

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

**The Architectural Patronage of Ḍayfah Khātūn:
Ayyubid Queen Regent of Aleppo (r.1236-1243 C.E.)**

By

Julia Aridi

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THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Student Name: Julia Aridi I.D. #: 201400376

Thesis Title: The Architectural Patronage of Dayfah Khātūn: Ayyubid (Queen Regent of Aleppo (1243-1236 A.D

Program: M.A. IN ISLAMIC ART

Department: Department of Architecture & Interior Design

School: School of Architecture & Design

The undersigned certify that they have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis and approved it in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

M.A. in the major of Islamic Art

Thesis Advisor's Name: Dr. Abdallah Kabil

Signature:  Date: 16 / 01 / 2023
Day Month Year

Committee Member's Name: Dr. Maroun Daccahe

Signature:  Date: 16 / 01 / 2023
Day Month Year

Committee Member's Name: Dr. Yasmine Taan

Signature:  Date: 16/ / 01/ / 2023
Day Month Year

Acknowledged by: 

Department Chair:  Date: 16 01 2023

Dean of School of Architecture & Design:  Date: _____

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DEDICATION

To my loving parents Amal and Fadi, sisters Reem and Linda, and partner Marc.

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The Architectural Patronage of Ḍayfah Khātūn: Ayyubid Queen Regent of Aleppo (1236-1243 A.D)

Julia Aridi

ABSTRACT

This thesis will conduct an analysis of the architectural patronage of Ḍayfah Khātūn, the queen regent of Aleppo between the years 1236 and 1243 C.E. It studies the architecture commissioned by her in light of the social and political changes in the Ayyubid Dynasty. The thesis goes on to discuss firstly Ayyubid Aleppo, secondly the architectural patronage of the Ayyubids including female patrons, and finally the architectural patronage of Ḍayfah khātūn; which consists of two buildings in Aleppo, Madrasat al Firdaws in the Maqamāt sector and Khanqah al Farāfra in the area under the citadel. It will come to show how the architecture commissioned by her was a means to exert and assert her power and stature. What makes her architectural patronage singular is that it is unlike prior female architectural patronage in Ayyubid Syria in terms of scale and location. Female patronage was not uncommon in the Seljuq and Ayyubid dynasties and primarily consisted of modest pious foundations and mausolea usually built at the outer edges of cities. By relying on Ayyubid historians, prior scholarship and a field visit, this thesis will show how the architecture commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn was utilized to cement her power and ensure the succession of her grandson. The buildings she commissioned are distinguished in that they feature new elements in Ayyubid architecture. They are located in prominent areas of the city and are of a relatively large scale. All of this and more comes to show the remarkable way in which Ḍayfah Khātūn was able to use architecture as a political tool to assert the power and status she attained as the queen regent of Aleppo.

Keywords: Aleppo, Ayyubids, Ayyubid Architecture, Women in Islamic Art, Architectural Patronage, Power.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration system used follows that of the Library of Congress (ALA-LC) Arabic Romanization system. Familiar Geographical names such as Aleppo, Damascus, Baghdad, Anatolia, Jazira and dynastic names such as Abbasid, Ayyubid, Fatimid, Seljuq, are used in their common English form.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Ayyubids ruled Egypt and Syria from 1171 to 1250 and 1260 respectively. The Ayyubid leaders were of Kurdish origin. The founders of the house of Ayyub were Najm al-Dīn Ayyub and his brother Shīrkuh, who were from the suburbs of the Georgian capital Tbilisi in the north-west Caucasus.¹ Saladin (r.1171-93) was the son of Najm al Dīn, and the leading figure in the history of the Ayyubid dynasty. He began his rule, when he waged a war against the Zengids after the death of Nūr al Dīn Zengī, and managed to replace them, dominating by that Syria, the Jazira and Mosul.²

Ayyubid architecture is a topic well discussed in the Islamic art field and is usually categorized regionally between Ayyubid Syria and Ayyubid Egypt. In Ayyubid Syria, Aleppo was one of the major urban and architectural transformations in medieval Islamic cities.³ The Ayyubid sultanate consisted of regional kingdoms lead by regional ruler assigned by the sultan. These regional kingdoms referred to their ruler as the regional sultan or Malik. Aleppo was a kingdom within the Ayyubid sultanate ruled by Saladin's brother Al 'Adil in 1182 and then it was ruled by his son Al Zāhir Ghāzī in 1193. The Ayyubids of Aleppo were avid builders and worked on fortifying and developing the city constantly as will be shown in the body of this study.⁴

Dayfah Khātūn, the well-known Ayyubid princess ruled the kingdom of Aleppo as

¹ Al Maqrīzī, *'Itti'āz Al Hunafā' Bi Akhbār Al A'imma Al Faṭimiyyīn Al Khulafā'*, Vol. 3 (Cairo: Wizārat al-Auqāf, 1984). p.305 ; Taef Kamal El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019). p.249

² Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh, [England]: Edinburgh University Press, 1999). pp.171-94. El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.350

³ Tabbāa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.12

⁴ Tabbāa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.12

Queen Regent from 1236 until her death in 1243. She was the daughter of Al ‘Adil I, brother of Saladin and sultan of the Ayyubids in Egypt and Syria from 1205 until 1218. She was also the wife of her cousin Al Zāhir Ghāzī , the son of Saladin, and regional sultan of Aleppo from 1193 until his death in 1216 (Figure 1) . Dayfah Khātūn’s ruling was uncommon for the period. She was a remarkable person who was able to effectively rule the kingdom of Aleppo after her Husband and Son’s death. In the words of Ibn Waṣīl an Ayyubid historian: “تصرفت تصرف السلاطين” meaning she “behaved as any sultan did”.⁵ She made military and political decisions concerning Aleppo, and she commissioned the construction of several buildings; including Madrasat al Firdaws and Khanqah al Frarafra,

In this paper, the architectural commissions of Dayfah Khātūn will be discussed with a focus on the political meaning associated with these projects.⁶ I will study the buildings commissioned by Dayfah Khātūn and suggest that these buildings reflect the power and stature of their commissioner.

Female patronage was not uncommon in the medieval Islamic world, especially under the Seljuq and Ayyubid dynasties in the 12th and 13th century, when women of the ruling families sponsored architectural work.⁷ The buildings commissioned by women of the court were religious foundations, such as mausolea, ribats, khanqahs and madrasas that were mostly used as family tombs.⁸ In addition to that, according to Humphreys, the buildings sponsored by female patrons were usually modest in scale and in peripheral locations in the city.⁹

⁵ Ibn Wāṣīl, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, Vol. 5 (Cairo: Matba‘at Jāmi‘at Fu‘ad al’ūla, 1953),p.313

⁶ By architectural patronage what is meant is the buildings she commissioned and where constructed under her will.

⁷ R. S. Humphreys, "Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyubid Damascus," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994), 35-54. doi:10.2307/1523208.

⁸ Humphreys, "Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyubid Damascus," , 35-54. Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.234

⁹ R. S. Humphreys, "Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyubid Damascus," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994), 35-54. doi:10.2307/1523208.

1.1 Architecture as an expression of Power and Legitimacy: The Architectural Patronage of Ḍayfah Khātūn

The architectural patronage of Ḍayfah Khātūn is unlike prior female patronage in terms of scale and in that it is located in prominent areas of the city. She commissioned two buildings: madrasat al Firdaws in the Maqamāt region southwest Bāb al Maqām, and Khanqah al Farāfra in the Farāfra neighborhood directly under the Citadel (taḥt al qal‘a), highlighted in the map in figure 2. Madrasat al Firdaws is the largest madrasa in Ayyubid Aleppo with an area of approximately 2,436 square meters.¹⁰ Its location in the Maqamāt region is right outside the city wall, a prominent location.¹¹ Khanqah al Farāfra is the largest khanqah in Aleppo and is located in the city center, right under the citadel.

The buildings Ḍayfah Khātūn commissioned appear to have been generously supported, as seen by the lavish way in which they are decorated. They also feature new elements unseen priorly in Ayyubid architecture; such as having a main bent entrance with a muqarnas portal (figure 3), the geometric marble interlacing at the mihrabs (figure 4,5), and the roofing system of madrasat al Firdaws consisting of eleven domes a number unprecedented in Ayyubid architecture (figure 6). Studying these buildings, paired with demonstrating the political significance of Ḍayfah Khātūn, will show how the architecture she commissioned stood as an expression of her power and legitimacy as queen regent of Aleppo.¹²

¹⁰ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* table on p.134

¹¹ The location is prominent given its position between the housing of the high class families and the military encampments.

¹² In the same way other Ayyubid sultans commissioned buildings to strengthen their power and legitimacy.

1.2 Thesis Outline

This thesis includes six chapters. This first chapter is an introduction to the topic, rationale and hypothesis. The second chapter includes a review of the literature of what scholars and other researchers discussed about the several aspects of the topic and presents the methodology adopted in this research. The third chapter explores the background and context in which the Ayyubids of Aleppo, and in particular Ḍayfah Khātūn, ascended to power. The fourth chapter portrays the discussion and study of the architecture commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn. It discusses the locations, plans, and architectural elements of the two buildings tied to her patronage in order to show how her power and stature as a ruler was reflected in them. The fifth chapter looks into the political significance of the patron of the buildings, discussing her relationship with the surrounding regions and how she acted with full authority as Queen Regent of Aleppo. The sixth and last chapter serves as a conclusion, attempting to show how the architecture commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn was a reflection of the power and stature she held as queen regent.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Ayyubid History

The History of the Ayyubids and their contemporaries is well studied. Stephen R. Humphreys is a thorough author on the subject. In his book *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus* (1977), he relays the history of the Ayyubids and their states from its origin to its end. He describes their internal relationships, and that with the neighboring powers such as the crusades and Anatolian Seljuqs. Humphreys relies on primary accounts of historians from the Ayyubid period. His work is a clear study of the social and political affairs of the Ayyubids. Humphreys mentions Dayfah Khātūn in his accounts and relays the part she played in Ayyubid history.

Taef El Azhari, the author of the entry ‘Dayfa Khātūb’ in *Encyclopedia of Islam* 3rd edition (2017) has several publications on the Anatolian Seljuqs and the Ayyubids; stressing the depth of the relationship between these two dynasties.¹³ In his Book *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubine in Islamic History 661-1257* (2019), he relays the different sections in Islamic history which explore the role of women in the ruling class, specifically in the Seljuq and Ayyubid period. In his final chapter he describes in detail the life of Dayfah Khātūn and her political and social status relying on primary sources. In his article ‘Dayfa Khatun, Ayyubid Queen of Aleppo 634-640/1236-1242’¹⁴, he also wrote about her reign and how she came to be accepted as a female ruler.

¹³ El-Azhari Taef Kamal. *The Saljuqs of Syria : During the Crusades, 463-549 A.H./1070-1154 A.D.* Berlin: Schwarz, 1997

¹⁴ *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies* (Vol.15, 2000)

Arabic sources on the subject of the Ayyubids and Ḍayfah Khātūn , that list their accomplishments and buildings are also needed in this study . First is *Nahr al Thahab fī Ta’rīkh Ḥalab* (1923) by Al Ghāzzi, which provides a historic account on the time frame and lists the buildings built and all accounts mentioning them. Second is *Malakāt al bilāt al Ayyubi Ḍayfah Khātūn wa Shaggar al Dur* (2021) by Dr. Salam al Jabiri, which collects the accounts on Ḍayfah Khātūn’s and Shaggar al Dur’s lives and presents an account of how they came to power.

2.1.1.1 Primary Sources:

In addition to the literature mentioned above, there are many primary sources that detail the history of the Ayyubids and provide insight into the life of the Ayyubids of Aleppo and Ḍayfah Khātūn. The primary historic accounts most referred to in this study are: Al Maqrīzī ‘s ‘*Itti’āz al Ḥunafā’ bi Akhbār al A’imma al Faṭimiyyīn al Khulafā’*, Volume 3 and *Al Sulūk li Ma’rifat Duwal al Mulūk*, Volume 1.¹⁵ He is one of the most celebrated Mamluk Historians and mentions the affairs of the Ayyubids prior to the mamluks in these books, also providing accounts on the history of the Ayyubids of Aleppo.

Al Yunīnī, Qutb al Din’s *Dhayl Mir’at al Zamān*¹⁶ is a mamluk historian whose father was a hanbali jurist close to the Ayyubids of Syria. In his book, he recounts some essential tales on the Ayyubids of Syria.

Ibn Al ‘Adīm’s (1192-1262): *Zubdat al Ḥalab fī Tārīkh Ḥalab* ,Volume 3¹⁷ was used, where he was the trusted advisor of Ḍayfah Khātūn in the time of her reign and a

¹⁵ Al Maqrīzī, *Al Sulūk Li Ma’rifat Duwal Al Mulūk*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiya, 1997). Al Maqrīzī, *‘Itti’āz Al Ḥunafā’ Bi Akhbār Al A’imma Al Faṭimiyyīn Al Khulafā’*, Vol. 3 (Cairo: Wizārat al-Auqāf, 1984).

¹⁶ Al Yunīnī, Qutb al Din, *Dhayl Mir’at Al Zamān* (Hyderabad: Maṭba‘at Majlis Dā’irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmāniyah, 1954).

¹⁷ Ibn Al ‘Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta’Rīkh Ḥalab*, Vol. 3 (Damascus: Inst. Français de Damas, 1959).

known historian in the Ayyubid period of a wealthy patrician family. He provides the accounts of the Ayyubids of Aleppo and the accounts of the life and actions of Ḍayfah Khātūn.

Ibn al 'Athīr's *Al Kamil fi al Tarikh*, volume 12¹⁸ is used for background information on the Ayyubids. He died before the rule of Ḍayfah Khātūn.

Ibn Shaddād, Izz al Din's *Al A'lāq al Khatīrah fi Dhikr Umarā' al Shām wal Jazīra*, Volume 2¹⁹ was also used, where he was a scholar and official of the Ayyubids of Aleppo from a well-known patrician family and accounts the tails contemporary to him and provides insight on the timeframe in which Ḍayfah Khātūn ruled.

