

Shedding light on Women's patronage of architecture in Cairo during the Mamluk era

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Abstract:

This paper is a part of an MA thesis entitled "The patrons of art and architecture in Mamluk Cairo", the thesis studies the Mamluk Patrons of art and architecture and their efforts in Cairo.

This paper deals with Women's patronage to architecture in Cairo, there is a variety of studies that discussed the role of women in the Mamluk era such as:

- Ahmed Abdel-Razik: "Al Mar'aa Fi Al-asr al-Mamluky" ,The general organization for books .
- Sheikha al-Dosry: Awqaf al-Nisaa Wa Athrha Ala al-hayat Al-ama Khelal al-Asr al-Mamluky, MA Thesis, King Mohammed Abdel- Aziz University, 2014 AD.
- Walaa Hamdy: "Al-Mar'a fel Asr al-Mamluki wa Aham Munsha'ateha al-Athariyya or Women in the Mamluk Era and the Most Important Archaeological Institutions", MA Thesis, Faculty of Girls, Ain Shams University, 2006 AD.
- Ali al-Sayed: "al-Gawary Fi Mogtam'a al-Qahira al-Mamlukia", The general organization for books.

Introduction:

Some of the rich and prosperous women, especially those of the ruling elite contributed to the patronage of architecture in Mamluk Cairo. The patronage of women to architecture in Cairo is represented by the construction of religious and funerary buildings included the construction of mosques, madrassas, khanqahs and kuttabs for

learning the boys. They dedicated shops, farms, money and others as endowments to provide financial fund, the spiritual target was to gain bless by god⁽¹⁾.

The great status enjoyed by women in the Mamluk era helped them to patron the architectural structures. Women enjoyed a great deal of respect during that period, whether from the ruling class or the general public. The Mamluk state looked at its women with reverence and appreciation. This is crystal clear in the titles and honorifics they dubbed on their women such as "khawand", "khatun"⁽²⁾ 'Barakat al-Dawlah, Barakat al-Melouk wal Salatin, al-Jiha al-Sharifa, al-Jiha al-Karima, Salilat al-Dawlah and other honorable and noble titles that highlight the status of women in the Mamluk society⁽³⁾.

The influence of women and their authority on the public life in Mamluk Egypt is also noteworthy. Mamluk women provided tangible support for their for their husbands and sons It can be found that the wives of sultans and emirs had a significant role and influence on their husbands and sons in terms of governance, such as "Baraka Khatun", the mother of Sultan Sha'aban and " Khawand Zainab", one of the wives of sultan Inal⁽⁴⁾.

The women of the Mamluk sultans and princes paid their attention to architecture as a result of their richness and extravagance, especially that

they enjoyed a freedom of ownership, whether to real estate, land or money, They willingly shared their wealth⁽⁵⁾.

The sultans and emirs did not deprive their wives from having considerable shares of fortune. Al-Maqrizi concluded the standard of life of the sultans' wives, their daughters and odalisques in his account of al-Malik al-Nasir ibn Qalawun, he mentioned: "He collected from the money, jewels, and pearls an unprecedented quantity that no other Turkish king before him could collect... He outfitted eleven of his daughters with

(1) ابن تغري بردي، النجوم الزاهرة في ملوك مصر، طبعة وزارة الثقافة، القاهرة، بدون تاريخ، ج ٩، ص ١٧.

(2) The title of Khuwand (Khawand) was specific to the spouses of sultans. It was sometimes used to address the sultans themselves. The word Khatun originally meant a princess and was then used to honor women in general, such as the lady or the missus.

- سعيد عبدالفتاح عاشور، المجتمع المصري في عصر سلاطين المماليك، دار النهضة العربية، القاهرة، ١٩٩٢م، ص ١٤٣.

(3) أحمد عبدالرازق، المرأة في مصر المملوكية، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، القاهرة، ١٩٩٦م، ص ١٦.

(4) سعيد عبدالفتاح عاشور، المجتمع المصري في عصر سلاطين المماليك، ص ١٤٣.

(5) أحمد محمد عبدالعزيز، المرأة في مصر والشام في العصرين الأيوبي والمملوكي، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية دار العلوم جامعة المنيا، ٢٠٠٣م، ص ٩٧.

considerable trousseaus. The least of which was worth of eight-hundred thousand dinars⁽⁶⁾. It was stated that one of the sultans' wives left behind six hundred thousand dinars after her death⁽⁷⁾.

