CHAPTER TWO

Mosques

Of the nine mosques built during the two centuries of Mamluk rule in Tripoli (Appendix A), at least seven were erected in the first hundred years. A mosque was the first building constructed in the new Muslim city, and it was followed by a succession of others which arose every ten or twenty years throughout the fourteenth century; construction then declined in the fifteenth century, as the population stabilized and additional places of prayer were no longer required. Six — the Great Mosque, and the mosques of al-‘Aṭṭār, Ṭaynāl, al-Uwaysi, al-Burjāsī, and al-Tawbah — were congregational jami’s where Friday prayers were held, and three — the mosques of ‘Abd al-Wāhīd, Arghūn Shāh, and Ṭaḥḥān — were quarter masjids for local use.

The mosques were evenly spread throughout the city (Appendix B), except for the section on the right bank of the river, which did not develop sufficiently to require a mosque of its own. Their location was only in part determined by the people who endowed them. Al-Burjāsī and al-Uwaysi chose virgin ground, but almost all the other mosques incorporated earlier structures, either by consciously transforming abandoned Christian buildings or by taking practical advantage of elements from them or from already standing Muslim structures. The Jami’ al-‘Aṭṭār and the Masjīd ‘Abd al-Wāhīd were conscious and pious transformations of a church and a khan respectively; the Great Mosque used an already standing tower and gateway for its minaret and main entrance; Ṭaynāl’s mosque incorporated parts of a Carmelite church into its vestibule; the Jami’ al-Ṭaḥḥān was built over existing shops; and the Mosque of Arghūn Shāh was produced by enlarging a small ẓāwiyah.

The sponsors of these mosques reflected the sociopolitical structure of the time. Three had rulers for patrons: the Great Mosque was more or less an imperial mosque sponsored by the sultans in Cairo, and the mosques of Ṭaynāl and Arghūn Shāh were founded by local governors. Three mosques are named after wealthy citizens — ‘Abd al-Wāhīd, al-Uwaysi, al-Burjāsī — who endowed them, and two were built by merchants — the perfumer al-‘Aṭṭār and the miller al-Ṭaḥḥān. Whoever had the money and wanted to endow a mosque in Tripoli could do so; there seems to be no distinction either in date of construction or in scale between those built by the powerful and those by rich merchants.
The ground plans of the mosques built in Tripoli turn up very few traditional types. The Great Mosque and the Jami’ al-Tawbah show the standard arrangements of courtyard surrounded by portico and of a deep qiblah hall for prayer, but the rest are less conventional. By the fourteenth century there was no longer a standard mosque plan, and a great variety of forms were used. The Mosque of Taynāl, for instance, and the Mosque of al-Burṭāši (which was first conceived as a madrasah) follow plans akin to those of covered Syrian madrasahs with three raised iwans around a central court. The mosques of al-‘Aṭṭār and ʿAbd al-Wāḥid, on the other hand, show peculiar arrangements arising from their somewhat different functions, and the mosques of al-Ṭaḥḥān and Arghūn Shāh have simply used a large space divided by the supports that bear the roof.

THE GREAT MOSQUE

Founded in A.D. 1294 by al-Ashraf Khalīl; completed in 1314 by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. Both were sons of Qalā‘ūn.

Location

Left bank of the Qadisha River, in the area known as Nūriyyah, at the foot of the Citadel. Tripoli, Monument no. 2.

Figure 4. Great Mosque, main entrance, founding inscription on lintel.
Figure 5. Great Mosque, eastern wall of courtyard, inscription testifying to the completion of the mosque.

Figure 6. Great Mosque, minaret.

Figure 7. Great Mosque, main entrance.
History and Inscriptions

The Great Mosque, the first monument built in the new, Mamluk, Tripoli, remains the largest and best known of the city’s mosques. Officially named the Jami’ al-Manṣūrī al-Kabīr after al-Manṣūr Qalā’ūn, who liberated Tripoli from the Crusaders in 1289, it was erected by his two sons, al-Ashraf Khalīl, who ordered its construction in 1294, and al-Nāṣir Muhammad, who had the arcade built around the courtyard in 1314. Located on the site of what was once a Crusaders’ suburb at the foot of the Citadel, the mosque was often mistaken for a remodeled Christian church by medieval travelers and modern historians alike. Two elements, the door and the minaret, probably do belong to an earlier, Christian structure and were incorporated into the mosque when it was built, but the building — its court, arcades, fountain, and prayer hall — is essentially a Muslim creation.

The building has four inscriptions. Two record the date of the construction and the names of its founders. The first, set on the lintel of the main entrance to the mosque (fig. 4), consists of three lines of clearly written naskh. It reads as follows:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ارأي باشأ هذا الجامع البازار خولة السلطان العظيم سيد طولك الغرب والعجم فاتح الإمار وبين الكفاز الكل الأشرف صلاح الدين والد بن خليل قسيم امر المؤمنين خولة السلطان العظيم سيد طولك الغرب والعجم فاتح الإمار وبين الكفاز الكل الأشرف صلاح الدين والد بن خليل قسيم امر المؤمنين

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, our master the most powerful sultan, lord of Arab and Persian kings, conqueror of the frontiers and exterminator of the infidels, al-Malik al-Ashraf Salāḥ al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn Khalīl, the associate of the commander of the faithful, son of our master al-Sulṭān al-Malik al-Manṣūr Sayf al-Dunyā wa-l-Dīn Qalāʿūn al-Salīḥī, may God perpetuate his reign, has ordered the construction of this sacred mosque [jami’], during the governorship of His High Excellency the great Amir al-‘Izzī ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak al-Khazandār [the treasurer] al-Ashrafī al-Manṣūrī, governor of the sultanate in the conquered lands and protected shores, may God forgive him. In the year six hundred and ninety-three [A.D. 1294]. Glory to God the One and Only.


Following the inscription, in the left-hand corner, between the lintel and the arch, three additional short lines have been squeezed in. They read:

العجي عفا الله عنه.

The humble servant of God Sālim al-Šahyūnī, son of Nāṣir al-Dīn the Persian, has supervised [or has undertaken] the construction of this blessed mosque [jāmī‘]. May God forgive him.

The second inscription is set in the eastern wall of the arcade around the courtyard (fig. 5) and refers to the completion of the mosque. A plaque of white marble shaped like a trilobed arch on a horizontal band, it comprises ten lines of naskh and reads as follows:3

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم إنما يحمي وسجد الله من آن بالله والسهر الآخر أمر بعده. هذه الوثائق كثرة الجامع المبارك ولاة السلطان الملك الناصر العالم العادل الجاهد الطاهر التميمي ناصر الدين والديب بمحمدي ابن طالب خليج الله ملك في دين يقين الشريف العالي السيفي كنامي الناصري كأول السلاسل الشريفة الوطائدة في الحضرة اتحال بإشراف الشريف العالي البديع ابن أبي بكش عام الدواوين المصور أئدم الله تعتيه وكأن الفراعنة في شهوة سنة خمسة وسبعاء وعلى الله وفيه محسن.

فأنا عماره عبد الفقير إلى الله تعالى أحد ابن حسن البحلبي المهندز.

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3 Ibid., pp. 51–53, Inscription no. 21, with comments, pp. 54–55.
Figure 9. Great Mosque, plan.
In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, only the one who believes in God and the Last Day shall inhabit God’s places of worship [Qur’an 9:18]. Our master the sultan, the king, the victorious, the just, the learned, the warrior, the triumphant, Nāṣir al-Dunyā wa’l-Dīn Muhammad ibn Qalāʿūn, may God perpetuate his reign, has ordered these riwāqs to complete the blessed mosque, during the governorship of His High Noble Excellency Kustāy al-Nāṣirī, governor of the province of Tripoli, may God fortify his victories, under the supervision of His High Excellency Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad, son of Abū Bakr, inspector of flourishing diwans, may God lengthen his favor. It was completed in the months of the year seven hundred and fifteen [A.D. 1314-15], may God bless our lord Muḥammad. The humble servant of God Aḥmad ibn Ḫasan al-Baʿlabaki the architect has supervised [for undertaken] its construction. 4

The first inscription tells us that the building of the Great Mosque was ordered by al-Asḥraf Khalīl, son of Qalāʿūn, during the governorship of ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak al-Khazandār, his treasurer,5 in 1294. From the second, we can conclude that it was completed and the arcades were ordered by al-万家 al-Nāṣirī, son of Qalāʿūn, during the governorship of Kustāy al-Nāṣirī and under the supervision of Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad, by the architect Aḥmad al-Baʿlabaki. Work was completed in 1314-15.

A third inscription is on a secondary mihrab to the left of the axial mihrab on the qiblah side of the building. It has four lines of naskh recording that Usindamur ordered the marble revetment of the mihrab in 1478: 6

The humble slave of God, Usindamur al-Asḥrafi, governor of the royal province of Tripoli, the well protected, has ordered the marble revetment of the blessed mihrab, may God fortify his victories, under the administration of our lord the judge of judges7 the Shiʿite, the Imām in the beginning of Rabiʾ II of the year eight hundred and eighty-three [A.D. 1478] under the supervision of Inspector Muḥammad.

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4 The word muhandiss squeezed into the left corner of the inscription can mean either architect or engineer. It was added to Sobermheim’s reading by N. Elisséef and published by Jean Sauvaget, “Notes sur quelques inscriptions arabes de Baalbek et de Tripoli,” Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth 7 (1944-45): 7–11, esp. p. 10. For the use of the word muhandiss and its origin, see idem, La poste aux chevaux dans l’empire des Mamelouks (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient, 1941), p. 66, n. 269.

5 Not to be confused with ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak al-Mawsili, who built the mausoleum and hammam named after him.

6 Sobermheim, Matériaux, p. 57, Inscription 24, and pl. 6.

7 A curious case of a qadi, or judge, being referred to as “our lord” and “our master.”
Figure 10. Great Mosque, courtyard, remains of classical columns

Figure 11. Great Mosque, courtyard.
The minbar has the fourth inscription, two lines in a clear naskh, which identify its donor as Amir Qaraṭāy and give the date of its execution as 1326. It reads as follows:

`امير بن زايد البكر عبد القاهر المبارك المبارك عبد الله الناصري
أعطاه الله فقراً به من الله كون من عبد الله الشهابي تقبل الله منه وذلك في شهير
ذي القعدة سنة سبعمائة وثلاثين سنة وسيمبان
`

The humble slave of God, Qaraṭāy, son of `Abdallāh al-Nāṣirī, has ordered the construction of this blessed minbar, may God reward him. He has delegated this work to Bakhtūvān, son of `Abdallāh al-Shahābī, may God recognize his effort, in the month of zu al-Qa'dah of the year seven hundred and twenty-six [A.D. 1326].

Amir Qaraṭāy was twice governor of Tripoli, from 1316 to 1326 and from 1332 to 1333. During his first term he endowed this beautiful minbar and also built the finest madrasah in Tripoli, the Madrasah Qarṭāwiyyah, adjoining the mosque to the east.

**Description**

The Great Mosque occupies an area of about 50 by 60 meters in the middle of the city. It does not have an elaborate façade, but is readily identifiable from the outside by its minaret and its main northern gate, the two controversial elements responsible for the theory that it is a remodeled Christian church.

The square-towered minaret (fig. 6) has been replastered and repaired many times. It has four floors topped by a balcony on which an octagonal shaft, with its own balcony and conical dome, has been built in recent years. The first story of the minaret has no openings; the second has two arched windows with a central column on each of its four sides; and the third and fourth have three arched windows on the south and north and two on the east and west. The minaret is probably part of the Crusaders' Church of St. Mary, known to have existed at the foot of the Citadel. Although Arab sources do not say anything about its peculiarities, Western scholars have puzzled over its shape since the nineteenth century. The Marquis de Vogüé, a nineteenth-century French historian and traveler, thought that the way the stories were laid out, the shape of the windows, and the arrangement of the bell tower suggested a Christian belfry, and when Max van Berchem saw it on his first trip to Tripoli in 1895, he remarked on how its square tower recalled the campaniles of northern Italy. Modern guidebooks repeat that theme when...
Figure 12. Great Mosque, courtyard, vaulted porticoes.

Figure 13. Great Mosque, dome over mihrab area.
they describe the minaret as "probably a bell-tower [which] has features of Lombardic art and can be dated to the 12/13th century" and then refer to it as "St. Mary's Lombard tower." Lombard or not, the minaret of the Great Mosque may well have been a bell tower dating from before the Muslim conquest and later integrated into the structure with no particular religious connotation attached to it.

The Muslim origin of the main entrance to the mosque (fig. 7) has also been doubted because of its shape and decoration. The rectangular door is set in a portal of successive arches of alternating plain and zigzag carved stone moldings resting on two slender colonnettes of white marble and four narrow wall segments; the whole is preceded by an Arab cross-vaulted entryway. The question is whether the system of moldings above the door is an element brought by the Crusaders, as most writers claim, or whether it is a Muslim work that simply shows the influence of the Crusader style. The Crusaders' source for the molding, known as a "chevron," "dogtooth," or "zigzag in relief," is indisputable; it is undoubtedly of Norman origin and made its appearance in the Fertile Crescent with the Crusaders, but the motif was early assimilated by the Muslims and used in the decoration of many monuments in Jerusalem, Aleppo, and Tripoli. The Muslim version, however, invariably consisted of one row of dogtooth or zigzag in various degrees of thickness. The Western type of successive molding that is seen on this gate is otherwise unknown in Muslim buildings.

