

An Egyptian *qa'a* in 16th Century Damascus

Representative Halls in Late Mamluk and Early Ottoman Residential Architecture in Syria and Lebanon

STEFAN WEBER

Historical houses from the Ottoman (1516-1918) and Mamluk (1260-1516) periods are the real treasure of Syrian cities. Damascus and Aleppo contain hundreds of these very valuable monuments. Some of them are outstanding monuments but their importance becomes even more evident in their setting as an 'urban ensemble' in connection with the old *sugs*, mosques, *hammams*, bakeries, coffee houses, and other elements of architecture.

During the last decade, more attention has been given to this urban heritage by both scholarly circles and the general public. Many houses were changed into restaurants and renovated according to their new functions. Private money has also been invested in fixing old family houses or in providing homes for people who have consciously discovered this heritage. This private initiative is very much needed and welcomed, however the restoration of some of the residences has not always been beneficial for the structure: some houses were literally rebuilt and destroyed in the name of restoration. For numerous years the old living culture has been neglected in the public consciousness and this, together with daily practices and modern education, have all contributed to destroying the traditional knowledge of space, its characteristics and its usage. Saving these treasures from decay, neglect, or from some fancy commercial 'restoration' is one of the very urgent tasks in the heritage conservation of modern Syria. The spirit and characteristics of these houses should be communicated to the public and different models of how to save them must be developed and made known. The restoration of the Bayt al-Aqqad, that houses the Danish Institute, has played a pioneer role as a model for scientific restoration. It was Peder and Inge Mortensen who had the idea, the spirit and the energy to plan and carry out this project.

Being one of the most striking and important houses in Damascus, the Bayt al-Aqqad has various rooms containing masterpieces of Syrian craftsmanship in residential architecture, mainly from the 15th, 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Its importance is not only evidenced by the few Roman theatre remains in the

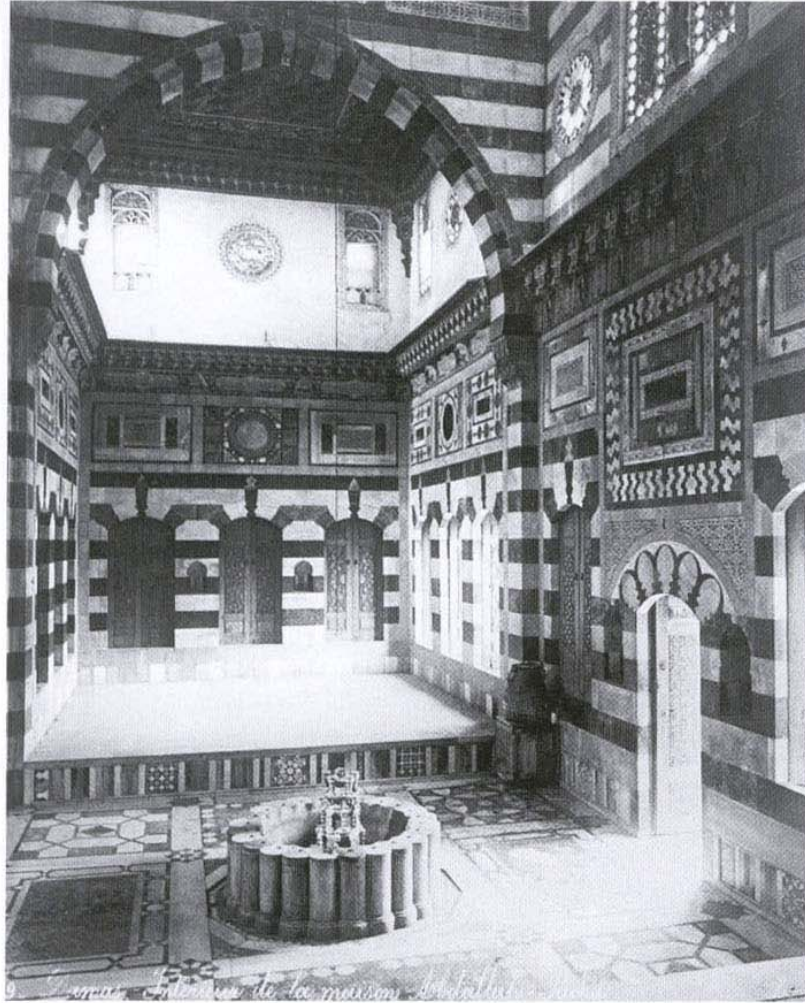
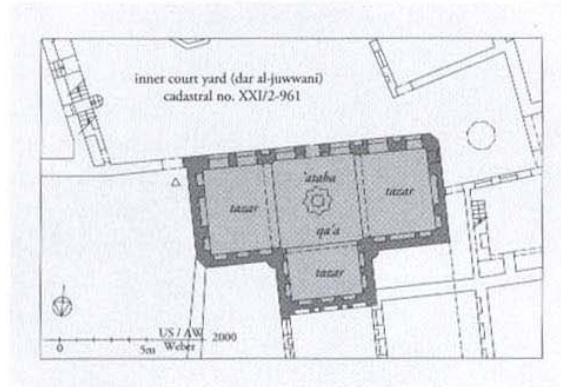


Fig. 1. Damascus, Qasr al-'Azm, dated 1163/1749-50, picture of the qa'a before the fire of 1925.

walls of the house, but also by the fact that the Bayt al-Aqqad, with the *iwān* and the *qa'a*, contains two large building units from the Mamluk period. Only few Mamluk rooms are known in Damascus, among them the most spectacular is preserved in the Bayt al-Aqqad. The *qa'a* of the Bayt al-Aqqad was rebuilt twice in the 18th century but its original Mamluk shape allows us to form hypotheses about how it may have looked in the past. This article should therefore provide some information for further speculation.¹

Fig. 2. Damascus, Bait al-Hawraniyya, built and decorated between 1202/1787-88 and 1218/1803-04, plan of the *qa'a*.



Until the middle of the 19th century living rooms in the Ottoman period had a very formalized layout: When entering a room one came first into a lower part, the so-called '*ataba* (threshold), which often took up one-fifth to one-third of the space and was the entrance area of the room. The second part of the room, called *tazar*, or depending on the regions and times – *diwan* or *majlis*, rises 40-50 cm from ground level like a platform, and is separated by a high rising arch (*iwan*). In the reception rooms (*qa'a*) of the houses of wealthy families, the '*ataba* could lead to two or even three *tazars*. In some cites the '*ataba* is domed or the whole room is covered by cross vaulting. All *qa'as* known in Damascus so far are roofed by beams covered by a thick layer of compressed mud and fibre. The ceiling of the *qa'as* in the Syrian capital (also found in many houses in Aleppo, Hama and Sidon) is normally decorated with painting or even lacquer work on light mouldings called '*ajami*. Normally the ceiling on the *tazar* is panelled, while the ceiling of the '*ataba* is higher and the '*ajami*-painting is directly fixed on the beams.