The most prominent women who patronized architecture in Mamluk Cairo were as follows:

Queen Shajr al-Durr⁽⁸⁾:

Shajar al-Durr's interest in architecture and arts was reflected in the construction of two mausoleums that are still in place in Cairo to witness the greatness of artistic creativity and the peak of architectural richness. The first is the mausoleum of as-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub. It was established by his wife Shajr al-Durr in al-Nahhasin (Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah al-Fatimi Street) beside al-Madrassa al-Salehiya⁽⁹⁾ in (648 AH/1250 AD)⁽¹⁰⁾. She also

(7) المقرئزي، السلوك، دار الكتب العلمية، بيروت، ١٩٩٧م، ج٣، ص٣١٢.

(٧) ابن شاهين، زبدة كشف الممالك، باريس، ١٨٩٤م، ص١٢١.

(8) Shajr al-Durr: She was the first sultan of the Mamluk Bahri dynasty (656 AH / 1258 AD). She was an Armenian slave of the Abbasid caliphate al-Mu'tasem Billah (640-665 AH / 1242-1258 AD), the last Abbasid caliph. He presented her to al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, who married her and she gave birth to his son Khalil that died young. She took power after Turan Shah, the son of al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub. Later, she relinquished the rule to Izz al-Din Aybak, but she was in (656 AH / 1258 AD) at the hands of his servants.

- ابن تغري بردي، النجوم الزاهرة في ملوك مصر والقاهرة، دار الكتب العلمية، بيروت، ج٦، ص٣٣٢-٣٣٣.

(9) Monument Number: 38.

- أبو الحمد محمود فرغلي، الدليل الموجز لأهم الآثار الإسلامية والقبطية في القاهرة، الدار المصرية اللبنانية، القاهرة، ١٩٩١م، ص٢٠١.

- Al-Madrassa al-Salehiya: It was established by King Salih Naj Al-Din Ayyub ibn al-Malik al-Kamil, over a part of al-Qasr al-Fatimi al-Sharqi al-Kabir in (641 AH /1243 AD).

- أحمد عبدالرازق، العمارة الإسلامية في مصر منذ الفتح العربي حتى نهاية العصر المملوكي، ص١٨٣.

(١٠) أحمد فخري، مساجد القاهرة ومدارسها، دار المعارف، القاهرة، ٢٠٠٨م، ط٢، ج٢، ص٤٤.

established for herself a mausoleum⁽¹¹⁾ in (648 AH /1250 AD) in al-Khalifa Street in Cairo, off the square of the Mosque of Ahmed Ibn Tulun⁽¹²⁾. She was buried there in (656 AH / 1258 AD)⁽¹³⁾.

In addition to these two mausoleums, Shajr al-Durr established a hammam⁽¹⁴⁾, a garden and houses in the area of *Al-Sayeda Nafeesah Mosque*. The historian Ali Mubarak stated that this complex vanished and no longer exists in this blessed area⁽¹⁵⁾.

Tezkar Bai Khatûn (Daughter of al-Malik al-Zahir Baybars:

In (684 AH / 1285 AD), a ribat was erected for al-Sheikha al-Saliha Zaynab bint Abi al-Barakat, known as Ribat Bint al-Bughdadiya⁽¹⁶⁾ in al-Darb al-Asfar near Khanqah Baybars. It was the residence of this Sheikha and the philanthropist women, where they managed to preach other women and remind them of the matters of religion. It was also the shelter for the divorced or deserted women till they remarry or return to their husbands. In addition, it was marked with the severity of control and perseverance of religious rituals⁽¹⁷⁾.

⁽¹¹⁾ Monument Number: 169. See Pl.1.

- Al-Madrassa al-Salehiya: It was established by King Salih Naj Al-Din Ayyub ibn al-Malik al-Kamil, over a part of al-Qasr al-Fatimi al-Sharqi al-Kabir in (641 AH /1243 AD).