Whatever doubts one may have about the origins of the doorway are removed by a closer look (fig. 8). A row of spiky quatrefoil rosettes in relief decorates the inner side of the arched entryway right behind the main entrance with the zigzag decoration. These rosettes are totally alien to the Muslim decorative vocabulary, and it would be difficult to think of a reason why a Muslim architect might invent them for a Muslim arch. On the other hand, identical rosettes are encountered in Western architecture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and are especially common in the Crusader architecture in Syria and Palestine. Friezes of four-petaled rosettes can be found in Norman architecture throughout Europe and on some Norman buildings in the Holy

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13 As, for example, van Berchem, de Vogüé, Guérin, and Condé in the works cited above, nn. 1, 10, and 11.
14 Examples of identical rosettes are seen on the portal of Leczyca in Poland (C. Enlart, Les monumens des croisés dans le royaume de Jerusalem, 2 vols. [Paris, 1925], 1:12); the jambs of the façade of the Church of Civray at Poitou (Camille Martin, L'art roman en France [Paris, 1970], pls. 63–64); the window of the ancient cathedral at Salamanca in Spain, framed by similar rosettes called by Speltz, "a Spanish romanesque ornament" (drawing no. 3, pl. 93, in Alexander Speltz, The Styles of Ornament from Prehistoric Times to the Middle of the Nineteenth Century, trans. and ed. R.P. Spiers [2d ed., London, 1910])
Land. In Jerusalem, similar rosettes can be seen on two reused capitals at the al-Aqsa mosque, and in Galilee they frame the doorway of an early Christian church at Yârûn.\(^{15}\) In Syria, the Logis du Maitre at the Krac des Chevaliers has arches decorated with two kinds of rosettes in relief; those decorating the upper third of the arch are of the same four-pointed type as those in Tripoli.\(^{16}\) Considering that the Krac belonged to the Frankish counts of Tripoli in the twelfth century and that for almost two centuries the Krac and Tripoli had been under Latin rule, the similarity of decorative elements is not surprising. The Abbey of Belmont, a Crusader construction only a few kilometers to the south of Tripoli, has a voussoir with similar four-pointed rosettes.\(^{17}\) The Crusader origin of the entrance and the minaret therefore seems undeniable, but they are the only elements betraying Christian influence. The rest of the building is purely Muslim in plan and in style and owes nothing to earlier structures.

The plan of the Great Mosque (fig. 9) shows a traditional arrangement with a central courtyard, single porticoes on three sides, a deeper qiblah side for prayer, and a central fountain. In traditional fashion the

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\(^{16}\) Paul Deschamps, *Les châteaux des croisés en Terre Sainte: Le Crac des Chevaliers* (Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique, vol. 19 [text], vol. 34 [plates]), vol. 34, pl. 62A

\(^{17}\) Enlart, *Monuments des croisés*, vol. 1, pl. 66, fig. 203.
mosque has three axial entrances set to the north, east, and west, but there are also two others on either side of the prayer hall. Creswell regards the three axial entrances as a Syrian feature which started accidentally in the Umayyad mosque in Damascus, became part of the Syrian arrangements (e.g., the mosque in Harrân), and was then copied in other parts of the Muslim world (e.g., in Anatolia and in a number of Cairene mosques, including those of al-Ḥâkim, al-Ṣâliḥ Ṭâlâʾî, and Baybars I). 

A visitor entering the courtyard sees to the right of the main entrance two granite columns (fig. 10) springing from the pavement, remnants of classical times that were for some reason left standing. Like the two columns in front of Ṭâynâl’s mosque and the two in front of the Madrasah Saqraqiyyah, they do not seem to have any practical or decorative function.

The courtyard which dominates the building (fig. 11) is enclosed by porticoes to the north, east, and west, and by the closed prayer area to the south. The porticoes display a rhythmic arrangement of identical low arches in the courtyard, and a continuous corridor-like area of simple cross-vaulting behind (fig. 12). These are the riwaqs built by al-Malik al-Nâṣîr in 1314, when he completed the mosque. The ablution fountain in the middle of the courtyard (figs. 9 and 11) consists of two adjoining square units, one of which is covered by a dome. When al-Nâbulî visited Tripoli in 1700, he described the fountain as “having a huge dome and pillars so large as to need four men to embrace them.”

The prayer hall (fig. 9) takes up the entire qiblah side of the building and consists of two aisles divided by six large piers to form fourteen areas, thirteen of them covered by simple cross-vaults, and the fourteenth, the area in front of the mihrab, by a small dome (fig. 13). The qiblah wall has three mihrabs — an axial main mihrab with a rosette set above it and one on either side — and a minbar (fig. 14).

The minbar is a wooden chair entirely covered with geometric carving. The painted rosette above the minbar (fig. 14) is clearly reused; the word “Allah” appears in its center and the same two motifs as were used inside and outside the main gate decorate the periphery. Four-pointed rosettes in relief run around the circumference of the roundel and a zigzag motif forms circles within. This decorative rosette, of the same style as the gate, must have belonged to the same Crusader church.

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18 The east and west entrances are not seen on the inaccurate plan, but they can be seen on Sobemhein’s sketch of it, Matériaux, p. 50, fig. 7.
20 Al-Nâbulî, Al-Rihlah, p. 72.
Since, like the door, it had no particular Christian iconographic or symbolic significance, it could be reused by Muslims as a mosque decoration. In any case the two Christian elements in no way detract from the traditional Muslim nature of this great royal mosque, the first building erected in Mamluk Tripoli.

Selected Reading


**MASJID ṬABD AL-WĀḤID**

Built in A.D. 1305-6 by Ṭābd al-Wāḥid al-Mikrāṣī (i.e., from Meknes, North Africa), also known as the Maghribī (i.e., the North African).

**Location**

Left bank of the Qadisha River, behind the Jeweler’s Suq (*suq al-ṣāghah*) on an alley named after the founder of the mosque, Zuqāq Sidi Ṭābd-al-Wāḥid. *Tripoli*, Monument no. 17.

**History and Inscriptions**

A small masjid rather than a large jamā‘, the Masjid Ṭābd al-Wāḥid did not attract the attention of many travelers, so documentation is exceedingly scarce. Locally, however, it has its own tradition. After Tripoli was liberated from Christian rule, so the story goes, one of the many Muslims who visited there was Ṭābd al-Wāḥid al-Maghribī, a pious Muslim from Meknes. At the khan where he stayed, he had a disagreement with the keeper. The owner of the khan was a Christian who was not very hospitable. Angry at the treatment he received, Ṭābd al-Wāḥid, a pious and wealthy man, offered to buy the inn. The Christian agreed and brought a large tray, demanding he fill it with money. Ṭābd al-Wāḥid did so, became the owner of the building, and immediately had it transformed into a mosque. The story comes in many versions (according to another, Ṭābd al-Wāḥid had to save up his money before he could buy out the innkeeper);²¹ though none can be documented from a con-

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²¹ Condé, *Tripoli of Lebanon*, pp. 77-80, identifies Ṭābd al-Wāḥid as one of the preachers who flocked to Tripoli during the busy period of its Muslim reconstruction and who had a reputation for holiness and attracted many disciples; but Condé gives no source for that information. The story of the khan keeper is also reported by Šāmil Wajīh al-Zayn, *Ṭārikh Ṭabarluṣ Qadīman wa Ḥadīthan* (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1969), pp. 420-22.
temporary source, both the founding inscription and the shape and character of the building itself make it a plausible story.

The inscription, which was originally on a fountain in the courtyard, was removed during recent renovations and reapplied to the wall of the prayer hall (fig. 15). It reads as follows:

اِنْشَأَ هَذَا الْمَسْجِدُ الْبَارِكُ اِبْنِ الْقَفْرِ الْأَلِيِّ الْلَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْعَمَالِ أَبِهِ الْوَاحِدُ الْمَكْنََيْيِ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ

This blessed place was built by God’s humble servant ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Miknāsī, may God forgive him, his parents, and whoever was the cause of it [its construction] for the Muslims, in the year seven hundred and five [A.D. 1305].

Apart from giving us the name and date of the donor, the inscription also unveils another fact in its phrase asking forgiveness for “whoever was the cause of it,” i.e., the building’s construction. This may well be a reference to the khan keeper who, according to legend, was indirectly instrumental in the building’s being transformed into a mosque and who in that way benefited the Muslims. Further substantiating the legend are the building’s clear signs of remodeling and alteration, and its waqf’s stipulation that shelter be provided for ‘Abd al-Wāḥid’s fellow North Africans, a provision that is still in force six hundred years later. Although the waqf document itself no longer exists, its contents have been transmitted by word of mouth and are accepted as valid by all.

Description

From the outside the mosque is completely integrated into its surroundings and is hardly distinguishable from the buildings around it; it has two domes, but neither can be seen from a distance. It does not have an elaborate façade and is entered through a small, inconspicuous, modern door which leads to the mosque proper and to the living quarters that occupy the second floor on the left side of the building. These are the rooms which, according to the waqf, are used to shelter North Africans.

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Figure 15. Masjid 'Abd al-Wāhid, founding inscription.

Figure 16. Masjid 'Abd al-Wāhid, general view.
The minaret is small and not easily seen from without; it consists of a simple octagonal shaft (figs. 16 and 19) open at the top by windows on each of its eight sides. Five of these windows are still open; the other three were at some point blocked. Through the open windows a column can be seen with a capital in the middle of its shaft. The minaret is topped by an equally plain half-dome with a stone crescent. Simple, yet powerful, the 'Abd al-Wâhid minaret is very different from other Tripoli minarets, and even other Mamluk minarets throughout the Fertile Crescent. An octagonal tower of the same size and shape, with the same dome and upper windows, can, however, be found in the Crusaders' Church of Taïtus (Tortosa), a Romanesque structure of the twelfth century with a Gothic façade of the thirteenth, which had been taken over by the Arabs in 1291, but not transformed into a mosque until 1851. The tower/minaret looks incongruous beside the earlier structure and was obviously added. While otherwise unparalleled in the Mamluk world, then, the simple octagonal minaret of 'Abd al-Wâhid does have at least one close companion in this undated Taïtus minaret some two hundred kilometers to the north.

It is regrettable that no floor plan of the mosque is available, but a description of the building combined with photographs should at least make its major characteristics clear. It is a squarish structure built around a central courtyard (fig. 16), but unlike most mosques with a courtyard, it is built on two levels (fig. 17), with a lower floor of thick, low vaulting, and an upper floor of rooms behind a gallery of arches. This plan and its constituent elements are undeniably typical, not of mosques, but rather of caravanserais or khans, which were located within the city, were oblong in shape, had a simple exterior, and were built on two levels — the lower one a low-vaulted area for animals and merchandise, and the upper one a series of rooms for travelers. The layout of the Masjid 'Abd al-Wâhid, then, also substantiates its legendary origins, all the more so because the elements that make the building a mosque — the expanded prayer hall, the ablution area, the mihrab, the raised dome, and the side minaret — are clearly later additions to, or transformations of, the original structure.

The qiblah side now has only one level, the second having been removed at some point. It consists of a prayer area that has been expanded into the original courtyard, reducing the latter to an open rectangular passageway. The three other sides are on two levels and have dwellings upstairs behind the gallery (fig. 17). The prayer hall proper is a rectangle of about 16 by 6 meters divided into six vaulted areas by two

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23 W. Müller-Wiener, Castles of the Crusaders (New York, 1966), pl. 34.
Figure 17. Masjid 'Abd al-Wâhîd, arced on courtyard

Figure 18. Masjid 'Abd al-Wâhîd, dome over mihrab

Figure 19. Masjid 'Abd al-Wâhîd, minaret and dome over tomb chamber.
heavy piers, approximately 2 by 2 meters each. The ceiling is very low owing to the massive vaulting, except for the area above the mihrab where it has been raised and covered by a dome (fig. 18). The mihrab, with its modern ribbing, has clearly been added to an earlier building, inasmuch as it is set at an angle to the qiblah wall. Had the original structure been conceived as a mosque, it would have certainly been possible in 1305 to orient the building properly, and there would have been no need to build the mihrab askew.

The dome over the mihrab can best be seen from the outside (fig. 18). It is a simple, plain dome resting on an eight-sided and sixteen-sided double drum over a square area. The dome is fairly conventional but nonetheless interesting on two counts. First, the vaulting in the prayer hall eliminated the square room or square open space over which a dome is normally set, so a square area had to be built over the roof for the dome to rest on, adding an extra level to the dome's exterior. Second, the drums or zones of transition are not clearly octagonal or sixteen-sided, but look more like circles. These areas are also not straight, but flare upward, wider at the top than at the bottom.