Finally, Ibn Wāṣil's *Mufārij al Kurūb fi Ta'rīkh bani Ayyub* volume 5.²⁰ He was an allocated judge and diplomat within the Ayyubids and later on with their successors, he relays accounts from the time of Ḍayfah Khātūn's rule.

2.1.2 Ayyubid Architecture

Ayyubid Architecture is relatively well studied. Terry Allen in his *Ayyubid Architecture* (1999) presents a comprehensive overview on the buildings of the Ayyubid period. He relies on historic sources and physical evidence to describe, analyze and interpret the building plans, elevations elements, and construction. His writing is essential to the study, given that he presents most buildings built under the Ayyubids. His comprehensive study presents the base upon which the study of the buildings commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn can be built.

Another source on Ayyubid architecture is the work of Yasser Tabbāa. In his *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* (1997), Tabbāa discusses the issues

¹⁸ Ibn al 'Athīr, *Al-Kāmil Fi L-Ta'Rīkh*, Vol. 12 (Beirut: Dar Beirut, 1982).

¹⁹ Ibn Shaddād, Izz al Dīn, *Al A'lāq Al Khatīrah Fī Dhikr Umarā' Al Shām Wal Jazīra*, Vol. 2 (Damascus: Al ma'had al Faransī lil dirāsāt al 'arabiyah, 1956

²⁰ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufārij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb*, Vol. 5 (Cairo: Matba'at Jāmi'at Fu'ad al'ūla, 1953).

of patronage in Ayyubid Aleppo, describing the different social classes and how architectural patronage has changed since prior Islamic periods. In addition, he discusses the architecture of the Ayyubids of Aleppo and its elements and categorizes it between constructions of power (fortification and palaces) and piety (madrasas and pious foundations). Furthermore, he has two articles that are relevant for the research. The first is on the design of Madrasat al Firdaws "Geometry and Memory in the Design of Madrasat al Firdaus in Aleppo" (1987) and the other is on the issue of patronage named "Circles of Power: Palace, Citadel and City in Ayyubid Aleppo" (*Ars Orientalis* 1993). Also, he wrote the chapter "Ḍayfa Khātūn, Regent Queen and Architectural Patron" in the book *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies* (2000) edited by D.Fairchild Ruggles. In this chapter he claims that the patronage of Ḍayfah Khātūn was primarily to promote the Sunni Sufi faith because it allowed female participation. From Tabaa's writing, a wider image on the patronage of the Ayyubids of Aleppo and an interpretation of the two concerned buildings is gained.

Another source on the architecture of Madrasat al Firdaws is a Master thesis from the American University in Cairo titled "Al madrasa al Firdaus in Aleppo: a chef d'oeuvre of Ayyubid Architecture" by Rana Jalabi Holdjik in 1988. It studies the building, its location, and impact on later architecture. In her research she discusses Ḍayfah Khātūn commissioning the building along with Khanqa al Farāfra. She analyzes Madrasat al Firdaws in depth, drawing a map of what she believes the grounds of the madrasa were at the time of its construction and how it impacted later buildings and what its influences might have been.

Other useful sources for the study of Ayyubid architecture are the documentations of Sir Archibald Creswell (K.A.C Creswell) and Ernst Herzfeld. They wrote information on the state of Ayyubid buildings, including the buildings to be discussed and the

architecture of Aleppo. Herzfeld has 3 Volumes on the buildings encountered in Aleppo with a report on his findings in *Materiaux pour un Corpus Inscriptonum Arabicum*.

Deuxieme Partie: Syrie du Nord. Volumes 1,2&3.” (1955)

2.1.3 Ayyubid Female Architectural Patronage

Female architectural patronage in Islamic art has been discussed by several scholars. Stephen R. Humphreys wrote an article on Female architectural patronage in Ayyubid architecture ‘Women as patrons of religious architecture in Ayyubid Damascus’²¹. In it, he describes the career and commissions of several women in the Ayyubid court, which was a common practice for noble Ayyubid women. He discusses these commissions as acts of piety and points out the modest scale and peripheral locations of these commissions.

Another study on the topic of female architectural patrons that studies the different women who commissioned architecture and some that came to power, is the book by Fairchild Ruggles mentioned above with the chapter on Dayfa Khatun written by Tabbaa. Another source utilized in the study on this topic is the book *Women in the medieval Islamic world : power, patronage, and piety* ed. By Gavin RG Hambly, which discusses women that came to power in medieval Islam and were patrons of the architecture.

2.1.4 In Conclusion

All the Literary sources listed above highlight one aspect of the topic of this paper. From the historic sources, the account on Ḍayfah Khātūn’s life and social and political position within the Ayyubids is highlighted. From the sources on the Architecture, details about the buildings commissioned by Dayfah Khātūn are presented. Finally, from the sources on female architectural patronage that recount the tales and

²¹ *Muqarnas* Vol.11 (1994)

achievements of women who came to power in medieval Islam, one is able to differentiate the case of Ḍayfah Khātūn as a patron of architecture.

What is apparent is that the topic of Dayfah Khatun's architectural patronage and the topic of her Status among the Ayyubids are both discussed separately in prior literature. This study discusses both with the intent of showing how Ḍayfah Khatun's power and stature as queen regent of Aleppo is reflected in the architecture she commissioned.

2.2. Methodology

The following research studies the architectural patronage of Ḍayfah Khātūn, the only recorded female ruler to hold political power in Ayyubid Aleppo. It aims to show how the architecture commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn was used as a political tool to express the power and stature she held as queen regent of Aleppo, and to ensure the succession of her bloodline.

This study discusses the context of the architecture. It includes the formal study of the architecture commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn, a discussion on the period of when and where this architecture was made, its patronage, and what the intended meaning and significance of this architecture might be.

This study explores the history in which the patron of the architecture existed, and from that goes on to discuss the buildings commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn and the stature and position that she held in the history of the Ayyubids of Aleppo.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXT OF AYYUBID ALEPPO

The Ayyubid dynasty ruled over Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and the Jazira. Aleppo was a kingdom within the Ayyubid sultanate. Under the Ayyubids, Aleppo was a well built and reinforced city. It contained more than twenty Ayyubid structures built between the twelfth and thirteenth century (figure 2).²² From various historic sources, we learn that throughout the Ayyubid period, the empire was divided into kingdoms each ruled by an emir or named regional sultan.²³ The ruler of each kingdom was responsible for the collection of taxes, the administrative work, and commanding a military.²⁴

3.1 Ayyubid Aleppo

The Ayyubid period in Aleppo started with the conquest of Saladin in 1180 and ended with the Mongol invasion of Aleppo in 1260. The Ayyubids, upon taking over Aleppo, took the citadel of the city as the seat of their government in the same manner they did in other Syrian and Egyptian cities that they conquered. The citadel was expanded by the Ayyubids to include several structures.²⁵

The city of Aleppo underwent its most notable refurbishment during the reign of al Zāhir Ghāzī. During his reign, the erected structures focused on four areas: the waterworks, the citadel, the fortification and extramural developments (including the bazaar, and markets east of the great mosque).²⁶ By the latter part of the Ayyubid period,

²² Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.2

²³ R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 1977)

²⁴ In R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 1977). He shows how each area became independent, with each state having its own line of sultans.

²⁵ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.15-16

²⁶ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.19-20

the main edifice in the city was still the Great mosque and the vast market surrounding it, but the citadel and its surrounding formed a secondary focus; one that was somewhat more official and aristocratic in nature.²⁷ South of the citadel was maydan al Qal‘ah , around which were located numerous official institutions (including dar al ‘adl and the madrasa al Sultaniyya or al Zahiriyya al juwaniya). The Farāfra quarter north of the citadel was an aristocratic quarter because of its proximity to the citadel and the abundance of water in its channels and fountains.²⁸ The city of Aleppo was further developed by the creation of madrasas and other pious institutions within it. Other than maydān al qal‘a, several other maydāns were created in Aleppo during this time, almost always located outside an important gate.²⁹

3.1.1 The Political History of Ayyubid Aleppo

When Saladin conquered Aleppo in 1183, he assigned it to his son al Zāhir Ghāzī who at the time was only 11 years old. Al Zāhir Ghāzī presided as sultan over the largest iqta‘ of Syria for only 6 months, after which Saladin transferred it to his own brother al Malik al ‘Adil. This appointment was meant to appease al ‘Adil and maintain stability in Aleppo while Saladin was preoccupied with conquest and the preservation of his empire. After 3 years, in 1186 Saladin asked al‘Adil to govern Egypt and reinstated al Zāhir Ghāzī as the sultan of Aleppo.³⁰

After Saladin’s death, the Ayyubids went through internal turmoil on who would succeed Saladin among his sons, which led to each claiming an area of the empire as their own. Al ‘Adil in 1199 reunited the Ayyubids under his rule, removing all of Saladin’s sons from their positions of power except for al Zāhir Ghāzī in Aleppo, who was married to his

²⁷ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.22

²⁸ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.23

²⁹ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.23

³⁰ Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* p.53-61

daughter Ghāziya Khātūn, who died childless in 1212. Al Zāhir Ghāzī then married her sister Dayfah Khātūn to maintain good relations with his uncle.³¹ He arranged that she was received in Aleppo in 1212 amid great festivities.³² In the following year she gave birth to a male heir, sultan al ‘Azīz Muhammad.

Al Zāhir Ghāzī died in 1216, and with the approval of al ‘Adil upon Dayfah Khātūn’s request, a regency council was formed. The council confirmed that the rule goes to al malik al ‘Aziz Muhammad. After him, should something occur to him, the rule would go to his half-brother al malik al Ṣaliḥ, al Zāhir Ghāzī’s son with a concubine. The council also declared that the administration would be in the hands of the atabeg Shihāb al Dīn Toghril, until al ‘Aziz was of age. At the age of seventeen al ‘Aziz Muhammad took control of the sultanate, keeping Toghril on as an advisor and treasurer. He focused his efforts on the defenses and infrastructure of Aleppo and the citadel. Al ‘Azīz Muhammad died in 1236 leaving his 7-year-old son al Nāṣir Ṣalaḥ al Dīn Yūsuf as successor. Given his young age, and the threat to the succession posed by al ‘Azīz’s half brother, Dayfah Khātūn, alongside a new regency council, was appointed to rule instead of her grandson until he became of age. After her death in 1243, al Nāṣir Ṣalaḥ al Dīn Yūsuf reigned until the end of the Ayyubids at the hands of the Mongols in 1260, becoming the last Ayyubid prince to govern any land.³³

3.1.2 The Social Structure of Ayyubid Aleppo

In the province of Aleppo, the social structure was made up of three classes other than the ruling class: al khāssa, al a’yān, and al‘āmma. Al khāssa was the official class,

³¹ Girgis Ibn Al ‘Amid, *Akhbār Al Ayyubiyyīn* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqafah al-Diniyah, n.d.)p.32, El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.350

³² Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.28 from Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb*

³³ Claude Cahen, "Ayyūbids" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition* Brill, I:796b. El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.350

consisting of eunuchs, slaves, freed slaves, and a smaller number of nativized foreigners from different Islamic lands. This group were employed as viziers, governors, regents, supervisors, and scribes among other professions, given that they owed their position and fortune to their sovereign Ayyubids, and so would be the closest allies to those who reigned.³⁴

Al al'yān were long standing "noble" families (a'yān), who accumulated their wealth from agriculture or trade, and were at the head of the population. In addition to their wealth, they produced most of the 'ulamā'. The members of these families occupied the positions of judges, jurists, professors, administrators of waqf and market supervisors.³⁵ Beneath this class lived al'amma, which included upper end shopkeepers and artisans at its top and lower end peddlers and common workers at its bottom. At the bottom of the social structure were the menials such as street entertainers, beggars, scavengers, and such. In conclusion, within the social structure of the Ayyubids of Aleppo we have: the ruling class, the army (of mixed ethnicity and segregated as seen above from the native urban population), the notables, and the commoners.

In Ayyubid Aleppo, as in most of the medieval Islamic world, expendable wealth and possessions were converted into status through the mechanism of 'awqāf (charitable endowments). Waqf was the only secure way for the upper class to protect their wealth and perpetuate the status to their families. A waqf had to be based on the revenue derived from rightfully and unequivocally owned property known as Mulk, whether agricultural or commercial, and it had to be intended for a public charitable purpose such as the foundation and maintenance of pious institutions (including zawiyas, ribats, khanqahs and madrasas). It is important to note that unlike other cities, in Aleppo under al Zāhir Ghāzī a

³⁴ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.30

³⁵ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.30

new form of waqf was instated, where monies from bayt al māl was turned into 'awqāf to create new institutions, augment endowments of preexisting ones, and rebuild the cities defenses. In other words, the waqf system was transformed into a means of furthering the aims of the ruler and upholding political sovereignty.³⁶

3.2 Architectural Patronage in Ayyubid Aleppo

Under the Ayyubids Aleppo underwent a substantial expansion in terms of architecture. The erected structures varied in function, from fortifications to mosques, madrasas and other religious foundations.³⁷ The architectural patronage of the Ayyubids of Aleppo, according to Tabbaa, is divided into four groups: the patronage of sultans, the patronage of state officials, the patronage of patrician families, and that of women of the court.³⁸

3.2.1 Patronage of Sultans

Al Zāhir Ghāzī (r.1193-1216) stands out as an architectural patron in Ayyubid Aleppo. His name occurs on around twenty-four foundational inscriptions of which more than half refer to his own work.³⁹ His focus was firstly on infrastructure and fortifications and secondly on pious foundations. Some of his most important work is that of the waterworks of Aleppo. He refurbished and added buildings to the citadel, rebuilt the city walls and fortifications, and in addition to that, he built two major madrasas al Sulṭāniya (Al Zāhiriya al Juwāniya) next to the Great Mosque and al Zāhiriya al Barraniya (1213) in the Maqamāt region. He was also a patron of shrines; he restored maqam Ibrahim at the citadel and built part of the maqam Ibrahim in Ṣaliḥin (he added a minaret and portal in