The shape of the Damascene *qa'a* in the 18th century is well known but we have difficulties in establishing a clear genealogy of the *qa'a*; in every city of Bilad al-Sham a different mix of influences shaped the layout of *qa'as* and often different concepts were applied during the same time. In Damascus no Mamluk *qa'a* survived in its original form and the oldest known examples date from the 16th and 17th centuries. The *qa'a* of the Bayt al-Aqqad, which is found in structures from the Mamluk period, was fundamentally reshaped during the 18th century (we were able to establish at least five building phases).²

Domed *qa'as* and free-standing *qa'as*

Since material evidence is missing about the appearance of *qa'as* at the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule, we must depend on written sources for the reconstruction of early *qa'as*. As mentioned sometimes in Mamluk sources, we have no written indication of the shape of *qa'as* in the Mamluk period. Different endowment deeds (*waqfiyya*) and court records from the early Ottoman period, held at the Syrian National Archive for Historical Documents, give descriptions of houses that were sold, bought or added to a foundation or personal property. Here we find the existence of domed *qa'as* (!) and of single *qa'as* without being constructively an integral part of a courtyard structure. The existence of free-standing *qa'as* (not being constructively united with the rest of the house as we know it today) will be dealt with in a later stage of this article.

However, the relevant sources will be given at this point regarding the question of domes. In the year 991/1583 Niqula ibn Yuhana al-Mawardi rented one *qa'a* with two *tazars/iwans* in the city quarter of Qaymariya.³ The arrangement of the rooms resembles an entrance *qa'a* from 1155/1742 found during our documentation and restoration study of Bayt al-Quwatli in al-Naqqashat. This kind of construction can be found twice in 992/1584 next to the Siba'iya-Madrasa, where in one house two *qa'as* are mentioned, one of them with a dome and each of them possessing two *iwans/tazars* facing each other. Also a year later a Jew named Sulayman ibn Yusuf bought, according to the document, a house with a *qa'a* that contained two *iwans*, one of them (as written in the document) had a *tazar*. Even more unusual and appealing must have been the *qa'a* that Hasan Jawish ibn Khudrawardi bought (in 993/1585) from the Mufti Isma'il al-Nabulsi. His *qa'a* with a large and small *iwan (tazar)* had two upper floors, which were similar to those in Aleppo, *i.e.* accessible by a stone staircase from inside the *qa'a*.⁴ The *waqfiyya* of Ahmad ibn Sinan al-Qaramani mentions, for example, several houses that were turned into a *waqf* in 1011/1603. His house, built in 999/1590-91 southeast of the famous Bimaristan Nur al-Din (north to the Madrasa al-Khatuniyya al-Juwaniyya), borders on an independent *qa'a* also owned by him. Another house that he bought in 986/1578-79 is said to have a *qubba* (dome) in the outer courtyard (*barrani*), and another dome of wood, 'which has two windows'.⁵ In the early 18th century one can still find descriptions of houses in court records that mention domed *qa'as*, for example the house in the west of Suq al-Buzuriyya that the governor Isma'il il Pasha al-'Azm bought in 1140/1727 from Khadija bint Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad al-Mufti. In the *barrani* the records describe a *qa'a*, which is 'topped by a dome' and contains two *iwans/tazars* (a southern and a northern). The house contained different shaped *qa'as* and included – next to the domed *qa'a* mentioned above – the *qa'a* of the

Fig. 3. Homs, Bait al-Zahrawi (Korn 1996, 266).

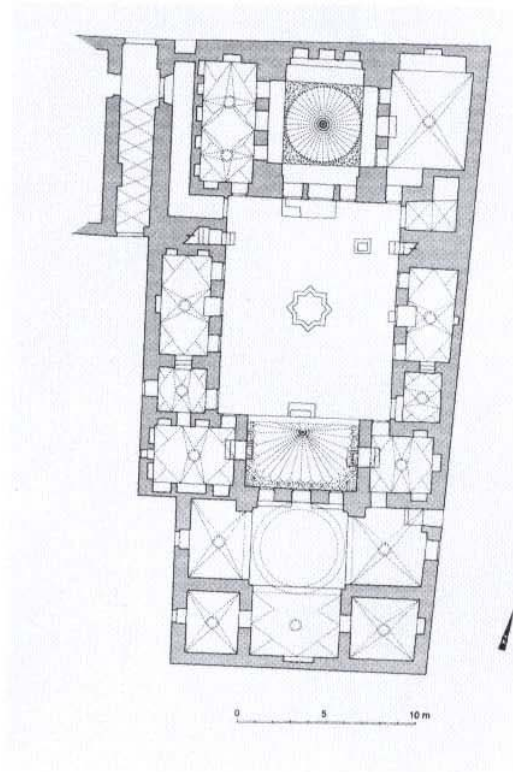


Fig. 4. Aleppo, Bait Janbulat (David 1998, 55).

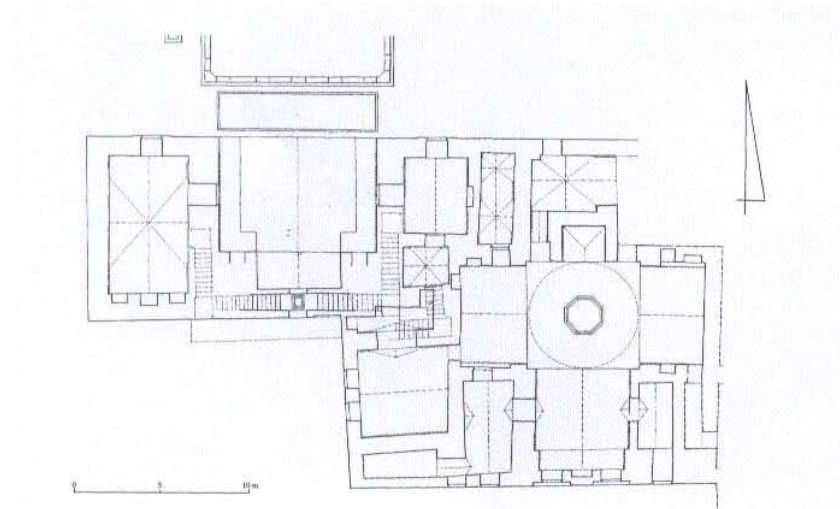
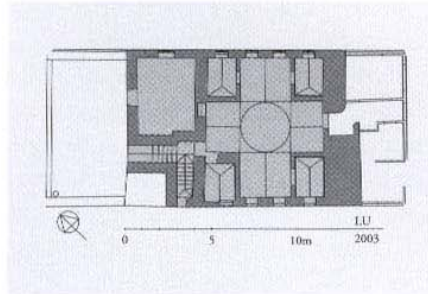




Fig. 5. Tripoli, Khan al-'Askar, *qa'a* western part, ~17th ct.

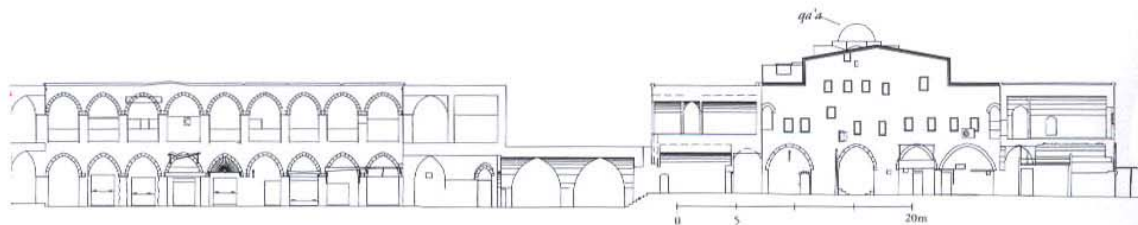
Fig. 6. Tripoli, Khan al-'Askar, *qa'a* western part, 17th ct. (1:400)



juwwani, which had a painted wooden ceiling (*musaqqafa bi-l-saqf al-'ajami al-madhun*), as known from other *qa'as* of that time.⁶