- أحمد عبدالرازق، العمارة الإسلامية في مصر منذ الفتح العربي حتى نهاية العصر المملوكي، ص ١٨٣.
^(١٢) حسني نويصر، العمارة الإسلامية في مصر في عصر الأيوبيين والمماليك، مكتبة زهراء الشرق، القاهرة، ١٩٩٨م، ص ١٠٦.

^(١٣) المقريري، السلوك لمعرفة دول الملوك، ج ١، ص ٤٩٤.

⁽¹⁴⁾ The construction of hammamat was not restricted only to kings, emirs, and senior statesmen as women also built hammamat in Egypt during the Mamluk era, such as Sultan Shajar al-Durr, Khatun al-Tatumash Khan, the wife of al-Malik al-Zahir Baybars. She built it beside the ablution place. In addition, Sayeda Ardukin, the spouse of al-Malik al-Ashraf Khalil ibn Qalawun built also a hammam next to al-Ruhba that she built at the end of Haret Zuwailah.

- أحمد محمد عبدالعزيز، المرأة في مصر والشام في العصرين الأيوبي والمملوكي، ص ٩٤.

^(١٥) علي مبارك، الخطط التوفيقية، ج ١، ص ٧٨، ابن عبدالظاهر، الروضة البهية، ص ١٣٧.

^(١٦) ثامر نعمان، دور المرأة في الحياة العامة في عصر المماليك البحرية، مجلة واسط للعلوم الانسانية، عدد ٢٣، بدون تاريخ، ص ٢٨٤.

- This Ribat now disappeared.

^(١٧) المقريري، الخطط، ج ٣، ص ٦٠٢-٦٠٣.

Khuwand Tughay al-Kubra⁽¹⁸⁾:

Khuwand Tughay al-Kubra established a khanqah⁽¹⁹⁾ (749 AH / 1348) in the Mamluk desert, beside mausoleum of emir Tashtimur al-Saqi, and allocated many waqfs⁽²⁰⁾ to spend on it. She was buried in this khanqah⁽²¹⁾.

Umm Anouk was charitable. She had a lot of money that she spent on the needy and the poor. She also outfitted her maids with trousseaus and designated on the tomb of her son in the mausoleum of al-Madrassa al-Nasiriya in Bein al-Qasrein some inciters and waqfs. These waqfs used also to distribute bread to the poor⁽²²⁾.

Al-Sitt al-Galila al-Kubra Khuwand Tatar al-Hijaziya⁽²³⁾:

Al-Madrassa al-Hijaziya⁽²⁴⁾ was established in Ruhbat (square) of Bab al-Eid⁽²⁵⁾. Great waqfs were designated for it to spend from their returns on the employees. It had a bookcase a platform to preach Friday khutbas, and a mausoleum where she was buried. In addition, she built beside the madrassa a sabil and kuttab to teach the Muslim orphans⁽²⁶⁾.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Khuwand Tughay: The wife of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, and the mother of his son Emir Anouk. She was a slave but he liberated her and married her. She was said to be the sister of wife of Emir Aqbugha Abdul Wahid.

- المقريري، الخطط، ج ٣، ص ٥٩٧.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Monument Number:81 .See: Pl.2.

⁽²⁰⁾ المقريري، الخطط، ج ٣، ص ٥٩٦.

⁽²¹⁾ سعاد ماهر، مساجد مصر وأولياؤها الصالحون، ج ٣، ص ٢٤٣.

⁽²²⁾ المقريري، الخطط، ج ٣، ص ٥٩٧.

⁽²³⁾ Al-Sitt Tatar al-Hijaziya: The daughter of al-Malik al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun and the wife of Boktomor al-Hijazi.

- المقريري، الخطط، ج ٢، ص ٥١٨.

⁽²⁴⁾ Monument Number: 36.

⁽²⁵⁾ Ruhbat (square) of Bab al-Eid: It extended from Bab al-Rih, one of the gates of the palace that was demolished by emir Jamal al-Din al-Istadar in (811 AH / 1408 AD), and it was very spacious.

- المقريري، الخطط، ج ٢، ص ٤٦٨.

⁽²⁶⁾ المقريري، الخطط، ج ٣، ص ٤٨٧.

Khuwand Tatar bought Qawsun's palace in khatt Ruhbat Bab al-Eid, and constructed its buildings according to the royal architecture style. These buildings were highly ornamented. The palace had a bond, and under the palace there was a vast stable of horses and a large courtyard. It was a part of the waqfs designated for her madrassa⁽²⁷⁾.