³⁶ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.32-33

³⁷ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.33

³⁸ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.34-40

³⁹ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.34

1213). He also commissioned the building of the shrine of Nabi Yusha‘ at Ma‘arrat al Nu‘man.⁴⁰ After al Ghāzi, Al ‘Aziz Muhammad (r.1230-1236) did not build on the same scale as his father given his short reign of 6 years, but he did work on continuing the work of his father. He worked on the fortifications and rebuilding of the palace at the citadel. He also restored parts of mashhad al Dikka and allowed the shi‘i community to add a new wing to mashhad al Ḥusayn that began construction in 1183 and wasn’t completed until 1260. After the death of al ‘Aziz, his mother became governess of Aleppo, and her patronage is later discussed. Following her reign is Al Nāṣir Yūsuf (r.1243-1260), who was not an avid patron. He mainly restricted his patronage to fortifications and took special interest in the commercial wellbeing of the city. Moreover, Ibn Shaddad states that he built two markets east of the great mosque, but no remains exist. Also under his reign was the restoration of the bimaristan al Nūri of Aleppo.⁴¹

3.2.2 Patronage of State officials and Patrician families

Other than the sultan, high ranking personal, including state officials and noble or patrician families, also had the privilege of commissioning architecture. Two prime examples of the architectural patronage of state officials are Shihāb al Dīn Toghril al Zāhiri and Jamāl al Dawla Iqbāl al Khātūni (the trusted official of Ḍayfah Khātūn). Shihāb al Dīn Toghril the atabeg was one of the most active nonroyal builders in the Ayyubid period as he also continued the main projects started by al Ghāzī (the digging of canals, fortifications and work on the citadel). He also built a tower near Bab al Naṣr and had a residence built for himself in it. He additionally built at least 3 religious institutions, 2 madrasas and a khanqah. Jamāl al Dawla Iqbal al Khātūni was also an architectural patron

⁴⁰ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.34-36

⁴¹ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.34-37

of some note according to Ibn Shaddad. Unfortunately, none of the buildings commissioned by him survived. It remains that he is recorded to have built al madrasa al Jamāliyya , a khanqah in al Qala‘a sector, four masjids in different parts of the city and a jawsaq in the south of the city.⁴²

Yāqut mentions that several old households in Aleppo were known for their wealth, which is passed on from generation to generation.⁴³ It is known that with their wealth they commissioned buildings and this is showcased in the example of the two remnant patrician built madrasas (al Sharafiya on the road connecting the great mosque with the citadel, and al madrasa al Şāhibiyya). This is in addition to numerous other monuments built in attestation of the prosperity and the relative stability of the notables in the Ayyubid period. Some of the most active building families are al Khashshāb, Banu al ‘Ajami, al‘Adim and Shaddād.

3.2.3 Patronage of Women of the court

There are many anecdotes by historians that attest to the wealth of the court women and their independence and proclivity towards charitable acts. They enjoyed a public profile and notable presence in society even if without political power.⁴⁴ It is important to note that the princesses engaging in patronage are those of noble birth not concubines or slaves of a harem. They were either daughters of sultans, wives of sultans or mothers of sultans. Political marriage was not uncommon in this period as it was used to mediate inevitable tension between the members of the Ayyubid household. The women of the court were often remembered in sources through their charity and building.⁴⁵ The

⁴² Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.37-39

⁴³ Yāqut, *Mu‘jam al-Buldiin*, Vol 2, (Beirut: Dār al-Sader, 1956) , p.286.

⁴⁴ El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257*

⁴⁵ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.40

patronage of women in the Ayyubid court is one that is far from rare. Stephen Humphreys counts more than twenty in Damascus alone.⁴⁶

Although not many of these monuments remain, they are cited in primary sources. One of the first architectural commissions by a woman of the court was that of Khanqah al Ṭawūssiya in Damascus by Safwat al Mulūk (1104-1110); it also served as a mausoleum for her son Duqaq and later for her.⁴⁷ It is mostly this type of pious foundations; commonly khanqahs, mausolea, and small madrasas (usually used for funerary purposes), that are a favor among woman patrons of the court. Mostly they are timidly built outside the center of the city. After Safwat al Mulūk, Sitt al Shām the wife of Saladin built al Madrasa al Shāmiyya ca.1185 in Damascus which in turn was used as a family mausoleum, it consisted of a masjid facing a rectangular courtyard and adjoining cross vaulted mausolea with three cenotaphs.⁴⁸ Another funerary structure built by a women of the court in Damascus is known as al madrasa al Mu‘azzamiya at Ṣaliḥiyya, in attribution to al malik al Mu‘azzam ‘Issa. Hertzfeld suggests that it is ‘Issa’s mother who founded this structure, given her and her sons’ tombs as well as that of her brothers’ and relatives’ are found there. Other significant buildings built by women of the court in Damascus are: al madrasa al Ṣaḥibiyya built by Rabi‘ah Khātūn (d.1245) , al Māridāniyya by the wife of al Mu‘azzam and al Murshidiyya built by his daughter Khadīja Khātūn in 1254. It is important to note that these institutions were mainly used as funerary and were located in semi-remote locations. In Ayyubid Aleppo, female patronage consisted of Khanqahs. Recorded by Ibn Shaddād are six khanqahs commissioned by women in Aleppo.⁴⁹ One of

⁴⁶ Humphreys, "Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyubid Damascus," , 49

⁴⁷ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.46

⁴⁸ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.40

⁴⁹ Ibn Shaddād, Izz al Dīn, *Al A‘lāq Al Khatīrah Fī Dhikr Umarā’ Al Shām Wal Jazīra*, Vol. 2 (Damascus: Al ma‘had al Faransī lil dirāsāt al ‘arabiyah, 1956). p.95

them, Khanqah al Farāfra, is still extant and is built by arguably the most important female patron in Aleppo, queen regent Ḍayfah Khātūn.

Among the commissions of Ḍayfah Khātūn, queen regent of Aleppo from 1236 till 1243 are two important buildings that are unlike earlier Ayyubid architecture in their scale and location; Khanqah al Farāfra and Madrasat al Firdaws which is described by contemporary historians as a multipart institute consisting of a masjid, madrasa (classrooms), ribat and mausoleum.⁵⁰

3.3 Ḍayfah Khātūn Queen Regent of Aleppo

Ayyubid women as mentioned priorly had independence and influence, something that is demonstrated by the appearance of two queens in public life during the last two decades of Ayyubid rule; Ḍayfah Khātūn and after her Shagar al Durr . Ḍayfah Khātūn was born in 1185 to al ‘Adil I while he was governor of Aleppo.⁵¹ Not much is known about her early years, as was usual of the chroniclers when it came to women of the harem.⁵² However, it is known that she is one of four daughters of al ‘Adil and that her eldest sister Ghāziyah Khātūn was married in 1186 to al Ḍahir Ghāzi, Lord of Aleppo. After her sister died without giving birth to any male children in 1212, she became betrothed to al Ḍāhir Ghāzi⁵³. It is important to note that political marriage was a useful tool for al ‘Adil, as he also married his other daughter to an Anatolian Seljuq prince.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ibn Shaddād, Izz al Dīn, *Al A‘lāq Al Khatīrah Fī Dhikr Umarā’ Al Shām Wal Jazīra*, Vol. 2 (Damascus: Al ma‘had al Faransī lil dirāsāt al ‘arabiyah, 1956).

⁵¹ Ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.312; Al Ḥanbali, Ahmad b. Ibrahīm, *Shifā’ Al Qulūb Fī Manāqib Bani ‘Ayyub* (Cairo: Maktabat al Thaqafa al Diniya, 1996). p.283. El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* 351

⁵² El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p. 351

⁵³ Ibn Al ‘Amid, *Akhbār Al Ayyubiyyīn* p.32; Al Maqrīzī, *Al Sulūk Li Ma‘rifat Duwal Al Mulūk*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiya, 1997). p.311.

⁵⁴ Al Ḥanbali, Ahmad b. Ibrahīm, *Shifā’ Al Qulūb Fī Manāqib Bani ‘Ayyub* p.283

In 1213, Dayfah Khātūn gave birth to her only son, al ‘Aziz Muhammad.⁵⁵ During her years with al Zāhir, Dayfa didn’t interfere in politics in any way as is understood by her two contemporary historians ibn al ‘Adim and Ibn Wasil.⁵⁶ During al Zāhir’s final illness in 1216, Dayfah for the first time interfered. When Al Zāhir died in October 1216, Dayfah and Toghril in collaboration forbade anyone from visiting or seeing him. They concealed the news from the rest of Aleppo, including the high officials and high commanders inside the citadel.⁵⁷ She also insured the succession of her son by going back to her father who was the Ayyubid sultan and ask him to support her son as the next in line ruler. Al ‘Adil had no objection to his grandson governing under the regency of his atabeg, as ibn al Athir described it.⁵⁸ After securing the succession of her son, she retreated from political affairs and remained in the royal palace despite her son’s young age. The chroniclers since then don’t provide any information on her interference until Ibn Al ‘Adim mentions her with the death of al ‘Aziz in December 1236.⁵⁹

3.3.1 As the Queen Regent

A month before his death, on his sick bed, al ‘Aziz declared to install his 7 year old son al Nāṣir II Ṣalāḥ al Dīn (by a concubine) as his successor.⁶⁰ Ibn al ‘Adim was sent as an ambassador to al ‘Aziz’s half-brother to ask him to swear allegiance to him and his son al Nasir II as future king of Aleppo, but al Ṣāliḥ didn’t accept.⁶¹ When al ‘Aziz died, Dayfah Khātūn enforced her son’s will and installed her grandson al Nāṣir II Ṣalāḥ al Dīn

⁵⁵ Abu al Fida’, *Al Mukhtaṣar Fī ‘akhbār Al Bashār*, Vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1979). p.171

⁵⁶ El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p. 352

⁵⁷ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.241 , El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.352

⁵⁸ Ibn al ‘Athīr, *Al-Kāmil Fī L-Ta’Rīkh*, Vol. 12 (Beirut: Dar Beirut, 1982).p.313

⁵⁹ Ibn Al ‘Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta’Rīkh Ḥalab* p.221 Al Maqrīzī, *Al Sulūk Li Ma’rifat Duwal Al Mulūk* p.294.

⁶⁰ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.113-16, El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.353

⁶¹ Ibn Al ‘Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta’Rīkh Ḥalab* p.221

as the new ruler of Aleppo. She achieved that with the support of four leading figures: the two commanders of al 'Aziz, Emir Shams al din Lu'lu' and Emir Umar ibn Mujallī, in addition to the vizier al Qifti and her advisor Jamāl al Dīn Iqbāl al Khātūnī (a eunuch who she used to relay all her decisions).⁶² Together they formed a governing council headed by Dayfah Khātūn herself as queen regent (الملكة صاحبة). The council would debate the affairs of the sultanate and then when they reached an opinion, send Iqbāl al Khātūnī to Dayfah to get her opinion and ask for her permission to carry out the agreed upon actions.⁶³ She retained these officials as advisors and deputies given their experience and freedom of movement and so even if she was not the ruler whose name was pronounced at khutba or had coins struck in her name, she was the actual ruler and all matters were referred to her. On numerous occasions she carried out actions without even referring to the council, ibn al Wāsil states:

تصرفت تصرف السلاطين ، وكانت مدة عمرها نحو تسع وخمسين سنة. وقامت بتدبير المملكة نحو ست
سنين."

This shows how she was in fact the ruler of Aleppo and its state affairs.⁶⁴

It is important to note that the main factor to her ruling after her son's death was the fact that her father and Toghril were dead, and so she had to defend the interests of her grandson in order to ensure his succession. This is given the threat that his powerful great uncle the sultan in Egypt al Kāmil posed to Aleppo in the ongoing battle for power between him and his brothers in Syria.

⁶² Al Yunīnī, Qutb al Din, *Dhayl Mir'at Al Zamān* (Hyderabad: Maṭba'at Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Uthmānīyah, 1954)., p.461; Baybars Al Ḍuwāda, *Zubdat Al Fikrah Fī Ta'rikh Al Hijra* (Cairo: Dār al 'ayn lil dirasat, 1977).p.71

⁶³ Ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.312, Al Ḍuwāda, *Zubdat Al Fikrah Fī Ta'rikh Al Hijra* p.71; Ibn Al 'Amid, *Akhbār Al Ayyubiyyīn* p.21. El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.353

⁶⁴ Ibn Wāsil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.312

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ARCHITECTURAL PATRONAGE OF DAYFAH KHĀTŪN

Dayfah Khātūn sponsored the construction of two buildings in Aleppo; Madrasat al Firdaws and Khanqa al Farāfra. Ayyubid architecture is known for its austerity, as previously stated, and focused primarily on fortifications, madrasas, and other pious foundations. These buildings are in line with other Ayyubid architecture and are characterized with what Allen refers to as the plain style which is embellished in limited areas that are traditionally decorated (capitals, inscription, vaulting of the qiblah dome). However, these buildings include new features in Ayyubid architecture such as the use of an embellished main entrance that is bent, the introduction of decorative inscription bands, and the use of marble marquetry in the mihrabs of the prayer halls.

4.1 Madrasat Al Firdaws

Madrasat al Firdaws is located outside the city wall, about five hundred meters southwest of Bāb al Maqām, in the area known as Maqāmat.⁶⁵ It stands out among Ayyubid madrasas for several architectural features. It is the largest Ayyubid madrasa in Aleppo and is conceived as a multi-functional institution which includes a family tomb chamber, a madrasa, a masjid and a ribat or khanqah.⁶⁶ Art historians observed and studied several new features in this structure. These features include a bent main entrance, the use of domes to roof each of the bays of the porticoes surrounding the courtyard, the use of long inscription bands on the interior and exterior of the building, and marble interlace in the mihrab. These defining features set it apart from other Ayyubid

⁶⁵ Terry Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture* (Occidental, California: Solipsist Press, 1999).

