzfeld, M.C.I, p. 301.
5 It is interesting to note that Dr. Shit, a photographer and student of Ayyubid architecture in Aleppo, once remarked that these capitals were quite unique in Ayyubid architecture in Aleppo. They show a rather 'feminine touch' and seem to render homage to the founder Queen and indicate her 'signature'.


arch (see figs. 53a-c). Wood has been inserted in order to provide resilience and flexibility in the case of earthquakes, a phenomenon occurring frequently enough in the history of Aleppo for architects to be aware of it. 1

The riwaq ceiling. The ceiling is at present made out of concrete, but Herzfeld says it was made out of wood. 2 The early pictures show it with the roof fallen in (see figs. 48d, 54b-c, 63a-c).

The fountain. The fountain in the middle of the sahn is a typical octagonal Ayyubid fountain and is identified as a mudalla‘a. 3 It is multi-foiled and made of assembled pieces of stone. There is a place for the cistern in the corner of the sahn, on one side of the iwân, which probably provided the water for the fountain (see fig. 52a and can be seen in section on fig. 59). Until now, with the use of a modern pump, water is still provided for the fountain from the cistern, or from the well. Earlier, sufficient water pressure was provided by a nuria (mentioned by Ibn Ajami) which was placed in the garden facing the northern iwân. Ibn Ajami’s description of al-Firdaus is as follows: "Il s'y trouve ... un bassin qu'alimentait en eau une machine élévatatoire située à l'extérieur, dans le jardin de la madrasa, à coté duquel est un grand iwân, en pierres de dimensions énormes." 4 Other madrasas seem to have had similar nurias. Ibn Ajami describes one in Masjid al-Ṣâfi, in the zawiya Ḥajj Balât, and in the Palace of Falak al-Din in the citadel. 5 Ibn al-Shihna mentions that the latrines in the Madrasa Tâgri-wîrmichiya were supplied with water from a nuria. 6

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1 Aleppo was first destroyed by earthquakes in 1144, then 1131, and again in 1170. Baedeker, Palestine, p. 366. Ibn al-Ajami also mentions the architects' concern about earthquakes while speaking about the Madrasa al-Sharafiyah: "Au fond de l’iwân est ménagée une quaine de ventilation (bâd-heni) qui débouchait dans trois ouvertures (bâb), mais deux de celles-ci ont été murées, car on craignait de voir la stabilité de l’iwân compromise par les secousses sismiques." Ibn ‘Ajami, trans. Sauvaget, Trésors d'Or, p. 76.

2 Herzfeld, MCI, p. 301.


5 Ibn ‘Ajami, trans. Sauvaget, Trésors d’Or, p. 54, 120, and 165 respectively.

The cave or cistern. On the western side of the iwân there is a cave, sometimes known as maghâra, which, unfortunately, is sealed (see fig. 40). It was probably a storage cistern for the rain water which was collected from the roof (see fig.76, the hole marked X). The position of the drain on the relevé plan corresponds to the central cave which had been specifically dug for rainwater storage (see later discussion on water supplies in the madrasa).

Another possibility, as to its function, is that it was a khâchkhâcha, or funerary cave, mentioned in Ibn al-Ajami, who says in Sauvaget's translation: "Il s'y trouve un caveau funéraire (khâchkhâcha) et un bassin...." 2 But this cave could also very well be the one that is located outside in the garden facing the northern iwân. (See figs. 20,71,72b,73,74).

There are other instances of such caves. For example, in the Khanqâ of Ibn al-Ajami: "C'est un grand couvent qui comprend...un rez de chaussée où se trovent deux caves (maghâra) superposées." 3 In the case of the Madrasa al-Sharafiya, Ibn al-Ajami mentions that one of the caves was used for storage. 4

A final possible function of the cave may have been to serve as a refuge in cold winter days. It is mentioned that even up until modern times, the Aleppines of the old city used to take refuge in their cellars because they were very warm in winter. These are called al-mashatta, or the room reserved for winter (al-shita') use.

The Southern iwân. The iwân is raised higher than the level of the sahn and is a large open vault twelve meters high. It was mentioned that traditionally the iwân faced north and was placed in the southern part of the sahn and that in the case of the Firdaus this rule was broken in order to accomodate the qibla orientation of the prayer hall. In order to re-establish the proper climactic conditions, the architect designed another iwân (the northern iwân B, see plan, fig.39) at the back of the southern iwân,

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1 In winter 1988-89 the cave was filled in because it had begun to fill with water, and there was a worry that surface around would collapse. (see fig. 71c).
and provided three large openings (windows with wooden grilles which were later walled in) between the two. With this architectural device a strong draft is created and intensified by the longitudinal shape of the two īwāns and the openings between them. Another factor that affects the air movement is the takhtabosh effect, which is created, in this case, by placing the two īwāns between two open spaces: the sahn and the garden. This principle is explained in some detail by the master architect Hassan Fathy, but the basic necessary conditions for the steady flow of air by convection is that there be a shaded, or covered, area between the courtyard and the back garden. The two īwāns fulfill the function of the covered area in this case. Also the covered area should be placed to catch the wind. 1 When the courtyard heats up, the heated air rises, drawing cooler air from the back garden and, thus, creating a draft of cool air in the īwāns. We find this principle employed in some traditional Cairene houses, for example, Bait al-Suhaymi. 2 Hassan Fathy has also incorporated this effect into some of his designs for Bāris and al-Kharga. 3 In the winter the openings between the two īwāns were closed by means of shutters, and the we can still find the places where the hinges for these were inserted (see fig. 64d).

In addition to the takhtabosh, the malqaf, or badīnj, was used to catch the fresh western to northwestern breezes. These malqafís, or wind-catchers, are all on the roof (see figs. 54a, 56b-c). 4 The air caught by these bādinjes was channeled through a chimney leading to the wall niches of the madrasa (see figs. 58, 66a-b). They are closets in the wall which are opened in the summer and closed in the winter. When open, they provide cool air by circulating the air and replacing the heated inner air with a

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3 Vernacular, pp. 63. (see fig. 75).

4 The concept of a wind-catcher is an ancient one and which we already find in pharaonic times. We find one drawn on the top of a country house in the tomb of Nebamun. See fig. 8, p. 22 in A. Badawy, A History of Egyptian Architecture, Giza: Studio Misr, 1957. vol. 3. (see fig. 41d)
fresh cool breeze. Some of the wind-catches in other parts of the madrasa are high and built out of stone in such a way that they slant facing the wind (see fig. 65a). There are some plain flat openings on the roof (see fig. 65b) which are also wind-catches but whose superstructure, probably made out of wood, may have been destroyed with time.

Above the southern iwân, on the eastern side, there is a room which can only be reached from the roof (see figs. 63a, 67). From the masonry work and from observations on site, we can conclude that this cell was added at a much later date, maybe at the time of the building of the minaret. It was probably meant to lodge someone (the muezzin?). It may, because of its isolated position, have been used as a seclusion cell.

**Northern iwân and the two Qâ’as.** From the main sahn, there are two entrances on either side of the southern iwân which lead from the main court complex into the back part of the Madrasa, in which the northern iwân and two qâ’as form a separate complex. The eastern entrance door is placed just next to the entrance way. It opens onto a corridor leading first to the toilets (the first opening on the right hand side, see fig. 38). After this, we arrive to another room which may have been the kitchen or a place for ghusl, or major ablutions. The corridor continues until, on the left-hand side, it opens onto the northern iwân. After this opening, the corridor runs straight ahead and then, finally, opens directly onto the garden.

The western entrance door also leads through a long straight corridor in the direction of the garden. However, on its way, the first thing it intersects is another corridor, or hallway, coming from a secondary western entrance. Further on, the corridor opens onto an oblong room which may also have served as a kitchen. The corridor opens after that, on the right-hand side onto the northern iwân. Just before the corridor ends, there is an opening to the left-hand side giving onto a bent entrance leading to the western qâ’a. Shortly after this entrance-way, the corridor opens directly onto the garden.
Northern iwân. This iwân is more elongated than the southern one, the latter having to comply with the proportions of the space as an integrated element of the main-court complex. The northern iwân opens onto a garden which, until quite recently, was said to have contained pistachio trees. This arrangement is probably an element transposed from the domestic architecture of Aleppo, more precisely from the pleasure palaces, where iwâns are built especially overlooking the gardens. At the same time, in this case it may have the served as a place for teaching, especially in the summer, because the iwân doesn't get any direct sun and, as was mentioned earlier, catches the cool summer breeze.

The iwân as a general architectural element in Aleppo may have served several functions. As a ceremonial hall, it was the place in which we find the seat of honour, or the place where a public address could be given. In Ibn Shihna there is a description of a ceremony (protocole) on the day of the Mawkah, or procession:

Le gouverneur franchit la porte. Le grand-chambellan, son bâton à la main, s'avance et l'escorte jusque près de l'iwân sous lequel il doit siéger; cet iwân fait face à la porte principe (de la salle), dont aucun rideau ou voile ne le sépare.

The iwân was also considered a place for pleasure in much of the domestic architecture of Aleppo. This pleasure consisted in the view of a garden or court, and a fountain or water basin. Thus, we find frequent mention in the sources of the use of the iwân in such a context. In his description of Dâr al-Minqâr, Ibn Shihna says, in Sauvaget's words that: "c'est aujourd'hui une vaste demeure où l'émir ... constitue une grande qâ'a et en dehors de celle-ci, un iwân digne de celui de Cosroès, avec un bassin

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1 This according to the testimony of the people living there. Also, see Cadastra Plan, fig. 20, and figs. 80c-d.

2 It is noteworthy that a later Mamluk monument on the main road, just before al-Firdaus, shows an open iwân with a mausoleum. This is an example of an open iwân used as a prayer-hall and may have been inspired by the Madrasa al-Firdaus, (see fig.).

et un jardin." 1 He also mentions that al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi in his palace in the Citadel "construisit des appartements, des chambres, des bains et il fit dans l’axe de l’iwān, un vaste jardin avec toutes sortes de fleurs." 2 There is another description in Ibn Shihna which refers to a madrasa, specifically the Madrasa of Ibn al-Ajami, in which he says: "Cette madrasa est aujourd’hui contigue au rempart et il y a dans son iwān nord une fenêtre qui domine le fossé de la ville... les Banoū l’Ajami venaient à cette madrasa pour prendre l’air." 3 Ibn al-Ajami himself describes an iwān in the Zawiya of Shaikh Khidr, which was originally a pleasure palace, and says that it contained a water-basin and an iwān overlooking the river and gardens. 4

This brief historical digression was necessary in order to support our conclusion that the northern iwān in Madrasa al-Firdaus faced a garden, and not the street, as has been proposed. 5 This is specifically supported by Ibn Ajami who says: "Il s’y trouve un bassin qu’alimentait en eau une machine élévatoire située à l’extérieur, dans le jardin de la madrasa, à côté duquel est un grand iwān, en pierres de dimensions énormes." 6

Tabbā’a compares Madrasa al-Firdaus to al-Mustansiriya in Baghdad, which he said also contained an exterior iwān, where this iwān served a similar function, i.e. that of providing a public area in which the madrasa interacted with the outside world, at the same time shielding its more intimate parts from disturbance. Tabbā’a also mentions the Madrasa al-ʿAdliya al-Kubrā, containing a room to the right of the entrance, which he says may have served a similar function. 7 However, all the sources, in the case of Madrasa al-Firdaus, mentioning the garden and the remains of the sahīrīg northeast of the iwān all tend to prove the opposite. The northern iwān, in my opinion, was probably the most private and most desirable place for the people of the madrasa to sit in summer.

2 Ibn Shihna, trans. Sauvaget, Perles Choisis, pp. 44.
5 Al-Tabbā’a, Architectural Patronage, p. 192.
7 Al-Tabbā’a, Architectural Patronage, pp. 191-192.
As for Herzfeld, he proposes a very far-fetched solution to the problem. "La présence de cet iwân qui s'adosse mais sans communication, contre l'iwân de la cour, pourrait faire croire que d'autres bâtiments subordonnés au Firdaus, lui faisaient face de l'autre côté de la rue." 1 This is a bit difficult to accept because it would mean doubling the size of the madrasa. One would need a building large enough to balance out the huge iwân. The dimensions of the whole madrasa would have been tremendously large. As it is, it is already considered to be very large, if not the largest of the madrasas of Aleppo. 2 If we would assume the existence of another set of hypothetical buildings, we would have to also assume the existence of second large sahn. If we combine this with the existing sahns, we would be creating a type of madrasa architecture that in its design would be unacceptable. The design of the existing madrasa is already considered to be quite unusual and unique in the history of the architecture of Aleppo.