The evidence in sources is surprising because during recent surveys of several hundreds of houses by the French and German Institutes in Damascus no single domed *qa'a* was found. Domed *qa'as* are well known in other cities and might have deep historical roots. Well known is the green dome on top of the palace of Mu'awiyya (40/661), the centre of Umayyad rule in Damascus (Ibn 'Asakir 1954 II, 125, 133, 138; al-Rihawi 1972, 32 ff.; Sack 1989, 19 f.). The great Umayyad reception hall on the citadel in Amman has four *iwans* that might have had a similar function to later *iwans* in *qa'as*. But so far it has not been proven whether the reception hall was domed or not (Northedge 1992, 71). Also in Ottoman architecture domed reception halls with *tazar/iwan*-like wings on the four sides are known. The Çinli Köşk in Istanbul is the most famous pavilion with this layout (Eldem 1969). But these examples are far-fetched and too scattered to establish a clear link.⁷

Fig. 7. Tripoli, Khan al-'Askar, Left to right: *khan* (east), connection hall (ex stables of *khan*), *khan*-like residential building topped by the domed *qa'a* (west) (Lebanese University).⁸



More interesting are examples that are closer in time and geography. The Bait al-Zahrawi in Homs was built or rebuilt in 945/1538-39 and contains on its southern side, behind the *iwan*, a full developed T-shape *qa'a* and a domed *qa'a* with two *iwans/tazars* in the North (Korn 1996). If these elements – especially the T-shape *qa'a* – do belong to the early 16th century or even earlier, it would prove that the shape was already developed when the Ottomans arrived in this region. Jean-Claude David mentions the Matbakh al-'Ajami and a building next to it as examples of the Mamluk domed *qa'as* of Aleppo (David 1998, 34 ff). He dates the development of the T-shape *qa'a* (one *'ataba*, three *tazar/iwans*), with a dome on the *'ataba*, to the 16th century. Indeed the *qa'a* of the Bait Janbulat (reconstruction David 1998, 55) from the middle of the 16th century and the *qa'a* at the Khan al-Jumruk dated 1574 (David 1996), with its cross shaped *qa'a* (central dome on the *'ataba* and four *tazar/iwans*), seem to be the predecessors of the T-shaped domed *qa'as* in Aleppo a few decades later. Similar cases of domed *qa'as* with three or four *tazar/iwans* could be found in Tripoli and Sidon.

The – as yet – undated Khan al-'Askar in Tripoli includes a room that responds to the shape of a cross *qa'a*. The domed *qa'a* is located on the 2nd floor in the western part of a composite structure consisting of a *khan* (east, cadastral-No. TZ60-553), a *suq* with a dome to the entrance of the *khan*, the *khan*-like living structure with the cross *qa'a* to which I am referring (west, cadastral-No. TZ60-14), and a connection hall (stables) between them (fig. 7).

During our recently started survey on the *suqs* and historical sources of Tripoli no information on the Khan al-'Askar has yet been found; however the *muqarnas* ribbon on the entrances to both structures in the west and east allows for a dating between the late 16th and early 18th century. The whole western structure of the Khan al-'Askar is an impressive building topped by a domed *qa'a*, which was – in analyzing its layout – not a commercial structure but most probably a residential complex. The building only consists of living units and does not indicate any commercial use; storage space and shops are missing. It may have been built next to the northwestern city gate to host travellers or military troops.⁹ The *qa'a* on the top floor is the most important room and is marked on both the street façade and courtyard façade by a gable that serves no architectural purpose. The interpretation that the domed *qa'a* with four *tazar/iwans* belongs to a residential complex is supported by another important residential complex, the Bait Kastanfīs – 'Adra in the Rammane Quarter (cadastral-No. TR2-41). This late Mamluk or early Ottoman house was rebuilt twice during the 19th century but still preserves a domed *qa'a* with four *tazar/iwans* topping the house on the third floor.

In Sidon, during our research for the Debbané History Museum (www.museumsaida.org) we have so far identified three houses with domed *qa'as*.



Fig. 8. Sidon, qa'a, house of French consul, southern façade.

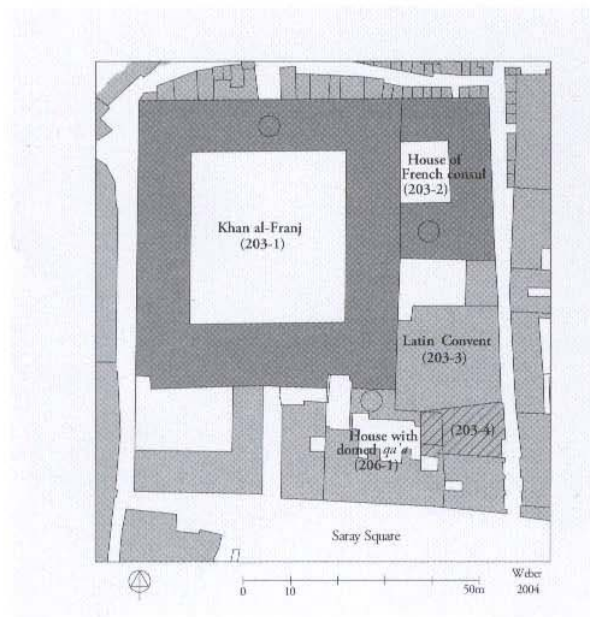


Fig. 9. Sidon, surrounding Khan al-Franj (1:1500).

The most important one is located on top of a house (cadastral-No. 203-2) attached in the East to the Khan al-Franj (cadastral-No. 203-1) and shows four *tazarliwans*. Consular records in the French National Archive give evidence that this house was administered by the provincial treasury in Damascus (AE/B1/1019, 1712-15 p. 169) and was rented out to the French consul in the early 18th century by Mustafa and Ali Agha al-Hammud. It was Mustafa who gave permission in 1711 – and at later phases – to repair and change the

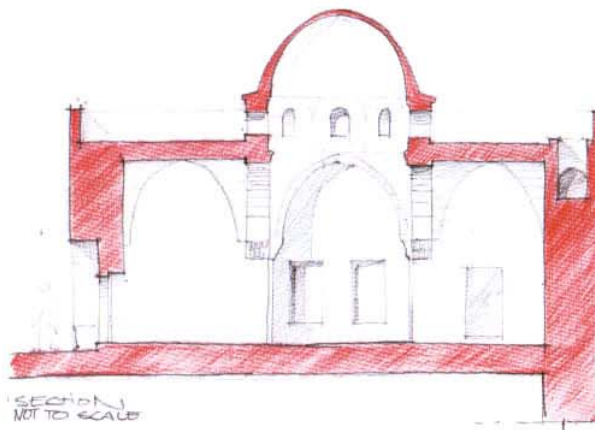


Fig. 10. Sidon, *qa'a*, house of French consul.