⁶⁶ The khanqah or ribat is unfortunately not found in the extant parts of the building

architecture. Terry Allen in *Ayyubid Architecture* discusses madrasat al Firdaws, he explores and documents the plan, elevation and construction. Yasser Tabbaa also discussed the madrasa in his article “Geometry and Memory in the Design of the Madrasat al-Firdaws in Aleppo”, and he describes the plan of the building and suggests an applied geometric proportion in its design.⁶⁷ Both Allen and Tabbaa rely on earlier studies by Ernst Herzfeld, Michael Meinecke and Sir Keppel Archibald Cameron Creswell. They also rely on the information provided on the building by the historians contemporary to Ayyubid times. The monument is described by Ibn Shaddād, Ibn al-Shihnah, and Sibṭ b. al’Ajamī. Ibn al’Adim and Ibn al Wāsil who also mentions the building as being commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn. Ibn Shaddad describes the monument as a complex made up of a tomb, masjid, khanqa and madrasa.⁶⁸

4.1.1 The Plan

Madrasat al Firdaws is a large rectangle of 43.5 by 56 meters, with a total area of 2,436 square meters, larger than any other Ayyubid madrasa.⁶⁹ The plan consists of a rectangular courtyard with a portico on three sides and iwan on the fourth, with an octagonal fountain that has polylobed edges and an inscribed eight-pointed star in its center (figure 7).⁷⁰ The “riwaq” is on its eastern, southern, and western sides (figure 8). On the northern side is an elevated iwan, that opens way to another courtyard, which was supposedly a living quarter, forming by that a double iwan hall.⁷¹ Tabbaa suggests that the

⁶⁷ Tabbaa Yasser, “Geometry and Memory in the Design of Madrasat al Firdaus in Aleppo.” Foundation Max Van Berchem, 6-8 November 1987.

⁶⁸ Ibn Shaddād, Izz al Dīn, *Al A’lāq Al Khaṭīrah Fī Dhikr Umarā’ Al Shām Wal Jazīra* p. 108

⁶⁹ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.68-70

⁷⁰ Octagonal tanks also occur in the Madrasah al-Shādhbakhṭīyah, the Madrasah al-Kāmilīyah, the Palace of al-Malik al-Zāhir Ghāzī in the Citadel, and the Khānaqāh of Ḍayfa Khātūn; of these Terry allen attributed the Madrasah al-Kāmilīyah and the Khānaqāh of Ḍayfa Khātūn to this same Firdaws architect. Who might have been the contracted court architect. From Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

⁷¹ The most prominent examples of such double iwān-halls are probably the Palace of Mahmūd of Ghaznī at Lashkāri Bāzār (early eleventh century, southern Afghanistan, a provincial reflection of palaces in Iraq) and, more to the point, the Madrasah al-Mustansirīyah in Baghdad. Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

plan is based on an underlying four iwan plan that was used in many madrasas (figure 9).⁷² The madrasa was located outside the city walls in a vast orange orchard, which permitted its development as an entirely free-standing building, surrounded by garden grounds (figure 10). It is presumed that at the time of construction the whole of the grounds were also surrounded by a wall (figure 11).⁷³ Today it is surrounded by buildings and the gardens and walls are nowhere to be seen. The madrasa features a muqarnas portal in its eastern façade that served as the main entrance. It also had gateways in the northern iwan that served as an entrance from the living quarters, and a gateway on the western façade that opened to the garden grounds. Today only the eastern portal is accessible and the other gateways are blocked (Figure 12).

4.1.2 The Elevation & Features

The severity of the madrasa in its elevation is only lessened by the undulating profile of its eleven hemispherical domes that sit on top of the bays of the porticoes and can be seen from a distance. The severity is also lessened by the muqarnas portal on the eastern façade and the band of inscription that runs around its exterior (Figure 13 and 14). The bent entrance as the main portal is a new feature in Ayyubid madrasas and was typically used in Ayyubid palaces as a secondary entrance. The entrance portal in accordance to Allen, is in line with a typical Ayyubid entrance portal. It is tall and narrow, with a three-tiered muqarnas vault of the Seljuq type, according to Herzfeld's classification (Figure 15).⁷⁴ The muqarnas vault has a scalloped semi-dome on top, and it is framed by radiating voussoirs. The four middle ashlar of the radiating voussoirs extend

⁷² Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.68-70, Which is a type of plan inherited from the Seljuqs.

⁷³ It is also possible that a wall surrounded the grounds of the madrasa , given Ibn shaddad describes gardens surrounding the madrasa with a fencing. Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*.

⁷⁴ Ernst Herzfeld, *Inscriptions Et Monuments D'Alep* (Cairo: Institute Francaise d' Archeologie Orientale, 1955).

beyond the roof line of the structure. It is important to know that contrary to the common practice of Ayyubid architecture, the entrance portal does not bear a foundation inscription on its lintel, but rather the lintel is a plain monolith (Figure 16,17,18). The foundational inscription is part of a long inscriptional frieze that runs across the entire eastern façade, just below the springing of the muqarnas vault. This inscription is the external inscription and one of two main inscriptions in the madrasa, the other being the internal inscription that runs around the internal courtyard's façade.⁷⁵ The external inscription is carved in relief on a recessed band about half a meter high that begins about ten meters north of the portal and it runs horizontally through the portal bay, one course below the muqarnas vault. It then continues down the length of the east exterior wall, overrunning its allotted space and concludes in two smaller lines over one of the windows south of the portal (figure 19).⁷⁶ The inscription begins with the Qur'ânic text surah 43:68–72, which extends through the portal bay.⁷⁷ The second part of the inscription consists of a foundational inscription and includes the name of the founder. It states:

"بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم يا عبادي لا خوف عليكم ولا أنتم تحزنون الذين آمنوا بأياتنا وكانوا مسلمين أدخلوا الجنة أنتم وأزواجكم تحبرون يطاف عليهم بصحاف من ذهب وأكواب فيها ما تشتهييه الأنفس وتلد الأعين وأنتم فيها خالدون وتلك الجنة أورثتموها بما كنتم تعملون هذا ما أمر بإنشائه الستر الرفيع والحجاب المنيع الملكة الرحيمة عصمة الدنيا والدين ضيفة خاتون إبنة السلطان الملك العادل سيف الدين أبي بكر بن أيوب تغمدهم الله برحمته في أيام مولانا السلطان الملك الناصر العالم العادل المجاهد المرابط المؤيد المظفر المنصور صلاح الدنيا والدين يوسف بن الملك العزيز محمد بن

⁷⁵ The two main inscriptions are the exterior inscription, and the interior inscription running around the courtyard walls

⁷⁶ Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

⁷⁷ It states: "O my servants, today no fear is on you, neither do you sorrow, even those who believed in our signs and had surrendered themselves [become Muslims]. Enter [northeast corner of portal bay] Paradise, you and your wives, walking with joy. There shall be passed around them platters of gold, and cups, therein being whatever the souls desire, and the eyes delight in. Therein you shall dwell forever. This is the Paradise (jannah) that you have been given for an inheritance". Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

الملك الظاهر غازي بن يوسف بن أيوب ناصر أمير المؤمنين عز نصره بتولي العبد الفقير عبد المحسن العريزي
الناصرى رحمه الله وذلك في سنة ثلاثة وثلاثين وستمائه."

This translates to: "O My servants, no fear will there be concerning you this day, nor will you grieve, who believed in our verses and were Muslims. Enter paradise, you and your kinds, delighted. Circulated among them will be plates and vessels of gold and therein is whatever the souls desire and [what] delights the eyes, and you will abide therein eternally. That is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do. This is what has ordered its construction the elevated curtain and impregnable veil, the Merciful Queen, 'Iṣmat al-Dunya wa'l Dīn, Ḍayfah Khātūn, daughter of the sultan al-Malik al-'Adil Sayf al-Din abī Bakr son of Ayyub, may God envelop them with His mercy, during the reign of our lord the sultan al-Malik al-Naṣir, the learned, the just, the warrior for the faith, the defender of the outposts, the assisted by God, the victorious, the vanquisher, Salah. Al Dunya wa'l Dīn Yūsuf son of al Malik al 'Azīz a son of al Malik al Zāhir Ghazi son of Yūsuf son of Ayyub, the supporter of the Commander of the Believers, may his victories be glorious, under the supervision of the poor slave 'Abd al Muhsin al 'Azīzī al Nāṣirī, may God have mercy on him, and that was in the year (633/1235-36)."⁷⁸

From the door of the portal extends a tunnel vaulted corridor, which turns left to enter the courtyard at its northeastern corner. The non-axiality of the entrance portal differs from most large Ayyubid madrasas, such as the al Zāhiriya and al Ṣultāniya and is repeated in both Ḍayfah Khātūn's khanqah al Farāfra and al Madrasa al Kāmiliyya. The porticoes surround the courtyard on three sides and consist of eight plain columns and two composite column at the corners, all of them are topped with muqarnas capitals (Figure

⁷⁸ Translation by Tabaa, in Tabaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p. 171-172. The conclusion of the inscription, in two lines, was first reported by Creswell: "a short inscription, hitherto unpublished, on the exterior, over a window on the east side of the building, which looks into the courtyard of a group of houses, built against the southern half of [the eastern] facade". Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

20).⁷⁹ Pointed arches spring from these capitals, four on the long sides and three on the short side creating a tripartite façade on the side of the domed prayer hall in the South (Figure 21). The courtyard leads through three doors on each side into three long chambers, each consisting of three domed bays (Figure 22). Two more domes cover the corner bays flanking the prayer hall, making a total of eleven domes that sit on top of all the portico bays. This use of domes above each bay is unseen in any other Ayyubid madrasa in Aleppo and also expanded the madrasa's visibility.⁸⁰ All the domes are of stone except the one over the mihrab in the prayer hall which springs from a dodecagonal base resting on bipartite triangular pendentives (figure 23). Facing the prayer hall across the courtyard is a large iwan raised on two steps and covered with a cloister vault (Figure 24). Its walls, like most others in this madrasa, each contain three regularly spaced niches.⁸¹

4.1.2.1 Interior inscriptions

Above the niches of the iwan is a long cursive inscription that begins a little to the right of the iwan and runs on the three sides of the courtyard, ending above the prayer hall referred to priorly as the masjid (figure 24). The courtyard inscription actually consists of two distinct parts: a historical inscription that runs along the eastern wall and a religious inscription that traverses the three other wall.⁸²

Another band of inscription, in much smaller characters, surrounds the tympanum above the mihrab rendered in black stone inlaid into white marble. It states Quranic text surah 38: 17-22 :

⁷⁹ No one of the muqarnas capitals is identical, Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*.

⁸⁰ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.68-70

⁸¹ Most Probably used for Book Storage. Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo*.68-79

⁸² Full Arabic text with translation found in Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.173-174.

"اصبر على ما يقولون وأذكر عبدنا داود ذا الأيد أنه أواب. إنا سخرنا الجبال معه يسبحن بالعشى والإشراق. والطيور محشورة كل له أواب. وشددنا ملكه وءاتينه الحكمة وفصل الخطاب. وهل أتتكم نبوء الخصم إذا تسوروا المحراب. إذ دخلوا على داود ففرع منهم قالوا لا تخف خصمان بغى بعضنا على بعض فأحكم بيننا بالحق ولا تشطط وأهدانا إلى سواء الصراط."

Which translates to: "Be patient over what they say and remember Our servant, David, the possessor of strength; indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back. Indeed, we subjected the mountains with him, exalting in the afternoon and sunrise. And the birds were assembled, all with him repeating. We strengthened his kingdom and gave him wisdom and discernment in speech and has there come to you the news of the adversaries, when they climbed over the wall of his prayer chamber. When they entered upon David and he was alarmed by them They said, "Fear not. [We are] two adversaries, one of whom has wronged the other, so judge between us with truth and do not exceed [it] and guide us to the sound path."

In sheer length, these inscriptions stand out in Ayyubid architecture, whose inscriptions rarely exceed a purely functional plaque above the entrance.⁸³ They are, furthermore, written in a legible and very elegant script. The inscriptions are clearly legible and elegant. The fact that they are placed at a convenient height vis-a-vis the visitor enhances their legibility. The inscriptions consist of mystic verse praising the practice of prayer throughout the night as a means of reaching the presence of Allah.⁸⁴

4.1.2.2 The Prayer hall

The prayer hall consists of three dome covered bays. The central dome springs from a complex muqarnas zone of four tiers, with squinches of three tiers in each corner (Figure 25) and a fourth tier that forms a ring of muqarnas cells encircling the

⁸³ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.68-70

⁸⁴ Described by Sibte al ajami , Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*.

dodecagonal transition zone which is pierced by twelve small windows (figure 26).⁸⁵ The mihrab is in the central bay, it is made of veined white marble, red porphyry, and green diorite interlaced in a geometric pattern on top (Figure 27). The niche of the mihrab is supported by granite columns with muqarnas capitals echoing the exterior of the prayer hall. Moreover, a rabbeted, continuous molding frames the columns and cuts across the cavity of the mihrab, dividing it into two distinct parts the upper and the lower part. In the lower part arched panels of colored and white marble alternate. The second part is that of the hood of the niche that has voussoirs that intertwine to form a complex interlace of polychrome masonry something that is not seen until later in mamluk architecture.⁸⁶ On this interlace is superimposed a semicircular tympanum framed by a cursive inscription and filled with a geometric pattern. (Figure 28).⁸⁷

4.1.3 In Conclusion

Looking at Madrasat al Fridaws, it becomes apparent that it was made to be a statement. Its grandness and portrayal of new architectural features indicate that the commissioner expended a good amount of wealth on the structure. Dayfah Khātūn in the commission of this building made a statement, cementing that she as other rulers before her can commission a structure as large and elegant as this madrasa for her people, proving her status as a ruler.

⁸⁵ Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* p.68-70. Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*. It is important note that this type of transition is not unfamiliar in seljuq architecture,
⁸⁶ Also seen in late Ayyubid and early Mamluk architecture such as the niche of the mihrab of the Tomb of al Saleh Ayyub in Cairo. This type of geometric interlace might have been in seen in stone in seljuq architecture.

⁸⁷ The apex of this interlace is inscribed with the name of the artisan: "The work of hasan ibn 'Anan." As recorded by Herzfeld who read it as the signature of the artisan. In the arch of the lunette also is inscribed Qur'ân 38:17–23,75 which, as Jalabi-Holdijk points out, contains the word mihrâb, and is on that count appropriate for use here. Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

4.2 Khanqa al Farāfra

Another building commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn is the khanqah al Farāfra.⁸⁸

This khanqah is located just north of the Citadel of Aleppo in the middle of the Farafra quarter. It is the largest Ayyubid khanqah found in the city and was built in 1237.