Sitt Maska (Variant Hadaq)⁽²⁸⁾:

She was also known (Sayeda Hadaq), Despite the fact that she was one of the slaves of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, she was able to play an important role in the public life. She was able to collect a great

wealth of money and gifts which the sultan and his entourage bestowed upon her on the hope of getting closer to the sultan. This helped her to show favor to the poor and needy through her charities and waqfs⁽²⁹⁾.

Sittmaska established a mosque⁽³⁰⁾ in Hikr Sittmaska, which was known on its name after its establishment, near Qantara of Āq Sunqur on al-Khalij al-Kabir (now Port Said Street). It is dated back to (740 AH /1339 AD)⁽³¹⁾.

Khuwand Stettah⁽³²⁾:

She established a mausoleum in Bab al-Khawasin, where she was buried in (730 AH /1330 AD). It was attached to a mosque and a women's ribat⁽³³⁾.

Sayeda Baraka Khatun⁽³⁴⁾

(²⁷) المقريري، الخطط، ج ٢، ص ٥١٨.

(²⁸) Sittmaska: She was a slave of Sultan Muhammed ibn Qalawun. She grew up and became Qahramana, i.e., the housekeeper and patron of his affairs. He used to consider her opinion in the works of royal weddings and days as well as the arrangement of the affairs of the Sultan Hareem in addition to raising his children.

- المقريري، الخطط، ج ٢، ص ٦٣٤.

(²⁹) سعاد ماهر، مساجد مصر وأولياؤها الصالحون، ج ٣، ص ٢٢٣.

(³⁰) Monument Number:252. See: Pl.3.

(³¹) المقريري، الخطط، ج ٣، ص ٣٤٦.

(³²) Khuwand Stettah: She was the daughter of emir Sayf al-Din Kokai al-Mansouri, the wife of Tinkaz, the viceroy of Sham, and the mother of Sultan al-Maliki al-Salih Salah al-Din Salah.

- الصفدي، أعيان العصر وأعيان النصر، ج ٢، ص ٤٠٣.

(³³) الصفدي، أعيان العصر وأعيان النصر، ج ٢، ص ٤٠٣.

She was the daughter of al-Sayeda al-Galila al-Kubra Baraka, the mother of Sultan Sha'ban. In (771 AH /1369 AD), she built a madrassa⁽³⁵⁾ called madrassa of Umm al-Sultan, outside Bab Zuwaila, near the Citadel in khatt

al-Tabbana⁽³⁶⁾. She was keen that her madrassa's delivery of lessons for the Shaafa'I and Hanafi learners as well. In addition, she built a sabil at the

door of this madrassa and a mausoleum to be buried therein. This madrassa was one of the sublime madrassa, where her son, al-Malik al-Ashraf Sha'ban was buried after his murder. She also was buried there in (774 AH /1372 AD)⁽³⁷⁾.

Khawand Zaynab Bint Al-'Alai (Wife of Sultan Inal):

She was known for the ribat⁽³⁸⁾ she established in (860 AH / 1455 AD), and now located in Haret al-Ribat (off al-Khrunfush Street)⁽³⁹⁾.

Conclusion:

We conclude from this study that women were an essential element in the Mamluk society and had a great deal of respect and appreciation, whether they were from the upper class or the public class. They were able to express this prestigious position and confirm their existence in this period in a clear and perceptible way by establishing Of various buildings in Cairo still commemorate her.

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⁽³⁴⁾ Baraka Khatun: The mother of Sultan Al-Ashraf Sha'aban ibn Hussein, and the wife of emir Al-Jay Al-Yusufi, was one of the greatest women of her time, good, righteous, beautiful and generous.

- ابن تغري بردي، المنهل الصافي والمستوفي بعد الوافي، ج ٣، ص ٣٥٦.

⁽³⁵⁾ Monument Number:120. See: Pl.4.

⁽³⁶⁾ khatt al-Tabbana: It included the area from Bab al-Wazir to Darb al-Ahmar, where Bab al-Wazir Street, al-Tabbana Street and al-Darb al-Ahmar located to its centre. It was known as such because it was the place of selling hay.