Herzfeld continues to speculate on the possible functions of the iwân by relating it to the Persain tâq :

Mais dans l'ensemble du plan, cet iwân devait être l'entrée principale. Avec les deux corps de bâtiment fermés qui le flanquent, il joue le même rôle que les grands tâq, iwâns, entre les corps de logis des palais sassanides et 'abbâsides. Il occupe la place de l'entrée principale, mais ne fonctionne plus comme tel.... Deux corridors longs et étroits qui le flanquent et mènent à la cour, témoignent encore de son rôle comme entrée. 3

As was mentioned earlier, the main architectural concept in a mosque or madrasa is the directional emphasis towards the qibla. Thus, anyone entering the mosque or madrasa is immediately directed towards that direction, specifically the place of prayer. The position of the northern iwân on the central axis of the madrasa gives an emphatic and ceremonial feel to the plan but only on paper. When one enters the actual main

1 Herzfeld. MCL, p. 301.
2 "... la plus grande et la plus riche des madrasas d'Alep." Herzfeld. MCL, p. 302.
3 Herzfeld. MCL, p. 301.
court complex, one is not aware of this northern iwân, and the two doors leading to the corridors on both sides of the iwân are neither imposing nor monumental in any way. (See figs. 60a-c). The centrality of the iwân and its direction are not the result of Herzfeld's suggested function as a main and central entrance portal. It may be that these elements and the centrality are the same, but these have been transposed and used in a totally different manner, to serve a totally different purpose.

We would suggest that this iwân served several possible functions. Earlier we discussed the importance which the founders attached to their foundations, for example, in the case of al-Zâhir al-Ghâzî who himself attended lectures given by Shaikh Diâ' al-Dîn Abû al-Ma'âllî in al-Zâhirîyya. We also suggested earlier, that there was a concern for the spiritual welfare of women in Ayyubid times and places were frequently provided for women in the madrasas. This would lead us to suggest that the Queen and founder of the madrasa may have wished to attend some of the lectures given in her own madrasa. The strategic position of the northern iwân, opening as it does onto the main iwân of the madrasa, may have provided the perfect and most honorable place for the queen to take part in these lessons, providing a private and secluded area for both prayer, contemplation and listening, but at the same time allowing for contact with what was going on in the madrasa itself.

The western and eastern qâ'a's on either side of the northern iwân.

(See figs. 69a-e,70a,89.) These two qâ'a's are small semi-independent complexes within the madrasa. They open onto their own sahns, and they have access to the outside of the madrasa without having to go through the main entrance (see fig.39). These qâ'a's that are built in two storeys (see fig.43), probably functioned, as Wirth suggests, as lodgings for the students. At the same time, we can assume that they were probably used during the day for other purposes. These might have included functioning as a Dâr al-Ḥadîth. The sources mention that there was a zawiya in the

madrasa for a Dâr al-Ḥadith. ¹ One of these qâ’a’s would have been ideal for providing the space for such instruction. We should remember that in the zawiya, as an institution during Ayyubid times, the disciples slept in the zawiya where their Shaikh lived.

La grande-mosquée neuve... à Banqoïsa....
Le Cheikh Ahmad al-Ḥanafi al-Qaṣîr, qui etudiait la doctrine des soufis et manifestait un penchant pour la mystique, a fondé de toutes pièces une zaouïâ à l’Est de cette mosquée, sur laquelle il lui ménagea une fenêtre; il fréquentait assidûment cette zaouïâ, où les derviches venaient habiter avec lui.... ²

This kind of arrangement would have been made possible by the very arrangement of the qâ’a’s and at the same time explains why, most unusually, Madrasa al-Firdaus contains no khalwas, or seclusion cells, as did most of the madrasas of the time. This also may be the reason why one of the qâ’a’s is named, until the present day, the Ribâṭ. (See fig.37).

It is possible that the other qâ’a ³ was used as private accommodation to house the Shaikh’s, or Imâm’s family. Inside the city, the houses of the shaikhs and imâms who taught and prayed at the madrasa or mosque could be located in the proximity of the building but in the case of Madrasa al-Firdaus, which was located extra-muros, housing was not readily available. (We mentioned earlier, that there was no housing agglomeration near al-Firdaus in Ayyubid times.) Also, the fact that the tomb of the first shaikh and instructor Aḥmad al-Khabûrî, as well as his wife, children, and servant at Madrasa al-Firdaus is located in the western Mausoleum, leads us to the conclusion that this qâ’a may have been reserved for the shaikh in-residence and his family. Later, beginning with the early Ottoman period, houses were attached to and built around Madrasa al-Firdaus (see figs.89b,d, and e), probably to house the extended families of the shaikhs, and even perhaps the families of the students at the madrasa. ⁴

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³ We would suggest the western qâ’a, since this is the most private and at the same time has an independent entrance to the garden. See fig. 39a.
⁴ The present shaikh in charge of the keys lives just opposite the madrasa.
It is clear that this second part of the Madrasa al-Firdaus contains an ingenious architectural innovation which is particular to al-Firdaus and is unique in the architectural history of Aleppo, as well as that of Syria. This northern section of the madrasa provides a private area, out of reach to the strangers who might just come to visit and pray in the mosque area and the public space of the main court area. The northern iwān provided access to the garden area but only "habitués" would know how to reach that iwān, through the long corridors closed off by doors at the main court.

The garden and the iwān would provide the teachers and students with a place to relax and an area that was significantly cooled by a breeze in the hot summer. The qā‘a’s themselves are private little islands within the madrasa itself. Independent and self-sufficient, they have their own little piece of sky, an open court, an iwān, as well as all the necessary facilities.

The Garden and the Cave. Gardens must have originally surrounded the whole madrasa (see figs. 80c and 80e) but the main garden, which is mentioned in the sources, was opposite the iwān. As was mentioned earlier, there was a water cistern, or sahrig, and a water wheel, or noria, to distribute water to the different part of the madrasa. The cistern was located slightly to the northeast of the iwān (see fig. 71).

There is also an interesting underground cave in the garden (see figs. 73a,b,c,74a and b). The interior is roughly hewn and its approximate shape,(see fig.74a and b) indicates a central space, which is opened to the surface by means of a round hole (now covered with wooden beams and some earth for aeration. With the exception of the entrance in one side, the other three sides are shaped like recesses, or small iwāns. ¹

Although the origins of the cave will remain obscure, we know that the Firdaus quarter was an extention of the area of the maghā‘ir, or caves. This quarter (see fig.

¹ It was impossible to take any measurements, much less move around inside the cave, because it was packed with straw for the horses and sheep stabled inside the cave. See figs. 73b-e. I would estimate it to be thirty to forty meters square. See fig. 74b.
6), is full of caves, carved underground, some of them quite large (see fig. 72a). According to Saouaf the primitive habitations were located in large caves south of the city, near the water. Entrances to these caves can still be found near Bāb al-Maqām. Some of them can also be found in the northwestern part of the city. These caves were generally well designed inside, with carved mastabs and cells which could have served as rooms for lodging people. Another possibility is that this cave was originally a quarry which provided some of the stones for the building of the madrasa. "On a également extrait la pierre de carrières souterraines dans certaines parties de la périphérie de la ville. Ces souterrains constituent une curiosité d'Alep et sont l'objet d'un certain nombre de légendes." Godard adds that the stone which could be extracted in this area was ideally suited for construction. Baedeker also says that in the area south of the city near Bāb al-Maqām "il y a plusieurs grottes, la plupart probablement d'anciennes carrières." We can speculate as to the possible functions of this cave by referring to the sources. It could be the funerary cave mentioned in Ibn Ajami. It could also easily have served as a refuge in winter time. A third possibility is that it served as the madrasa's sewage pit or well, and was dug at that time to serve that purpose. This latter possibility would have to be explored in greater detail. From the sources, however, we do learn that, for example, in the description of the Madrasa al-Sharafiya:

... il avait sa canalisation souterraine (sarāb) de vidange qui aboutissant en dehors de la ville et était réservé exclusivement à la madrasa. Le local à ablutions de la madrasa a été pourvu d'un puits à margelle (tannouîra) en dehors de l'édifice, vers le Nord, et couvert de bois, les immondices s'y accumulent dans les fosses.

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2 Godard. Alep. p. 5.
4 According to the old guardian's account it was used in cold winter nights for the making of dhikr, or remembrance of God. The winter in Aleppo can be intolerably cold and when I visited it was particularly cold outside, but in the cave it was quite warm.
jusqu'à ce qu'elles débordent dans l'égout. Lorsqu'on a creusé ce puits perdu, on prit pour le couvrir le bois du portique Nord.  

We can conclude, therefore, that there must have been a pit that existed in the garden where the sewage collected, and that when it reached a certain level, it went into a drainage pipe. This cave may well have served that purpose.

The water supply to the madrasa was covered in a variety of ways. The cistern in the garden outside the northern īwān is probably the one mentioned in Ibn Ajami (see earlier quote), 2 and supplied the madrasa with well water. The adjacent noria, or dawlab, provided the necessary pressure for the latrines and the fountain, and other possible domestic purposes.

The other main source of water was rain water collected in the rainy season on top of the roof. A clever system of collection and distribution was worked out (see figs.76,78a-c,79a and b). We can clearly see the original design on the roof above the sanctuary and the riwāqs (the section above the northern īwān is a later addition and has therefore probably altered the original Ayyubid design, see fig.78b). The roof is inclined in order to let the water from around the domes and above the riwāqs collect in a relatively deep central channel, which in turn was inclined to feed the water into several different holes. In addition to this system it is noteworthy that the two northern qā'a's also had their own rain-water cisterns.

In addition to the above supplies of water, the Madrasa al-Firdaus may have been connected to a wider water network. In order to determine this more definitely, detailed excavations would have to be made. According to the sources, this suggestion seems quite possible. By basing ourselves on these and the study of Sauvaget (see map of canalisation, fig. 75) we are well within reason to suggest such a possibility.

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1 Ibn 'Ajami. trans. Sauvaget. Trésors d'Or, pp. 74-75.
2 A peasant living across the way showed me two large rectangular stones, half buried in the ground, (see fig. 71) and said that he uncovered these stones while driving his tractor. These stones probably formed part of the this cistern.
According to Ibn Shaddād, the city water supply which is relevant to the Maqāmāt area was the one that came from the Masbagha, or Masnā', and went to Bāb al-'Irāq. The water entered a qastal, or cistern, where it was divided into two: one part went to Bāb al-'Irāq itself and the other went to Bāb Qatī'ā and Qal'at Sherif. The one that proceeded to Bāb al-'Irāq ended in another qastal just inside Bāb al-'Irāq. The water flowed out of it and continued outside the city walls where it collected in a great water reservoir, or Ḥuḍ 'Ādhim. From out of this reservoir, there was a non-stop flow of water going into three canals. One of these passed in front of Bāb al-Maqām and ended in a qastal near Masjid al-Arāhī. From this qastal the water went to a madrasa, renewed as a mausoleum by al-Zāhīr al-Ghāzi, and collected in a pool. From there, the water divided into a further two channels, one of which ended in a pool in front of Khān al-Sabil built by Ṣayf al-Dīn Alām ibn Jaudar, and water flowed from it day and night. The other channel continued past the khān.

Ibn al-Shihna concludes that "l’eau de cette canalisation arriva sous son règne [Al Malek az-Zāhīr Ghāzi] dans des endroits où elle n’était jamais parvenue, même dans le Ḥāḍir Solaymānî."  