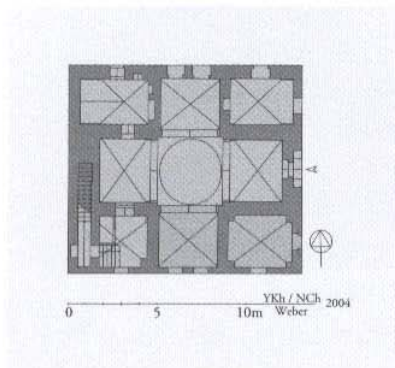


Fig. 11. Sidon, *qa'a*, house of French consul.

building.¹⁰ The consul writes: ‘...mais ici que P.P. a obtenu d’Agi Moustafa, procureur du trésorier de Damas, propriétaire de la maison occupée par mon dit sieur le consul, la permission par l’écrit du 15 fev. dernier de faire bâtir une grande arcade...’¹¹ The Chevalier D’Arvieux, who visited Sidon between 1658 and 1665, attributes the building to Fakhr al-Din al-Ma’ni (1590-1633), saying that it served as a residence for his wives (D’Arvieux 1982, 44f). This seems quite doubtful, since residences for women only, and attached to a *Khan*, are not known. D’Arvieux, who gives detailed descriptions of places he visited, generally tends to attribute buildings to Fakhr al-Din (like the Khan al-Franj, see below). D’Arvieux arrived 25 years after the death of Fakhr al-Din, whose influence was still very palpable. However, after the historian, Abdel Nour, this house belonged to the Ma’ni family and was confiscated in 1633 with the other properties of the Ma’nis. It was then being incorporated into the *waqf* for Mekka and Medina (D’Arvieux 1982, 41, note 63).

This house was built in local construction and layout techniques during the impressive building activity around the Saray Square in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. A terminus post quem is given by the Khan al-Franj, which was founded in 1560 by the famous Ottoman politician Sokullu Mehmet Pasha (d. 1579), Grand Vizier from 1565 to 1579.¹² The joints between the two buildings show that the *khan* is older than the house, hence the house was built between 1560 and 1633/1658. Today the building serves as a school and has been changed and restored during the last years. It is not possible to see any remains of *tazars* in the *qa’as*’ four arms, and neither is it possible to detect if any has been built and removed at a later phase. D’Arvieux gives a detailed description of the room:

De la première terrasse on entre dans la chambre consulaire. Elle est en forme de croix, dont les bras à droite et à gauche sont percés chacun de deux grandes fenêtres, avec des grilles de fer. Les unes regardent la mer, et les autres donnent sur la basse-cour. Le bras du fond opposé à l’entrée, est occupé par deux grandes armoires. Les quatre cantons de la croix forment quatre petites chambres fort propres, dont les deux du côté de la mer, servent de chambre et de cabinet au consul; le deux opposées lui servent de garde-robes; et dans la dernière est un passage et un escalier, qui conduit sur la dernière terrasse, c’est-à-dire, sur la plus élevée, sur laquelle on a bâti une chambre ouverte de tous côtés, qui sert de belveder, d’où l’on découvre bien loin à la mer du côté de Sour. (D’Arvieux 1982, 45).

Like the Khan al-’Askar or Bait Kastanflis – ‘Adra in Tripoli, this domed *qa’a* is meant to serve as a belvedere and to be seen from afar as well. When D’Arvieux entered the consulate via the Khan al-Franj and a small courtyard to the south

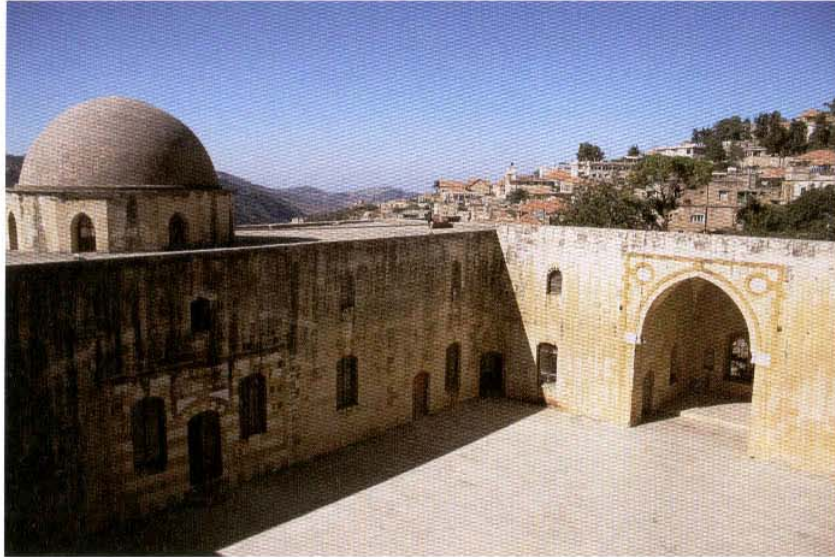


Fig. 12. Deir al-Qamar, Saray Yusuf al-Shihabi.

of the *qa'a* he noticed: 'La maison consulaire est au nord de cette cour; c'est un gros corps de logis de six toises en carré, couvert d'un fort beau dôme' (D'Arvieux 1982, 44). Without doubt the domed *qa'as* mentioned here were built to be the most prominent feature from both the inside and the outside of the buildings. The T-shaped *qa'a* of the Saray of Amir Yusuf al-Shihabi (ruled 1770-88) from the second half of the 18th century, in Deir al-Qamar, is a good example of this wish to be conspicuous. Its dome is not only visible from within the courtyard but also from the outside, where the *qa'a* is indicated in the clear standing façade by a *tazarliwan* that juts out, and is marked by a wooden köşk.

To recall: unlike Aleppo, Hama, Tripoli, Sidon or even Deir al-Qamar, no single domed *'ataba* is known in Damascus. This seems quite logical, because public and residential architecture in all the mentioned cities is mainly based on stone, while Damascene craftsmen used much more wood and clay. Normally the ground floor and arches are made of stone, while the walls of the upper floor are built of a grid of half timber, its compartments filled with unburned clay bricks carrying a roof of wooden beams covered with a mud-fiber roof system. The absence of domed *qa'as* in Damascus must partly be seen as an outcome of the building materials that are used. Why construct a heavy, expensive and difficult vaulted or domed structure when wood can be borne more easily by half



Fig. 13. Hama, Qasr al-'Azam (1153/1740).

timber walls and can then be painted lavishly in the *'ajami* technique. The material seems to determine some aspects of the shape of the *qa'a*. But as previously mentioned, written sources indicate clearly that Damascus also had domed *qa'as* at some time. The reason for the absence of domed *qa'as* in Damascus in the existing residential architecture from the 17th to the 19th centuries is a bit more complicated however, and cannot be solely explained by the building materials. In fact strong evidence indicates that Egyptian residential architecture may have had an influential role to play.

An 'Egyptian' *qa'a* in Damascus

A large hall in the Bab Tuma quarter could serve as a key monument for investigating the shape of *qa'as* in late Mamluk and early Ottoman times. The hall strongly squattered and subdivided by modern additions of concrete walls is hidden today in a large compound of small shops and workshops. A fire that broke out around 1980 in one of the workshops ruined the original ceiling and caused further damage to the structure. The eastern part was already separated in the early 20th century and has, since 1996, served as the well-known night-club/restaurant Marmar (compare fig. 14).