4.2.1 The Plan

The plan consists of a rectangular courtyard with an octagonal fountain at its center. To the south of the courtyard is a three bay prayer hall entered through a tripartite façade. To the north, there is a large iwan hall with embedded niches that served as a library possibly. On the east and west side of the courtyard there are residential cells on two floor, with the eastern side containing some common quarters on the ground floor. The plan is in many ways similar to that of madrasat al Firdaws, in that they both have similar bent entries, that bring the visitor to the northeast corner of the courtyard (figure 29), they both have large iwan halls on the north side, prayer halls to the south with a tripartite façade and an octagonal basin at the center of the courtyard (figure 30). However, in the Khanaqah residential cells fill both the eastern and western sides on two floors and the western residential cells extend more than the eastern residential cells. Moreover, the courtyard's octagonal lobed basin is about the same size as that of the Firdaws and so occupies proportionally much more of the courtyard's area given the difference in scale.⁸⁹

4.2.2 The Elevation & Features

The Khanqah is entered on the north side through a muqarnas portal that opens onto a narrow east-west running street. (Figure 31,32). The portal itself is now well

⁸⁸ Mentioned by Ibn al Adim , that she commissioned the building of a khanqah for Sufis in the taht al kalaa district near Bâb al-Arba`în. Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

⁸⁹ Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

below street level, it is a simple bay topped by a vault composed of two tiers of muqarnas and a semidome. (Figure 33) The portal then leads to the rear of a deep iwan that opens onto the northeast side of the building's central courtyard. On the south side of the courtyard is a tripartite façade that leads onto a rectangular prayer hall three bays wide and one deep (Figure 34).

The prayer hall facade breaks with the interior elevation of the east and west sides, it consists of a large central doorway topped by a pointed arch and two side doorways, topped by arched windows. Wooden beams run beneath the lintels of the side doorways, and across the central doorway below the springing of the arch.⁹⁰ The central bay of the prayer hall containing is domed, while the lateral bays are barrel vaulted (Figure 35). The central dome is constructed of brick and sits on a stone collar that rests on an octagonal zone of transition. The octagonal drum has a window in each face and rests on two tiers of muqarnas pendentives. The mihrab found in the central bay is not as lavish as the one seen in madrasat al Firdaws, but shares some features with it. It has a complex and deeply molded frame that turns inward at the top and bottom of the niche, framing colonnettes with matching bases and capitals, a semidome at the top with alternating-colored panels, and panel at the base featuring geometric marble interlace.

The east and west internal facades are plain with linteled windows and doors, they contain the sleeping cells on two levels that open onto the central space via doorways on the ground floor and through windows on the upper stories. The exterior of the building given its surrounding is plain except for the muqarnas portal. It is adjacent to other structures on the south and east, and partially on the west and only the northern façade is outlooking the street.

⁹⁰ Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

4.2.3 In Conclusion

Khanqah al Farāfra is larger and grander than other khanqahs in Aleppo. This building also shares many features with madrasat al Firdaws but is less grand than madrasat al Firdaws, and so are its portal and inscription and this might be due to the difference in function and scale.⁹¹ The inscription on the portal of the khanqah echoes those of the Firdaws in the qur'anic citation, not only in the religious sense but it also continues the theme of gardens introduced in madrasat al Firdaws (figure 36).⁹² Moreover, The portal of the khanqah although less lavish than that of the madrasa, echoes that of madrasat al Firdaws. In addition to that, the mihrab of the khanqah is also similar to that of al Firdaws, but is less lavish and utilizes dichromatic marble marquetry (figure 42). Terry Allen attributes both this khanqah and the madrasat al Firdaws, in addition to al madrasa Kāmiliyya to the work of the same architect.

This structure commissioned by Ḍayfah Khātūn, like madrasat al Firdaws makes a statement of power in both its scale and location next to the citadel.

4.4 The Significance of the Architecture Commissioned by Ḍayfa Khātūn

The significance of the architecture commissioned by Ḍayfa Khātūn lies in both the introduction of some new architectural features and in the social and political indication presented by the buildings' location and scale. Unlike other female patrons of her time, Ḍayfa Khātūn commissioned the building of a multipart institution, including a madrasa, a ribat, and a tomb in the same manner rulers before her did. The use of embellished bent entrances, grand muqarnas portals, grand mihrabs, and possibly gilded inscriptions distinguish the buildings commissioned by Ḍayfa Khātūn.

⁹¹ Herzfeld concluded that it was a state, not personal foundation of Ḍayfa Khātūn, and that for that reason it was credited in its inscription to the ruler, her grandson. Herzfeld, *Inscriptions Et Monuments D'Alep*

⁹² Allen, *Ayyubid Architecture*

CHAPTER FIVE

ḌAYFAH KHĀTŪN'S POWER & STATURE

5.1 The Political Stature of Queen Regent Ḍayfah Khātūn

Ibn al 'Adim refers to the stature which Ḍayfah Khātūn held in the eyes of the Ayyubids. He states "I travelled to Cairo from Aleppo as an ambassador to the king of Egypt to request his permission to allow his aunts to travel to see their sister al malikah (the queen) Ḍayfah in Aleppo. King al Ṣāliḥ Ayyub received me and asked me to pass this message to Ḍayfah: 'You kiss the ground before the queen, and tell her that al Ṣāliḥ is her mamluk, and her status is like that of my late father, king al Kāmil. I offer myself fully to her service and will follow her orders in any matter'"⁹³. This quote shows the attitude a powerful male figure in the Ayyubid era had towards her and in which regards he held her.

Ḍayfah Khātūn at the time of her reign held several titles : in addition to the traditional title given to most Kurdish and Turkic princesses "Khātūn", she was described by her contemporaries as "al Malikah al Ṣahiba" (queen regent).⁹⁴ Also she was described by ibn al Wāṣil as "al Ṣahibah" (possessor of).⁹⁵ Even in foreign correspondents , the lord of Ḥama , and al Ṣāliḥ Ayyub both referred to her as "al Sitr al 'ali" (meaning her high eminence or highness).⁹⁶ All these titles clearly reflect the political status of Ḍayfah in Aleppo. Even though queen Ḍayfah did not have her name on coins, and there was no evidence that she gave the khutba in her name, it was in her hand whose name the khutba

⁹³ Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.247 Translated by El Azhari El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.353

⁹⁴ Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.235-47; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.268 Ibn Bibi, *Ta'rikh Salajiqat Al-Rum* (Cairo: , 1994).p.150; Ibn Shaddād, *Izz al Dīn, Al A'lāq Al Khatīrah Fī Dhikr Umarā' Al Shām Wal Jazīra* p.95

⁹⁵ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.121.

⁹⁶ Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.233-4 Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.253

should be given to and whose name was minted on coins, meaning she had the acting power. At first as recorded, she gave permission to declare the khutba in the name of her brother al Kāmil of Egypt along with that of the Abbasid caliph of course but that was only until the internal crisis of 1237, when she canceled that and refused al 'Adil II's request to place his name on the coins.⁹⁷ Instead, she opted to use her grandsons name in the two matters of coinage and the khutba to legitimize him as the successor.⁹⁸ In the following year, after consultations with the council she accepted to declare the khutba in the name of her powerful ally the Rum Seljuq sultan Kay Khusraw II (d.1246) in exchange for his allegiance, support and aid. She also placed his name on the dinar next to that of her grandson's al Nāṣir II.

5.2 The Political Acts and Relationships as Queen Regent.

As a ruler Ḍayfa Khātūn was responsible for the maintenance of relationships both internal with other Ayyubid princes and external with neighboring powers. After Ḍayfah installed al Nāṣir Yūsuf as successor to his father in 1236, and set the regency council with her as acting queen regent she sent ambassadors to her brother the sultan of Egypt and nominal chief to the Ayyubid realm to attain formal recognition of this succession and ensure that her grandson held the title of king of Aleppo. Her brother, Al Kāmil, wanted to install al Ṣāliḥ lord of 'Ain tāb (the half-brother of al 'Aziz) as king of Aleppo and not her grandson. So, he did not show the regular diplomatic respect and hospitality that was expected for the envoy sent by the queen. After this, the two messengers returned to Aleppo and informed the queen of what had occurred and so after that she consulted with her council and declared her refusal of al Kāmil's authority and removed his name from

⁹⁷ Al Maqrīzī, *Al Sulūk Li Ma'rifat Duwal Al Mulūk* p.272; Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.239; Eddé Anne-Marie., *La Principauté Ayyoubide D'Alep : (579/1183-658/1260)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999),p.481-2

⁹⁸ El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.355

the Friday Prayer.⁹⁹ In the later weeks, al Kāmil attempted to increase pressure on Ḍayfah Khātūn by sending the robes of honor to his candidate, to which she responded by dispatching a force to intercept the robes, ensuring that only her grandson would be considered a successor.¹⁰⁰

As a result, of this hostility between them, Ḍayfah Khātūn joined a political military pact with her brother al 'Ashraf Mūsa lord of Damascus and al Jazira. He arrived in Aleppo in May 1237 and swore allegiance to Ḍayfah Khātūn, joining her alliance against al Kamil. Also on their side was prince Shirkuh lord of Ḥimṣ and al Muzaffar lord of Ḥama. From Ayyubid Syria only al Nāṣir Dawūd lord of Karak refused to join them and allied with al Kāmil.¹⁰¹ For a woman in the field of political affairs in the thirteenth century initiating a military political alliance of leading Ayyubid princes was definitely a rare feat and an attestation to her power given she was recognized as a leading partner among them.

During this time Ḍayfah Khātūn also sent ibn al 'Adīm as an envoy from Aleppo to the Rūm Seljuq sultan Kay Khusraw II who welcomed the invitation and joined the alliance.¹⁰² Her relationship with the Rūm Seljuqs was one that was very tightly knit, she arranged two political marriages between them and even supported them against one of her brothers claim.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.120. Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.260. Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* p.236

¹⁰⁰ Al Maqrīzī, *Al Sulūk Li Ma'rīfat Duwal Al Mulūk* p.294; Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.226. El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.357

¹⁰¹ Abu al Fida', *Al Mukhtaṣar Fī 'akhbār Al Bashār* p.158-9. Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab*, p.227. Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt Al-Zamān Fi Tawārikh Al-A'yān*, Vol. 8 (Damascus: Dār al risālah al 'ālamīyah, 2013). p.700. Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* p.231

Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.124. Al Maqrīzī, *Al Sulūk Li Ma'rīfat Duwal Al Mulūk* p.294; H. A. R. Gibb, "The Ayyubids," in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. M. Setton Kenneth (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), 693-714.p.702.

¹⁰³ Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.227; Cahen Claude., *Pre-Ottoman Turkey : A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History, C. 1071-1330* (New York: Taplinger Pub. Co., 1968). p.132' Taef Kamal El-Azhari, "Ḍayfa Khātūn," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE* Brill, 000., El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.358

The pact only held for a few months before al Ashraf died and cracks began to appear.¹⁰⁴ Ḍayfah Khātūn fought to keep alliance together, and sent ibn al Adim as an ambassador to Shirkuh in Ḥimṣ to meet with him and al Muzaffar of Hama to reach a reconciliation but her efforts only lasted for a few month, after which Shirkuh refused to hand over his dominions and al Muzaffar said to ibn al adim: “ If al malik al Kāmil is going to attack Ḥimṣ, I will join him , but for Aleppo I sacrifice my soul and wealth to avoid any harm being done to one of the Aleppan villages. I will not go back on my oath which I gave to al Satr al ‘Ali and al malik al Nāṣir.” Ibn al ‘Adim sent this to the queen who ordered him to end his mission and return to Aleppo.¹⁰⁵ The queen then sent a contingent to help Ismail in Damascus, together with a large force from Homs. It’s important to note that it was rare to see a woman ordering troops to go on military campaign alone, but to order them in the heart of winter and them accepting is exceptional , and was only seen with very capable commanders such as Nūr al Dīn Zengi and her brother al Kāmil. This stands to show the respect and command she had over her region.

Here Aleppo was fighting for its political survival since al Kāmil who besieged Damascus sent his son al Ṣāliḥ Ayyub to invade and seize the dominions of Ismail in the Jazira and by that hit Ḍayfah’s ally and closed in on Aleppo from the south and northeast.

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In the beginning of 1238 al Kamil seized Damascus, and was making plans to continue in invasion on Ayyubid syria ,he treated the Aleppan troops taken captive in

¹⁰⁴ Al Muzaffar wanted to take the town of salamiye and shamaymash castle to add to his district of Hama , Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.148

¹⁰⁵ Ibn Al ‘Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta’Rīkh Ḥalab* p.233-5; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb*p.148-9 El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.358-359

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.153 El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.359

Damascus, well and sent them back to his sister unharmed as a sign of good faith.¹⁰⁷ As soon as the Aleppan contingent arrived back from Damascus, Ḍayfah Khātūn with her council started her military preparations against al Kamil. First, she secured the loyalty of the Ayyubid emirs and commanders to her and her grandson, calling on prince Turān Shāh, the son of Saladin, who was the chief commander in Aleppo in addition to all his brothers and relatives to pledge their allegiance to her at the palace.¹⁰⁸ Second, she summoned all the ranked emirs in the army and made them give an oath of allegiance to her as queen regent and to al Nāṣir II at the madrasa which she commissioned. Third she summoned to the citadel the nobles of the city together with the ra'is of the locals and made them swear allegiance to her and al Nāṣir in the same way.¹⁰⁹ This act was a rare case of an Ayyubid woman taking oath to herself as queen from different social classes without objection, in public in the royal palace and in the building she commissioned. In addition to all of this, she also sent a message to the Rūm Seljuq sultan Kay Khusraw II, urging him to send military aid, to which he responded by dispatching a force of his finest elite troops to Aleppo. He also sent a message to al Kāmil in Damascus warning him not to attack Aleppo.¹¹⁰

All these military measures demonstrate how Ḍayfah Khātūn was a woman in power capable of acting equal to men in a political military crisis. She controlled the army, mobilized foreign troops and supervised military efforts. She was the only Ayyubid in Syria who was able to resist the authority of al Kāmil.

¹⁰⁷ Unlike the hims captive troops. Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb*.151-2; Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* p.237;

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Taghrī birdī, *Al-Manhal Al-Ṣāfī Wa-Al-Mustawfā Ba'da Al-Wāfī*, Vol. 4 (Cairo: Al hay'a al Maṣriya al'āmah lil kitāb, 1986). p.182 Al Ḍuwāda, *Zubdat Al Fikrah Fī Ta'rikh Al Hijra* p.66; Al Yunīnī, Qutb al Dīn, *Dhayl Mir'at Al Zamān* p.429

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.235; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.186

¹¹⁰ Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab*p.229-30; Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.181.