**The Exterior.** The general outward appearance of the building is fortress-like. It presents plain high masonry walls with very few openings, these being covered with iron bars. This kind of protection for the windows is also found in the Madrasa al-Zāhiriya and the Madrasa al-Kāmilīya (see figs. 82a-b), but in both cases they are built claustras. In the case of al-Zāhiriya most of the openings were arrow-slits (see figs. 82c-d). This was obviously done for purposes of security. Since the madrasa was located outside the city walls during a period of great turmoil, it needed a greater

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1 The following section is summarized from Ibn Shaddād. Ibn Shaddād. Al-A’laq, p.148-149.
2 According to Ibn al-Shihna: "De notre temps on a amené l’eau de cet aqueduc jusqu’en dehors de la Porte du Maqām, près de la Madrasa Jamāliya." Ibn Shihna, trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisis, pp. 160. Further, we know that the Madrasa Jamāliya was built by a Zāhiri emir and that near was a "puits, au bord du chemin." Ibn Shihna, trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisis, pp. 131-132. We can therefore conclude that the madrasa in question is the Madrasa Jamāliya.
measure of security. That these madrasas were defensible structures can be found in the
testimony of Ibn Shihna, who, in the words of Sauvaget, describes how the Madrasa
al-Zâhiriyâ fought against the Mongols: "Cette madrasa se défendit un jour contre les
Mongols qui voulaient arracher son linteau (ou: son seuil - 'otba): ceux qui y habitaient
creusèrent un trou d'assomoir (saqqâta) au-dessus de sa porte et repoussèrent les
assaillants en leur jetant des pierres." 1

The masonry of the exterior of Madrasa al-Firdaus is also noteworthy. For
connoisseurs this masonry work is quite beautiful and Aboû Darr says:

Au sud d'Alep, en dehors de la Porte du Maqâm, au sud du
Paradis: près d'elle [Madrasa Jamâliya] est un puits, au bord du
chemin.... On dit que ses pierres ont été prises parmi celles qui
avaient été réunies pour la construction du Paradis, aussi la bâtisse
en devint-elle très belle et l'appareillage en est-il parfait...." 2

The need for defence and the prevailing Ayyubid aesthetic combined to show a
total 'dénuement' and sobriety, with no facade decoration or exterior display. This is in
contrast to later Mamluk architectural aesthetic which tended to sculpted and articulated
facades and exteriors (see figs. 99a-d, and 100).

**Entrance Portal.** The severity of the exterior is somewhat softened and yet,
at the same time, heightened by the beautifully carved and imposing monumental
stalactite portal (see fig. 83). The portal does not project, but is slightly recessed, and
is almost in the middle of the main facade (see fig.84a). Herzfeld has a very detailed
drawing of this portal with its magnificent muqarnas work and it is worth quoting his
detailed description:

La baie du portail...a une cemi-coupoole à trois rangeé
d'âlveoles et de consoles en encorbellement. La ligne de sa
naissance est horizontale, à la maniere iranienne. Les trompes des

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coins occupent la hauteur de deux rangées d'alvéoles par une
alvéole creux, accentué par son ombre dans l'ensemble des
cellules. (...) La clef est une grande conque construite en vrais
voussoirs.

La porte même a un lourd linteau sans décor et un arc de
décharge dissimulé derrière trois dalles verticales.¹

On either side of the door of the portal there are two mastabas. Above the lintel
there is a tirâz band, a carved inscription, in a similar style as the one that is inside the
building around the courtyard (see fig. 84e). The band continues around on the three
walls of the portal and proceeds all along the façade walls on both sides of the portal.
Over the inscription band, on both sides of the portal, there is a moulded cornice,
simple and curved. It is interrupted over the portal, probably for emphasis. On the
southern side of the wall facade, near the portal, there is a foundation inscription
with a date, located above a window.

Roe, in her study on portals, concludes that, taken as a whole, the Syrian
stalactite portals are the same. In the case of the Firdaus portal we see a standardized
form. ² She places it in her typology of these portals as the fifth example of madrasa
portals in Aleppo. ³ Herzfeld places it after the Shâdhbakhtîya. ⁴ We also know how
these portals were constructed from Ecochard's useful study on the methods of
construction. ⁵

But apart from all of this we can concur with Roe when she says: "The
magnificence of these Syrian portals lies in the technical virtuosity of their crafting and
assemblage...their simplicity and their starkness." ⁶ Much of this beauty is implied in
the symbolic meaning of the portal. It is the threshold between the private and the

¹ Herzfeld. MCL, p. 301.
² Hilary Roe. The Bahri Mamluk Monumental Entrance of Cairo: A Survey and Analysis of Intra-
25 and 28. (Hereafter Roe. M.A. Thesis.)
³ Roe. M.A. Thesis, pp. 25
⁴ Herzfeld, MCL, p. 305.
⁵ Michel Ecochard. "Notes d'archéologie musulmane. Stéréotomie de deux portails du XIIe siècle,"
⁶ Roe. M.A. Thesis, pp. 27.
public sphere, the secular and the sacred. In the case of Madrasa al-Firdaus the meanings are heightened by the monumentalized doorway and the striking contrast between the portal and the plain, sober facade. The tirāz band reinforces this effect by focusing the attention on the portal, the center and focus of the whole facade.

In addition to this monumental entrance, there is a very modest, unassuming doorway which constitutes the secondary entrance to the madrasa. This entrance, in all likelihood, was used by the teachers at the madrasa. This is confirmed by a textual reference in Ibn Shihna, who is citing Ibn Shaddād, in reference to the Madrasa al-Zajajiyya. He says, in Sauvaget’s words: "Cette madrasa possède à côté de son entrée principale, une petite porte réservée au professeurs;...." 1 Other madrasas mentioned which have two doors are the Mosque of Alṭirboghâ, 2 Madrasa al-Aqjâ 3, and Madrasa al-Kāmilīya in the Maqamāt (see fig. 88).

All the walls of the madrasa are pierced at regular intervals by windows which, according to Ibn Ajami, permitted the viewer beautiful vistas onto the surrounding gardens. 4 On the whole, despite its formidable and severe exterior, the jewels of the portal and the tirāz band are heightened in this simple setting.

The minaret. The minaret is actually a later addition. Herzfeld mistakenly attributes it to part of the original construction and therefore also places it in the third phase of cylindrical Ayyubid minarets. 5 Herzfeld bases himself on the fact that there is a similar minaret in Madrasa al-Ṣuṭḥāniyya, Ma‘arrat Nu‘mān, and Maqām Ibrāhīm in the Šāliḥiyn area. But in this latter case, too, there is a clear difference in the masonry, proving that this minaret, like Firdaus, is a later addition also. An examination of the base of the minaret clearly shows a break in bond (see fig. 87c).

3 Ibn Shihna, trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisis, pp. 175, footnote 1. "Elle a été fondée par Agjâ.... Il lui fit deux portes...."
5 Herzfeld. MCl, p. 302.
Sauvaget, Lauffrey and Talas all date the Şultāniyya minaret to the Mamluk period.\(^1\) This is also most evident in the masonry. In conclusion we can say that as a rule the Ayyubid madrasas did not have minarets. It is for this reason that Sauvaget, in speaking about the Mamluk period, says: "D’autre part à l’encontre des médressés ayyoubides ces mosquées sont régulièrement pourvues de minarets construits suivant un type nouveau."\(^2\) According to our limited research in this area, we have not encountered original minarets in Ayyubid madrasas in Aleppo. It is well known that minarets were frequently added, in different periods, to buildings whose original purpose was not that of a religious building. These might include zawiyyas that used to be domestic houses, or former pleasure palaces, or as in the case of the Madrasa Saffāhiyya, a sesame press.\(^3\) We even find the case of the Madrasa al-Nāsirīyya which was originally a synagogue and was then transformed into a madrasa in 727 / 1327.\(^4\) Ibn Ajami also mentions the "Alamiyya: "...près de la mosquée d’Altoûnboğâ vers le sud. Elle a un minaret qui a été construit par ..."\(^5\) Ibn Shihna cites another example of the Zawiyah d'al-Atānī. "Cette zâwiya comporte des locaux d’habitation et un minaret construit récemment par le ḥājj ʿAbd al-Qaṣṣâr." The addition of a minaret to any such building was considered a major act of piety. In all of the cases we have cited one can also note that the minarets have been added during the Mamluk period. That is not to say that during the Mamluk period madrasas were not built with minarets; an example of such a madrasa is the Madrasa Zaydiyya.\(^7\)

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5. Ibn 'Ajami, trans. Sauvaget. *Trésors d'Or*, p.124-125. [n.b, the name is also missing in the original manuscript]
The minaret of Madrasa al-Firdaus does not fit with a building that was designed
with such ingenuity. To reach it the muezzin has to climb to the roof (see fig. 39c),
walk a short distance across the roof in order to climb another flight of stairs, in order
to reach a higher platform where the minaret is located. He then climbs into a tiny short
stairway within the minaret itself (see figs. 37b and 87a).

It is not only Madrasa al-Firdaus which had a minaret added to it. There is
evidence that other madrasas near al-Firdaus, as well as inside the city walls, do not
seem to have had minarets originally. We also know that very early on in the Aleppine
tradition, it was customary to put the minaret over or next to the doorway, as for
example in the Qasat al-Shu‘abiya. This tradition was even carried over into Mamlük
times and into the Ottoman period. In the case, however, of Madrasa al-Firdaus, even
if they had wanted to place it over or next to the doorway, the structure would not have
allowed it. This may explain its rather odd, present location.

The style of the minaret is late Ottoman and might even be an early 'Post-
Ottoman' style. There are two other Ottoman minarets in Aleppo, Intra-muros, which
show a similar style of construction (see figs. 86a-b). The extremely short
proportions of the minaret probably have structural causes, these being the heavy
weight of the platform and other later hybrid additions over the iwâns. In effect, the
height of the iwân was already significant enough, so that the minaret did not need to be
any higher than it is for the voice of the muezzin to be effective.

The tops of minarets were generally covered in the Ottoman period with a
conical metal cover. We can only speculate as to whether or not Madrasa al-Firdaus's
minaret, if it is a construction from this period, had one of these covers; however, one
may present an interesting parallel. In figures 86a and 86b we see two pictures of
two different Ottoman minarets in Aleppo. We can see one that one still has this cover,
whereas in the other, the cover has been removed and we can see clearly the shape of a
small dome, bearing a striking resemblance to that of the minaret of al-Firdaus.¹

¹ I would like to also add that according to the oral testimony of the caretaker of the mosque, the
minaret was built in 1250 A.H., i.e. the Post-Ottoman period.
this Yahya to whom Herzfeld is referring when he says: "The unequaled master was Yahyā; Mu‘āli was his partner; the atelier was at Aleppo, and Yahyā, Mu‘āli, and sons produced not only the most famous masterpieces of medieval Islam in marquetry of wood, but also of marble." 1 Thus, two other sons of Yahyā signed their work on the minbar of the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. 2 According to Herzfeld, the decoration above the mihrāb dome is a transposition from woodwork, called muqandal (cusped moulding) and which consists of big knots, or 'uqda, sculpted in relief. 3 Above the pattern there is a semi-circular capping in the band of which we have inscribed an excerpt of ayāts 17-23 of Surat Ṣād, whose lines, besides their obvious symbolic content, contain the word mihrāb.

We now come to what is our most significant discovery concerning the pattern over the mihrāb dome. That this pattern clearly contains a message underneath its geometrical intertwining motifs might not have been obvious to the uninitiated.

For a Muslim artist or - what comes to the same thing - a craftsman who has to decorate a surface, geometrical interlacement doubtless represents the most intellectually satisfying form, for it is an extremely direct expression of the idea of the Divine Unity underlying the inexhaustible variety of the world. 4

The message itself, once deciphered, is quite clear (see figs.91-94): Lā ilāha illa Allāh, Muhammad Rasul Allāh, or the two testimonies of faith: the declaration of Divine Unity and the declaration of the Prophethood of Muḥammad, peace be upon him.

Burckhardt continues his remarks on the mihrab. "It may seem surprising that a form such as the mihrab which is, after all, simply an accessory to the liturgy, should be the focus of a particularly rich and profound symbolism. But this is implicit proof of

2 Herzfeld. MCI, p. 241.
3 Herzfeld. MCI, p. 259.
the link between sacred art and esoterism, the 'science of the inward' (‘ilm al-bāṭin)."