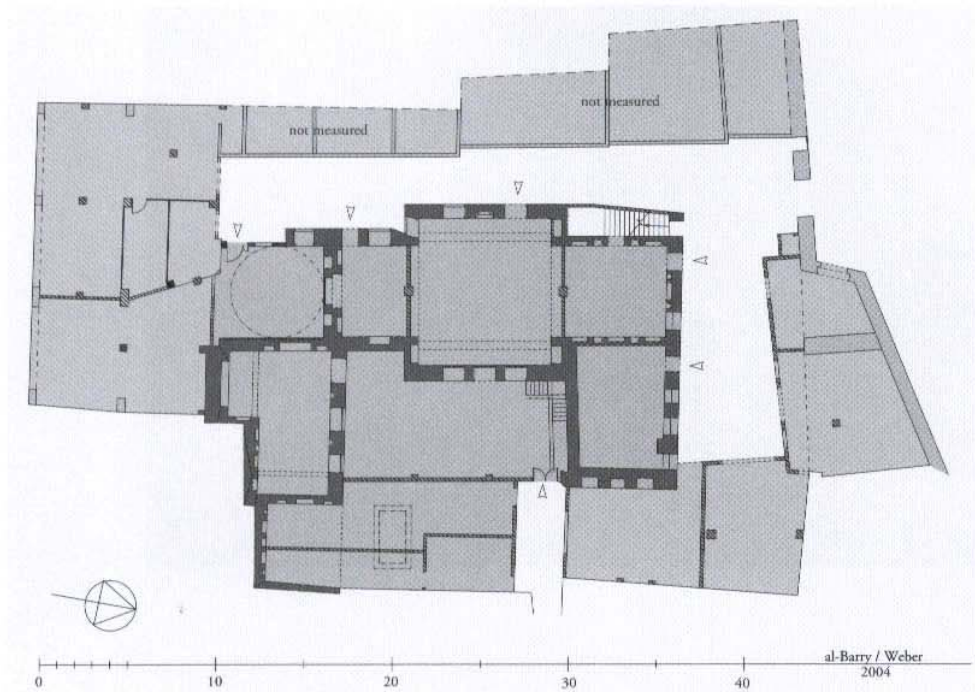


Fig. 14. Damascus, Qa'at al-'Imadi, present-day situation without the secondary elements in the centre of the hall (original walls highlighted, recent additions hatched/ dashed, 1:400).

Fig. 15 gives a preliminary reconstruction of the original position of the building based on observation results made on site. The main hall consists of four large arches (height 9.16 m, width 7.56 m/east-west and 5.28 m/north-south) that lead on the western and the eastern side to 1.2 m deep aisle-like sections, and in the north (6.52 m depth) and south (4.37 m depth) to *iwān/tazar*-like rooms. In the south, a chamber is attached to a –now – lost dome of 2.62 m diameter. This setting is highly unusual in Damascus and could have only served as a reception hall in a residential complex since no grave or *mihrab*/apse was found. The niche in the western wall is a normal niche/*kutubiyya* in the centre of the *qa'a*-wall facing the entrance. For a school – a possibility in view of the typology of the building (see below) – it would need a *mihrab*-niche in the south, since the *qibla* in Damascus is oriented in this direction. The original entrance from the east with a courtyard, fountain and attached rooms supports this reading of the building. I will hereafter name the complex as Qa'at al-'Imadi due to the closeness of the 'Imadi Mosque located to the west.

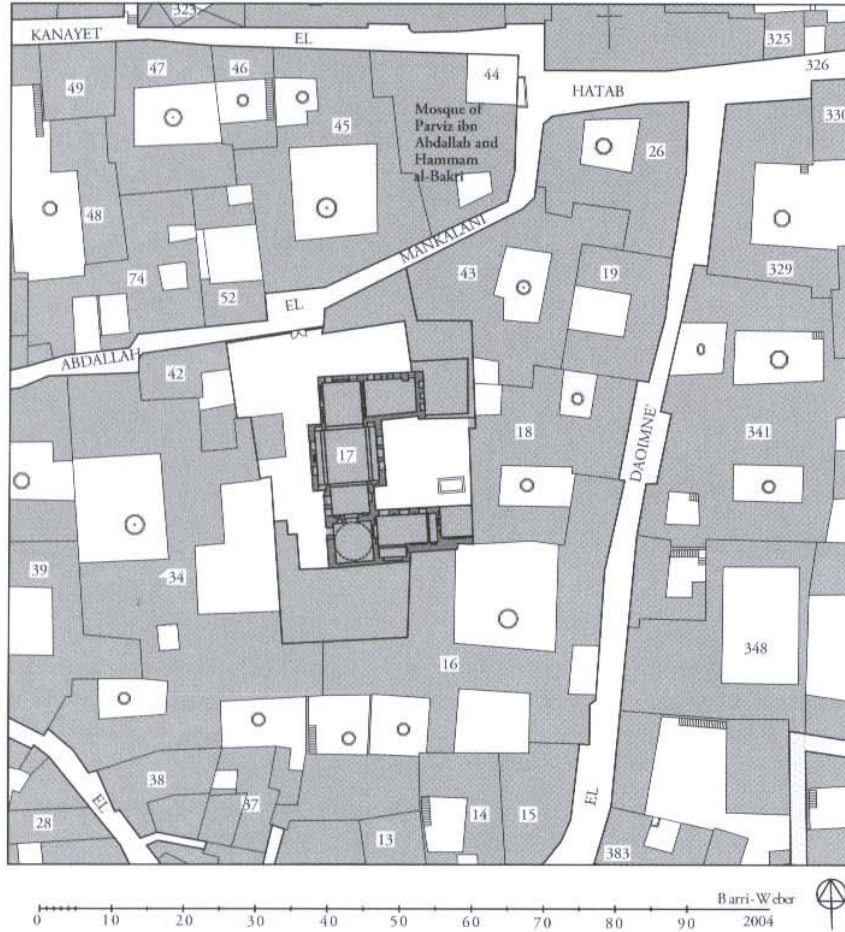


Fig. 15. Damascus, Bait al-Imadi, location and preliminary reconstruction (1:1000).

The *qa'a* lay south of the Hammam al-Bakri (1026/1617) and the small mosque (restored in 1069/1658-59) of the Amir al-Umara Barawiz (Parviz) ibn 'Abdallah (d. 1015/1606-07), and could possibly be ascribed to one of these two buildings.¹³ We know from sources that members of the Bakri family, which was very prominent during the 16th and 17th centuries, lived in the Bab Tuma quarter of the city and this enormous residential hall may have belonged to the Bakri household. It is, however, more likely that another very important figure of the second half of the 16th century and very early 17th century was the patron of this *qa'a*. Barawiz

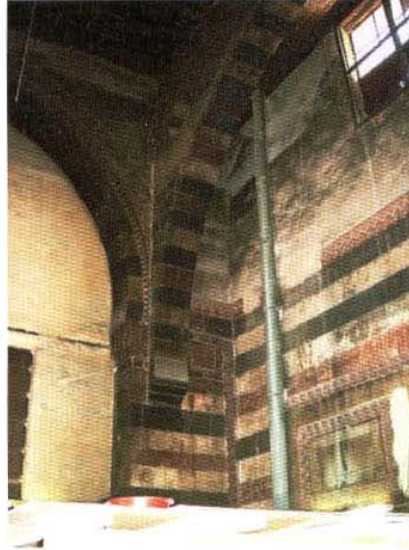


Fig. 16. Damascus, Qa'at al-'Imadi, (outside) Nightclub Marmar.

(Parviz) ibn 'Abdallah (d. 1515/1606-07) was as Amir al-Umara one of the most prominent notables in the city during the second half of the 16th century.¹⁴ He had built the mosque for himself close to his home next to the Hammam al-Bakri; after leaving his official position he became the Muazzin and Imam of the mosque. In different court records the house is mentioned as located next to the mosque, but I could not identify the mentioned buildings directly with this *qa'a*.¹⁵ Another court record states that the buildings of Parviz were all restored in the year 1130/1717-18, among them seven houses (*dar*) and one palace (*qasr*). Three of the houses with an enclosed piece of land (*hawsh*), situated in Bab Tuma, were connected to each other.¹⁶ The Qa'at al-'Imadi is the only building in the neighbourhood and vicinity of the mosque that fits the mentioned buildings in function, date and importance. The Bait Mishaqa (cadastral-No. XIV-315) in the north of the mosque has two rooms dating from the same period (16th/17th centuries). But, by the middle of the 19th century, this house was the property of Mikhail Mishaqa (1800-1888) and could not therefore have been referred to in 19th century sources as the *waqf* of Parviz. However, the *qa'a* described here could have been part of the residential complex of Parviz, but this assumption must remain hypothetical.