After al Kāmil's death, Ḍayfa Khātūn decided to retaliate on Hama. She appointed Turān Shāh as the commander of an army that would move to invade the dominions of Ḥama.¹¹¹ After this occurred al Muzaffar sent a message to the queen asking for her forgiveness, but she refused to meet his envoy.¹¹² Turān Shāh besieged Ḥama for nearly six months, which meant it was an economic war, and that long of a siege was impressive in medieval standards for the difficulty of maintaining control over the troops, but Ḍayfaha Khātūn's orders were carried out.¹¹³ During the siege al Ṣāliḥ Ayyub sent an ambassador to his aunt to mediate and secure a pardon for al Muzaffa, but the queen refused his request.¹¹⁴ Dayfah's leadership is remarkable here, as she gave precise targets to her army commander and decided on the timing of withdrawal and the control on the troops who didn't take over Ḥama after a long siege.¹¹⁵ She was the one deciding which envoys would be received and which refused and that is clear from the chronicles.

After al Kamil's death his sons fighting for the throne wrote to Ḍayfa Khātūn to get her support, but she decided to remain the neutral party and not interfere in their affairs saying: "I will not interfere between you and your brother, both of you are my brother's sons."¹¹⁶ The fact that three Ayyubid princes were seeking help from Ḍayfa Khātūn, a woman, shows that they had no problem considering her the authority figure and dealing politically with her for political gain. This stands as a reflection to how eminent and legitimate Dayfah as a ruler had become.

¹¹¹ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.181; Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.237-8., El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.362

¹¹² Abu al Fida', *Al Mukhtaṣar Fī 'akhbār Al Bashār* p.163; Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab*. p.237-8

¹¹³ El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.362

¹¹⁴ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.179-82

¹¹⁵ El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.362

¹¹⁶ Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab*, Translated in El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.363

She remained amicable with her nephews and chose to remain neutral to protect the best interests of her dominion. She also maintained respect for them and had a great relationship with al Ṣāliḥ for when, the Seljuq sultan had taken the city of Edessa and the town of Sarruj in eastern Anatolia from him in mid-1237, and sent a sultanate messenger to Dayfah with a diploma allocating these dominions as an iqta' to Aleppo. Dayfah met the envoy and accepted the seljuq investiture but didn't put it into practice. So, she did not appoint her own deputies there but rather kept those anointed by al Ṣāliḥ. When al Ṣāliḥ learned of this he sent an envoy to his aunt that stated: "All the cities under my rule are subject to your rule. If you wish to send your deputy to take over these two cities and more, please do. I will execute whatever order you give me". Dayfah wrote to him expressing her gratitude to such loyalty and submission and reassured him that she would not harm his interests.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb*.185-6 Translation from El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661–1257* p.365

CONCLUSION

It can be said that the architectural patronage of Ḍayfah Khātūn was intended to show that she and her branch of the Ayyubid dynasty were every much as legitimate, and important to the most central aspect of cultural life as the Ayyubid sultans in Cairo and Damascus. This is not only evident from the buildings physical evidence in their location, lavishness and grandness, but it is also evident in some of the accounts seen in literary sources. Ibn al 'Adim, tells an account as priorly mentioned on how Ḍayfah Khātūn when struggling to keep her brothers at bay asked all the high-ranking officer for their presence in the Madrasa in which she commissioned, to pledge their allegiance to her administration and the reign of her grandson al Nāṣir Yūssuf, to ensured his succession in rule and to assert her legitimacy as queen regent. Moreover, Ibn al Wāṣil tells of the account of how after the establishment of the madrasa, just as prior sultans did, she asked that the Friday prayer be held in the madrasa, which she ensured was large enough to host a large number of people; another sign of her establishing her legitimacy as ruler.

It becomes evident that although coins weren't struck in her name, and the Friday prayer was not made in her name, Ḍayfa Khātūn was the affective ruler in the sultanate of Aleppo. In addition to her impact on political life she was a patron of architecture, and commissioned buildings that projected the stature she held. Dayfa Khatun was a landmark in medieval Islamic history, described by her contemporaries in words that reflect this; Ibn al wasil states that "she behaved like sultans do, al Nāṣir II became a ruler only after her death' and Ibn al Adim also wrote that "she was resolute in her kingdom" and "Aleppo was in the hands of khatun the queen".¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij Al-Kurūb Fī Akhbār Banī Ayyūb* p.313; Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.237

She was distinguished among other Ayyubid women of her age.¹¹⁹ It can even be said that her rule influenced similar experiences in the later Ayyubid period such as in Ayyubid Hama in 1244 (on a smaller scale) and possibly even the rule of Shagar al Durr who only eight years later dominated the political affairs of Egypt. She let any sultan used building, to ensure the obedience of her people, appeasing all social classes to ensure the succession of her grandson, and to express the legitimacy of her bloodline.

The Architectural patronage of Dayfa Khātūn showed us how architecture plays a role in expressing and cementing the stature of the ruler. Moving forward in this line of research would be studying the impact and relationship of this architecture to Seljuq architecture. In addition, it would be interesting to see its impact on later architectural patronage of the late Ayyubid and early Mamluk period. In specific, its impact on the architectural patronage of women in power, such as that of Shagar al Dur and Fatima Khatun both of whom had interactions with or knowledge of Dayfah Khātūn and her rule prior to her death.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'Āt Al-Zamān Fi Tawārīkh Al-A'yān* p.756; Al Ḥanbali, Ahmad b. Ibrahīm, *Shifā' Al Qulūb Fī Manāqib Bani 'Ayyub* p.237

¹²⁰ Dayfa died on November 1242 at the age of 59, Abu al Fida', *Al Mukhtaṣar Fī 'akhbār Al Bashār* p.171; Ibn Al 'Amid, *Akhhār Al Ayyubiyyīn* p.32 ; Ibn Al 'Adīm, *Zubdat Al-Ḥalab Min Ta'Rīkh Ḥalab* p.266

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FIGURES

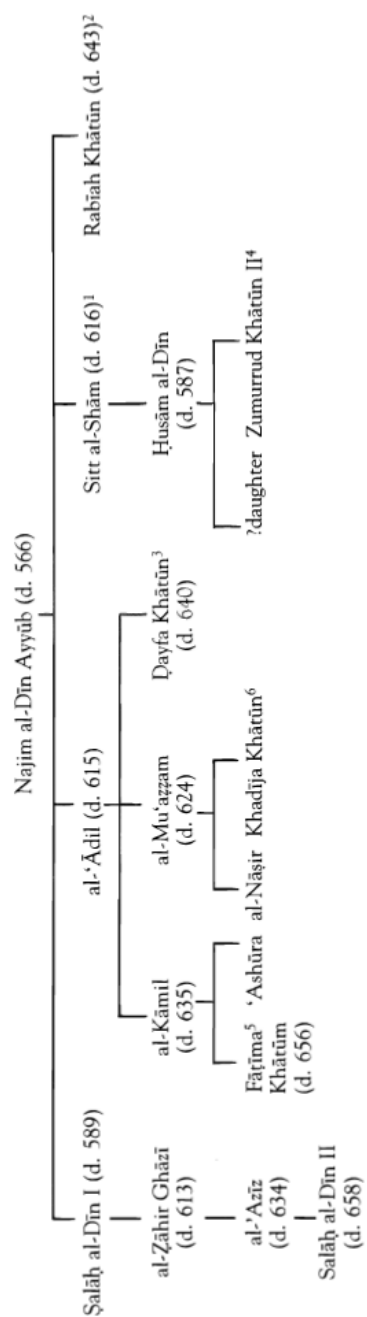


Figure 1. Genealogy of the Ayyubids from, Tabbaa Yasser, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997),p.193

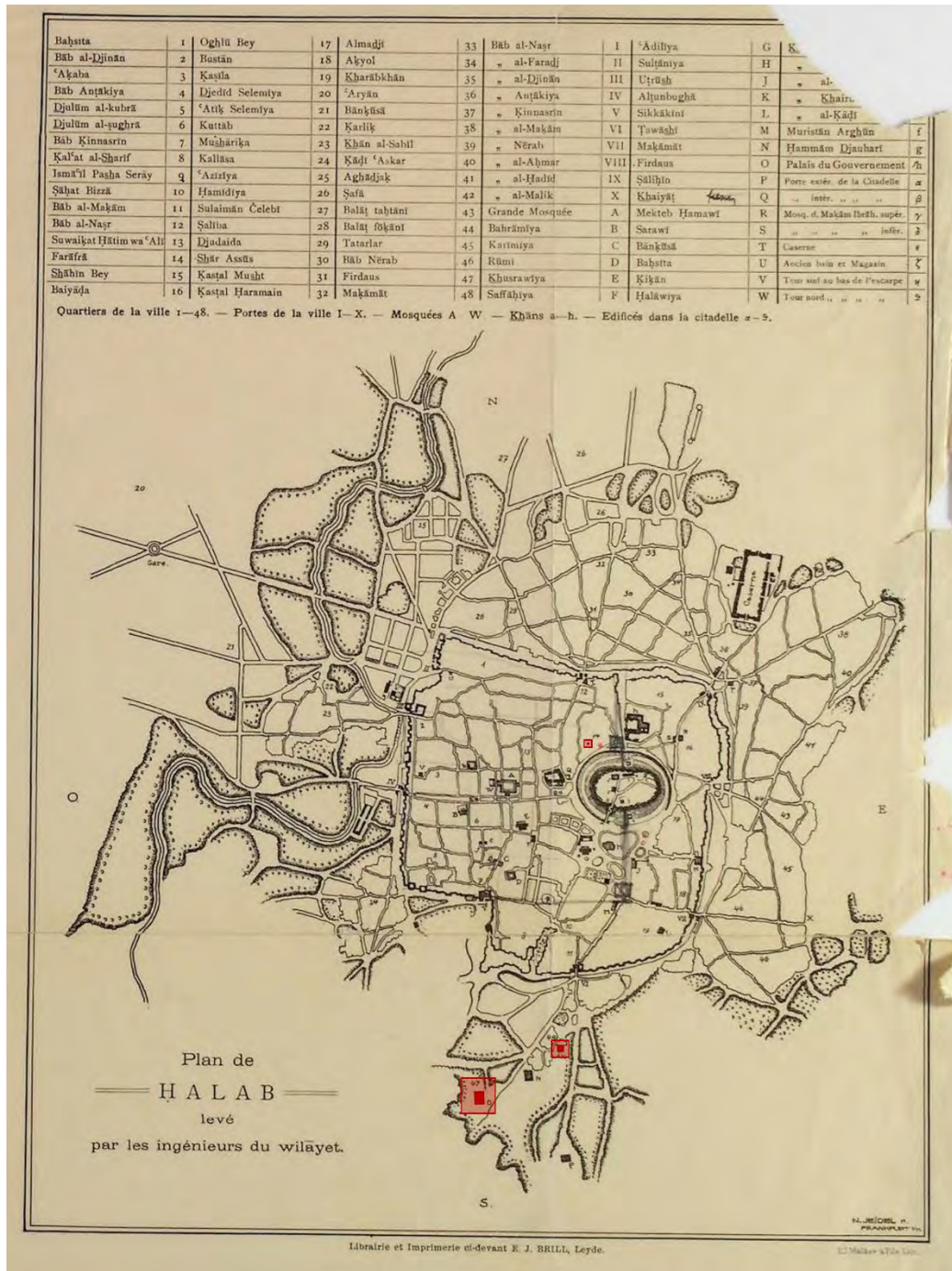


Figure 2. Map of Medieval Ayyubid Aleppo with the architectural patronage of Ḍayfa Khātūn highlighted in red by author. Map image by Herzfeld, Ernst, 1285 Map Aleppo (Syria) ,(42 cm. x 37 cm.), dated 1908-1914 from Ernst Herzfeld Papers. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. Gift of Ernst Herzfeld, 1946.



Figure 3 , Main bent entrance with muqarnas portal of madrasat al Firdaws, in its current state. Image taken by the author.



Figure 4 , Marble interlace mihrab of Khanqah al Farāfra Image taken by the author .



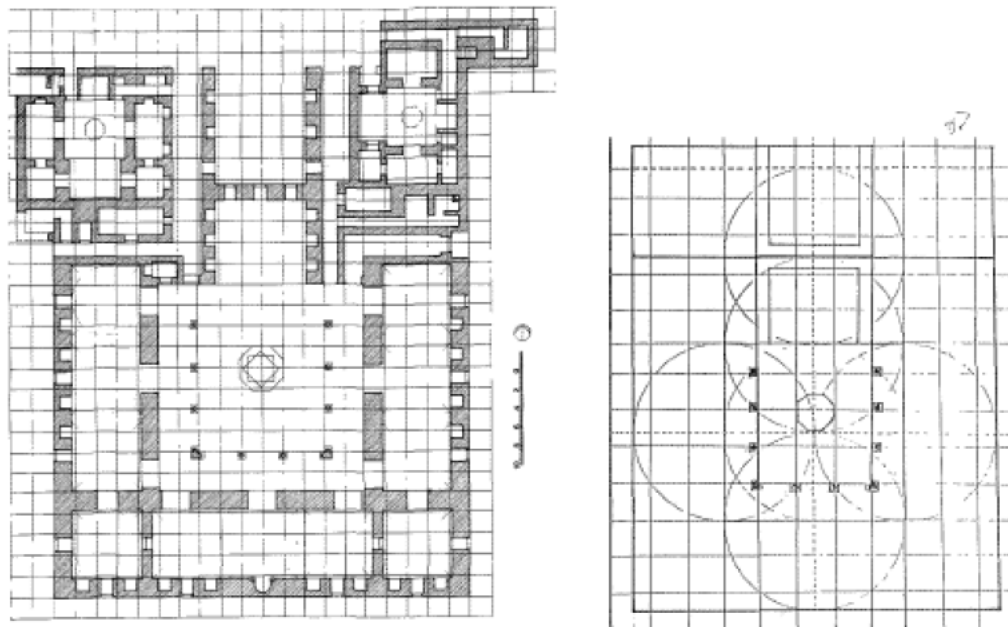
Figure 5, Marble interlace mihrab of madrasat al Firdaws from the Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT



Figure 6. Madrasat al Firdaws as seen from a distant view over the complex from southeast. Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1986, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.