1 This link was kept alive in the Islamic world by the brotherhood system in the crafts and the master-student relationship within that system. Thus, Ibn Ajami says about the Madrasa al-Sharafiya:

Cette madrasa est bâtie en pierre de grand appareil: sa vue délate de joie la poitrine. Comment en serait-il autrement alors qu'elle a été construite par le maître (mo'allim), le cheikh de la confrérie [emphasis mine], Aboû Bakr an-Nasba,... son nom est inscrit au-dessus du mihrab, et celui du tailleur de pierre (mahlât): Abou-ṭ-Ṭanâ' b. Ya'qûb, au dessus de la porte. 2

We also know from the sources that even at the time, these mihrābs were considered to be marvels of perfection and exhibit a mastery in the marble decoration which was unique. Thus, Ibn Shihna in quoting from Abû Darr's description of the mihrāb of the Madrasa al-Ṣultaniyya, says in Sauvaget's words: "Son mihrāb est une des merveilles du monde, tant par la beauté de ses marbres que par la perfection avec laquelle ils ont été assemblés. Tamerlan voulait l'emporter mais on lui dit que si on le démontait il serait impossible de le remonter selon sa disposition primitive, et il le laissa." 3

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2 Ibn 'Ajami, trans. Sauvaget. Trésors d'Or, p. According to Ahmad. Muitama’a, p. 105-106 and 111-113, the head of the brotherhood was elected by the masters of the craft. Some later traditional Mamluk sources say that the shaikh was chosen from the ‘Arifin, or those that have knowledge, in matters of architecture and building. (A famous example that is often cited is that of Abu al-Fadl al-Dimashqi who died in 599 A.H.. He was first of all a carpenter, but he also had knowledge of masonry-work, mathematics and Euclidian theory, medicine, and was known as a poet and man of literature.) But a major criterion was also good character, piety and good moral conduct. Thus, it was the duty of the Shaikh not only to encourage his craftsmen to work but he was also responsible for encouraging them to pay attention to their religious duties. This is confirmed by several textual references in Ibn Shihna and Ibn al-Ajami, the former mentioning in Sauvaget's translation, "Hajj Abd Allah, le menuisier, homme de bien,..." (Ibn Shihna, trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisits, pp. 73,74). Ibn Ajami, in Sauvaget's translation, says about the khaza’in, or storage closets, of the Mosque of Mankliboghâ, that they are "chefs-d’œuvres de menuisiers. On m’a dit qu’ils étaient dûs au cheikh Farîkê, personnage plein de mérites, qui était menuisier-charpentier." Ibn ‘Ajami, trans. Sauvaget. Trésors d’Or, p. 41.
The link between sacred art and esoterism is nowhere more apparent than in the tirāz band which runs all around the sahn. The naskhi inscription \(^1\) on this band, (originally colored in blue and white and of which only a faint remnant can be seen [see fig. 103b]), celebrates in classical Sufi poetry the people of God and their love of God. The beautiful frieze surrounds the walls around the sahn and continues inside the īwān. The eye of the visitor and the students at the madrasa must have fallen frequently upon the inspiring lines of this poem. For the full Arabic text and French translation, see Appendix B.

HARMONY AND PROPORTIONS

Measures

Herzfeld study shows that the builders used the following measures. The basis for his calculations were these:

...la cour intérieur(e) est un carré parfait de 12 m. 70 de côté, avec des colonnades ...; l'espace à ciel ouvert mesure 13 m. 09 sur 17 m. 45, relation 3:4. Ces mesures et relations ont un diviseur commun 0 m. 87266, qui est la longueur de la coudée double, employée par les architectes. L'espace ouvert de la cour mesure 30 coudées simples sur 40, la cour 50 sur 50. La portée de voûtes du sanctuaire est de 7 m. 27, les ouvertures de leurs murs ont toutes 2 m. 90. La coudée double était donc subdivisée en trois pieds de 0 m. 29.088, ce qui donne 10 pieds pour les ouvertures, 25 pieds pour la portée des voûtes. Le grand iwân de la cour... a 8 m. 72 sur 9 m. 55; c'est-à-dire 10 coudées doubles sur 11, ou 30 sur 33 pieds. ¹

Modules

A study of the Madrasa al-Firdaus shows that a number of modules were systematically used to achieve a harmony of proportion and space ² which are the outstanding features of this madrasa. These modules are: Phi (Φ), the Golden Section, the square root of 2 (√2) and Pi (Π). In addition to these, we discover a consistent use of the circle and the square. (for all of the following, see figs. 128 and 129).

¹ Herzfeld. MCI, p. 300.
That these modules are the determining factors in creating a sense of beauty and harmony that is tangibly extraordinary in Madrasa al-Firdaus cannot be doubted. In a study on the Golden Section as manifested in some French impressionist painters of the 20th century, Guila Ballas, examines the significance of this geometrical measure. Since, as will be shown, this measure forms the basis of the geometry of Madrasa al-Firdaus, it is worth reproducing some of his remarks.

Or le nombre d'or n'était que trop considéré, depuis l'Antiquité, comme une "proportion divine" [the author cites Luca Pacioli's treatise De Divina Proportione, (Venice, 1509) illustrated by Leonarda da Vinci] imbue de significations mythiques et ésotériques. (...) La propriété la plus intéressante de la proportion définissant le nombre d'or en tant que proportion géométrique au sein d'un rectangle consiste en ce qu'elle est "une progression continue et asymétrique que se développe sur elle-même et, par ce fait, devient équilibrée. Appliquée à la longeur des côtés d'un rectangle, elle comporte un sentiment d'ordre et de diversité dans les aspects propres à éloigner toute monotonie. Le rapport de la section d'or répond entièrement à la nécessité d'introduire une certaine variété à l'unité par ce fait qu'il apporte avec lui un maximum d'unité et il s'établit sur un lien profond et renouvelé de ses formes n'exulant pas la diversité indispensable". [The author is citing A. Lurçat. Formes, compositions et lois d'harmonie. Éléments d'une science de l'esthétique architectural. Paris: 1955, V, pp. 60-61].

Central sahn and adjacent architectural elements

Ground plan. The central sahn is the central geometrical space of the whole madrasa and must have been the starting point for the design of the madrasa. It constitutes a rectangle in the proportions 3-4-5, based on the Golden Section of Pythagoras. The central element of the design of the sahn and, therefore, of the

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madrasa, is the fountain. The octagonal shape of the fountain fits exactly into the
diagonals of this Golden Section. In the direction of the qibla the diagonals of the basic
square which is inscribed in this Golden section were extended to form a larger
square and thus created the side riwāqs.

The $\sqrt{2}$ taken from the extended square of central sahn and riwāqs, created the
qibliya and the side-aisles.

The same dimensions of the basic square of the Golden Section which were
used to establish the diagonals of the qibliya and the riwāqs were then used to establish
the southern iwān.

The extensions of the diagonals of the square of the central sahn form another
pair of perfect squares for the mausolea on either side of the prayer-hall.

The inside spaces of each of the side-aisles as well as the prayer-hall show
perfect proportions on the basis of $\Pi$.

The northern Iwān's inner space is also a rectangle based on the Golden Section.

Sections and Elevations. There is a close relationship between the ground
plan and the elevations. When looking south to the qibla from the main sahn the
elevation that the viewer perceives is one of two $\Pi$ elements. The lower element ends at
the top of the arches of the riwāq and the upper element ends with the top of the qibla
dome. A perfect circle forms the elevation of the three central southern arches and the
mihrāb dome thus creating a harmonious perspective for the viewer. Furthermore, the
arches are all a doubling of two perfect squares, in the center of the lower $\Pi$ element.

The side mausolea form the Golden Module in section. This Golden Rectangle
corresponds exactly in size to the Golden Rectangle of the northern iwān.

The side-aisles, both eastern and western being duplicates, show in elevation,
when viewed from the sahn, a Golden Section which corresponds exactly in size to the
Golden Section of the central sahn. This section includes the four arches of the side-
aisle to be seen in elevation, and ends with the top of the domes of the side-aisles. Each
one of the four arches is a double square (as in the elevation of the arches of the prayer-
hall) and each pair of arches in turn forms a larger perfect square. In section, the whole
of the riwāq in front of the side-aisle forms a proportion of Π which is exactly the same size as the ground plan space of the side-aisle.

In section, the prayer-hall with the mihrāb dome creates a space which is a perfect double square.

The section of the southern īwān is a perfect square. The section of the northern īwān is a Golden Section which is exactly the same dimension as the ground plan of the īwān.

Eastern and western qā‘a’s and adjacent architectural elements

Ground plan. The sahn of the western qā‘a is a perfect square with center marked by the fountain. The fountain marks, as in the central sahn of the madrasa, the center of the open space. The three īwāns of the western qā‘a complex are created by taking Φ from the square. The extensions of the diagonals of the central square form two side rooms, on each side of the southern īwān of the western qā‘a, which are perfect squares. The northern īwān of the qā‘a is created by taking √2 from the central square.

The sahn of the eastern qā‘a is also a perfect square. The place of the fountain is not exactly known because it was destroyed, but we can assume, given the location of the other two fountains in the madrasa, that it, too, was in the center of the open area. The eastern and western spaces are created by √2 taken from the central square. The southern īwān is created by Φ taken from the central square. The northern īwān is a rectangle in the proportions of the Golden Section.

Sections and Elevations. In the lateral section, the large northern īwān is also a Golden Section exactly the same size as its ground plan and its longitudinal section.

As for the section of the western qā‘a, the main space including the sahn and the western īwān form a Golden Section in the same dimensions as the northern īwān. And

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1 J.C. David in some of his studies has shown that the central point of the geometry of space in domestic architecture is also the fountain. See fig. 41 and 43 in David, L’espace, pp. 38-47.
the eastern iwān is created by taking √2 from the basic square inscribed in this Golden Section.

The section of the eastern qa‘a is inscribed in a Golden Section the same size as the northern iwān and that of the western qa‘a.

In the elevations of the western qa‘a, the northern and southern elevations are the same in proportion and the eastern and western elevations are the same. We will restrict our discussion to one of each of these because of this similarity.

The southern elevation is created by a square and taking a √2 over this square. The spaces on either side on the ground level are squares. In the northern elevation, the central arch is also formed by two perfect squares over each other, as in the central sahn of the madrasa.

The eastern elevation is created also by a square and by taking a √2 over this square. The space adjacent to it is Φ.
COMPARISONS

The architectural elements which composed an Ayyubid madrasa had already been present at the very beginning of that period. The architects simply adopted and adapted these elements from the period of Nūr al-Dīn. These recurring elements and features help us to determine the concept, design and planning of Madrasa al-Firdaus. The main elements of the plan are: the prayer-hall [with mausoleum], the iwān, the sahn, the fountain, the cells, and service areas. The façade’s main features are the portal and the occasional window. Decorational elements restrict themselves to the miḥrāb and a tirāz band on the façade and around the inside of the sahn.

Elements

A study of the plans of Ayyubid monuments demonstrates that by the time of the construction of Madrasa al-Firdaus, builders had reached a peak in the maturity of their style. The arrival of the Mamlūks signals the arrival of new direction in both plan and façade intended to suit the taste of the new patrons. (See figs. 98,99,100).

The Prayer-Hall. The early prayer-halls were like those of Madrasa al-Firdaus: tri-partite and longitudinal. There was a difference in the expression, however, in that the middle room containing the miḥrāb was covered by a cross-vault, while the two side-rooms were barrel-vaulted and opening onto the middle room, e.g. Jāmi‘ Hajjarīn and Madrasa Muqaddamiya (Khān Tutūn (see figs. 106a and 107). More developed prayer-halls had a dome over the central miḥrāb hall and barrel vaults on either side (see figs. 111-113). The next step in this development was to have the three divisions covered by domes, but making the middle, or miḥrāb dome, higher than the other two.

In the next stage, a mausoleum was added to one side of the tri-partite prayer-hall, as in Mashhad al-Mahāssin (although we must qualify this by the fact that it is possible that there was another mausoleum on the western side which was destroyed,
see fig. 105), the Madrasa al-Ṣultāniya (see fig. 118), and Turba Umm al-Afḍal (see fig. 120). The final stage of this development was the addition of mausolea on both sides of the tri-partite prayer-hall, as in Mashhad al-Ḥusain, Madrasa al-Zāhiriyah, and Madrasa al-Kāmilīyya (see figs. 110,116 and 123).

The repetition of the domes as an architectural expression came to extend over other parts of the madrasa as in the Zāhiriyah, which has two domes on the western side, Mashhad al-Muḥassin where domes where added on the northern and eastern sides, and Mashhad al-Ḥussain, in which domes have been added all around (see figs. 105,110,116). We reach a final and coherent expression of this architectural feature in Madrasa al-Firdaus, which is covered completely by domes, with the exception of the contrasting element of the iwan (see fig. 38). In contrast to the obviously well thought-out design of the Firdaus, the designs of the Mashhads of Muḥassin and Ḥusain seem almost an after-thought. The altering of the plan over a long period of time is clear in the differing types of domes and their differing sizes.