- علي مبارك، الخطط التوفيقية، ج ٢، ص ١٠٢.

^(٣٧) المقريري، الخطط، ج ٣، ص ٥٣٠.

⁽³⁸⁾ Monument Number:61. See: Pl.5.

^(٣٩) عبدالحميد عبدالحميد العطار، دليل الآثار الإسلامية بمدينة القاهرة، وزارة الثقافة، ٢٠٠م، ص ١٣٣.

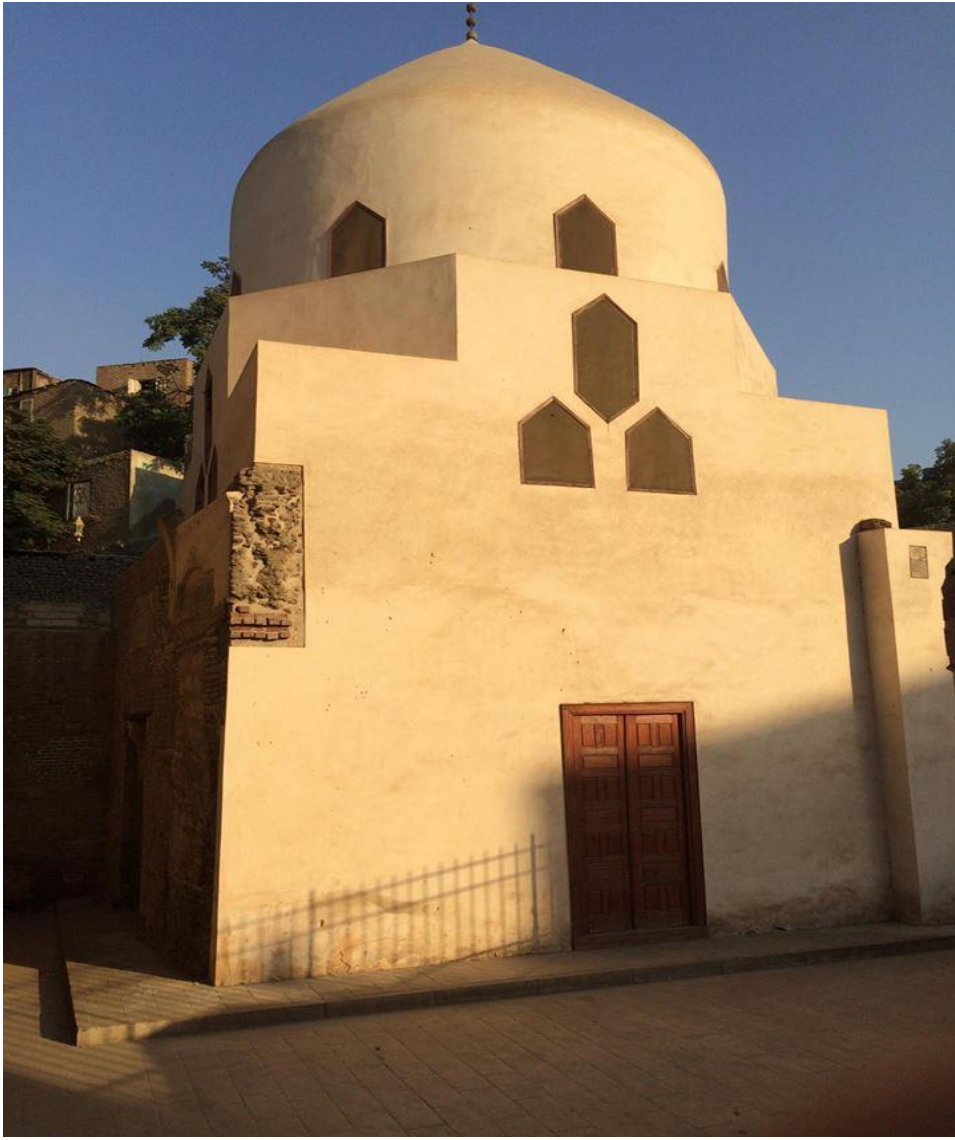
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مواقع من الانترنت:

- www.foursquare.com
- www.kotooof.blogspot.com.