Figure 7. Courtyard, view south toward prayer hall from within north iwan of madrasat al Firdaws. Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.



Figures 8. Plan of madrasat al Firdaus on a grid , with a zoom in showing the basis on the 4 iwan plan suggested by Tabbaa, extracted from Tabbaa, Yasser. "Geometry and Memory in the Design of Madrasat Al Firdaus in Aleppo."Foundation Max Van Berchem, 6-8 November 1987, 1988.



Figure 9. View from the southwest of Madrasat al Firdaws. Creswell Archive, early 20th century Ashmolean Museum, neg. EA.CA.5843. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library



Figure 10. View from the south of the Madrasat al Firdaws showing remnants of the surrounding ground walls, Creswell Archive, early 20th century Ashmolean Museum, neg. EA.CA.5843. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library



Figure 11. Eastern main entrance portal in its current state , image taken by the author



Figure 12, view of madrasat al firdaws from the south west in its current state, image taken by the author .



Figure 13 View from the north east of the Madrasat al Firdaws, Creswell Archive, early 20th century Ashmolean Museum, neg. EA.CA.5843. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library



Figure 14. Eastern entrance portal of madrasat al Firdaws. Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.



Figure 15 & 16. To the left is the muqarnas portal elevation and to the right is the view of view of muqarnas vault. Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.

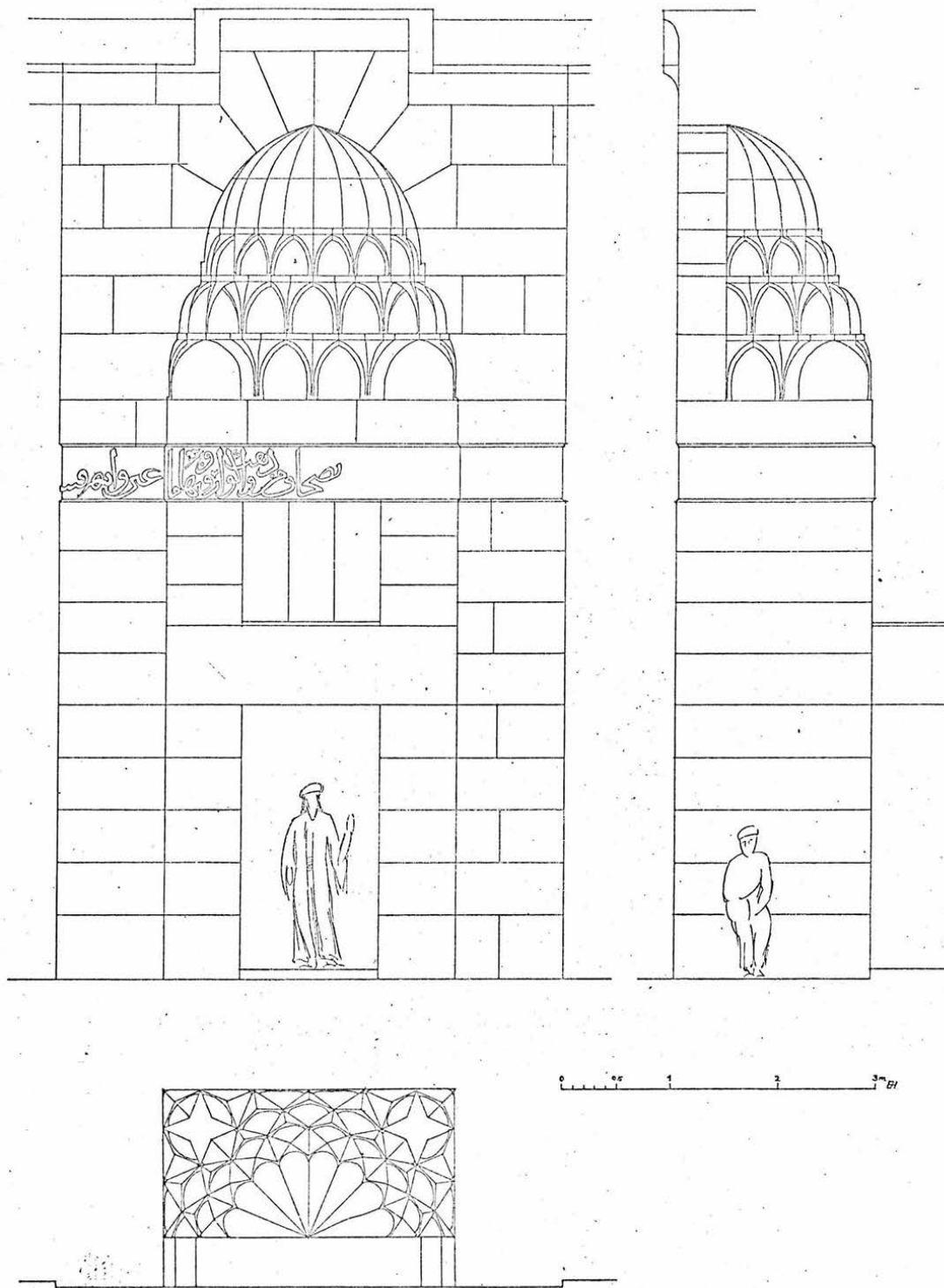


FIG. 343 AL-FIRDŪS , Detail of the Entrance.
 (After Herzfeld)

Figure 17. Illustration From 'Abu N. 'Ādil, Ayyubid Domes of Syria Edinburgh University February 1973, after Hertzfeld's sketches found in the freer gallery of art.



Figure 18. A section of the external inscription band on the eastern façade of madrasat al Firdaws. Picture taken by the author

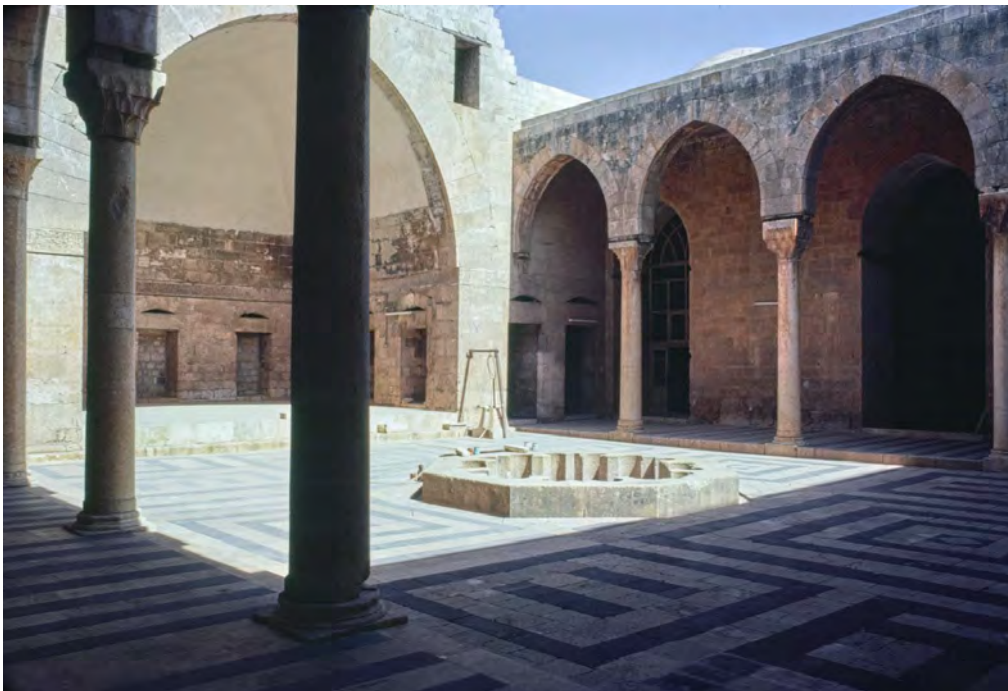


Figure 19. View from the southwestern corner of the courtyard looking north towards the iwan of madrasat al Firdaws. Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT



Figure 20. View from the eastern corner of the northern iwan looking south into the courtyard of madrasat al Firdaws. Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.

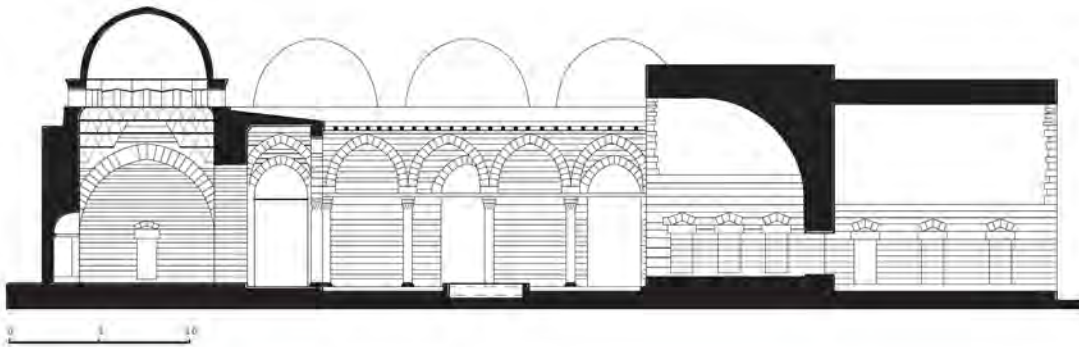


Figure 21. Longitudinal section through the prayer hall and northern iwan showing the courtyard façade. Illustration provided by the Director General of Syrian Antiquities.



Figure 22. view from the northeast corner of the room , showing the difference between the domes on the sides and the dome on the prayer hall. Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.



Figure 23. view of the northern iwan, showing the interior inscription band. Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.

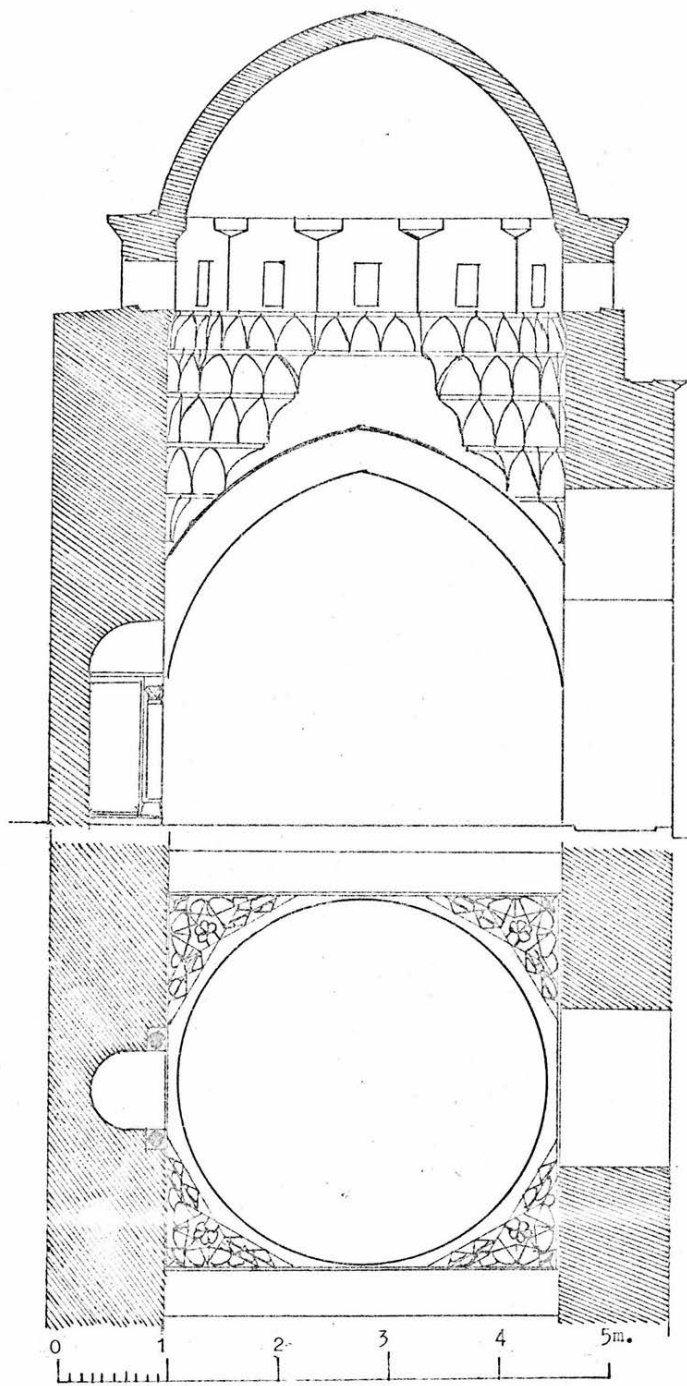


FIG.339, AL-FIRDŪS, Plan & Section;The Central Dome of The Prayer Hall.

Figure 24. Plan and section of the central dome prayer hall , Illustration From 'Abu N. 'Ādil, Ayyubid Domes of Syria Edinburgh University February 1973, after Hertzfeld's sketches found in the freer gallery of art.