The domes, as architectural elements of design and expression, varied with the need of stressing specific elements, eg. the miḥrab or the mausoleum, in the madrasa. This variation may have occurred on the exterior or in the interior of the dome. The way in which domes, and other architectural elements, were applied in any given madrasa depended on a fluid relationship between different architectural 'schools', the latest innovations in design, and the period of time it took to construct a building. In the sources, we are reminded that a madrasa like the Sharafīyya took 40 years to complete. We find, therefore, that stylistic analysis does not fit neatly into the dates of a single building, or even group of buildings. Older architectural expressions, e.g. domes between two vaults, often existed alongside newer innovations, which took time to spread.

What is clear from our analysis, is the uniqueness of the prayer-hall and final form it took in Aleppo. It is particular to Aleppo and can be considered a major innovation which is typified in this period.
The Sahn and Fountain. The sahns are all rectangular in shape, with some more pronounced than others (see figs. 105-124). All of them contained either water-tanks, cisterns, or fountains. These latter, especially in their function as ablutionaries, started as square or rectangular shapes with one lobe on each of the four sides (see figs. 110, 116, 118). This is reminiscent of the Nūrid period (see figs. 108, 115). The Shadbakhtiyya has an octagonal tank but we cannot determine how it looked originally (see fig. 111). The final developments of the fountain, as found in the Madrasa al-Firdaus, Madrasa al-Kāmilīya and Khānqā Farafrā, are octagonal multi-lobed masterpieces of craftsmanship, combining both the utilitarian function of ablutionary with that of a major decorative element which enlivens the court by reflecting and enhancing the beauty and harmony of the architecture (see figs. 38, 123, and 124). The sound of running water must have had a calming and meditative effect on those studying or meditating in the court and adjacent rīwāqs. ¹

Colonnaded Portico. According to Creswell, the first madrasa to show evidence of a colonnaded portico is that of the al-Ẓāhirīya. A closer look, however, at the Madrasa al-Sharafiyya reveals the first attempt at having columns introduced around the court. In addition, the portico in front of the prayer hall was probably provided with columns, which have now been replaced with a modern wall, (see fig. 122). The development of this colonnade can be sequentially linked, from the sources ², so that we can say that probably the Sharafiyya was the example for the development of the colonnaded portico in the Ẓāhirīya. In Madrasa al-Firdaus, the colonnaded portico is placed on three sides of the sahn and has reached its full architectural expression in this madrasa.

¹ A major element in the treatment of mentally disturbed patients in the Maristanas of Aleppo was the sound of running water in a dark hall. This was accompanied by the sound of distant music in certain maqāmas (or musical modes) which soothed the soul. (Oral testimony of the caretaker at the Maristān Arghūn in Aleppo. This maristān was still in use until the beginning of this century.) Also see Gaube, p. 387 and H. Kamel. Encyclopedic of Islamic Medicine. Cairo: GEBO, 1975, p. 478.
² Ibn Shihna mentions that the Ẓāhirīya was inspired by the plan of the Sharafiyya. Ibn al-Shihna, trans. Sauvaget. Perles Choisies, p. 116
Iwān. Another major architectural element present in most madrasas, besides the Qibliya, is the Iwān. The one unexpected exception is the Madrasa Şultāniya. Given the special significance of the Iwān for the majlis, as discussed earlier (pp. 64 - 67), one would have expected to find one in a royal foundation such as the Şultāniya. In cases where the monuments have been badly damaged we can only speculate as to its presence or not.

Cells are to be found in most of the Madrasas. They were intended as lodgings and / or khalwas, or spiritual retreats, for the students in the khanqāhs. The Firdaus is a unique exception in this respect in that a different solution was found for the problem of lodging.

Portals. Very early on the madrasas had formalized portals. The Madrasa Muqaddimiyah, for example, still had a very simple design but with an astute execution and display of mastery which are the herald of the more complicated portals of the Mamlūk period.

With Madrasa al-Firdaus the portals have reached a full maturity of expression. According to Roe, they have by the time of al-Firdaus achieved a kind of standardised form and a peak in the mastery of crafts. Thus, we see that in the Mamlūk period the skills and extended experience of the craftsmen enabled them to execute variations on these models. But these Mamlūk portals lost the elegant simplicity of their Ayyubid predecessors and came to be overworked with detailed sculptural patterns (like fish scale patterns inside the muqarnas) which reflected the changes in taste and the ideal of beauty.

Position and orientation. The most desirable position for the portal, if the conditions of the sites permitted it, was in the middle of a side wall, preferably the eastern wall (see flgs. 105,107,110,112,113,122,123). That the site was the

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3 This was also the preferred place for the portal in domestic architecture. David. L'espace, p. 39.
determining factor can be seen in the Madrasa Shadhbakhtiya, where the portal is located on the western side to provide access to the suq (see fig. 111).

The portals did not open directly onto the court. They either opened onto an inner porch (see figs. 105,110,11,112,113,116,118,122), or onto a bent entrance, or a corridor which lead to the court, or a series of small successive rooms which alternated in width and volume (see figs. 38,107,123,124).

With two exceptions the position of the portal is non-axial with reference to the mihrab. Only the portals of the Sulṭāniya and the Zamiriya are placed symmetrically on the same axis as the mihrab (see figs. 116,118). Significantly, both were built by the same ruler, al-Malik al-Zahir al-Ghāzi. This may have been done on the express wish of the king who may have wanted to create a more 'royal' processional and ceremonial approach to the madrasa. They remind one of the early monuments of Nūr al-Dīn, e.g. the Dār al-Ḥadīth. Later buildings in the Zengid period lost this directional emphasis (see fig. 106b).

Mihrābs. The superb mastery exhibited in the mihrābs is the outcome of two different schools in Aleppo. The first, and more famous, school exhibits the complex interlacing which contains within it the two testimonies of faith. Although all the mihrābs of this school are similar in their general patterns, each one taken separately is individual and unique and shows particular individual variations on the general pattern. Innovations and variations in this school continue until we reach the finest example of this kind of work in the mihrāb of the Madrasa al-Firdaus. Afterward, we merely find copies and repetitions of the earlier mihrābs. For example, the Jaqmaqiya in Damascus contains a mihrāb which is an exact copy of that of Madrasa al-Firdaus (see fig. 91). In Konya, too, the mihrābs of two different buildings, the Karatay Madrasa and the Citadel, are exact copies of each other (see fig. 92).

The second school consists of less sophisticated mihrābs like those of the Muqaddamiya, Khanqāh fl-l Farāfrā, and the Madrasa Kâmiliya (see fig. 96). The decoration consists of a simple interlacing forming a loop to create the letter 'ha'. This is the last letter of word Allāh. It is said in the traditions that this letter contains
the essence, or meaning of the whole name and in some interpretations is the basis for the formation of one of the non-canonical names of God, 'Hu(wa)', or He, and which is repeated as an invocation in all the dhikrs, or circles of remembrance, of the Sufi orders. Ecochard's drawing (see fig. 96, drawing 7), seems to further suggest that the full name of Allāh is written on either side of the 'ha'.

**Exteriors.** As we mentioned earlier, the exterior of the Ayyubid Madrasa is very severe. Some of the madrasas like the Zāhiriya, Kāmiliya and Firdaus look like fortresses of sobriety (see figs. 80 and 82). Even the madrasas located inside the city walls, which stand alone look ascetic and plain (see fig. 121). In cases where the madrasa is in the suq or built next to housing, the only feature to relieve the severity of the facade wall is the entrance portal.

**Minarets.** The most noteworthy point about the minarets is the lack of them in all the madrasas (see discussion on pages 71-3.)

**Decoration.** Apart from the particularly architectural decorative elements mentioned above, like the portal, mihrāb, pavement pattern, and fountain, there were no other major visual elements of decoration to be found in the madrasa except for the tirāz band mentioned earlier. Its presence proves the great importance attached to three specific artistic elements: the calligraphy used, the perfect carving of that calligraphy, and most important, the poetic and spiritual value attached to the poetry written on the band itself. Of course, this seeming 'lack' of visual decoration is more than counterbalanced by the beauty of harmony and space in the building itself.

**General Principles and Influences**

**Ante-:** Nūrid and Zengid. The particular synthesis of the Ayyubid architectural style began under Nūr al-Dīn. All the elements which were later to develop fully into the Ayyubid style were already present: the elongated prayer-hall, the īwān, the sahn with the fountain creating the focus for the central space, "the emphasis of the portal, the general internalization of the buildings, such that the plainness of their
facades is contrasted by the embellishment of their interiors." 1 Tabbâ‘a continues by saying that the "continuity and vigor of this style is demonstrated by the fact that a monument from the late Ayyubid period in Aleppo, the Madrasa al-Firdows (1235), exhibits much the same features of the monuments of Nur al-Din: its 'facade' is a plain wall with a long inscription and a muqarnas portal,..." 2

**Aleppo and Damascus.** On the whole, there were more differences in the architectural styles of Aleppo and Damascus than there were similarities. These differences were mainly due to geographical, historical and political factors. An example of such a geographical factor can be clearly seen in the roofing methods employed in both cities. The kind of building material available in Aleppo limited the possible span of the stone roofing. This led to the use of domes and vaults and subsequent combinations and juxtapositions of these elements to cover large areas and spaces. Similarities or parallel developments are rarer, although we do have some examples, as in the change from Kufic to cursive inscriptions, and a general plainness of facade in the monuments. 3

The most significant cross-fertilization for the formation of a "Syrian style" was begun under Nur al-Din and came to be fully developed in Aleppo under the Ayyubids. "It was in Aleppo, ... in the first half of the thirteenth century that the largest and most beautiful madrasas in Syria were built. Broadly speaking, Damascus provided the ideological framework for the madrasa and Aleppo produced the monumental form." 4

**Post-: Influences on Anatolia.** A large part of the kingdom of Aleppo consisted of the Anatolian plateau and the Mardin area (see figs. 1,2 and 3). The general architectural concept is very different from the Syrian examples we have discussed. This general concept included such elements as a longitudinal directional emphasis (corresponding to the mihrâb axis) which created a strong symmetry. This

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included an entrance flanked by two minarets. In addition, we find elaborate carved decoration, giving a particular flavor to the very special style of this region. Yet, in spite of the differences, the plans are in some ways close to the Aleppine and other Syrian plans, particularly in the space and proportions (see fig. 106c). This may be due to the similarity in environmental conditions, to include the general availability of stone. This led to an elaborate stone masonry and very similar roofing methods (see fig. 81). Similarities may have also occurred by a much more direct method: the migration of artisans to this area as is evidenced by signatures of names of Syrian origin on some of the monuments. We get a glimpse of some of these possible influences in monuments of the Karamanid dynasty, like the Hatuniye Madrasa (see compare figs. 109 with 110, and 119 with 118). Both the colonnad around the sahn and iwān do remind one somewhat of the proportions and the masonry work of the Aleppine monuments (see fig. 60,61 and 62,63).

In most of these Anatolian examples one major element that we find in Aleppo, is usually missing. It is the qibliyya, or prayer-hall. Usually the entrance faces the main iwān which is deeper than it is wide, thus serving as the prayer-hall, with the mihrāb usually placed on the side wall of the iwān (see fig. 109 and 119).

**Influence on Mamlūk Aleppo.** The transition from Ayyubid Aleppo to Mamlūk Aleppo was a radical one. The change in taste caused a radical change in perspective: from a mainly 'introverted' architecture to one that was primarily 'extroverted'. Whereas Ayyubid builders were concerned with a mastery of harmony of space, the crafting of beautiful masonry work, and an intricate geometrical composition of masses and volumes, Mamlūk architects came to be dominated by factors such as the effect of the monument from the perspective of the street. The dome changed in shape and became more elongated to suit the proportions of the towering minarets. The position and composition of the high pishtak portal was carefully

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1  see Kuran. Anadolu, figs. 37, 42, 47, 49.
chosen as part of the extensively decorated and carved articulate facades. All of these elements can be seen in the Utrush Mosque, [see figs. 99b,99d, and 100].