The tomb chamber, covered by a ribbed dome and set by the entrance on the right, is a square room with a high ceiling and a tomb in the middle. The tomb is that of a descendant of 'Abd al-Wāhid, named 'Abd al-Salām al-Maghribī al-Mashīshi, who — judging by the candles and wreaths which continue to decorate it even today — must be a local saint.²⁴

The particular interest of this tomb chamber lies in its dome. From the exterior (fig. 19) a ribbed dome can be seen carrying a stone crescent and resting on the eight-sided and sixteen-sided double drum, with openings on alternate sides, resting on a square. As in the dome over the mihrab, it gives the impression of a pile of elements, which over time has turned into a gray-and-green moss-covered mound. From the interior, however, the dome is more clearly defined (fig. 20). It has on its lowest level an octagonal zone consisting of two blind niches, two open niches, and four corner squinches, all of the same size and height. The squinches are simple, high, concave niches of the Damascus type.²⁵ Above this dome is a ten-sided zone that alternates two blind niches with one open one, topped by a sixteen-sided zone of small arches. These three zones are crowned by a narrowly ribbed dome, which is

²⁵ Sauvaget discusses the major difference between the architecture of Aleppo and Damascus, including the squinch, in "Architecture musulmane de Syrie," Revue des Arts Asiatiques 8 (1934): 37-41
extremely well built and whose elements are very clearly defined. Alternating broad and narrow, crisp, sharp edges form a very effective star pattern.

Selected Reading

Condé, Tripoli of Lebanon, pp. 77–80; Sobernheim, Matériaux, 25, pp. 85 ff., Inscription 38; Salem, Ṭarābiṣus al-Shām, p. 407; Tadmuri, Ṭārīkh wa Athār, p. 156; Unesco, no. 5, p. 12, and photograph of dome; al-Zayn, Ṭārīkh Ṭarābiṣus, pp. 420–21.

MADRASAH-MOSQUE OF AL-BURṬĀṢĪ

Built before AD 1324 by ʿIsā ibn ʿUmar al-Burṭāṣī.

Location

On the left bank of the Qadisha River to the northeast of the Citadel, between the Suwayqah and the Bāb al-Ḥadīd. Tripoli, Monument no. 19.
History and Inscriptions

The Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burṭāsī carries an inscription on its main gate which gives us the name of its founder and the purpose of its erection. The date of construction is not given, but the information it does provide permits us to infer a more accurate date than the estimate of sometime before 1381 usually given in the literature. A line of naskh running above the door along the inner sides of the gateway (figs. 25 and 26) reads as follows:26

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, the pious servant of God, 'Īsā ibn 'Umar al-Burṭāsī, has founded this blessed madrasah, may God forgive him, for the benefit of those working in the noble science according to the rite of Imám al-Shā'ī‘ī, and for the holding of gatherings and prescribed [i.e., Friday] prayers. And [the founder] has stipulated that no wage may be given nor lodging provided except for those entitled to it.27

Since the building is clearly identified as a madrasah for the followers of Imám al-Shā'ī‘ī, but a madrasah where Friday prayer is also to take place, its dual function has led to confusion whenever the building is mentioned. Sometimes it is referred to as the “Burṭāsiyyah Madrasah,” sometimes as the “Jami‘ al-Burṭāsī,” or even the “Jami‘ al-Burṭāsiyyah,”28 giving an ending to the name that belongs to a madrasah and not to a mosque. Apparently over time its function actually shifted from madrasah to mosque. The earliest sources such as al-Ṣafadī and Ibn Hajar state that al-Burṭāsī built a “madrasah for the Shā‘ī iyyah” in Tripoli;29 by 1634 al-‘Uṭayfī talks about a “jami‘ known as the Burṭāsiyyah,”30 and in 1700 al-Nábulsī lists the “Jami‘ al-Burṭāsiyyah” as the sixth in importance of the twelve mosques where Friday prayer was held.31

Today the building is unmistakably a mosque.

26 Soberheim, Matériaux, p. 138, Inscription no 63.
27 Ibid Soberheim notes that the stipulation providing salary and lodging only to those entitled to it is identical with that found on the Mosque of Tāynāl (Inscription no. 41).
28 Some imprecision in functional and architectural terminology is frequent in the architecture of Egypt, Anatolia, and Iran. For the case of the Mosque-Madrasah of Qaytbāy in Cairo, for example, see Oleg Grabar, “The Inscriptions of the Madrasah-Mausoleum of Qaytbay,” Studies in Honor of George C. Miles, ed. D. Kouroumijian (Beirut: American University, 1974), p. 466.
30 Al-‘Uṭayfī, Journey to Lebanon [Riḥlah ilā Ṭarāblus al-Shām], ed Stefan Wild (Beirut, 1970), p. 221.
31 Al-Nábulsī, Al-Riḥlah, p. 72.
Figure 21. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burjasi, view before 1955.

Figure 22. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burjasi, profile after flood.
Figure 23. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burtasi, portal

Figure 24. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burtasi, portal, muqarnas squinch and founding inscription.

Figure 25. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burtasi, portal, lintel and founding inscription.
Figure 26. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burṭāsi, minaret.

Figure 27. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burṭāsi, central dome, zone of transition.
The inscription identifies the founder as 'Isā ibn 'Umar al-Burṭāsi, and the literature provides us with his full name, 'Isā ibn 'Umar ibn 'Isā, al-Amīr Sharaf al-Dīn ibn al-Burṭāsi al-Kurdi, his date of birth, A.H. 665, and his death, the 15th of Ramadan A.H. 725 (A.D 1324) in Tripoli. This allows us to date the Burṭāsiyyah to between 1290 and 1324 which is at least more accurate than the so far accepted date of "before 1381," based on Sobernheim's attribution of the style of the inscription to the Bahri Mamluk period.

**Description**

Until 1955 the Burṭāsiyyah was completely surrounded by dwellings (fig. 21), but in that year a flood swept them away and it now stands alone, the only remaining structure on the river bank (fig. 22). A massive oblong building of sandstone, its three outstanding features are an imposing portal, an elaborate minaret, and three well-defined domes.

The portal (fig. 23) is set in the middle of the façade wall, which is damaged but still has remnants of two windows, one on either side of the portal, and two rows of black stone set for decoration along the wall's lower level. The portal, surrounded by a frieze of stone molding, rises to the full height of the building and consists of a trilobed opening on a wall of striped black and white masonry. These trilobed arches reflect the influence of the Crusader architecture adapted by the Muslims, the best example and closest parallel to al-Burṭāsi being the arch over the entrance door of the khanqah of Şalāh al-Dīn in Jerusalem. Other examples can be seen in Cairo (on the main entrance to the mausoleum of the Sab' Banāt, mid-fifteenth century; and in the Mamluk cemetery) and in Damascus (the arch on the façade of Jamī' al-Tawrizi, 1420). Tripoli's khanqah also has a variation of the three-lobed arch on its main entrance.

Crisp and impressive in its solidity and purity of line, this trilobed arch frames a simple interior: a plain rectangular door, corner muqarnas squinches (fig. 24) instead of the more common overall muqarnas hood, and, between the two, the band of inscription and a decorative rectangular plaque above the lintel (fig. 25). The plaque contains two square motifs in the corners and two circular motifs between them, separated

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32 Ibn Ḥajar and al-Ṣafadī, see Tadmuri, Tārikh wa Athār, p. 208.
33 Sobernheim, Materialia, p. 138.
34 Several other examples of trilobed arches can be seen on Mamluk buildings in Jerusalem. See Michael H. Burgoyne, "Some Mamluke Doorways in the Old City of Jerusalem," *Levant* 3 (1971): 1-30; Madrasah Muzhirīyya, elevation 1, p. 21; unknown soup kitchen, elevation 1, p. 18; doorway in Ṭāriq Bāb al-Ḥadīd, pl. 20b;
35 C. Wultzinger and K. Wultzinger, *Damasqu. die Islamische Stadt* (Berlin, 1924), pl. 27.

Figure 29. Cairo, Mamluk cemetery.
Figure 30. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burṭāš, plan.
Figure 31. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burjāsī, cross-vault in entrance corridor.

Figure 32. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burjāsī, fountain.
by three vertical modified fleurs-de-lys. The two corner motifs have, respectively, the names of ʿAlī and Muḥammad arranged in a swastika, with the initial letter set at the center and the rest of the name written in the four arms of the cross. The revolving effect is further emphasized by two meaningless whirling motifs. This use of the Prophet’s name in a revolving decoration is common throughout the Muslim world. It can be seen, for example, on either side of the mihrab of 1325 in the mausoleum of Zayn al-Dīn al-Yūsufī in Cairo, which was built around the same time as the Burṭāsiyyah.\textsuperscript{36}

The minaret stands directly above the portal and is commonly regarded as the most beautiful minaret in Tripoli (fig. 26). A square shaft of sandstone carries a square room resting on a three-tiered band of muqarnas interrupted to form positive triangles in relief and negative triangles in recess. The room is surmounted by two polygonal shafts ending in a simple dome. Sets of double windows with a central column decorate it at three levels. The top windows are rounded; the middle windows are rectangular and follow the lines of the muqarnas at their top. Both sets are of a common type, which can be seen on several minarets in Tripoli itself, including those of the Great Mosque and the Mosque of al-ʿAṭṭār. The third set is very different and much more interesting, however; it has rightly been compared with Moorish double arches on a column.\textsuperscript{37} Two slightly pointed horseshoe arches with alternating black and white stone rest on a central slender column with a capital; the whole set is recessed into the wall. Such windows, or double arches with a column that are used as windows, are typical of Muslim Spain, but are not normally encountered elsewhere in the Muslim world. The best-known examples are from Cordoba (blind double arches with alternate stones on the north portal of the Great Mosque built by al-Hakam II [961-76], and other windows on the external walls),\textsuperscript{38} from Toledo (windows on the Parochial Church of Santiago del Arrabal, thirteenth century), from the Alhambra in Granada (where twin windows with a central column abound — on gates, on courtyards, on the mosque), and from the Church of San Salvator in Valdenios. Outside Spain, this type of window can be seen wherever Spanish influence was strong, as in fourteenth-century Sicily where an excellent example is on

\textsuperscript{36} Creswell, MAF, vol 2, pl 114

\textsuperscript{37} Both Salem and Tadmur talk about the Spanish character of the windows, but without giving any comparisons or references

\textsuperscript{38} Albert F. Calvert, Moorish Remains in Spain (London, 1907), pp 45 and 217; idem, Cordova, a City of the Moors (London, 1907), pl 116; idem, Toledo, “The City of Genevations” (London, 1907), pls. 381 and 384; idem, Granada and the Alhambra (London, 1907), pls. 166 and 128 for the mosque; pl 139 for the Hall of the Ambassadors, and pl. 100 for the Wine Gate; Alexander Speltz, The Styles of Orament (London, 1910), pl. 69, figs. 5 and 6
the lower level of the palace of the duke of St. Stefona at Taormina, and in Cairo, where a Spanish type of double window is to be seen on the base of the minaret of the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn reconstructed by Lâgîn in 1296.

The domes are a third feature distinguishable from the outside of the Burjāsiyyah (fig. 22). Two domes, one over the mihrab and the other over the tomb chamber, are well built and of the common type comprising a cupola on a drum. The central dome, however, stands out by its size and its zone of transition. Below a sixteen-sided zone opened by sixteen arched windows is an octagonal zone with eight recessed arches containing three lights each: two round windows separated by a wall segment and topped by an oculus (figs. 22 and 27). Exact parallels to this use of three lights within an arch are virtually unknown in Syria or Egypt; consistent use of one aspect of this architectural element can be found there, but not the whole composition. In Syria, for instance, Ayyubid architecture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries shows a typical superstructure, especially prominent in mausoleums, of a dome resting on a sixteen-sided zone, opened by sixteen arched windows, or, more often, alternating open and blind windows, over an octagonal zone consisting of eight pointed and recessed arches containing two arched windows separated by a wall segment (fig. 28). This is exactly the arrangement in the Burjāsiyyah, except that the arches of the Damascus octagonal zone have no oculus above the two windows. A few examples of this standard Ayyubid transition are to be seen in Damascus in the twelfth-century anonymous mausoleum of Daḥīdāh, the mausoleums of Farūkh Shāh (1183) and Bahram Shāh (1230), and in the madrasahs Rukniyyah (1224) and Māridāniyyah (1227), both in the suburb of Şāliḥiyyah.

While two lights in an arch are common in Ayyubid Damascus, three lights without the arch are more common in Mamluk Cairo. The same two arched windows separated by a wall segment and topped by an oculus in the same relationship and arrangement as in the Burjāsiyyah are often found there, especially on the zone of transition in mausoleums. However, the Cairo arrangement is always set on the wall without the framing of an arch and almost always on the four walls above the

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39 Giulio Arata, *Architettura avabo-normanna e il rinascimento in Sicilia* (Milan, 1925), pl. 99, shows a pair of windows of the same style, proportions, and relationship of parts, the same arrangement of masonry around the arch, and the same pointed round shape of the arch as in the Mosque of al-Burjāsi

40 A. Fattal, *La Mosquée d’Ibn-Tulun* (Cairo, 1968), pp. 38–39 and pls. 75–76

square between the triangular corners. Mausoleums in the Mamluk cemetery (fig. 29), the mausoleum across the street from the Madrasah of Umm Sha‘ban, and the mausoleum of Sunqūr Sa‘di (1315) are examples of the Cairene arrangement. What was a simple idea of a window and three openings is multiplied in Cairo and used decoratively in combination with three arches and three oculi, as in the convent of Barquq (1385) and the mausoleum of the Sab‘i Banāt (mid-fifteenth century), and even in a superlative combination of four arches and six lights on the façade of the palace of Yashbak (1337), also known as Ḥosh Bardaq. Except for a single and unusual instance in the Mosque of Aqsunqūr (1346–47), we do not see three openings within an arch in Cairo. Sicily, on the other hand, provides several examples of the complete element of three openings within an arch in monuments ranging in date from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. Included among them are the tower of the Cathedral of Santa Maria la Nuova in Monreale (twelfth century), the tower of the Church of Santa Maria di L’Amiral in Palermo (first half of the twelfth century), and the Palazzo del Duca di St. Stefano in Taormina (fourteenth century).