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(Photographed by the researcher)



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(www.foursquare.com)



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(Photographed by the researcher)



(Pl.4): Mosque of Sitt Maska

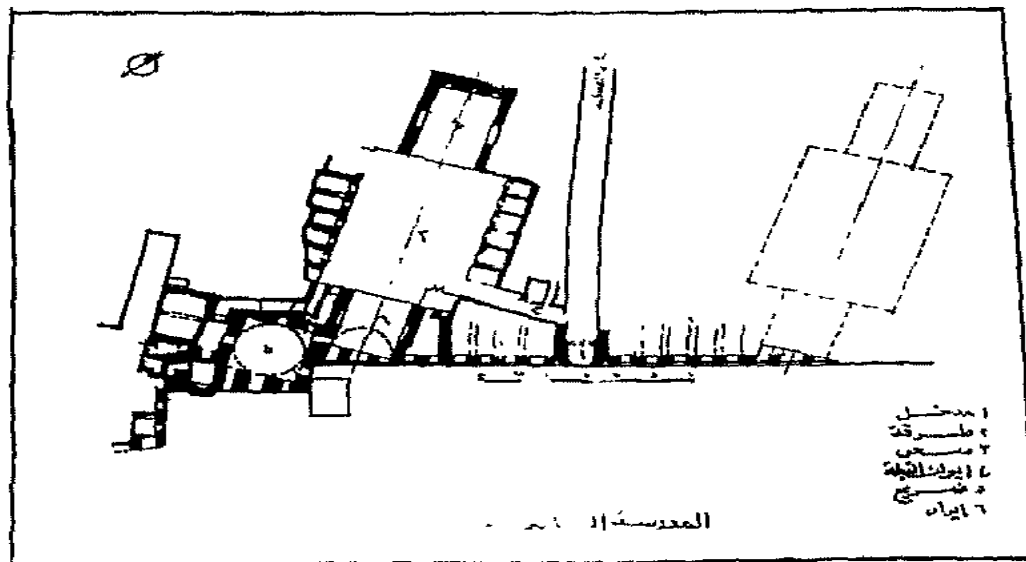
(Photographed by the researcher)



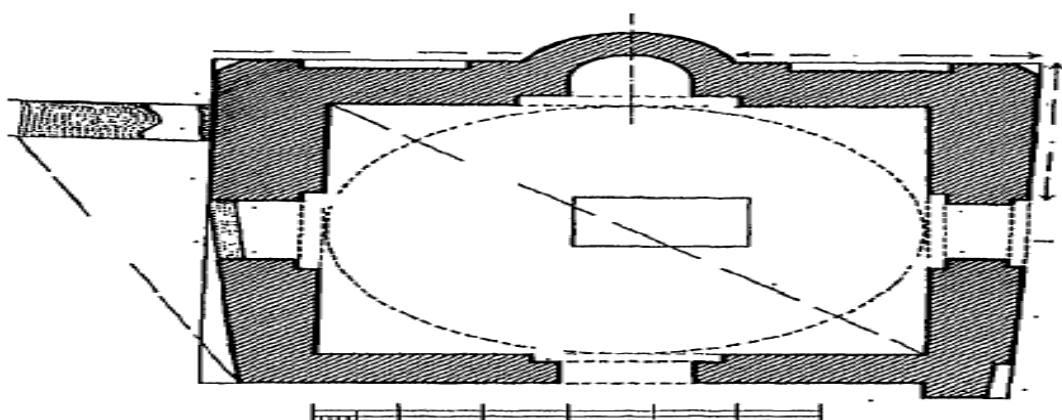
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(www.kotooof.blogspot.com)