An analysis of its architectural decoration remains the only way to date the building. But this undertaking is quite complicated, since we find features that could be dated to the 15th/16th and 17th century in the same area. One should

Fig. 17. Damascus, Qa'at al-'Imadi, (inside) southwest corner.



mention that the building decoration of the 15th and 16th centuries in Damascus contains similar single elements and overall arrangements. It is not always possible to distinguish a late 15th from a middle 16th century building and there are some cases where doubts remain. Such a case is that of the Qa'at al-'Imadi, which shows elements that cannot have been applied before the late 16th century, and some other elements seem to be relicts from the local Mamluk past (not necessarily from Cairo).

For example, one finds in the building the same sequences of serrated medallions (the large ones 36.5 cm long and 15.8 cm wide, figs. 18 and 19), which are extremely rare for buildings of the 16th century, and it would thus be an argument to attribute the *qa'a* to the Mamluk period. The same is true for some of the *muqarnas* camphor, where one finds the exact same design of camphor in Mamluk buildings. Other *muqarnas* camphor in the *qa'a* are typical for the late 16th/early 17th century. The interwoven ribbons (15 cm wide) are quite usual in 15th and 16th century Damascene architecture. At all four intersections of the four larch arches, the plinths with *muqarnas* camphor sit at right angles to each other showing some irregularities. They may have been changed at a later point of time. Different building phases between the early 16th and middle of the 17th century cannot be excluded, but the overall homogeneous layout and decoration of the *qa'a* indicates an overlapping of two styles, which occurred in a period of transition.

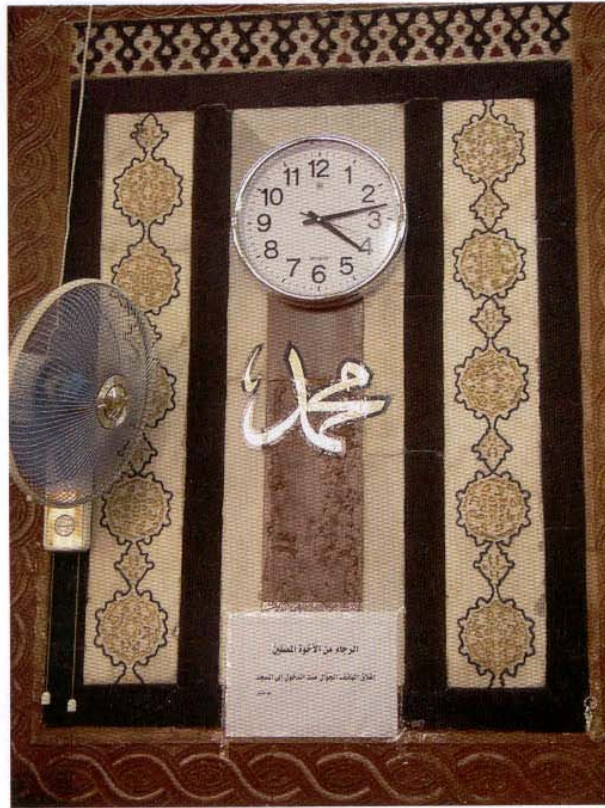


Fig. 18. Damascus, Madrasa al-Sibaiyya, (915/1509-921/1515).

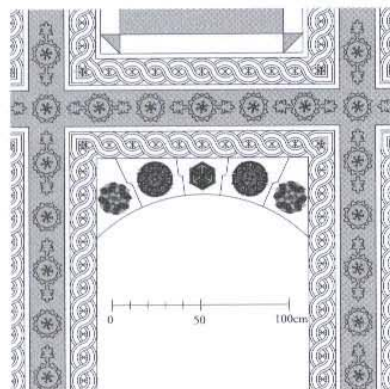


Fig. 19. Damascus, Qa'at al-Sayyidat, east elevation, detail (reconstruction, not to scale).

Fig. 20. Damascus,
Khan al-Sanawbar,
arch, detail.

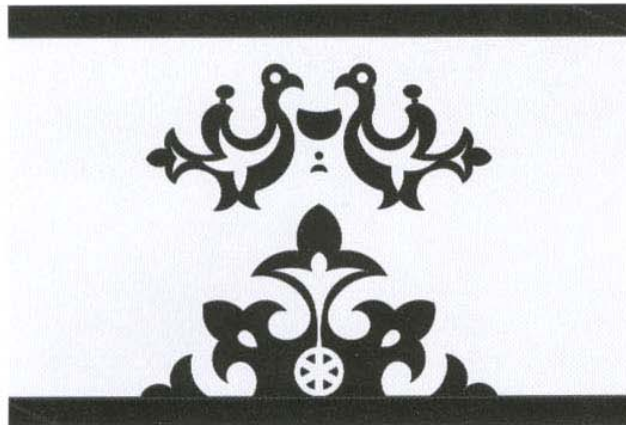
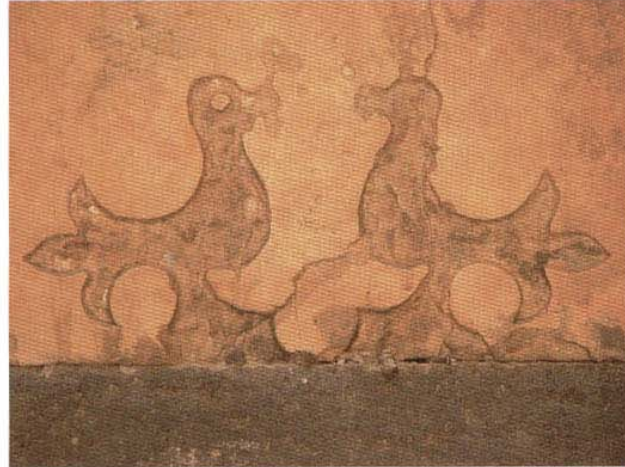


Fig. 21. Damascus,
Qa'at al-'Imadi, arch,
detail (Al-Barry, not
to scale).