The plan (fig. 30) of the Burṭasiyyah shows a well-defined three-iwan madrasah type with a covered courtyard, preceded by a side tomb chamber and a complex entrance corridor. The tomb chamber, where the founder is buried, is a square room containing a simple mihrab with a ribbed top opening to the outside by three windows and covered by a simple dome resting on an eight-sided zone of arched windows set over very simple corner squinches.

The corridor which leads from the portal to the madrasah proper is basically two successive rooms, the first covered by a cross-vault with a central cross-shaped keystone (fig. 31) and the second by a concave vault meeting in a central rosette, a type of vaulting frequently encountered in Tripoli.

The central, covered courtyard is about 60 centimeters lower than the surrounding iwans. It has an octagonal marble fountain in its middle (fig. 32) with an eight-lobed rosette inside. The floor surrounding the fountain is of rectangular and square units of white marble surrounded by alternating borders of plain colored marble and polychrome marble mosaic. As if to frame this inner room of marble, the short wall segment

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43 Creswell, Photos III, Ashmolean, Oxford, no. 33
44 Creswell, Photos III, Ashmolean, Oxford, nos 47–48
45 Arata, Architettura arabo-normanna, frontispiece, illustration, p. 9, and pls. 37 and 141; pl. 1; illustration, p. 20
Figure 33. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burṭāsi, central dome, interior.

Figure 34. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burṭāsi, dome over mihrab area, interior.
separating the floor from the adjoining iwan floors is also covered with marble in vertically striped bands of black, red, and white. The effect created by the light pouring in from the many windows so impressed al-‘Uṭayfī during his visit to Tripoli in 1634 that he spent many hours admiring it, and he describes it in glowing terms.

The central area is covered by the large dome (fig. 33) which is a perfect reflection of the exterior and admits generous amounts of light into the mosque from its numerous openings. The dome rests on four muqarnas pendentives (fig. 27) of the type attributed by Sauvaget to Aleppo. These muqarnas pendentives are most common in Aleppo and elsewhere in northern Syria but can also be found in Damascus (in the Madrasah `Adiliyyah [1222] and the mausoleum of Yashbak in the Maydān [1377]) and in Cairo (in the mausoleum of Barqūq [1384-86], the mausoleum of Yulghay al-Yūsuf [1373], and the mausoleum of Sab‘ Eanāt in the Mamluk cemetery [mid-fifteenth century]) (fig. 189).

The two iwans, to the east and to the west, are simple rectangular halls with simple vaulting. The western wall is opened by three doors leading to three small rooms, probably meant for students, and the eastern wall, which is right above the river, is opened by an organized system of windows (fig. 35) which further increases the amount of light pouring into the building.

The third iwan, on the qiblah side, as is often the case, extends the width of the building and is used as the prayer hall for the madrasah. The qiblah wall is entirely lined with marble at its lower level (fig. 36), with the miḥrab in its center. As in the Madrasah Qarṭāwīyyah, the marble paneling consists of vertical bands of red, white, and black marble interrupted by rectangular and square plaques and topped by small niches. The motif on the square plaque (fig. 37) is also seen on the Qarṭāwīyyah qiblah wall and is an intricate, bold motif common to the Mamluk vocabulary.

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46 Al-‘Uṭayfī, Journey to Lebanon, pp. 221–22; also in Tadmuri, p. 212:


48 Institut Français de Damas, Monuments ayyūbides, vol 2, p 83, photo pl. 19, nos 2 and 3; Sauvaget, Monuments de Damas, p 74, drawing.

Figure 35. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burāsī, eastern wall.

Figure 36. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burāsī, qiblah wall.
The mihrab, which follows the lines of the wall with vertical polychrome marble paneling topped by niches, is flanked by two twisted marble columns joined by an arch of joggled polychrome marble voussoirs. The mihrab’s half-dome is entirely lined with glass mosaic, representing acanthus leaves springing from a footed bowl in black and green on a gold background (fig. 38). In contrast with the exceedingly popular marble mihrabs showing various degrees of complexity and exuberance, mosaic mihrabs and mosaic decoration are rare in the Muslim world. Creswell, in one of his meticulous surveys, has listed all the mihrabs with glass mosaics in Cairo: the Mausoleum of Queen Shagar al-Durr (1250), the Madrasah of Qalâ‘ūn (1285), the Mosque of Ibn Túlùn (Lagîn’s addition in 1296), the Madrasah of Amir Ţaybars (1309), the Madrasah of Aqbughâ (1333), and the Mosque of Sitt Misk (1333).\textsuperscript{50} Considering the staggering number of mihrabs to be found in Cairo, that only six are mosaic indicates how rare the technique was.

In Damascus, mosaic mihrabs were equally rare, the only standing one being in the Mosque of Tankiz (1319), which also exhibits the traditional classical green acanthus on a gold background.\textsuperscript{51} The only other instance of glass mosaics used for decoration is in the funerary chamber of Baybars in the Madrasah Zâhiriyyah (1277), where the decoration is applied to the wall and window frames.\textsuperscript{52} This suggests that by Mamluk times the craft of glass mosaic was not a flourishing one; it was expensive and therefore rarely and sparingly used. Consequently, it had no chance to develop a vocabulary of its own, and relied instead on the classical past.

The mihrab area is covered by a dome with a polygonal zone of transition with open and blind niches resting on four corner squinches of the Damascus type (fig. 34).\textsuperscript{53} The two major domes of the Burjâsiyyah thus follow the two different Syrian traditions of Aleppo and Damascus. But this juxtaposition and variety of elements seem to characterize all of al-Burjâsi’s monument. Conceived as a madrasah, it was mainly used as a mosque. For its architectural elements it drew on the whole Muslim and pre-Muslim world, on the classical past, the Crusader past, the Muslim west, Cairo, Aleppo, and Damascus, picking and choosing, mixing and rearranging. The result is a harmonious whole, and its craftmanship gives the building a quality rarely seen in small structures.

\textsuperscript{50} Creswell, MAE 2: 138.
\textsuperscript{51} Selim ‘Abdul Hak and Khaled Moaz, Aspects de l’ancienne Damas (Damascus, n d ), illustration p. 108.
\textsuperscript{52} Sauvaget, Monuments de Damas, p 68
\textsuperscript{53} Sauvaget, “Architecture musulmane de Syrie,” pp. 37-41
Figure 37. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burtasi, marble motif on qiblah wall.

Figure 38. Madrasah-Mosque of al-Burtasi, mihrab, mosaic half-dome.
Selected Reading


**JAMI’ ṬAYNĀL**

Built in AD 1336 by Amir Ṭaynāl, governor of Tripoli.

**Location**

Left bank of the Qadisha River, on the southern outskirts of the city, in the orchards by the cemetery of Bāb al-Raml. *Tripoli*, Monument no. 36.

**History and Inscriptions**

Next to the Great Mosque, the Mosque of Ṭaynāl, locally called “Ṭaylān,” though why is unknown, is considered the most important monument in Tripoli. Whatever else they might mention, medieval travelers and twentieth-century scholars alike always include Ṭaynāl’s mosque in any survey.

Ibn Ḥajar (d. 1449) writes that he “visited Ṭaynāl’s mosque in Tripoli, prayed in it several times, and considered it among the best mosques... It is the musallah of Tripoli on feast days, and it is known as the Mosque of Ṭaylān.” 54 Al-‘Uṭayfī, who visited Tripoli in 1634, talks about “Ṭaylān’s” mosque as a “large institution” where prayer is held on feast days; 55 and in 1700 when al-Nābulūsī visited Tripoli for a fortnight he prayed in the Great Mosque on the first Friday and in Ṭaynāl’s mosque on the second. 56 The tradition was maintained when Max van Berchem and E. Fatio visited Tripoli during their Syrian trip in the early twentieth century; again Ṭaynāl’s mosque was one of the three monuments they described. 57

54 Ibn Ḥajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah*, cited in Tadmuri, p 176; also note the name “Ṭaylān” instead of “Ṭaynāl” as early as the fifteenth century
55 Al-‘Uṭayfī, *Journey to Lebanon*, p 222
56 Ibid., p 93.
57 Max van Berchem and E Fatio, *Voyage en Syrie* (Mémoires de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 37) (Cairo, 1914), pp 120-21.
Figure 39. Jami' Ṭaynāl, inner portal, inscriptions.

Figure 40. Jami' Ṭaynāl, inner portal, muqarnas hood and founding inscription.
Figure 41. Jami’ Ṭaynal, inner portal, inscription on tympanum.

Figure 42. Jami’ Ṭaynal, exterior.
The founding inscription is set above the door on the main inner portal (figs. 39 and 40) and identifies the benefactor and the date of construction. It consists of five lines of naskh set on either side of a square which records nine names in a rotating kufic motif; they are not recorded by Sobernheim, and three are undecipherable. The other six read:

محمد ابوبكر عمر عثمان علي عبد الرحمن
Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān
[fig 40].

The inscription itself reads: 58

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ابنا ثنا هذا الجامع البالارك البالارك البالارك البالارك البالارك
طبارن الناصر تابع الصنع الله العظيم بطلاب العرب وحاله عامه في ما علما الله تعالى
في شهر رجب سنة مائة وثلاثين ومبعثة.

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, His Excellency the noble, the high master Ṭaynāl al-Nāšir, governor of the sultanate, has ordered the building of this blessed jam‘. Glorified in Tripoli, the well-guarded, in the days of al-Malik al-Nāšir, in the month of Rajab, in the year seven hundred and thirty-six [A D 1336].

We thus learn that Amir Ṭaynāl ordered the construction of this mosque and that it was completed in February-March 1336. Two more inscriptions, one on either side of this same inner portal, reiterate Ṭaynāl’s sponsorship of the mosque and of the mausoleum attached to it, give all the waqf information regarding the two structures, and specify the method for its distribution.

The inscription on the right consists of four lines of naskh following the angle of the doorway (fig. 39); it reads as follows: 59

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ابنا ثنا هذا الجامع البالارك البالارك البالارك البالارك البالارك
الشريف الناصري البالارك البالارك البالارك البالارك البالارك
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58 Sobernheim, Matériaux, pp. 86-87, Inscription 39: several words were misread by Sobernheim.
59 Ibid., no 40, pp. 87-88; also Salem, Ṭarābīlus al-Shām, p 475; and Tadmuri, Tārīkh wa Aṯārā, p. 171.
In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, our master His Noble High Excellency, the master, the governor, the lord, the man in power, the served one, Sayf al-Dīn Ṭaynāl al-Nāṣiri, governor of the royal province of Tripoli, has ordered the building of this mosque erected to the glory of God, may God fulfill his hopes and accept his works among the good ones. And he has constituted as waqf [in favor of the mosque] to be used for the functions specified in his written waqf: the whole garden known as Ḥamawi, in the outskirts of Tripoli, and the whole of the two shops next to the door of the mosque, and the whole garden formerly known as Alṭunṭāsh in the irrigated land of Tripoli, and the whole of the two shops next to the suq of arms, next to the bath known as Usindamur, and these are now the property of the founder; and the whole of the third of the khan known as the old Dār al-Wakālah, and the whole village known as Arzuniyah in the dependencies of Ṭargā in the bay of Tripoli. And he stipulated that whatever excess from the revenue of this waqf remains after proper reductions are made for those employed in its specified functions and maintenance as prescribed in the waqf is to be spent on the poor and the impoverished living in Tripoli and coming to Tripoli at the discretion of the supervisor of the mosque, but without his allocating a fixed wage to anyone, neither monthly nor daily. Should anyone change or interfere with this or assign a regular salary, he shall be struck by the malediction of God, the angels, and the whole of mankind.

This exceedingly generous endowment, which included whole shops and villages, was for the upkeep of the mosque alone. Another equally generous endowment was provided for the upkeep of the mausoleum (though in the end Ṭaynāl was never buried there), and the waqf document for that is inscribed again on the inner portal opposite the first one. The inscription on the left reads as follows: 60

Ibid., no 41, pp. 91-92; also Salem, Ṭarāḥlus al-Shām, pp. 475-76; and Tadmuri, Ṭārīkh wa Athār, p. 172.
Figure 43. Jami' Taynâl, profile of domes.
After van Berchem and Fatio, *Voyage en Syrie*, 1914; fig. 53, p. 120

Figure 44. Jami' Taynâl, minaret.
Figure 45. Jami‘ Taynāl, outer door.