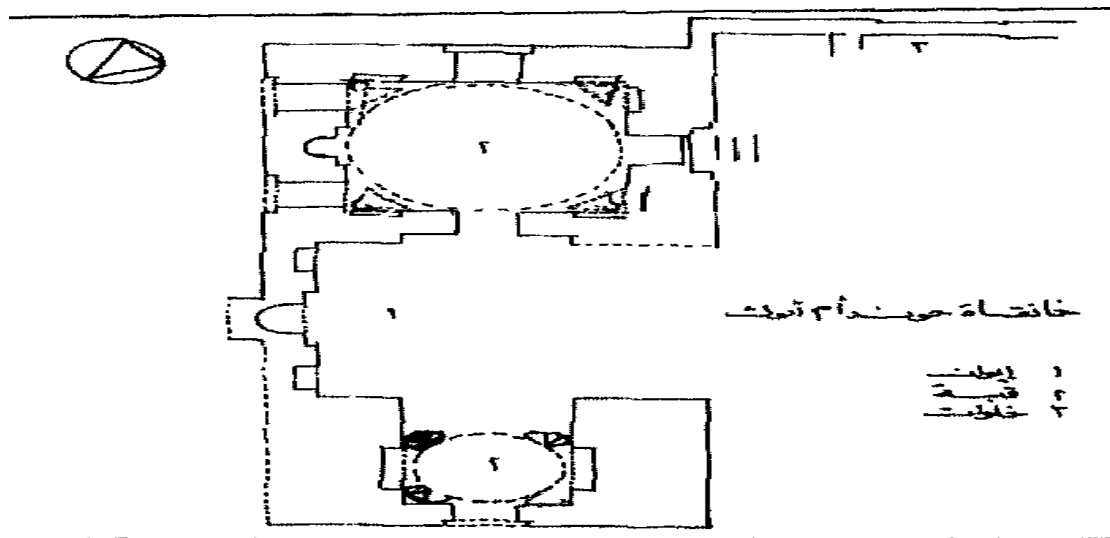
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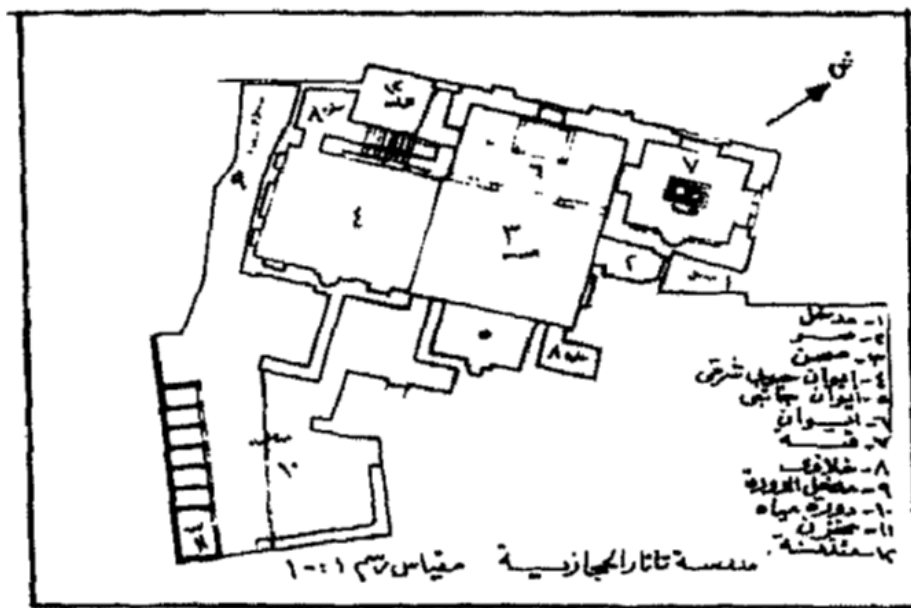
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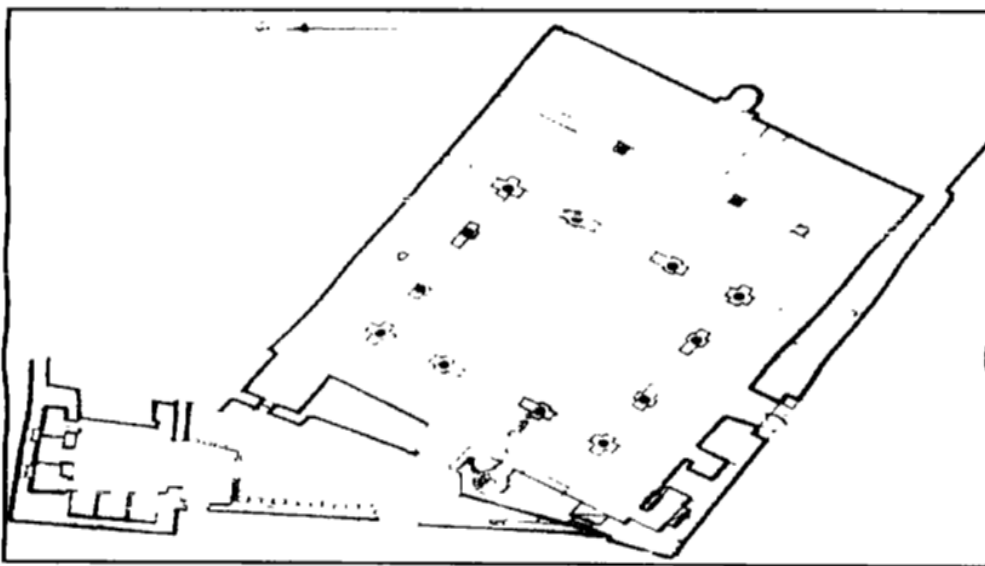
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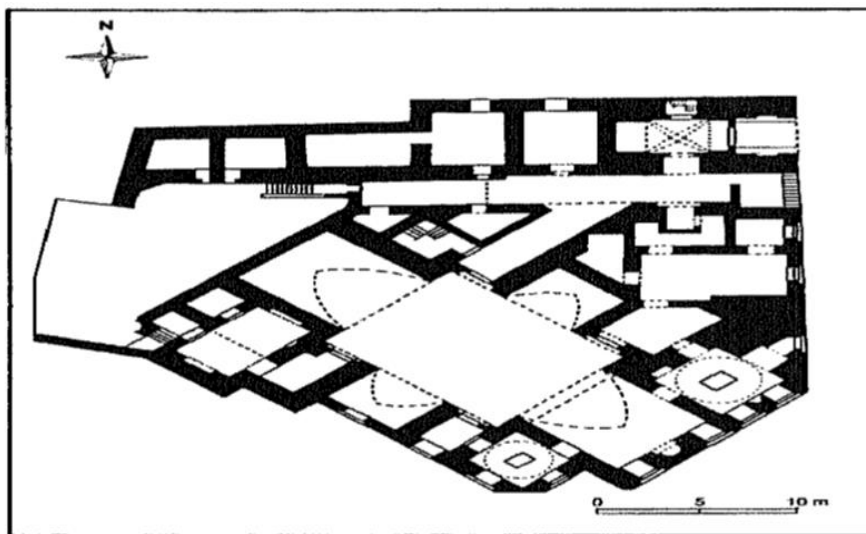
(Fig.3) Drawing Remnants of Khanqah Khund Um Anuk