The basic design of the plan was altered to a system of cross-vaulting to cover large spaces. This was to have an extensive influence on different areas of the empire such as Tripoli (the Great Mosque) 1, Anatolia (Ermenak: Meydan Camii, see fig. 97), and even Cairo, as witness the Aqsunqur Mosque. 2 In addition, the iwan-qâ’a elements are dropped and altered.

The change in general perspective, however, did not mean that all architectural elements were not carried over. Certain major parts forming the Aleppo mosque-madrasa were to be found in the Mamlûk monuments as well: the portal, the sahn, and the fountain, are some examples.

**Longer lasting influences.** According to David 3 the qâ’a, as discussed in the Madrasa al-Firdaus and Matbakh al-‘Ajami, was an architectural feature which went through a series of transformations from its earliest Ayyubid domestic (and religious) forms to a cruciform form in Ottoman times.

**Intarsia.** The interlacing motif in the marble of the Aleppo school of mihrâbs had a major impact on the contemporary, as well as later, architecture of a variety of cities. For convenience, we have listed specific examples by city and the region of Anatolia.

**Aleppo.** The same interlacing is to be found inscribed above the door of the Great Mosque of Aleppo (see fig. 92). Another example can be found in the prayer-niche of Mankalibughâ al-Shamsi (769 / 1367). 4

**Anatolia.** The same motif is to be found in the Great Mosque of ‘Alâ’ al-Din Kal Qubâd II in Konya (617 A.H.) allegedly done "par un maître Mahmoud de Damas" 5.

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1 See plan of the Great Mosque in Tripoli in Van Berchem, *Voyage en Syrie*, fig. 51.
4 See Meinecke, *Mamlûk*, Tafel 54, c.
5 *Herzfeld, MCl.*, p. 239, footnote no. 1.
as well as in the Karatay Madrasa in Konya (649 A.H.). Figure 95 shows an inscription with a carved decoration in stone with the same motif on a fortification tower in Anatolia. A final example is the Isa Bey Mosque built by Ayşınolu Ali of Damascus in 1375 A.D. (see fig. 93c).

**Damascus.** We find our motif in the Mosque of Yashbak, in the Shu'aib Rūmī mosque in Maldan, and even on a window in the Jaqmaqīya (see figs. 92, 93b).

**Tripoli.** Here we find an example in the Madrasa of Qarātay al-Mansūrī (before 734 / 1333), (see fig. 94).

**Jerusalem.** It is to be found in the miḥrāb of the Qubbat al-Silsila, and the Madrasa Tankiz (728 / 1328-29), as well as in the Turba of Sitt Tunshuq (see fig. 93a).

**Al-Khalil (Hebron).** It is on the qibla wall of the Haram (decorated 732 / 1331-32). 6

**Cairo.** In discussing the occurrences of our motif in this city, it is worth noting that, according to Allen, "the most direct form of contact between neighbouring regional traditions (was) : the importations of architects, and probably of masons as well." 7 This exchange probably occurred, in the case of Cairo, in two directions. There are references in the sources that artisans were sometimes brought to Aleppo. In writing about the Madrasa al-Safāhīyya, Abu Dārr, in Sauvaget's translation, says: "Le taillleur de pierre était un égyptien appelé Mohammad l-Eléphant (al-Fil).

8 In Ibn 'Ajami too, we find reference to Egyptian workers. In order to repair the water cistern in the Great Mosque in Aleppo "le préfet fit venir du Caire des ouvriers: on amena un architecte (mohandis) - un homme taciturne - un maître-maçon (mo'allim) et un coltineur (chayyāl)

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1 Herzfeld, *MCL*, p. 239, footnote no. 1.
2 See fig. 17 in Sauvaget, *Architecture Musulmane*.
3 See Meinecke, *Mamluk*, Tafel 51, b.
4 See Meinecke, *Mamluk*, Tafel 51, b.
6 See Meinecke, *Mamluk*, Tafel 49, d.
qui était un homme de haute stature, capable de porter des pierres de grandes dimensions...." 1

Examples of the interlacing motif are numerous in Cairo. There is the Mosque of Baybars al-Bunduqdâri (665-7 / 1226-9), the Mosque of Emîr Aqbughâ (734-40 / 1333-4 - 39), the Bath of Beshtâq (742 / 1341) 2, as well as the Madras of Sultân al-Nâsîr Hasan (757-60 / 1356-9) 3 in which we find a panel with a variation of our motif using the name of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

**Portals.** Although we have discussed the Ayyubid portals at some length, in particular with reference to the change of perspective in the portal in Mamlûk times, it is worth noting that the actual portal itself and its decoration were a major innovation of the Ayyubid period. It was to have a major impact on the Mamlûk monuments of Cairo and Roe says that "with the transfer of the basic stalactite portal shape from Northern Syria to Cairo, the same types of general central scheme arrived as well...." 4 Roe's summary is as follows:

The muqarnas Portal was imported to Cairo from Syria in the mid 7th / 13th century A.D. by Sultan Bibars al Bunduqdâri and used as the monumental entrance to his intra-muros madrasa. This Syrian style remained until the early 8th / 14th c (...) ...by the mid 800 / 1400's it appears that these stone-crafted portals requiring complex jointings were on the wane, with the more decorative types, multi-tiered "dripping stalactite" portals crafted in stucco, gaining in popularity.

If we take a look at what happens to the portals in Aleppo itself, we also notice the change in style. The "multi-tiered 'dripping stalactite'" portals replaced the earlier ones. It is as if the original muqarnas portal style had gone to Cairo and after having

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2 The three foregoing being taken from Roe. M.A. Thesis. Plates 12b, 34, and 45 respectively.
3 See Melnecke. Mamlûk. Tafel 54, d.
gone through the changes of the Mamlûk period came back 'home' to Aleppo in a new style, to be taken up again to serve the new taste.
CONCLUSION

In this study of the Madrasa al-Firdaus we hope to have been able to give a clearer picture of the network of topographical, social, architectural and religious influences in which the madrasa was set. The unique setting of the Madrasa al-Firdaus outside the city proper is particular significant as an example of the possible interplay of religious belief and with the more mundane factors taken into consideration when deciding the location of a major monument such as this. That there was a continuity in these considerations can be seen from the proximity of the madrasa to the Maqamât area as well as its strategic location on the processional way to the Hajj. Ceremony and protocol are the more tangible links to the specific location of the madrasa but we cannot exclude considering the founder's desire for receiving the spiritual blessing of pilgrims on their way to the House of God, as a major but much more intangible element.

Although we do not preclude that political considerations may have influenced founding, location, and even the staffing of the madrasa, it seems clear that the atmosphere of the society of this period was imbued with a particular kind of spirituality reflected most clearly in the Śūfi tariqas of the time. That the founder and queen Dayfa Khatûn was sensitive to this spirituality is clearly reflected in the Śūfi poetry surrounding the sahn and in her dedication of the monument to the instruction of what was by then already a science, 'ilm al-taṣṣawuf, the science of the soul. What is perhaps most striking is that the very stones of the madrasa seem to have absorbed this spirituality as is clearly reflected and shown in the harmonies and proportions of the building as a whole, and more subtly in the hidden calligraphy within the mihrāb.

The Madrasa al-Firdaus is a unique jewel in the Ayyubid setting of Aleppo. The specific historical period, the founder, the builders and local factors all combined to form a monument which evokes a beauty which can only really be experienced in situ. Striking aesthetic elements like the mihrāb and the portal were to have a major influence
on other monuments in later periods; but the special combination of all the elements remains unique to the Madrasa al-Firdaus.

Monument: Madrasa al-Firdaus
Type: Madrasa
Location: Jalan Srinivasan, west of the city of Alagar
Dates: The construction dates back to 1307-1308. The first constructions were carried out by Raja I 1117/1142 and the outer walls were added 1149/1174. Then more constructions were carried out in 1271/1296 by Nawal Raja III 1169/1194 and

Referred to: Dye, Michael, Dye III, 242-245, and

The author thanks the late Mr. K. E. K. Dye for the use of his work in the preparation of this article. Referred to: Dye III, 242-245, and

Dye, Michael, Dye III, 242-245.
APPENDIX A

Syrian Monuments Relative to the Madrasa al-Firdaus

In the following survey reference is made to a number of madrasas and other architectural monuments which are related in some way to the architectural development of the Firdaus Madrasa studied in this analysis. The references and references in the illustrations are in no way meant to be exhaustive, they are simply those which were used in this thesis. Comments are excerpted from the sources and were kept to a minimum.

Monument: Mashhad al-Muhāssin
Type: Madrasa-Turba
Location: Jabal Jaushan, west of the city of Aleppo
Dates: First inscription dates back to Ṣayf al-Daula 351 / 962. Then later constructions were carried out by Zengi 537 / 1142 and his son Nur al-Din 541 / 1146. Then more constructions were carried out under al-Ẓāhir al-Ghāzi 609 / 1212, al-Nāṣir Yusuf 634 - 658 / 1236-1259, and al-Malik al-‘Aziz Muḥammad 613-633 / 1216-1235.


Illustrations: See Fig. 105.

Comments: The inscriptions of Zengi and Nur al-Din can be found on the south side of the building. North of the building is the kitchen. The 'qibliya' or 'masjid hall' is mentioned in Ibn Shaddād as "qa'a de la cour" ¹, and has a central dome like the Firdaus dated to al-Malik al-ʿAziz Muhammad, but the rest can be dated to al-Zahir al-Ghāzi's period. The south wall fell at one point and was re-constructed by al-Zahir al-Ghāzi. Similarly the north wall collapsed and was re-constructed by al-Nāṣir Yusuf.

Monument: Jami Ḥājarīn
Type: Small Mosque
Location: Aleppo, Dabbaghā quarter, near Bāb Antakia
Dates: 539 / 1144
References: Herzfeld. MCI. pp. 182-6
Illustrations: See Fig. 106a.

Comments: The inscription refers to what looks like the remains of an old madrasa, while a minaret on the western side, differently oriented, indicates that it was a mosque. The rest is contemporary.

¹ Herzfeld. MCI. p. 196.
Monument: Dār al-Hadith of Nūr al-Dīn
Type: Madrasa
Location: Damascus
Dates: between 549 / 1154 and 569 / 1174
References: Creswell. Muslim. p. 108
Illustrations: See Fig. 106b.
Comments: The North and South parts remain. A tunnel vault entrance. Southern part is a triple-arched facade for the hall of prayer, the first of its kind to be used in a madrasa.

Monument: Madrasa of Khān al-Tutūn or Madrasa al-Muqaddamiya
Type: Madrasa
Location: Aleppo, Jallīm quarter, previously Darb al-Ijtababin
Dates: 564 / 1168
Illustrations: See Figs. 107.
Comments: What is left of this madrasa is in 3 parts: a) A portal on the street, approximately 15m distance away from the courtyard. Also, a rectangular hall, 14.20m X 3.85m with a miḥrāb deep in the southern wall. b) It opens onto a courtyard with 3 large bays in oval, and covered with a dome higher between two of the vaults. There is a series of cells on the eastern side. There is a great sobriety and skill exhibited in the masonry work.

According to Creswell this is the oldest madrasa. c) On the south side the masjīd has a triple-arched facade to the sahn. The original roof
probably had a central dome because the vault is lower than the summits of the arches of the facade.

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Monument: Madrasa of Nūr al-Din
Type: Madrasa
Location: Damascus
Dates: Sha'bān 567 / April 1172
References: Creswell, Muslim, p. 109-110
Illustrations: See Fig. 108.
Comments: Courtyard measures 16.60m from North and 20.60m from East to West. According to Creswell, the liwān with arch to carry flat roof may have originally been a vault. Small liwān with recess and under a stalactite hood, a spout of water running along a channel to a tank.

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Monument: Mashhad al-Husain
Type: Madrasa-Turba. According to the sources it was also a khanqāh, Herzfeld. MCI. p. 237, says "C'est un petit monastère...." He comments further on p. 247: "Le tout pourrait avoir été une madrasa-turba; un type différencié de 'mashhad' n'existe pas."
Location: Aleppo, Jabal Jaushān
Dates: The inscriptions say that the construction date was 569 / 1173-4 and the re-construction was 596 / 1206. However, Herzfeld comments that this period was "activité continue (non pas deux période archéologiques)" ¹


Illustrations: See Fig. 110.