Figure 46. Jami‘ Taynāl, courtyard, western wall.
In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, our master the previously mentioned king of the amirs, may God recognize his good [deeds] and accept them from him, give him goodness, and be happy with him, has ordered the building of this blessed mausoleum, may God have pity on him who lies in it. And he has constituted as waqf to ensure the upkeep of the mausoleum and for the salaries of those employed in it as specified in its acts, the whole upper floor to its east known as al-Khaṭīb\textsuperscript{61} and the whole of the renovated market [ga'yāṣariyyah] near the Mosque of Arzūnī to the west, by the stalls of the dealers in used clothing, and the number of its shops is sixteen and of its rooms upstairs sixteen; and all of the two shops by the Suq of the Ironmongers [ḥaddādin] on the western side previously known as Abī Rabbīh; and the entirety of the shops and floor built by the founder in the old Ṭārṣah; and the entirety of the six newly built shops by the founder previously called Muzaffar in the Suwayqat al-Qādi; and the three rooms above them; and the whole of the enclosed area in the vicinity of this mosque to the south; and the whole of the land to the south of the maydān; on the condition that whatever remains from the revenues of these waqfs, after the proper reductions are made for those employed in the functions specified and the maintenance prescribed in the waqf, is to be spent on the poor and the impoverished living in Tripoli and coming to Tripoli, but without fixed wages, and whoever gives a salary to anyone or establishes a regular income which resembles a salary, God shall be his enemy, shall ask him to render his account, shall put him with the depraved on the Day of Judgment, with those who have made efforts in the wrong direction during life on earth while under the impression that they were doing the right thing.

The two waqf documents of the mosque and of the mausoleum also refer to the extensive wealth of Amir Ṭaynāl.

But who was this Amir Ṭaynāl, and what do we know about him? He is often mentioned in the chronicles, and his biography is recounted in al-Ṣafadī and repeated in Qādi Shuḥbah, whose account closely follows al-Ṣafadī's.\textsuperscript{62} They both maintain that Ṭaynāl was one of the Mamluks who had given their allegiance to Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl, whom they call al-Ashrafī (as does the first inscription). Al-Maqrīzī, on the other hand, claims that Ṭaynāl was one of the Mamluks of Muḥammad al-Nāṣir (under whose reign the mosque was built; the title "al-Nāṣiri" is attributed to the founder in the second inscription).\textsuperscript{63} An accurate chronology can also be drawn from these biographies: in 1326 Ṭaynāl was named successor to Qaraṭāy as governor of Tripoli; in 1333 Ṭaynāl caused so

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p. 93, Sobernehm notes that only large mosques have rooms for the mosque's preacher. Ṭaynāl's mosque has two such rooms, one to the east and one to the west of the entrance.

\textsuperscript{62} For Ṭaynāl's biography and the pertinent information which can be drawn from al-Ṣafadī and al-Shuḥbah, see Sobernehm, Matériaux, p. 92, 93.

\textsuperscript{63} Al-Maqrīzī, Al-Khiṭṭ af al-Maqrīzīyāh (Beirut: Dār Sader, n.d.), p. 76
much trouble for Tankiz that he was sent to Ghazzah, a less important post than Tripoli; in 1335 Tāynāl regained Tankiz’s favor and was again named governor of Tripoli; in 1340 Tankiz was deposed, and Tāynāl had to leave Tripoli; in 1341 Tāynāl took back his post in Tripoli; and finally in 1343 he died in Damascus.

From this list we can conclude that Tāynāl had three terms of office in Tripoli beginning respectively in 1326, 1335, and 1341, and that the mosque was built during his second term. The chronicles praise him as an intelligent man with administrative talents, but also describe him as miserly and greedy. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, who visited Tripoli during Tāynāl’s first term, describes the pomp that surrounded him when he moved around the city and tells us that “his residence there is in the mansion known as Dār al-Saʿādah (the Abode of Felicity).” We also know that he owned a house in Damascus, later to become the Madrasah Tāynālīyyah, and that he built himself a house in Cairo on the “site of the Fatimid hospital” next to the al-Azhār mosque. But his mosque in Tripoli must still be considered his most ambitious undertaking.

The mosque’s large size, lavish decorations, and the fame of its founder attracted a great deal of attention in its early days. Later, people were interested in it largely on account of its architectural peculiarities. In 1700 al-Nābulī notes that it is a “pleasant jami’, but strange in style and unusual in its organization.” Later scholars, including van Berchem and Fatio, explained its peculiarities as reflecting the remnants of a Crusader church; a recent study advances the theory that it was built on the remains of a temple dedicated to Zeus. Whatever the theory, they all have one observation in common: the shape of the mosque and some of its architectural elements suggest that it once fulfilled some different function.

The minbar (fig. 54) has two inscriptions, one at the top, the other on a lower level. The inscription at the top, five lines of naskh, reads as follows:

\[
\text{بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم} \\
\text{إنا نسألك أن تكون من المهتدين} \\
\text{كتب هذا البركة} \\
\text{شهر ذي القعدة سنة ست وثلاثي وسبعة}.
\]

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66 Al-Nābulī, *Al-Riḥlah*, p 72; van Berchem and Fatio, *Voyage en Syrie*, p. 120.
68 Sobernheim, *Matériaux*, p 93, Inscription no 42.
Figure 47. Jami' Taynāl, main entrance.

Figure 48. Jami' Taynāl, plan After van Berchem and Fatio, *Voyage en Syrie*, 1914; fig. 54, p. 120
Figure 49. Jami’ Ta'ynâl, hall or vestibule and inner portal.

Figure 50. Jami’ Ta'ynâl, mosque, interior.
In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, only he shall inhabit God’s place of worship who believes in God and the Last Day and performs the prayer and pays the alms and fears none but God alone, may those be among the guided ones [Qur’an 9.18] This minbar was completed in the month of Zul’iqladuh in the year seven hundred and thirty-six.

Completed in June or July 1336, the minbar is contemporary with the mosque, which was finished in March of the same year.

The second inscription on the minbar, a line of naskh,\(^{69}\) gives us the name of the carpenter, who apparently was pleased enough with his work to sign it in an obvious place:

 utf8-encode(\u0627\u0628\u062a\u0642\u0627\u0631\u064b\u0628\u0629\u0641\u062f\u064a\u0646\u0629 )

[This is] the work of master Muhammad al-Šafadi, may God have mercy on those who show mercy to him.

Yet another inscription is on the portal tympanum area formed by the arch and the lintel. It is very beautiful in white decorative kufic on a black ground, but unfortunately almost indecipherable (fig. 41). It is not recorded by Soberneim.

**Description**

Taynāl’s mosque stands alone in the middle of an orchard, and can be viewed from all sides (fig. 42); its profile of domes (fig. 43) and minaret identifies it as a distinctly Muslim building. An oblong structure of sandstone, its four domes are of various sizes and shapes that reflect its interior superstructure: a large dome resting on a sixteen-sided zone, a higher dome resting on a double drum, and a medium dome on a sixteen-sided zone followed by a small ribbed dome.

The rather unusually shaped minaret to the east of the mosque is also of sandstone (fig. 44). A rectangular short shaft carries an even shorter octagonal shaft resting on four buttresses and ending in a balcony around two superimposed cylinders. For decoration, the square shaft is opened by windows with a cushion voussoir arch, as is the case with the minarets of Qalā’ūn (1285) and Salār and Sanjār (1303) in Cairo,\(^{70}\) a motif commonly used by Latins and Muslims alike. The octagonal shaft is opened by four windows topped by a lintel slab, and it carries vertical cornerstones with a rounded top around the balcony. It has an interesting twin set of stairs, one of which opens into the mausoleum area of the mosque and the other leads to the outside, the two running

\(^{69}\) Ibid., p. 94, Inscription no. 43

separately within the shaft up to the balcony.\textsuperscript{71} This unusual system was also used in the minaret of 'Abd al-Rahmân in the Great Mosque of Cordoba.\textsuperscript{72}

While at a distance the domes and minaret display no special peculiarities, indications that there was once another structure on the site begin to appear when one approaches the mosque. Just in front of the outer door the tops of two granite columns rise a meter above the ground (fig. 45), and in the open courtyard before the entrance to the mosque the western wall shows clear signs of arches and of wall segments used for the support of a superstructure (fig. 46). These two remnants need not be of the same period; the granite columns, which are clearly at a lower level, may well have belonged to a temple of Zeus that may once have stood on the site, and the western wall may equally well have been part of a Crusaders' church destroyed at the time of the Mamluk conquest of Tripoli.

In the Muslim period the exterior of Ta'nîl's mosque was subjected to alterations on its entrance side. The main entrance (fig. 47), built in an alternation of black and white masonry with a row of joggled stones above the lintel, shows signs of having been changed from a rectangular to a deeply arched entrance by the addition of a whitewashed canopy.

The plan (fig. 48) shows two units connected by an axial doorway; a northern entrance hall (fig. 49) leads through the monumental inner portal to the southern square area which includes the mihrab (fig. 50). The first unit (fig. 49) is an oblong three-aisled hall, with a wider central aisle leading to the inner portal. The area is divided by four granite columns of unequal width with four classical Corinthian capitals supporting the arches which carry the superstructure. This layout—columns, capitals, and arches—led van Berchem and Fatio and modern writers who followed them to consider Ta'nîl's mosque to be a reused Crusaders' church.\textsuperscript{73} The arrangement is indeed a curious one, and this room might well have belonged to an earlier Christian structure which itself had used older classical columns and capitals for supports.

The superstructure, however, is neither Roman nor Christian, for the two domes covering the first hall are of purely local Islamic tradition. The first of the two domes, to the north (fig. 51), has a simple cupola on a sixteen-sided zone with sixteen arches—alternately opened and closed—resting on four simple corner pendentives between the four

\textsuperscript{71} Kurd ʿAli, Khiṭṭāt al-Shām, 6: 53, found the system so unusual that he never got around to describing the rest of the mosque.
\textsuperscript{72} Salem, Ṭarāḥīs al-Shām, p. 412, n 23.
\textsuperscript{73} Van Berchem and Fatio, Voyage en Syrie, p 120, followed by Condé, Tripoli of Lebanon, p. 48; Samia Nassar, Connaissance du Liban (Beirut, 1969), p 12.
Figure 51. Jami' Tāynāl, first dome in vestibule, interior.

Figure 52. Jami' Tāynāl, second dome (in front of portal), interior.
Figure 53. Jami' Ṭaynāl, dome over mihrab area, exterior

Figure 54. Jami' Ṭaynāl, mihrab and minbar.
arches. The second dome, set directly in front of the inner façade (fig. 52), is higher than the first, and the area it covers is raised on four blind arches to reach the height of the portal. The dome itself consists of a cupola on an octagonal zone of four arches and four fan-like corner squinches resting directly on the four walls, an arrangement often encountered in Tripoli, the dome in the Madrasah Qādiriyah representing the closest parallel.

The floor, like the superstructure, is a Mamluk addition. The whole central aisle of the first hall is covered by a large pattern of marble mosaics which originally included a marble fountain in its middle (now removed). Though badly damaged (the mosque served as a shelter for Palestinian refugees for some fifteen years), the marble flooring shows a pattern of large square units of geometric motifs in red, black, and white marble. The motifs are ambitious choices from the known Mamluk decorative vocabulary in Tripoli—for example, on the floors of al-Burṭāṣī’s mosque and the Madrasah Qarṭāwiyyah—and include the rotating swastika pattern used on the inner façade and a simplified version of the rotating knot on the façade of the Qarṭāwiyyah. If this first hall is indeed a reused part of a Crusaders’ church, the architect has managed to give it a Muslim flavor through the use of Mamluk domes and Mamluk flooring and by using an axial fountain to direct attention to the inner façade that leads to the second unit beyond.

The second main area (see plan and fig. 50) is a totally Muslim construction in its plan, elements, and decoration. A covered central courtyard has a vaulted area around a sunken court, the floor is all covered with marble, and the area around the court is of a joggled black and white ablaq. The superstructure consists of simple long and short cross-vaults (see plan) to the sides and of two domes on the axis. The first of the two domes covers the central court and rests on a sixteen-sided zone of niches on simple pendentives. The second dome covers the area in front of the mihrab, and although the smallest of the four domes, it is the most decorative. It consists of a ribbed cupola resting on sixteen niches over an octagonal zone with corner squinches (fig. 53).

The mihrab itself is very simple; its only decorations are the two side colonnettes of white marble. The minbar is a masterpiece of Mamluk woodwork with sides of a complex star pattern and a ramp decorated with geometric patterns, unfortunately by now heavily painted over (fig. 54).

The final element of Țaynāl’s mosque is the monumental gateway placed between the two main areas. A tall portal rising to the height of the building, it is the focal point of the mosque (fig. 49). Constructed entirely of alternate courses of fine black and white masonry, the portal
is framed by a zigzag motif of carved stone. Its size, proportions, and fine craftsmanship suggest that it was not intended merely to be an interior gateway but rather to function as a façade for the part of the building containing the mihrab. The rectangular opening which serves as a passageway is topped by a decorative motif (figs. 39 and 41) formed by a relieving arch of complex joggled black and white stone pointing outward from a central white stone over a flat lintel of white stone slab with a center joggled stone. The tympanum area contains the beautiful but indecipherable inscription mentioned earlier. The composition of this arch and lintel with its inscription is exactly like that of the windows on the back wall of the Madrasah Qarṭāwiyyah.