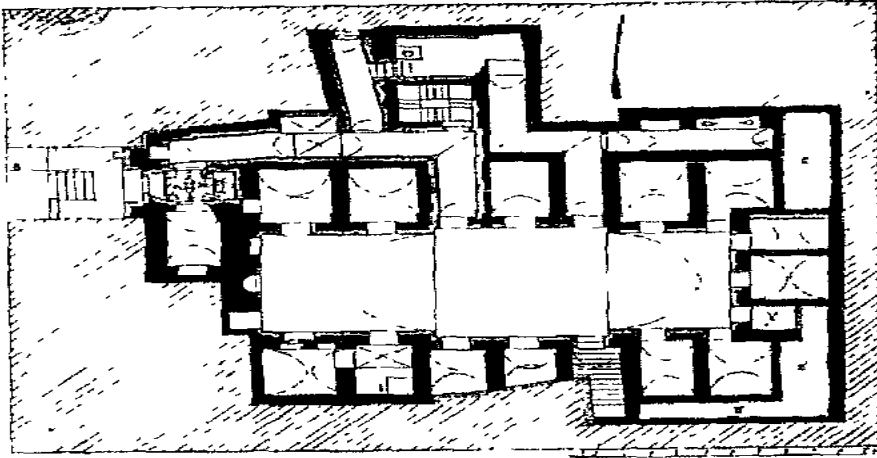
(Fig.4) Plan of Madrasa of Sitt Tatar al-Hijaziya



(Fig.5) Drawing of Mosque of Sitt Maska



(Fig.6) Drawing of mosque of umm al-Sultan Sha'ban mosque and madrasa



(Fig.7) Drawing of the Ribat of Khawand Zaynab Bint Al-'Alai