The above mentioned 'relics' of Mamluk architecture makes a dating back to the Mamluk period tempting, but, as mentioned previously, there are some elements that date the *qa'a* to the end of the first Damascene Ottoman century. The first of these elements are medallions (see fig. 19, middle) and ribbons in the colour paste technique.¹⁷ This technique developed in the late 14th century. However, small elaborated medallions in lintels and arches of doors and windows (between 8 and 10 cm diameter), like those in the Qa'at al-'Imadi, can only be found from the late 16th century onwards. Another feature in colour-paste technique makes the dating to the late 16th and early 17th century even more certain. Two buildings from the turn of the 16th/17th century, the Khan al-Sanawbar/al-Fawqani (cadastral-No. XXI-756) and the Bait al-Sa'ada (cadastral-No. XII-179),

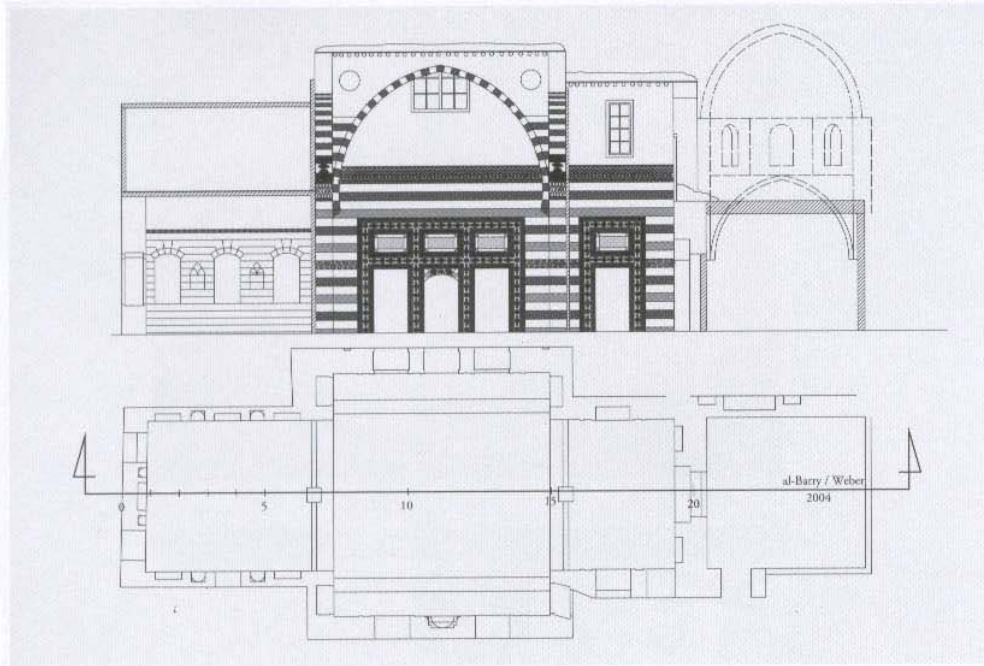


Fig. 22. Damascus, Qa'at al-'Imadi, elevation east façade (modern structures in blue, reconstruction dashed lines; 1:250).

have a depiction of small facing pigeons worked in black colour paste on the surface of one of the arch segments that divide the rooms. This motive is slightly enriched by a centred cup on one stone segment (33.8 cm x 60 cm) of the arches in the *qa'a*. The dating to the second half of the 16th or early 17th century would also correspond with the assumed patronage of Parviz ibn Abdallah.

Mamluk *qa'as*

The most interesting feature of the building is its plan, which is rare for a Damascus layout but known from Cairo in the Mamluk and Ottoman period. The Mamluk *qa'a* (in Cairo called *mandara*) has two large rooms on the shorter sides and not very deep, but high, rising niches or flat *tazar/iwan*-like sections on the longer sides. These elements of the room known from the public and private architecture of Mamluk Cairo, are marked by wide spanning and high rising arches as we know them from *tazar/iwans*, or later from Ottoman *qa'as*.¹⁸ Examples of Mamluk *mandaras* are found in the houses of Ahmad Kuhya, Muhibb al-Din Yahya, Shakir ibn al-Ghannam or the palace of Tashtimur in Cairo (fig. 23).

Fig. 23. Cairo, qa'as
(Maury / Garcin /
Revault / Zakariya
1982, 179, not to
scale).

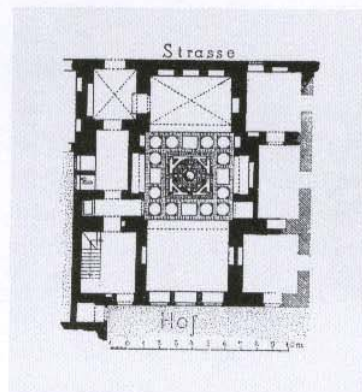
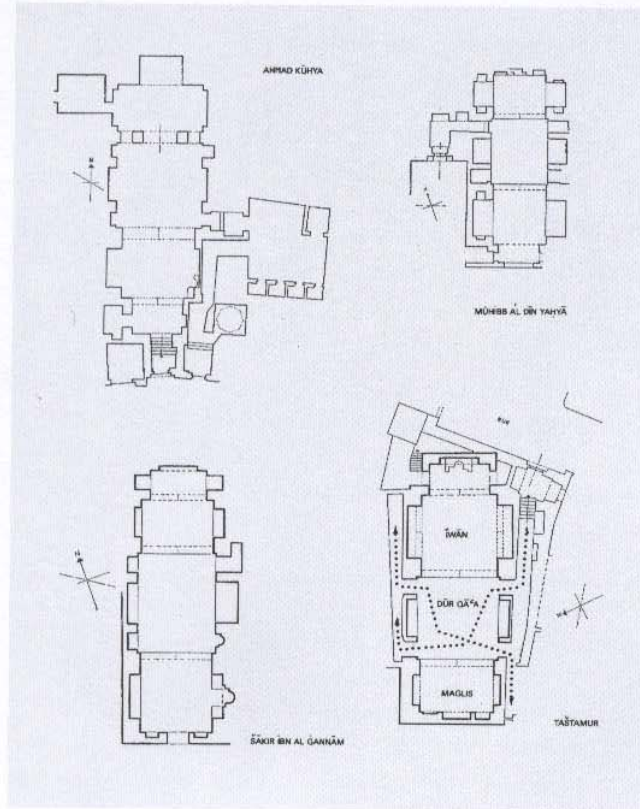


Fig. 24. Damascus, Bait al-Muradi (Reuther 1925, 210,
1:400).

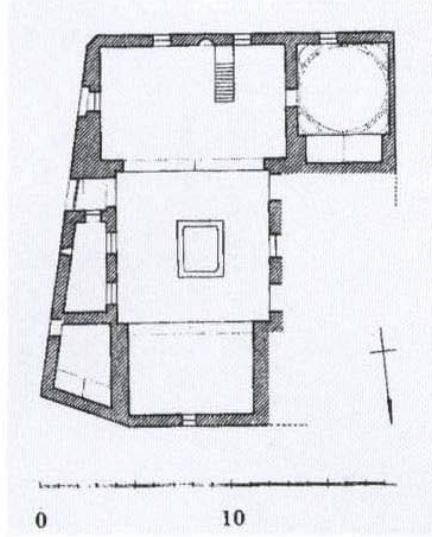


Fig. 25. Damascus, Madrasa al-Shadhbakliyya (857/1453), Meinecke 1992, I, 191 (1:400).

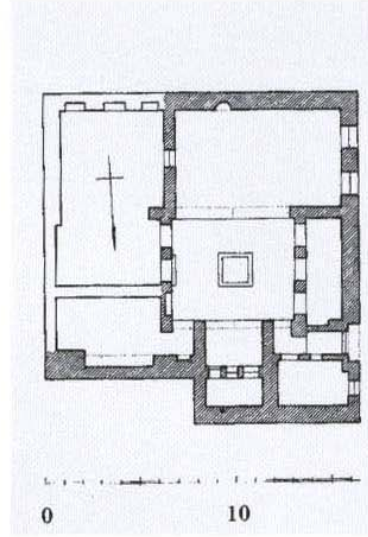


Fig. 26. Damascus, Madrasa al-Haidariyya (878/1473-74), Meinecke 1992, I, 191 (1:400).