Above that motif is the central panel surrounded by the founding inscriptions (figs. 39 and 55), the only decorative nonstructural element of the façade. It consists of three equal vertical rectangles of marble marquetry; a central plaque of red marble with a star motif in white marble, from which radiates a whole maze of geometric patterns in black and white; and side panels of two squares each containing a rotating swastika pattern in red, black, and white, like those on the floor of the first hall. These patterns are often encountered in Mamluk decoration (for example, on the Mosque of Tawrīzī in Damascus). This panel is surmounted by a muqarnas hood with corner shell motifs on two

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Figure 55. Jami' Ṭaynāl, inner portal, detail.

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colonnettes and a top row of stalactite muqarnas. The half-dome at the top of the muqarnas is decorated with a large zigzag motif in relief accentuated by the layers of black and white running in from the sides of the gateway.

It seems likely that the second unit of the building with the mausoleum attached to it was the mosque that Amir Ṭaynal built, since it is complete in its elements—mihrab, minbar, minaret, and façade, and that Roman and Christian elements found lying about were refurbished with Mamluk accents (domes and floor) and then used to form the very large hall or vestibule. Ṭaynal’s mosque can thus best be explained by regarding it as a purely Muslim construction. The remains found on the site were only used in the first part of the building, and it is just this part that has created such confusion. It has none of the Muslim elements or requirements for a mosque, in contrast with the second, self-contained unit which displays all the elements of a mosque organized in a known Muslim fashion.

Selected Reading

JAMIʿ AL-ʿAṬṬĀR

Built in A.D. 1350 by a perfumer, Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAṭṭār.

Location

Left bank of the Qadisha River at the end of the Suq al-Bazīrkan (a small-trader’s suq), near the Khan al-Khayyāṭīn and Khan al-Miṣrīyyīn, and not, as one might expect, in the Perfumer’s Suq. Tripoli, Monument no. 13.

History and Inscriptions

The Jamiʿ al-ʿAṭṭār is one of the largest mosques in Tripoli. Still in use today, it is regarded as the third most important in the city. In 1700 al-

75 A major Mamluk activity was to restore and refurbish existing monuments and remains. Many examples of this activity can be seen in Jerusalem.
76 Salem, Ṭarāblus al-Shām, p. 413
Nābulṣī listed it as the eighth in importance of the twelve mosques where Friday prayer was held. Literary evidence suggests that it was also an important mosque in Mamluk times.

An inscription above the door of the main portal (fig. 56), a line of naskh, reads:

يُسْتَمِعُ اللَّهُ الرَّحِيمُ هَذَا الْبَابُ الْمَبَارَكُ وَالْمُبْرَرُ الْعَلْمُ مَحْدُودُ إِبِّي اِبْرَاهِيمُ الْمَهْنِسُ
في سنة أحد وخمسين وسبعين.

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate, this blessed door and the minbar are the work of master Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm the architect, in the year seven hundred and fifty-one [A.D. 1350].

The architect named could have built either the original mosque or a later restoration. But a Mamluk account by al-Dawadārī in Al-Durr al-Fākhir reports the building of a mosque in Tripoli by a rich perfume merchant in the year A.H. 751, so it is safe to assume that the date on the inscription is a founding date of the building, and that the benefactor was Badr al-Dīn ibn al-ʿAṭṭār, a prosperous perfume merchant and son of another perfumer as his name, ibn al-ʿAṭṭār, indicates. According to al-Nābulṣī, “the al-ʿAṭṭār mosque was known to have been a [Crusaders’] church and a man who was a perfumer spent money in secret on its building, hence it was named after him.” The fact that he spent money on it “in secret” could explain the omission of his name from the founding inscription. Since the perfumer donated his money anonymously and the mosque is not in the Suq of the Perfumers, it was clearly not built to be the mosque of the perfumers corporation, as Sobernheim seems to conclude. Its anonymous benefactor simply happened to be a perfumer who helped finance the mosque. In time his identity was revealed, and the mosque was then named after him.

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77 Al-Nābulṣī, Al-Rihlah, p. 72
78 Sobernheim, Matériaux, pp. 104–5, Inscription 46; photo of door and inscription, p. 10. Sobernheim mentions a third inscription of 1418, which includes decrees concerning the Perfumer’s Suq and was found in the wall of a private house, but since the inscription was not in situ and the mosque is not in the Perfumer’s Suq, it does not appear to be relevant to our building.
79 See Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbdullāh al-Dawadārī, Al-Durr al-Fākhir fī Ṣirāt al-Malik al-Nāṣir, ed. Hans Roehmer (Cairo: German Institute, 1960), p. 391. But this is questioned by Tadmūrī, who, in his Tarikh wa Athār, pp. 190–91, refutes the A.H. 751 (A.D. 1350) date and, using the same source, argues for A.H. 735 or even earlier. He also provides textual evidence for the death of al-ʿAṭṭār by the black death in A.H. 749.
80 Al-Nābulṣī, Al-Rihlah, p. 72:

جَعَلَ المَعَارِجَ ِقَبْلَ أَنَّ اِبْنَهُ كَيْسَةً فَكَفْرَهُ وَأَوْفَى رَجُلًا، وَكَانَ يَقْتَلُ عَلَيْهِ مَنَ اخْتُبِسَ مِنَ النَّفْسِ
خَبٌّ لِلِّي.

81 Sobernheim, Matériaux, p. 104, n. 2. The conclusion Sobernheim draws from al-Nābulṣī’s text (n. 78, above) is that “this mosque was therefore that of the corporation of the perfumers.” Nothing in the text supports this conclusion, however; it only says that “a man who was a perfumer endowed this building in secret.”
Figure 56. Jami' al-'Attar, main portal, inscription and decorative plaque.

Figure 57. Jami' al-'Attar, bay of main portal, right wall.
The inscription in the bay of the main portal on the right wall, 2 meters above the ground (fig. 57), consists of two lines of naskh, and records a decree of A.H. 821/A.D. 1418 which refers to the monument as the Jami‘ al-‘Aṭṭār. The inscription reads: 82

لا كانت بتاريخ العشر الأول من ربيع الأول سنة احد عشر وثمنان وثلاثون وردة وردة المسموم الشريف السلطان الملك المؤيد أبو النصر شيخ باب لا يوخد مس ين وفجع العطار للمسكينين من دهم ولا نهر ولا أدا مغروه استجلاب أدبية العليا ومن عمل به عهدره
و قد خالف عليه قلب الله ونامنة الملائكة الناس اجمعين آمين.

On the date of the first tenth of Rabi‘ al-awwal of the year eight hundred and twenty-one [April 8–17, 1418], the royal edict of Sultan al-Malik al-Mu‘ayyad Abū al-Naṣr Shaykh arrived which decreed that nothing should be levied from the inhabitants of the waqf of Jami‘ al-‘Aṭṭār by the inspectors; that there should be no auctions and no injustices; that the requests of those praying may be granted. Those who comply would be compensated, and those who oppose would draw upon themselves the anger of God and the maledictions of all angels and all men. Amen.

From the text it is clear that within about sixty-eight years of its building, the mosque was already being called the Jami‘ al-‘Aṭṭār, and that its waqf had attracted the attention of administrative officials, as was often the case with many buildings (the Qartawiyyah is the most obvious example in Tripoli).

A third inscription is on a muqarnas decoration above the lintel of a door on the western side of the mosque (fig. 58). It apparently went unnoticed by Sobernheim and those who followed him, but was finally recently published by Tadmuri. 83 It is in a primitive script that reads:

عل ابوبكر ابن البصيص اللهم رحمه تعالى.

“This is the work of Abū Bakr ibn al-Baṣḥ, may God have mercy on him.” Abū Bakr ibn al-Baṣḥ was a known and active architect of the time, who was often called upon to do difficult jobs such as the building of the Dāmrū Bridge. In his Tārikh Bayrūt, Ṣāliḥ ibn Yahyā, writing about the events of A.H. 745 (A.D. 1344), reports that “Abū Bakr ibn al-Baṣḥ al-Ba‘labakī is an expert architect in coastal works; he is the one who built the Nahr al-Kalb Bridge and other difficult works in the lands of Tripoli.” 84 So two architects worked on the mosque and were moved to sign their name to it. One of them was famous; one otherwise unknown.

82 Sobernheim, Matériaux, p. 105, Inscription no. 47; photograph, pl. 9
83 Tadmuri, Tārikh wa Athār, p. 195
Figure 58  Jami' al-'Aṭṭār, rear door to the west.

Figure 59  Jami' al-'Aṭṭār, main portal

Figure 60  Jami' al-'Aṭṭār, main portal, muqarnas hood.
Description

From the outside the mosque blends into its surroundings and does not stand out as an independent structure, but three elements—the eastern main portal (the single most impressive element of the al-‘Aṭṭār mosque), the western side entrance, and the minaret—distinguish the building from its surroundings by their size, decoration, and quality.

The main portal of the mosque opens onto the northern third of the prayer area and faces east. It is a monumental and ambitious achievement (fig. 59), not part of a composed and organized façade, but an independent element that provides the focal point of the building. It is a tall, rectangular composition, higher than the mosque proper, carefully constructed and richly decorated. It is built of alternate courses of black and light-colored well-cut stone and framed by two rows of stone molding. The decoration is restricted to the inner surface of the portal above the rectangular door.
Figure 62  Jami’ al-’Aṭṭār, plan.
The opening of the door is spanned by a simple one-stone slab lintel, topped by a row of decorative ablāq just below the founding inscription, above which is a square polychrome plaque; the whole is crowned by a muqarnas niche. The course of ablāq, of the elaborate fleur-de-lys variety, runs the width of the opening above the lintel. The square plaque of polychrome marble (figs. 56 and 59) is a masterpiece of craftsmanship and the focal point of the portal. It consists of an inner circle of deep red marble surrounded by a stone carved palmette motif, enclosed in turn by a plain band of marble. This circle forms the core from which radiates and toward which converges a complex system of double interlocking bands studded with fleurs-de-lys pointing like arrows toward the inside circle and the outer square. This decorative plaque is set in a stone frame on the wall above the door and below the muqarnas niche.

The crowning muqarnas niche (fig. 60) consists of four rows of a muqarnas motif, running on the three sides of the inner portal and surmounted by a plain yet powerful half-dome. The first row consists of two corner niches with a shell half-dome flanked by two double-arched motifs; at the center of this row and at the two ends toward the exterior are plaques of a complex carved star-shaped Mamluk motif. The second row consists of central and side double arches with a corner stalactite; the third row alternates plain crossed double arches with stalactite double arches. Finally, the top row consists of narrower alternating flat and concave trilobed arches, the concave motif crowning the flat double arches of the lower row. The effect is of a rich and very well built stone muqarnas zone between the flat wall below and the half-dome above.

The western door (fig. 58) is clearly the side door to a mosque, but it still stands out from its surroundings by three horizontal rows of muqarnas above the lintel to suggest that it leads into some special place. The lowest row has wide arches; the second row has a simple attempt at stalactites; and the top row uses a simple scale motif. Since this wall of the building has been repaired and replastered many times, it is hard to tell whether or not what we now see is complete (which could well be the case) or whether it was once more highly decorated. The architect Abū Bakr ibn al-Ḥāşıṣ was in any case proud enough of it to sign it, as we have seen.

The third distinguishing element, the minaret (fig. 61), is a true landmark. A square tower of sandstone, it is considered one of the most important minarets in the city. The square shaft has two rows of horizontal molding that divide it into three parts opened at irregular intervals by small, star-shaped windows. The shaft is topped by a slightly wider cubical unit which rests on a muqarnas frieze above four en-
gaged colonnettes. It is open on each of its four sides by a double arched window divided by a central column and is topped by a balcony with four corner knobs. A later addition to the minaret is an octagonal shaft covered by a conical dome.

From even a cursory glance at the plan\(^5\) of the Jami' al-ʿAtṭār (fig. 62), it is apparent that the interior of the structure bears no resemblance to any common or even known mosque type. Essentially it is a long rectangular space (about 22 by 14 meters) with openings onto it. The main entrance follows the street line and is set at a slight angle to the mosque. The gate leads into an almost square entrance with cross-vaulting, which in turn leads into a prayer hall; a door on the north side leads into a large, almost square ablution room.

The central prayer area is rectangular and is covered by a simple long vault, except for the axis between the main eastern portal and the side western entrance which is more elaborately covered with a central high dome (fig. 63) flanked by two vaulted areas. The dome has a cupola with a central octagonal opening, resting on an octagonal zone of

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\(^5\) The plan is not very accurate in its details, though it adequately shows the general layout of the building. The windows, for example, are not indicated on it.
transition with eight windows set in double frames; this transition area rests on four plain pendentives placed between the vaulted areas.

The western side of the rectangular hall has three three-sided, simple vaulted iwan-like rooms opening onto it. The central one is the largest of the three and gives access to the outside through an arch of thick masonry.