Comments: There is a facade west of sahn. Interlacing in marble above the iwan dating to the period of mihrabs of the Shadhbakhtiya (589 A.H.), Şultaniya (613-620 A.H.), Firdaus (634 A.H.), etc. The interlacing of the mihrab is also like that of the western facade and belongs to the same school of mihrabs as the mosques mentioned.

Monument: Madrasa of Shādbakht

Type: Madrasa-Turba

Location: Aleppo, South of Sūq al-Darb, old Sūq al-Nashābin.

Dates: 589 / 1193 according to Herzfeld


Illustrations: See Fig. 111.

Comments: Masjid Shaikh Ma'ruf. Name of architect: 'Ṣanʿat Qāsim bin Sa'id al-Faqir illā rahmati-l-lāh', to be found in a medallion on the supporting arch of the door. Herzfeld's dating is related to an inscription on the Shuaybiya door on which we find the signature of Sa'id al-Maqdisi (the son of the above Sa'id).

¹ Herzfeld. MCI. p. 239.
Portal, with a semi-dome and antechamber square (with a staircase to the right). Haram area is rectangular with a dome set by two vaults in 'arc de cloître'. Three large bays open onto the courtyard. On the side opposite of the courtyard, a large iwān vault with 'arc de cloître'.

"A l'Est, il y a une série de chambrettes, que se répétait probablement a l'Ouest au fond de l'arcade détruite". The North-East corner is occupied by the Mausoleum, "...salle qui reproduit la disposition du Haram".

Monument: Madrasa Abu al-Fawāris - Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān
Type: Madrasa (Shafite)
Location: Town of Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān
Dates: 595 / 1199
References: Creswell. Muslim, pp. 111-112.
Illustrations: See Fig. 112.
Comments: The entrance is on the East. On the West there is the beginning of a iwān. The masjid is located in the South, and there a series of cells on the north side.

Monument: Maʿarrat, Nabi Yūsha
Type: Maqām, Mashhad
Location: Town of Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān
Dates: 604 / 1207 (Inscription date!)
References: Herzfeld. *Ars Islamica* vol. XI, pp. 6-9

Illustrations: See Fig. 113.

Comments: "The plan of this makâm repeats, on a smaller scale, that of the mashhad al-Muḥassin and al-Ḥusain of Aleppo; they are not essentially different from a madrasa, because there is no special architectural type of a makâm."¹ One should note, however, that Herzfeld also says that there is no distinct mashhad type, when talking about Mashhad al-Ḥusain (see above). It was probably also a madrasa-turba. From the point of view of functional need it is more logical to assume that it was needed in the town as a mosque-madrasa. An octogonal minaret rises over the barrel-vault of the entrance, similar to the Şultânîya in Aleppo, and was probably a later addition.

Monument: Matbakh 'al-ʻAjami

Type: Palace

Location: West of citadel of Aleppo, Suwayqat ʻAli quarter

Dates: 609 / 1212


Illustrations: See Fig. 114.

Comments: The earliest ʻqāʻa in Aleppo which is the only part which remains of a palace dating back to twelfth century. However, the earliest remains may date back to the Ayyubid palace of al-Zahir. (David. *Cahiers*, p. 40) It was restored in the fifteenth-sixteenth century.

Monument: Ädiliya Madrasa
Type: Madrasa
Location: Damascus
Dates: Begun in mid-12th and completed 629 / 1222-3
References: Creswell. Muslim, pp. 112-3
Illustrations: See Fig. 115.
Comments: On the East there is a portal entrance. The Mausoleum is in SE corner. West facade is new.

Monument: Madrasa al-Zāhiriya
Type: Madrasa
Location: Aleppo, 500m from Bāb al-Maqām, Firdaus area.
Dates: completed 616 / 1219-20
Illustrations: See Fig. 116.
Comments: According to Herzfeld this madrasa was never really finished. The sanctuary on the south side has three domes on an octagonal plan and conical surface pendentives with a triple arched facade. The sanctuary opens onto a triple-arched portico. Creswell notes that the portal is in the center of the north facade opening into the sahn. The west side is a row of cells in two tiers. The south side is a masjid with a triple-arched facade roofed by three domes. Creswell seems to think that this is the first time a triple arched portico occurs (see later comments on the Madrasa al-Sharafiya. The Zāhiriya was inspired by the plan of the Sharafiya (Perles Choisis, p. 116.)
Monument: Dar al-Ḥadith ibn Shaddād or 'al-Kushliya'

Type: Specialized madrasa for the teaching of Prophetic traditions (ḥadith)

Location: Aleppo, Şaffāhiya

Dates: 618 / 1221

References: Herzfeld. MCL, pp. 284 and 286.

Illustrations: See Fig. 117.

Comments: What remains are only the main Qibliya, part of the portal and a small section of what could be a cell. It can, therefore, be considered an early example of simple version of madrasa without a mausoleum. It is a very important because of the rarity of a Dar al-Ḥadith in Ayyubid times surviving to the present day. In its proportions it seems to be quite close to the earlier Nurid types.

Monument: Sultaniya Madrasa

Type: Madrasa

Location: Aleppo, Midān of the Citadel

Dates: 620 / 1223-24

References: Herzfeld. MCL, pp.276-77, Creswell. Muslim, pp. 113-115

Illustrations: See Fig. 118.

Comments: Herzfeld comments that its contours are irregular because it is located between irregular streets. It consists of three parts: portal, sanctuary, and a funerary room east of the sanctuary. [The minaret is similar to Maarut N'uman Nabi Yusha (604 A.H.).] The sanctuary proportions are exactly 1:3 and the dome plan is a dodecagon on conical ependentives, 'entre-deux berceaux'. The sanctuary is shaped like a
cross because of an extra space in the back. Around the sahn we find
cells with antechambers.

Creswell says this madrasa was built for the two legal schools, Shafite
and Hanaflte, of al-Zahir al-Ghâzi. His mausoleum is located in the SE
corner of the masjid.

Monument: Mausoleum of the mother of al-Malik al-Afdal - also Sheikh
Sâlih

Type: Mausoleum

Location: Aleppo, east of Maqâm Ibrahim, south of Maqamât area

Dates: 621 / 1224


Illustrations: See Fig. 120.

Comments: Two periods of construction close to each other. The building consists
basically of "qibliya" type of hall with a mausoleum on the western
side, fronted by a colonaded portico which is cross-vaulted and,
therefore, a very early example of this type of vaulting.
**Monument:** Sharafiya Madrasa  
**Type:** Madrasa  
**Location:** Aleppo, north-east of the Great Mosque  
**Dates:** 640-50 / 1242-1252  
**References:** Creswell. Muslim, pp. 116 and 118. Ibn ‘Ajami. trans. Sauvaget. Trésors d’Or. p. 75  
**Illustrations:** See Fig. 122.  
**Comments:** According to Ibn ‘Ajami the construction lasted 40 years. Creswell mentions that according to Ibn Shaddād this was a Shafite madrasa located intra muros. The entrance is located in the west. To the right and left of the entrance there is a portico, possibly for students. On the north side of the sahn there are three arches on piers and a possible portico for cells. The south side is a triple-arched masjid and probably a triple-arched opening onto the sahn (I tend to think on columns). As was mentioned earlier, the Zāhiriya was modeled on the Sharafiya, so we can deduce from the triple-arched opening that there was probably a portico, making this, rather than the Zāhiriya as Creswell claims, the first example of this type of portico.

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**Monument:** Kamliya Madrasa  
**Type:** Madrasa  
**Location:** Aleppo, beginning of maqāmāt area, 300m from Bāb al-Maqām and 350m from the Firdaus Madrasa.  
**Dates:** 627-634, according to Creswell before 1300 A.D.  
**References:** Herzfeld. MCI, pp. 305-6, Creswell. Muslim, pp. 119.
Illustrations: See Fig. 123.

Comments: According to Herzfeld, the madrasa was founded by the daughter of al-Malik al-Kāmil, whom Ibn Shaddād mentions as "la dame Fātimah Khatūn, fille d’al-Malik al-Kāmil, avait fondé une khānqāh dans la Qat‘iyah." ¹ (check reference). According to him, the premature death of al-Malik al-Kāmil explains why the madrasa remained unfinished. ²

However, there is a reference in Ibn Shaddād which mentions a Madrasa Kāmīliya built by a Kamāl al-Din, known as Ibn al-‘Adim, located east of Aleppo. He specifies that the building was never used because with the end of the Nāṣirī reign of Yussuf II all activity ceased in it. ³ This seems to me the most likely explanation. ⁴

The madrasa itself is a large rectangle around a courtyard which is almost square, "presque carrée de 500 coudées ayant un bassin et un puits au centre." On the south side there is a prayer hall between two mausolea covered by domes in the corners, and which opens onto the court with three bays. This prayer hall has a dodecagonal dome on conical pendentes between two vaults.

Creswell concludes that since there is no inscription it was probably built before 1300 A.D. The entrance is located at the west end of the north facade. The west side is a cross-vaulted hall with a triple-arched facade looking onto the sahn. Also, a vaulted square-room is located in the NE corner. An early example of cross-vaulting, it is here a precursor of the coming Mamlūk taste and style.

¹ Ibn Shaddād, p. 108.
² According to Sauvaget who is referring to Abu Ḍarr this khānqāh is located near the hospital of Nūr al-Din, which situates intra-muros. This, therefore, not the Kāmīliya discussed here.
³ Ibn Shaddād, p. 111.
⁴ There are two other references to a Kāmīliya madrasa. Ibn Shihna in Sauvaget’s translation mentions the “mausolée de Kamâl ad-Din ad-Damānîhûrî”. It is listed in Ibn Shihna as one of the mausolea located outside Bâb al-Maqâm. Sauvaget, Perles Choisies, pp. 180. Ibn al-‘Ajami comments on this same mausoleum and says: "On a déjà cité, parmi les couvents, la khâqāh Kâmiïya hors-les-murs, fondée par al-Kâmiïya; peut-être est-ce la même [as the mausoleum of Kamâl ad-Din mentioned by Ibn Shihna].” Ibn al-‘Ajami, trans. Sauvaget, Trésors, p. 128.
Monument: Khanqāh fi-l Farāfra
Type: Khanqā
Location: Aleppo, Farāfra quarter
Dates: 635 / 1237
References: Herzfeld. MCI. pp. 302 and 304.
Illustrations: See Fig. 124-126.
Comments: See page 102 for comments.

Monument: Sheikh Fāris
Type: Small mausoleum (mashhad)
Location: Village of Bābillā, 2 km north of Aleppo. Mentioned in Ibn Shihna as "lieu de plaisance".
Dates: 648 / 1258 (under Salāh al-Dīn Yūsuf II.
Illustrations: See Fig. 127.
Comments: Sheikh Abū Bakr came from Marāgha in Persia. The mashhad was probably combined with a mosque as it groups together the different elements on a very small scale which exist in the larger madrasas. The prayer hall, the iwān on the eastern side, a cell, and a bigger hall on the northern side. The court seems to be covered and may have been a later addition.
Other Monuments built by Ḍayfa Khatūn

Among other monuments mentioned in the sources as having been definitely built by Ḍayfa Khatūn is a Khanqāh for women inside of Bāb al-Arbaʿīn, in the proximity of Masjid al-Sheikh al-Ḥāfiẓ Abdul Raḥmān al-Ustāth.¹

She also shared in the waqf contributions for the Madrasa al-Bulduqiya. "Parmi ses waqfs [al-Bulduqiya] figure le tiers d’un moulin, en commun avec la madrasa du Paradis." ² This waqf must have been dedicated to the madrasa during its construction to contribute to the completion of the building. The madrasa had been founded by "l’emir Bouldouq, affranchi de Gâzi qui était un des émirs les plus importants." ³ This contribution of one-third must have been stipulated before 633, the construction date of Madrasa al-Firdaus, and before the construction of al-Bulduqiya in 635. We know of this waqf through Ibn al-ʿAjami: "La fondatrice [Ḍayfa Khatūn] constituait wakf en sa faveur le village de Kafr-Zaṭṭā et les 2/3 de son moulin (le 3e tiers est wakf de la Boldqiya)." ⁴

Herzfeld theorizes that the foundation of the Khanqāh al-Farafrāh coincides with the reign of Ḍayfa Khatūn.⁵ The date of the madrasa coincides with the Queen’s reign. ⁶ The district of Bāb al-Arbaʿīn, as Herzfeld points out, is actually the Farāfra quarter.⁷ (see figs. 26, 104 and 125). All the khanqāhs mentioned in Shaddād have been located, except two. One is the khanqāh of Fāṭima Khatūn in the Qaṭiyya quarter, an area which has yet to be located and the other is the khanqāh of Ḍayfa Khatūn. We, therefore, concur in Herzfeld’s conclusion that the khanqāh of Ḍayfa Khatūn was the

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³ Ibid. p.118.
⁵ Herzfeld. MCL, pp. 302-304.
⁶ Ibid., p. 304.
⁷ "La madrasa Qawamiya à l’intérieur de la Porte des Quarante, près du quartier d’al-Farāfrā..." Sauvaget. Perles Choisis, pp. 112. This reinforces Herzfeld’s view.
Khanqā al-Farāfra. That no founder is mentioned in the inscriptions of the Khanqā al-Farāfra and only the reign of al-Malik Nasīr Yusuf is given, suggests that the khanqā was a royal foundation and not a private monument.¹

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¹ The khanqā has been reserved since quite early on for women (see fig.126) and it was known in the early part of this century that the majority of the 'fuqara' were poor black women.
APPENDIX B
INSCRIPTIONS

Foundation Inscriptions

This inscription is inside the Madrasa, on the eastern wall of the eastern aisle. (See figs. 102b-c). (Source: Sourdell-Thomine. Index Géographie d’épigraphie, p. 57.)