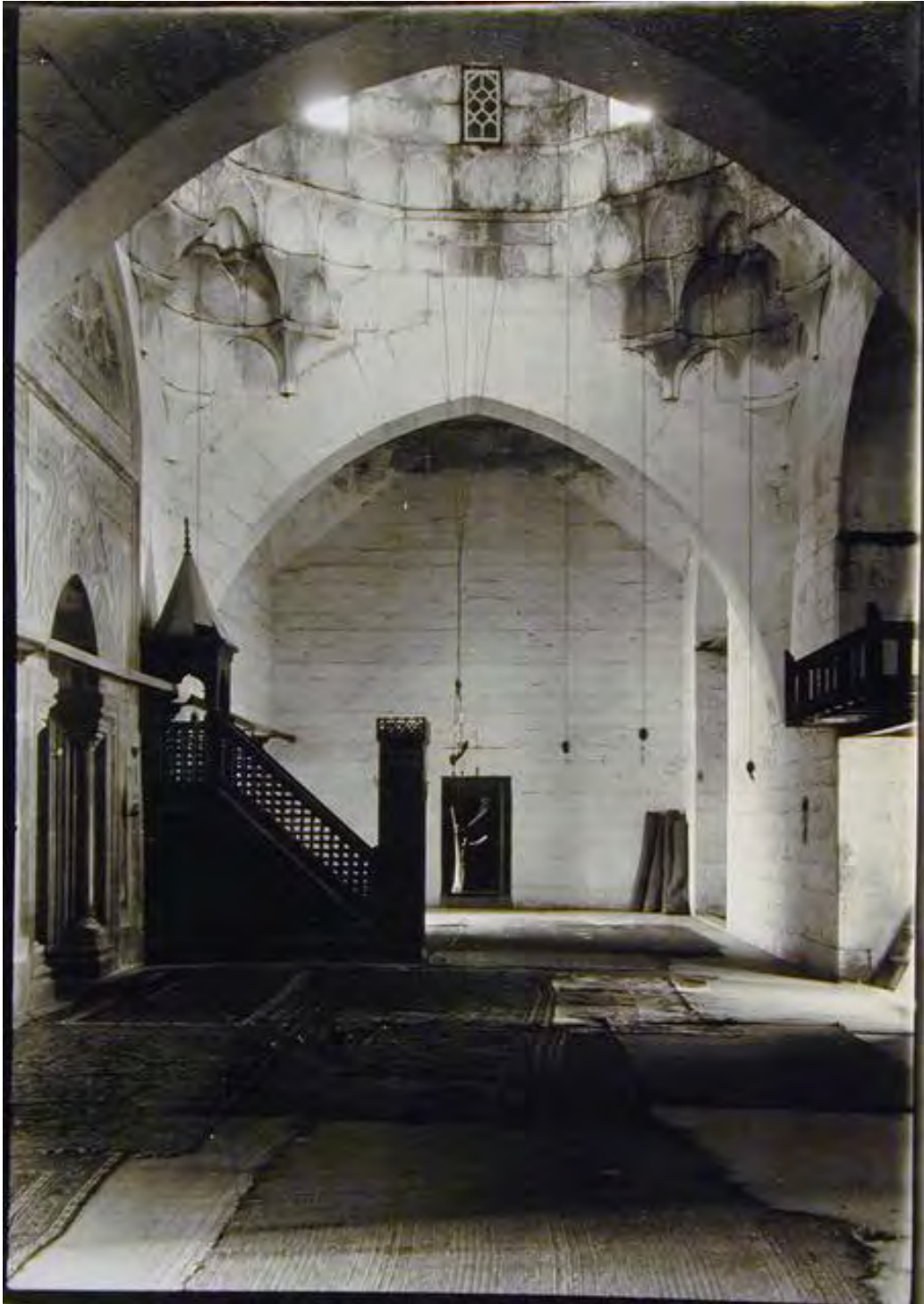


Figure 25. View towards the central dome from the prayer hall of the madrasat al Firdaws.

Creswell Archive, early 20th century Ashmolean Museum, neg. EA.CA.5843. Image

courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library



Figure 26. View of the mihrab in the prayer hall of madrasat al Firdaws. Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.



Figure 27. View of the mihrab upper section in the prayer hall of madrasat al Firdaws.

Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.

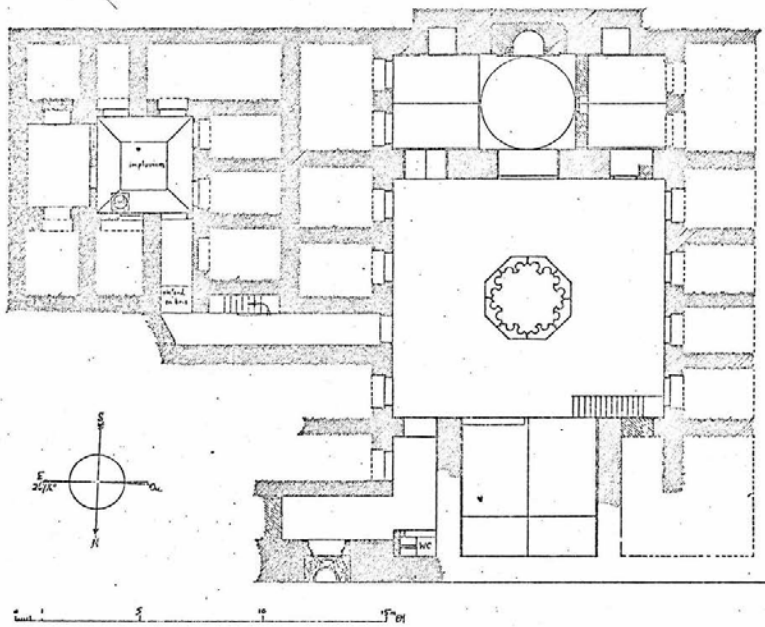


FIG.345, KHĀNQAĪH AL-FARĀFRA, PLAN .
(After Herzfeld)

Figure 28. Plan of Khanqah al Farafra. Illustration From ‘Abu N. ‘Ādil, Ayyubid Domes of Syria Edinburgh University February 1973, after Hertzfeld’s sketches found in the freer gallery of art.



Figure 29. To the left view towards north side of the courtyard, view, Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT.

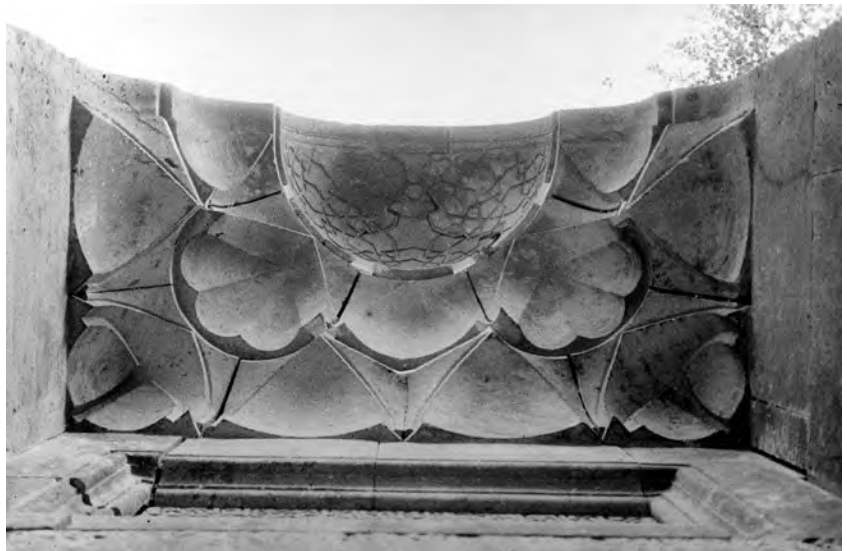


Figure 30 &31. Muqarnas Portal of the Khanqah Farafra . Figure 36 of the frontal view, Yasser Tabbaa Archive, 1990 developed, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT. Figure 37 of the view upward, Michel Écochard, ca.1950s, Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

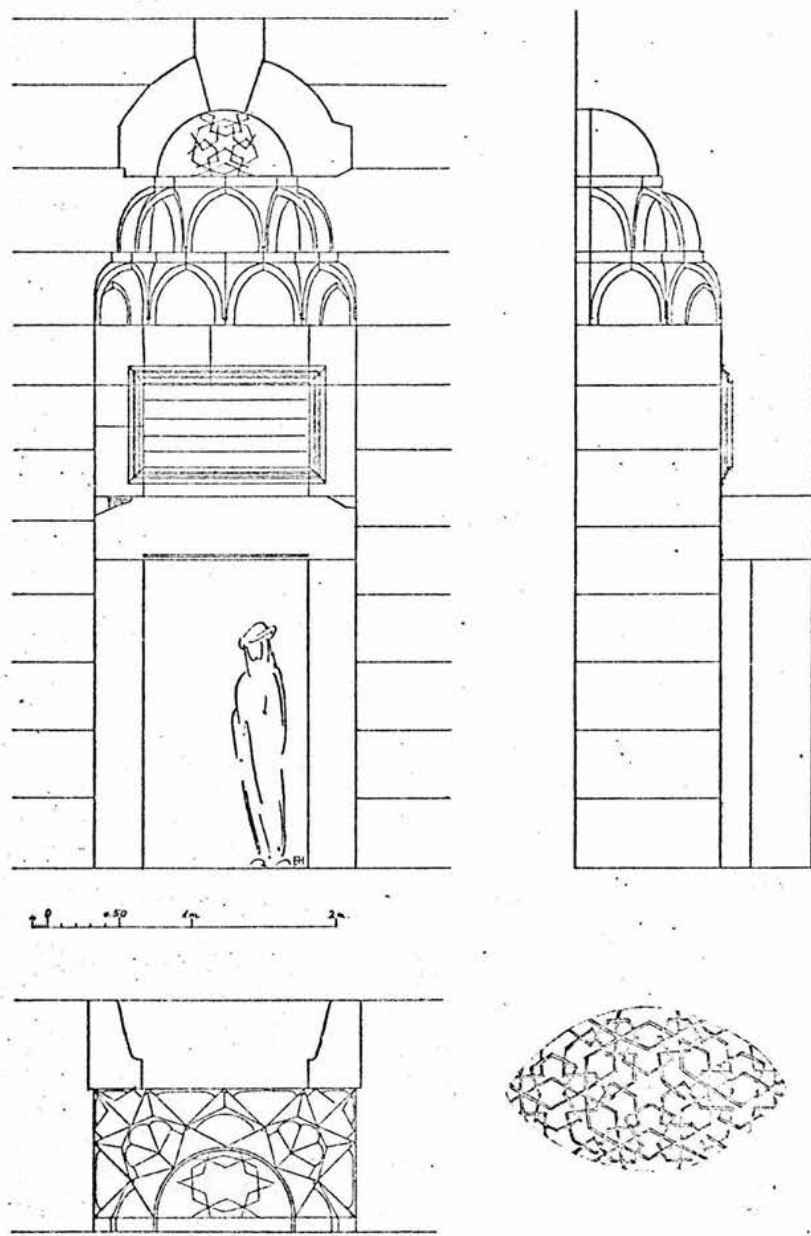


FIG. 347, KHĀNQĀH AL-FARĀFRA, Detail of The Entrance,
 (After Herzfeld.)

Figure 32. Elevation, section, plan and detail of the Portal of Khanqa al farāfra. Illustration From 'Abu N. 'Ādil, Ayyubid Domes of Syria Edinburgh University February 1973, after Hertzfeld's sketches found in the freer gallery of art.

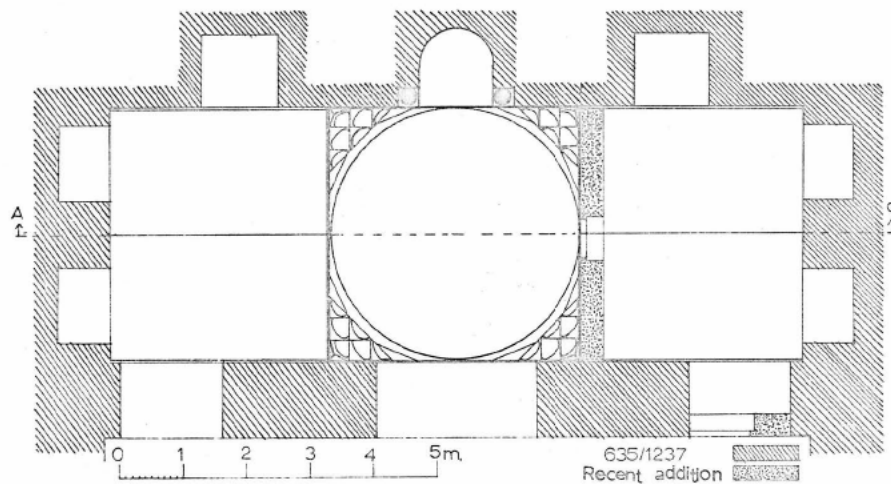


FIG. 346, KHĀNQĀH AL-FARĀFRA, Plan of The Prayer Hall.

Figure 33. Plan of the Prayer Hall of Khanqah al farāfra. Illustration From 'Abu N. 'Ādil, Ayyubid Domes of Syria Edinburgh University February 1973, after Hertzfeld's sketches found in the freer gallery of art.

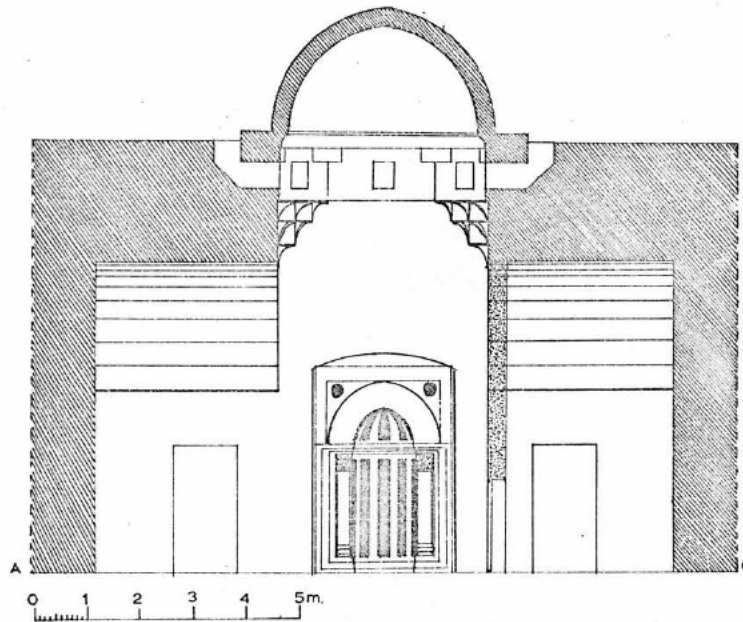


FIG. 349, KHĀNQĀH AL-FARĀFRA, Section Of The Prayer Hall.

Figure 34. Section through the Prayer Hall of Khanqah al farāfra. Illustration From 'Abu N. 'Ādil, Ayyubid Domes of Syria Edinburgh University February 1973, after Hertzfeld's sketches found in the freer gallery of art



Figure 35. Inscription on portal of Khanqah al farāfra. Picture taken by the author



Figure 36. Mihrab of Khanqah al farāfra. Picture taken by the author.