The eastern side has only one iwan-like room and two windows opening onto a garden. The three western iwans and the eastern one must be the "four platforms" mentioned by al-Nābulsi in 1700: "In this mosque, there are four platforms [suffah]; each platform has its own teacher, who receives a salary provided for by the waqf of the mosque." 86

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86 Al-Nābulsi, Al-Rihlah, p 72:

وفي هذا الجامع اربع صفاً، كل صفة لها مدرس، له معلوم يتوليه من وقفاً الجامع.
The plan is certainly not a typical four-iwan arrangement, and the building’s function was clearly that of a mosque and not a madrasah. On the other hand, since the teachers’ wages were provided by the waqf, teaching must have gone on in the mosque from the very beginning. Unfortunately, whether the four teachers belonged to the four schools of Islamic thought, or, more likely, to the same school, is unknown. The provision of a teaching endowment suggests that the benefactor intended to establish Sunni Islam in a city that had been Christian and in a building that had been a church. The piety that led to its transformation would also naturally have led to provisions for instruction as a means of strengthening the new faith. No source earlier than 1700\textsuperscript{87} refers to the building as a former church, but its plan certainly makes it likely. The building was not conceived as a mosque, but rather modified to perform that function.

The internal arrangement has other unusual elements. The mihrab, for instance, is a simple niche—that is, set, not in the middle of the qiblah wall, but to one side. The room for ablutions, a Muslim requirement, is clearly an addition, as is the entrance. The minbar, a built-in white marble structure,\textsuperscript{88} is believed to incorporate the baptismal font left over from the church (fig. 64).\textsuperscript{89} Again, we are clearly dealing with an earlier building, probably a Crusaders’ church, that was transformed into a mosque in 1350, with Master Ibrāhīm the architect contributing a new and fine portal and the minbar, and the well-known architect Abū Bakr ibn al-Bāṣīṣ constructing the eastern door.

*Selected Reading*


*JAMĪʿ ARGHŪN SHĀH*

Built about AD 1394-98 by Amir Arghūn Shāh, governor of Tripoli.

\textsuperscript{87} For the origin of the mosque as a church, see ibid, p. 172, and Kurd ʿAlī, *Khiṭṭaṭ al-Shām*, 6: 54.
\textsuperscript{88} Tadmuri, *Ṭarīkh wa Athār*, p. 200, gives a description of the minbar and a text for its inscriptions.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid, p. 194
Location

Left bank of the Qadisha River, on the street known as Šaft al-Bilāt, to the south of the Saqraqiyyah and Khâtuniiyyah. *Tripoli*, Monument no. 27.

History and Inscriptions

Known locally as the Jamiʿ al-Ghanshah, undoubtedly the mosque is named for Amir Arghūn Shāh,90 governor of Tripoli from 1394 to 1398. It does not carry a founding inscription, but does have, carved on the lintel above the door, a decree of A.H. 880/A.D. 1475 concerning the waqf of agricultural land. It consists of four lines of naskh (fig. 65) and reads:91

The text can be summarized as follows. In A.H. 880 (A.D. 1475) a royal decree was issued to protect and enforce the waqf of Arghūn Shāh; it stipulated that the lands he had left were to be leased to the public, and to the needy rather than to the rich, and that this was to be carved on the door of the madrasah (also referred to as a zāwiyyah in the text). This means that the monument was already standing by 1475 and that Arghūn Shāh was its founder and patron. We know from the history of Ibn al-Furāt that Arghūn Shāh al-Ibrāhīmī became governor of Tripoli in A.H. 798 (A.D. 1394)92 and remained in office until A.H. 800 (A.D. 1397), when he was transferred to Aleppo.93 Therefore this building must have been constructed between 1394 and 1398, the four years of his rule.

90 About the Mongol origin of the name Arghūn and Arghūn Shāh, see Jean Sauvaget, "Noms et surnoms de Mamlouks," *Journal Asiatique* 238 (1950): 35
What the original function of this structure might have been is somewhat obscure. It is regarded today both officially and popularly as a mosque, and was referred to as the jami' of al-Ghanshah as early as 1700 by al-Nābulṣī. The inscription calls the building both a zāwiyah and a madrasah, however, so it is possible that the structure was first erected as a place of instruction and only later transformed into a mosque.\(^4\) This could explain the silence of the sources on the subject of Arghūn Shāh's having erected a mosque, for he may in fact have only endowed a zāwiyah. Sometime after 1475, Arghūn Shāh's pious monument was certainly being used as a jami', however, and it may have been then that the minaret was added. Judging from its style, the minaret is certainly later than 1394–98 and most probably later than 1475.

**Description**

From the outside, the street façade, the main portal, and the minaret (fig. 66) are all clearly visible; they are simple but at the same time rather

\(^4\) Tadmuri, *Tārikh wa Athār*, pp. 218, 222
special. The two-story façade is built of cut stone and opens to the outside by three sets of double windows below and three simple windows above: both levels are on the same axis. The lower windows are surrounded by alternating black and white stones, and each set of two windows is topped by a course of joggled black and white stones of various sizes.

Next to this wall is the main entrance (fig. 65), which consists of a deep archway almost as high as the building and about 1.5 meters deep, with two vaulted units and a central circle at its upper level. The door proper is a simple rectangular opening, above which is the four-line inscription running the width of the wall, topped by a course of joggled ablaq, surmounted by an empty plaque with a cut border. The portal has unfortunately been painted over in white, hiding whatever merit it may have had and emphasizing its separateness from the wall next to it. It is probably an addition to the earlier building, since it is made of a different stone, is not quite of the same height, and leads into a corridor instead of into the mosque proper on its left. It was probably built in 1475, when the waqf decree was promulgated.

Figure 66. Jami’ Arghun Shah, façade.
The minaret is the building’s most remarkable element (fig. 66). It stands over the original building, next to the entrance. It has a cylindrical shaft of the Ottoman type with two round moldings separating it from the base and the top. The base is cubical with corner triangular buttresses. The top consists of a flat muqarnas level formed by six rows of a fish-scale motif, topped by a ten-sided balcony decorated with plaques of carved stone of varying design. The whole is covered by an umbrella-like wooden structure carrying a metal crescent.

The exterior of the Arghūn Shāh mosque well reflects its three phases of development: the wall belonging to the original zāwiya-madrasah of 1394–98, the gate to the time of the decree of 1475, and the minaret to the Ottoman period when most likely the madrasah became a jami’.

The interior is fairly simple and provides nothing to contradict the sequence of construction posited. The gate leads through a vaulted corridor to the ablution basin; the mosque itself is entered by a door on the left of this corridor. The squarish prayer hall is a vaulted area with piers of various sizes for support. The qiblah wall has a mihrab at an angle to the wall. The addition of a mihrab, a corridor leading to its entrance, and a minaret has thus clearly transformed a private zāwiya into a public jami’.

Selected Reading

Condé, Tripoli of Lebanon, pp. 53–54, photo p. 53; Kurd ʿAli, Khitaṭ al-Shām, 6: 53; Sobernheim, Matériaux, pp. 128 ff., Inscription 57; Salem, Ṭarāblus al-Shām, p. 115; Tadmuri, Tārikh wa Athar, pp. 217-20; al-Zayn, Tārikh Ṭarāblus, p. 423.

JAMIʿ AL-UWAYSĪ (also called the Uwaysiyyah)

Built in A.D. 1460–61 by al-Uwaysī; renovated in A.D. 1534 by Ḥaydarah.

Location

Left bank of the Qadisha River on a slope between the Citadel and the suqs below, near the Masjid ʿAbd al-Wāḥid and the Qarṭāwiyyah. Tripoli, Monument no. 16.

History and Inscriptions

One of the later Mamluk mosques of Tripoli, al-Uwaysī is also one of the least well documented. It carries none of the customary founding inscriptions, but a waqf document tells us that it was built by a Muḥī al-Dīn
al-Uwaysî in A.H. 865 (A.D. 1460–61). The mosque has retained his name in both official and popular usage, but we know nothing more either about the building or its founder.

The minaret (fig. 73), however, does have a two-line inscription on a marble plaque set above the door to the balcony, stating that the mosque was renovated in the days of Sultan Sulaymân al-Qânûnî (the Ottoman Suleyman “The Magnificent”) in the year A.H. 941 (A.D. 1534) by Ḥaydarah, the amir of the Citadel and of the city. The inscription reads as follows:

\[
\text{عمر في ظل السلطان سليمان ابي نجيب القلعة وطرابلس، هنّاء حفظه الله في كل حال.}
\]

Built in the days of Sultan Sulaymân, in the days of the governor [nâjîb] of the Citadel and of Tripoli, 941 Ḥaydarah, may God protect him at all times.

**Description**

The Uwaysiyyah mosque is situated on the right side of one of the narrow streets that descend from the Citadel. While the minaret and the dome are visible from a distance, the mosque is not readily identifiable from the street. It is entered through an alley that runs off at an angle (fig. 67) and leads to an inner courtyard and the mosque proper. There the mosque is properly oriented and has a façade on the court. Obviously by the time al-Uwaysî built his mosque, the city had already become crowded; the builder could have neither a full street location nor a correct orientation toward Mecca from the street, so he had to resort to this alley tactic. The simple inner façade on its marble-paved courtyard (fig. 68) consists chiefly of the large axial entrance to the mosque and a mihrab for outside prayer.

The building has no elaborate façade on the street. It is entered through a rectangular opening placed in a large frame that sets the entrance off from the rest of the wall. The frame has a border of knotted interlace with a rectangular projection at the lintel level. Above the door is a horizontal rectangular plaque formed by an inlaid border of marble with a positive-negative pattern pointing inward, very likely the place intended for the founding inscription that was never made. Just to the

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95 A waqf document mentioned by Salem, Ṭarāʾīlūs al-Shām, p. 416; Kurd ʿAli, Khīṭāt al-Shām, 6:54; and also by Tadmuri, Tārīkh wa Athār (after al-Jisr), p. 230. Neither Tadmuri nor I were able to see the document Unesco, p. 12, no. 28, gives the name of “ʿAbdul-Hay’” al-Uwaysî and date of 1461, but provides no references.

Figure 67. Jami' al-Uwaysi, archway leading to mosque.

Figure 68. Jami' al-Uwaysi, façade on courtyard.

Figure 69. Jami' al-Uwaysi, window on façade wall.
Figure 70  Jami' al-Uwaysi, central dome, interior.

Figure 71  Jami' al-Uwaysi, mihrab.
Figure 72. Jami` al-Uwaysi, mihrab and minbar.

Figure 73. Jami` al-Uwaysi, minaret
right of this entrance is an outside mihrab topped by a row of fish-scale motif containing various decorations at the door level. This façade also has a small window (fig. 69), whose opening is decorated by a floriated stucco trefoil motif reminiscent of Andalusian windows.\footnote{Cf. the blind windows on the third level of the minaret of the Mosque of Ibn Tûlûn in Cairo (1296)}

The floor plan of the Uwaysiyah is simple. It consists of two rooms, both with mihrabs, connected by a small door: a main square prayer room (approximately 10 by 10 meters) covered by a very large dome, and a smaller vaulted room to its right.

The main prayer room has a dome that spans (fig. 70) the whole area and consists of a cupola resting on a sixteen-sided area of arches, each with its own window, which in turn rests on an octagonal area of four open arches and four corner squinches. The breadth of the dome is unusual for its time and gives the impression that a simple domical structure has been blown up to very large proportions. This is particularly noticeable in the four corner squinches that here become large, concave areas. Domes of such a size were only later to become popular in Ottoman architecture.

The mihrab on the qiblah wall (figs. 71 and 72) is a plain niche with reused marble colonnettes with capitals at each side, set in a rectangular frame. The frame consists of a simple carved stone molding on its three sides, ending at the bottom with a circle on each side, as on the façade of the Qâdiriyyah.

Above the mihrab and within the frame are two fan-like projections (fig. 72), which according to local tradition are supports for a wooden shelf that once held oil lamps. In between these fan projections the central stone of that course of masonry is decorated on its two ends by a low relief of a fleur-de-lys pattern. The stone above the mihrab, like the stone above the door, has no inscription.

The built-in stone minbar is set to the right of the mihrab. It is heavily decorated—the most decorated element in the mosque—with interlace and star-shaped ablaq patterns over its entire surface. Whether it is contemporary with the structure or a later addition is unknown.

Finally, the Ottoman minaret (fig. 73) is a tall, cylindrical shaft (Mamluk minarets are either square or octagonal), resting on triangular buttresses. It has a circular balcony, wider than the shaft and resting on a band of muqarnas which looks like superimposed rows of fish scale. From the balcony rises a small, cylindrical shaft with a conical dome resting on two rows of fish scale.
Selected Reading


JAMIʿ AL-ṬAHḤĀN

Fifteenth century; precise date and founder unknown.

Location

Left bank of the Qadisha River, in the middle of the Perfumer’s Suq (al-ʿAttārīn). Tripoli, Monument no. 28.

History and Inscriptions

This mosque is popularly known in Tripoli as the Jamiʿ al-Ṭahḥān, or “Miller’s Mosque.” The lack of both founding inscription and literary evidence makes the name and the date of construction for this monument a subject of controversy.98 A version of the name, al-Ṭaḥḥāl, ending with

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98 Tadmurī, Tārīkh wa Athār, pp 236-37, gives a summary of the various names and dates that have been proposed.
an *l* rather than an *n*, can be found in al-Nābulūsī's *Riḥlah*; 99 Salem and the Unesco report use yet another variant, al-Ṭahḥām, with an *m*, 100 and Tadmurī uses the *m* as well, though without citing any evidence in its favor. Al-Ṭahḥām means "the courageous one," "the one who attacks in battles," and Tadmurī finds this to be a more plausible role for the founder of the mosque than being a miller. 101 So long as there is no evidence to the contrary, however, the popularly accepted local name at least has the argument of tradition on its side, and in fact there is no reason why a miller should not have endowed a mosque. Why accept a perfumer and not a miller? The history of Islamic architecture is replete with examples of middle-class merchants and people of all professions having endowed mosques which are subsequently named after them.