N° 4086. — Texte de construction.

ALEP.

Madrasat al-Firdaws. — Sur le mur est, grand bandeau, 1 h 00. Naskhi mamlûk ancien: grands caractères; quelques points et signes.

Publication : Tlebikh, II, p. 265; Coll. van Berchem, carnet IX, p. 137.


This inscription dating the foundation is to be found on the eastern wall of the main facade, above a window on the left-hand side of the portal. See figs. 53a,b, and c.
(Source: Sourdel-Thomine. Index Géographie d'épigraphie, pp. 56-57.)

N° 4084. — Texte de construction.

ALEP.

Madrasat al-Firdaus. — À l'extérieur, sur le mur est.


Quotations from original sources related to the foundation of the Madrasa

Ibn Ajami, as translated by Sauvaget:

[546] La madrasa du Paradis (al-Firdaus).
Fondée par la princesse Dayfa-Khâtoûn, comme tombeau, madrasa et couvent, où elle attribua un traitement à une foule de récitateurs du Coran, de juristes et de soufis. ¹

Ibn Shihna:

"قلت الفردوس أنشأتها الصحابة الملكة ضيفة خاتون بنت الملك العادل سيف الدين أبى بكر محمد بن أبي بكر جليلة كبيرة وجعلتهما تربة ومدرسة وربطا ( ورباطا ) ورتبت فيها خلقا من القراء والفقهاء والصوفية ."

Ibn Shihna, in Sauvaget's translation:

Moi je dis: Le Paradis (al-Firdaws), fondé par la princesse, la reine Dayfa-Khâtoûn, fille d'al Malik al-'Adil Aboû Bakr. Cette madrasa est très importante et très grande: la fondatrice enfit un mausolée, une madrasa et un ribât, et elle y attacha une foule de récitateurs du Coran, de jurisconsultes, et de soufis. ²

² Sauvaget. Perles Choisies, pp. 117.
Ibn Shaddād, ed. Dominique Sourdel:

"الفردوس ... أنشأتها الصاحبة الملكة ضيفه...
خاتون بنت الملك العادل سيف الدين أبي بكر محمد بن أيوب وهي جليلة كبيرة وجعلت لا ترمسه ورد رسمه
وربطا ورتبت فيها حلقة من القراء والفقهاء والصوفية

(translation of above): The Firdaus...it was founded by the Queen .DAYFA Khatûn daughter of al-Malik al-'ADİL ŞAYF aL-DIN Abî Bakr Muḥammad bin Ayyûb. It is great and spacious and she made into a mausoleum, a madrasa, and a ribāt. She also attached to it Qur'ān reciters, jurisconsults, and Sufis.

Ibn Adim, in Blochet's translation:

...le collège du Paradis (al-Fardoûs), bâti par la sultane Dâîfa-Khâtoûn, fille du sultan al-Malik-al-'Adîl-Saîf-ad-Dîn; elle y éleva un mausolée, un collège et un caravansérail 1; elle y plaça plusieurs sofis, lecteurs du Coran et juristes;....

Cette construction a été ordonnée par son Altesse, la défunte princesse 3, 'Ismat-ad-Dounâ'-wa'd-Dîn-Dafîyya-Khâtoûn, fille du Sultan al-Malik-al-'Adîl-Saîf-ad-Dîn, - Aboû Bakr-ibn-Ayyoûb (qu'Allah ouvre leurs péchés du voile de sa miséricorde! ) sous le règne de notre maître, le sultan al-Malik-an-Nâsir, le savant, le juste, le champion de la foi, l'aîdé d'Allah, le victorieux, le glorieux, Salâh-ad-

1 Blochet translates 'ribât' as 'caravansérail', a clear mistranslation.
3 Blochet again mistranslates 'al-Malika al-Raḥima'. This is merely a title, and does not mean she has died! Sourdel-Thomine leaves the title in the original Arabic, since the Queen was clearly still alive in 1236.
Doûnia-wa'd-Dîn-Yoûsour, fils d'al-Malik-al-'Aziz.
Mohammad, fils d'al-Malik -ath-Thâhir-Ghâzi.....

تیراز بند

الغاچی بن حسین بن محمد البابی السلیمی. کتاب نیل الذهاب

بستنها ونیبها ایوان مکتبه عليه فن طرازم وطرزها فمے در اعتماد او اجمنا

جن علیهم اللب سمعت لهم أئیم الخائف واذا أصبحوا وأتیت عليهم

تغیر ألوان

اذا ما اللب أقبل كابدوا

أطر الشیخ نومهم فقتاموا

وأهل الأمن فالمدنی خشوع

أجسادهم تصرع على التعبید ولقداهم لهم میقمة على التھجید لا برد لهم

صوت ولا دعا تراهم فن لهم سجدا وركعا قد ناداهم المنادی وآذربهم الشادی

رب صوت لا يرد

من له حزم وجد

ما يقوم اللب الا

لو أرادوا في لبهم وتاء أن نما قلقمهم الشیخ البیم فقاتوا وجد بهم

الوجد وقراهم فهاموا وأنشدهم ویه الحضره وشم وحالمهم على المناجاة

وحشهم

إن كان لب في القلب وجد

وتنشر الصحف فاستعدوا

قد آن أن تظهر الخبایا

الفرش مشتاقاة البيم والوسائد متساقطة عليهم النوم قری إلى عیونهم

والراحة مرتاحا إلى جنوبهم اللب عندهم أهل الأوقات في المراب وسامرهم

عند تهجدهم يزع الكواكب.

أراد أن يمض علقته به

وزارن طبله حتی اذا

فلات لب لم تزل سردًا

همروا المنام في الليلاء وقلدوا بطول القهاء وناجروا لهم بأطیب کلام

وانسوا بقرب الملك العلام لوا احتجاوا عنه في لبهم لذابوا ولفتقوا عنده

لحظة لما طابوا بدينهم التھجید الى السحر وتوطعنين حر البقطة والسهر

بلغنا أن الله تبارك وتعال بالنجل للمجینين فينقال لهم من آنا فتقولون أنف

ماك رقاننا فقول أنتم أحسنت آمن أهل ولایت ومباينه ها وجهي نساهد و

ها كلاس تاسعون ولا كأسی ناشرو وسقاهم لهم قاهرأ طهروا اذًا
شربوا طابوا ثم طربوا إذا طربوا قاموا إذا قاموا هاموا إذا هاموا طاشوا إذا طاشوا عاشوا لما حملت ريح الصباح قضى يوسف لم يغض ختامه إلا بعثوب ما عرفه أهل كنعان ومن عندهم خرج ولا يعودا وهو الحامل

ومكتوب على الباب سطر جدًا مدح الشعراء وهو ( أمرت بانشائه ضيفة حاتون في أيام السلطان الملك الناصر صلاح الدين يوسف بن الملك العزيز محمد بن السلطان الملك الظاهر غازى بتولي عبد المحسن العزيزي الناصر في سنة ۶۳۷ ) ومن جملته

يطاف عليهم بصحاف من ذهب

وما قاله فيه الشعراء:

سطر من الدروعج
هن صحاف من ذهب

في باب فروس حلب
Translation of tirâz band inscription.

(Ibn al-Ajami, trans. Sauvaget. Trésors, pp. 80-2.)

on lit : « qu'ils sont excellents ces hommes qui, lorsque la nuit les enveloppe, sont entendre gémissements et soupirs, et que le matin trouve le teint pâli par la veille.

Lorsque arrive la nuit, ils la voient secrètement, ils sentent une douleur, ils sont encore en prière.

Le désir des gens se réveiller, ils se lèvent, alors qu'on croit dans leur enfant.

Ils fatiguent leur corps en actes d'adoration. Toute la nuit ils restent sur pied en prières nocturnes. Qui ne les entend prêcher ni parole, ni supplique : toute la nuit ils s'efforcent et se prostrèrent, car Celui qui appelle les âmes vers Lui. Celui qui excite les âmes, les transporte d'émotion.

O vous qui veillez, multipliez vos efforts, car combien d'appels restent sans réponse !

Seuls restent debout la nuit ceux qui ont en eux une résolution ferme et zèle assidu.

Dans la nuit, ils veulent dormir un instant, le désir les éveille et les voile d'abord, le regret et le désir les attendent et les voile transportés d'amour. Le désir de la Présence divine rempli d'impatience et leur dévoile ses secrets, les pousse à laisser parler leur cœur et les presse.

Pour l'homme, qui s'efforce d'efforts, il est dans vos gestes de l'amour pour moi !

Les choses cachées sont maintenant être révélées, les feuilles déployées, préparez-vous.

Leur couche longuement après eux, leurs oreillers se désolent de leur absence, le sommeil aspire à saisir leurs yeux, le repos voudrait gagner leurs flancs. Mais en [55 x] : la nuit est pour eux le plus éminent en dignité de tous les moments, et leur veille nocturne observe les étoiles.

Tôr image de l'amitié, et lorsqu'elle a voulu me quitter je l'ai rétablie de toutes mes forces.

Oh, plût à Dieu que ma nuit durât à jamais, et que je ne visse jamais se lever les étoiles annonciatrices du matin !

Ils ont dit adieu au sommeil nocturne ; leur règle, c'est la longue veille où ils se livrent avec leur Seigneur, à cœur ouvert, aux plus dous des étreintes, dans l'intimité, du Roi, du Sage. Si dans cette nuit ils venaient à être séparés de Lui, ils seraient accablés de tristesse, s'ils devaient quitter Sa présence un seul instant, ils seraient assis de désespoir. Ils prolongent jusqu'à l'âge leur adoration nocturne, espérant le fruit de leur veille et de leurs veillées. On nous dit que Dieu, Saint et Tout-Puissant, se dévoile à ceux qui l'aiment, leur demandant : Qui suis-je ? et il répondent : Tu es le souverain maître. — Vous êtes mes amis, ceux que je protège de ma sollicitude. Voici ma face, contempliez-la. Voici mes paroles : écoutez-les. Voici ma couronne : battre-la, et leur Seigneur leur verse un par brevitude. Le boire les remplit d'aliégorie ; l'aliégorie les met debout ; se lever les transporte d'amour éperdu ; le désir les énivre, mais l'ivresse, c'est leur vie. Lorsque le vent apporte l'odeur de la chemise de Joseph, seul Jacob en ressent le secret : aucun des gens de Canaan et de ceux qui étaient avec eux ne la reconnut, pas même celui qui l'avait apportée à l'âge (2).

Au-dessus de la porte de la madrasa, qui est très belle, il est écrit sur une ligne : « Qu'ayant abandonné son fondation, sous le règne du sultan al-M. an-Nâcir Galb, il-Din Yousof, fils d'al-M. al-Asf. al-Zahir al-Câri, Sousse de direction de l'Abd. al-Mohsin al-Asf. an-Nâcir, en 633/1235-6 ». Selon ce que j'ai lu de mes yeux.
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##### (Also, see Ibn Shaddâd below).


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TRANSLATIONS FROM PRIMARY ARABIC SOURCES


Ibn Shaddâd. (see Ibn Shaddâd below).


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