The date and benefactor's name are also sources for speculation. Salem proposes a date of A.H. 967 (A.D. 1564) and the name of Maḥmūd Lutfī al-Za'īm— but he confuses this mosque with another in Tripoli, the al-Mu'allaq. Bruce Condé argues for Amir Yūnis al-Ma'nī, younger brother of Fākhru al-Dīn al-Ma'nī II, A.H. 1050 (A.D. 1641) and refers to the minaret as "the prince's minaret." Kamel al-Bābā favors a Mamluk amir

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101 Tadmurī, *Tarikh wa Athār*, p. 236
Figure 76: Jami' al-Ṭahhān, minaret over entrance.

Figure 77: Jami' al-Ṭahhān, minaret from the west.

Figure 78: Jami' al-Ṭahhān, mihrab
by the name of Yûnis Bahadar.¹⁰² But none of these authors provide any evidence to support their claims. Until further evidence turns up, we can only say that the mosque should most likely be called Ťâhîn—with an n—and that it was built by an unknown benefactor at an unknown date, but possibly toward the end of Mamluk rule in the city.¹⁰³

Description

The Jami’ al-Ťâhîn is on the second story, built over a series of shops (fig. 75), and is entered through a corner alley. Although mosques built over commercial establishments are not very common, neither are they totally unknown (the most famous example is the Mosque of Šâlîh Ţâlâî [A.D. 1160] in Cairo).¹⁰⁴ They were usually built by donors who could not afford a free-standing monument: combining commercial income-producing shops below with a religious building above to demonstrate their piety was a practical solution.

In today’s Tripoli, the Miller’s Mosque is hardly noticeable even when one walks right in front of it. The minaret is not very high and is by now dwarfed by surrounding structures (fig. 74), and the street side of the mosque is obstructed by vendors’ awnings and other shade-providing devices (fig. 75). But the mosque can be differentiated from the rest of the building of which it forms a part. The mosque level is built of cut stone arranged in alternate layers of black and white, with the top layer consisting of alternating black and white stones framed by a row of fish-scale motif with decorated hoods. The street wall is opened by an organized system of four sets of rectangular double windows (the last two have recently been plastered over). At right angles to the street façade is the façade proper of the mosque, also built in alternate layers of black and white stone. A flight of stairs leads to a large and deeply arched entrance topped by the minaret (fig. 76).

The minaret (fig. 77) is certainly the focal point of the Jami’ al-Ťâhîn. Its main parts are, first, a square shaft with engaged plaited colonnettes rising above the entrance at its corners; then, an octagonal shaft resting on four triangular buttresses and containing four opened, arched windows alternating with four blind niches with colonnettes; and finally an octagonal gallery-like structure resting on a complex stalactite muqarnas and covered by a peculiar octagonal-pyramidical roofing, which crowns the whole.

¹⁰³ The type and style of both construction and decoration favor a late Mamluk dating
¹⁰⁴ Creswell, MAE 1: 275-88
Considering the size of the minaret and the otherwise simple structure which it adorns, the amount and quality of its decoration is striking and clearly the result of a consciously planned effort to impress. Its square and octagonal shaft, buttresses, muqarnas, beautifully carved engaged plaited colonnettes, blind niches, and carved stone plaques wherever space permits provide a veritable catalog of the decorative themes of its time. This richness of the decorative vocabulary strengthens the theory of its later Mamluk dating.

The interior is a simple affair. A square room of about 15 by 15 meters, it is divided into nine vaulted areas by two pairs of reused columns with capitals. In the middle of the qiblah wall stands a minbar; in a corner and at an angle to the wall (fig. 78) is the mihrab. Evidently the building followed the street line, and the mihrab had to be adjusted to orient it in the correct direction for prayer. Aside from the reused columns, the mihrab is the only decorated element in the interior. A band of knotted motif frames the mihrab and emphasizes the usual mihrab features. Two reused colonnettes with capitals are set on either side of the niche; the whole mihrab corner is painted in a marbled effect with blue trimmings.

The roof of the mosque must have been used for outdoor prayer in summer, for it, too, has a corner mihrab with reused capitals (fig. 79).
The Jami‘ al-Ţahḥan provides a good example of a mosque built under bourgeois patronage. Because it was built on the first floor over shops in a crowded city, it could not be oriented correctly and this resulted in a corner mihrab that is somewhat askew. The minaret is the only element visible from the outside, and it bears almost all the decoration to be found in this simple structure. Its repertory of decorative elements makes it the only noticeable part of this otherwise inconspicuous building.

Selected Reading

Condé, Tripoli of Lebanon, p. 66; Salem, Ţarāblus al-Shām, p. 417; Tadmurī, Tārikh wa Athār, p. 236; Unesco, p. 13.

JAMI‘ AL-TAWBAH

Fourteenth century (?); precise date and founder unknown; restored in A.D. 1612 by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Sharbadārī al-Anṣārī.

Location

Left bank of the Qadisha River, close to the Jisr al-Jadid in the tanners’ quarter. Tripoli, Monument no. 22.

Figure 80. Jami‘ al-Tawbah, view.
Figure 81. Jami' al-Tawbah, inscription on northeast entrance

Figure 82. Jami' al-Tawbah, minaret.

Figure 83. Jami' al-Tawbah, vaulting over entrance corridor.
Figure 84  Jami' al-Tawbah, dome at end of entrance corridor

Figure 85. Jami' al-Tawbah, courtyard
History and Inscriptions

The Jami‘ al-Tawbah (Mosque of Repentance) closely resembles the Great Mosque in layout and other architectural elements (fig. 80), but it has no founding inscription so its exact date of construction is unknown. Since the mosque is located on the river bank and has therefore often suffered from high water, it is likely that its founding inscription once did exist but has since been carried off in one of the floods. The inscription on the northeast entrance to the mosque testifies to its rebuilding in June 1612 after it had been badly damaged by the flood of the previous January 20. It is a bronze plaque containing seven lines of naskh (fig. 81) which read as follows: 105

الحمد لله الذي سأ على عبد من جزيل فضله وسر هذا الخير على يده وهذه اللذ
عمل بكل محبة وعظام انا يعمر ساجد الله من آس بالله فتد وجد هذا الجامع
الكبرى في ساد عشر شهراً داراً الفعدة سنة عشرين بعد الخفاف المنفخة
الочно بين حمد الشديد غباراً كخدارت حفرت حميياً باشا ابن يوسف باسعد
السيك طير الأراء يطرأبن اذه الله تعالى الدولة والمعبداً علىهم بما عظم
الرسلين اجتمعين آمين. يتم بناء في شهر ربيع الآخر سنة احدروستين وفاغ ختم

Glory to God who has endowed His servant with the flow of His abundant favors and thereby made this good deed easy for him and guided him into this action—Glory be to Him—by his saying, "Only he shall inhabit God's places of worship who believes in God" [Qur'an 9:18]; thus was he able to overcome obstacles and renovate this blessed mosque [jami‘] for the love of God the Generous, after the destruction of its wall and minbar and mihrab and its water fountain by the great flood of the sixteenth of zur al-Qa‘dah in the year one thousand and twenty [January 20, 1612], he who believes in the creator king, Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Sharabaddar al-Ansari Katkhudar [under-vizier] of His Excellency Husayn Pasha, son of Yusuf Pasha al-Sayfi, amir of the amirs in Tripoli, may God bestow on them power and happiness and forgive them and all Muslims Amen. And its construction was completed in the month of Rabi‘ the second in the year one thousand and twenty-one [June 1612], and completed in prosperity.

The dates suggested for the mosque’s original construction range over the spectrum, but Tadmuri’s argument for a date coinciding with the very foundation of Mamluk Tripoli itself is far and away the most convincing. 106 Kurd ‘Ali, Condé, and Salem also all at least refer to it as a Mamluk building, 107 and only the Unesco report lists it among the

105 Soberheim, Matériaux, pp 134-35, Inscription no 61
106 Tadmuri, Tārikh wa Ahkār, pp 135–38.
107 Kurd ‘Ali, Khitat al-Shām, 6: 53-54; Condé, Tripoli of Lebanon, pp. 108–9; Salem, Tarabilus al-Shām, p 417
Ottoman buildings of the city. Tadmuri’s argument attributes the building to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāʿūn’s third, and last, sultanate (790–41/1309–40). Although no textual evidence attests to his patronage, Tadmuri has found enough secondary evidence to support it. Al-Qalqashandi, in his great encyclopedic work (1412), refers to the appointment of a khaṭīb (preacher) to the al-Tawbah mosque. Since the only other such appointment he mentions was for the Great Mosque, we can infer that al-Tawbah was also a royal mosque, which, like the Great Mosque, needed a royal decree for the khaṭīb’s appointment. Al-Qalqashandi also mentions a preacher by the name of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Khabūrī as having been appointed to al-Tawbah. Ṣadr al-Dīn died in A.H 769 (A.D 1367), so we can also infer that the building existed before that date. Al-Qalqashandi calls the mosque “al-Jami’ al-Nāṣiri, known as al-Tawbah,” which confirms that it was built by an “al-Nāṣir.” There were three al-Nāṣirs in Mamluk times, but the only one whose dates correlate is al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāʿūn. Finally al-Tawbah shared its waqfīs with the Great Mosque. Since the Great Mosque was completed in A.H 693 (A.D. 1293) and the arcading added by order of Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in A.H 1315), the property set as waqf provides an A.H. 693–715 date for al-Tawbah as well.

A folk tale handed down over the centuries, although unprovable, also corroborates this date and provides some information about the character of the building. According to it, the person entrusted with the building of the Great Mosque embezzled most of the funds set aside for it and the building had thus to remain unadorned. When his crime was discovered, he promised to build another mosque by way of repentance, and that is said to be the reason both for the building’s name and for its resemblance to the Great Mosque. Curiously, the Mosque of Repentance (Masjid al-Tawbah) in Damascus (built in 1234) was also built to resemble that city’s Great Mosque (built in 705), suggesting that repentance somehow involved copying the most important and the holiest local building available.

Description

From the outside the al-Tawbah mosque has no decoration to attract passers-by. An oblong massive building of sandstone, its presence is marked only by an octagonal minaret and three green domes. The minaret (fig. 82), in the northwest corner of the building, consists of an octagonal shaft set on a square base. A square room of more recent

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110 For an illustration of the Masjid al-Tawbah in Damascus, see Selim ’Abdul Hak and Khaled Moaz, Aspects de l’ancienne Damas (Damascus: Publications de la Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées, n.d.), p. 79, pl. 25
Figure 86. Jami‘ al-Tawbah, western wall of courtyard.

Figure 87. Jami‘ al-Tawbah, prayer hall.
Figure 88  Jami' al-Tawbah, prayer hall, dome over mihrab area

Figure 89  Jami' al-Tawbah, mihrab and minbar
date rests on four muqarnas squinches and is opened by two windows on each of its four sides. It is topped by a balustraded balcony surrounding a short shaft with a conical roof. The large central dome is plain; the two smaller domes are ribbed; all three rest on octagonal zones of transition and have been painted green.

The mosque is entered through an arched door on the southwest corner of the building, a few steps lower than the street level. Inside, a corridor-like area along the western side is covered by two cross-vaults with concave grooves and a central ribbed rosette (fig. 83). At the end of the corridor a rather ornate domed area opens onto the courtyard. The dome has a ribbed cupola with a ribbed rosette in its center resting on an octagonal area that rests in turn on a raised square area opened by two windows on each of its four sides (fig. 84). The vaulting is similar to that found in the vestibule of the al-Mu'ayyad mosque in Cairo (1415–20). From this corridor one enters the rectangular courtyard with a domed structure resting on four columns in its center (figs. 85 and 80). On the south side of the courtyard is the oratory; on the north side, the ablutions area entered by three arcades (fig. 85); on the west side, the entrance corridor opened by two arcades; and on the east side, an iwan-like arched vault (fig. 80) leading to the west entrance on the river side. The oratory wall (fig. 86) contains a simple mihrab niche for outdoor prayers set in a balanced composition of two doors and two windows framed by fish scale with various stylized floral motifs. This composition takes the place of an external façade.

The oratory is a long, rectangular low-vaulted hall (fig. 87), with a simple round dome in its center resting on an octagonal zone with a simple transition of corner arches (fig. 88). The mihrab and minbar are in the center of the qiblah wall (fig. 89). As in the Great Mosque, the qiblah wall has two additional mihrabs on either side of the main mihrab. As the inscription tells us, these date from the reconstruction of 1612. The mihrab is a simple niche with two side colonnettes with muqarnas capitals like those in the courtyard and is set in a rectangular frame with the same stylized fish-scale motifs as the outside mihrab. The minbar, a wooden structure decorated with Mamluk star motifs and a muqarnas entrance, is now painted white.

Selected Reading

Creswell, Photos IV, Ashmolean, Oxford, no. 68.