They continue throughout the Ottoman period, but lose their small *iwān*-like flanking components and are reduced to the *'ataba* (in Cairo called *dur qa'a*) and two larger *iwāns* (*diwan/tazar*). The *Qa'at al-'Imadi*, with two large *tazar/iwāns*, and two smaller flanking ones, corresponds more to the Cairene Mamluk *qa'as* and can be considered an heir of the Mamluk *qa'a*.

Subsequently the question of the possible appearance of the Mamluk Damascene *qa'a* comes up. Our research on the *qa'a* of the Bayt al-Aqqad, the *Qa'at al-'Imadi* and of the written sources shows that *qa'as* were quite often free standing, situated in a larger complex of buildings, but not formalized with the courtyard as we know it from later structures.¹⁹ This corresponds well to David's theory of the 'pavilion' character of Mamluk and early Ottoman *qa'as* in Aleppo (David 2004). Some pavilion-like *qa'as* from Mamluk Cairo have survived. Also the early Aleppine *qa'as* show partial parallels in plan with the Cairene models, but they differ from the surviving examples in Damascus and Cairo by their domed structure. Another house published by Oscar Reuther in 1925 and dated by him to the 16th century proves that the *Qa'at al-'Imadi* is not an exception (fig. 24). The *qa'a* of the recently destroyed Bait al-Muradi in Damascus shows a very similar plan to our *qa'a* with the same main elements as the Egyptian Mamluk *qa'as*: one central part (*dur qa'al'ataba*) and two large and two small flanking sections (*tazar/iwān/diwan*) – no dome.

Fig. 27. Damascus, Madrasat and Turbat Afridun al-Ajami/Fardawsiyya (744/1343-44) Wulzinger/Watzinger, 1924, 88 (1:400).

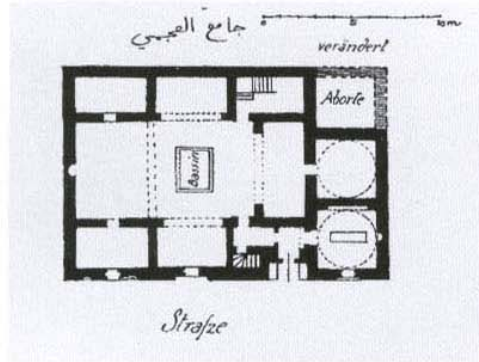
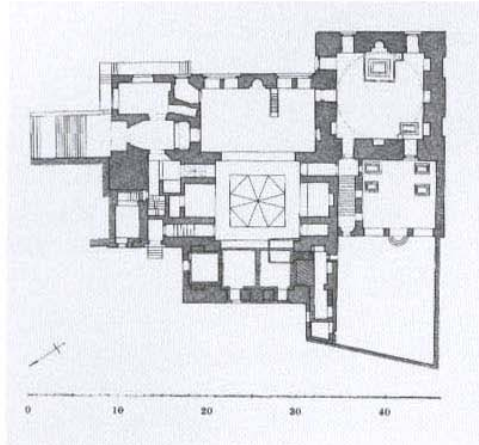


Fig. 28. Cairo, Madrasa and Mausoleum of Qaytbay (877/1472 – 879/1474) Meinecke 1992, I, 166 (1:800).



The parallels between Cairo and Damascus are not reduced to residential architecture only. Fifteenth century school buildings show a close parallel between the Mamluk capital and the second city of the Empire, Damascus. From the 15th century onwards the same layout of a covered hall (*qa'a*) with four *tazarliwans*, two larger ones and two smaller ones – also became very frequent in *madrasas*, where the most known example in Cairo is that of the Madrasa of Qaytbay (877/1472 – 879/1474). This plan is quite known and developed from the *iwan-madrasas* but its courtyard was covered and the yard turned into a hall at a later stage, such became the type of *qa'a* discussed here. The Madrasa al-Shadhbakliyya (857/1453) and the Madrasa al-Haidariyya (878/1473-74) are two examples from 15th century Damascus. If the present ceiling of the Madrasat

Afridun al-Ajami/Fardawsyya (744/1343-44, fig. 27) had a Mamluk predecessor, *iwan madrasas* in the *qa'a* style with a flat roof would have been known in Damascus since the 14th century.

Conclusion

Given that some of the decoration of the Qa'at al-'Imadi is a continuation of local Mamluk decoration, the shape of this *qa'a* could quite easily be a continuation of the local layout of reception halls. As previously mentioned, no Damascene Mamluk *qa'a* is preserved in its original shape. In Cairo the plan of late Mamluk madrasas and *qa'as* are quite close to each other. The same could be true for Damascus. The two 16th century *qa'a* plans ('Imadi/Muradi) are very close in plan to those of some Mamluk madrasas in the town. It is most likely that residential *qa'as* of the same type existed in Mamluk Damascus. On the other hand it would be misleading to state that Mamluk *qa'as* in Damascus looked like the Qa'at 'Imadi. The Qa'at 'Imadi is an outstanding reception hall and, as such, not representative of all the *qa'as* in Damascus. But it is this Mamluk tradition, which makes Damascus closer to Cairo than any of the other Syrian cities. It is most probably this connection to Mamluk Cairo that, on the background of local construction techniques, has formed the Damascene *qa'a* without domes as we know it from numerous examples of the 18th century.

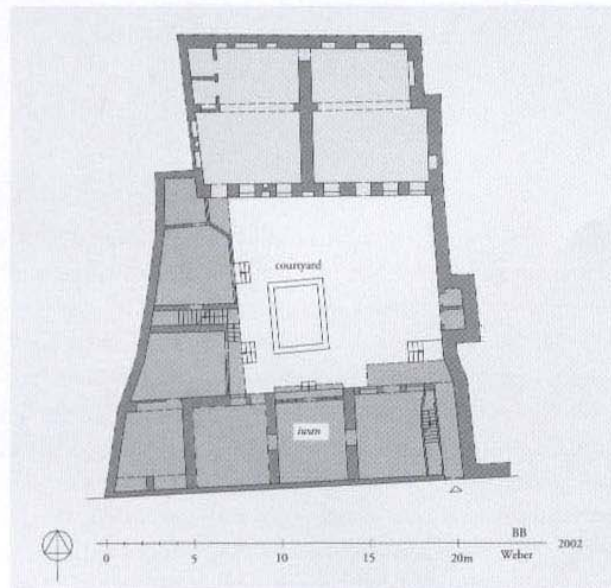


Fig. 29. Damascus, Bait al-Sa'ada, ground plan (1:400).



Fig. 30. Damascus, Bait al-Sa'ada, eastern *qa'a* from entrance.

A good example of a transitional *qa'a* shape, with one *'ataba* and only one *tazar*, is that of the Bait al-Sa'ada (cadastre XII-179, Fig. 29 and Fig. 30). This house was rebuilt several times, but still preserved large parts of its original late 16th or early 17th century structure.²⁰ Among them are two parallel rooms on the northern side of the house with the described *'ataba – tazar* layout. The *'ataba*

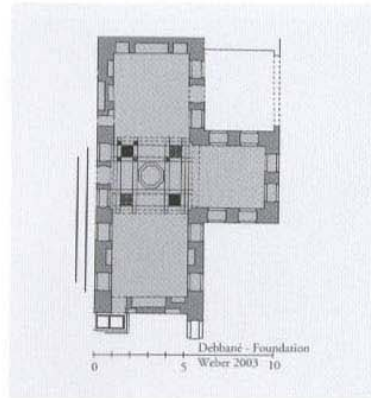


Fig. 31. Sidon, Qasr Debbané (1134/1721-22), *qa'a*, (1:400).

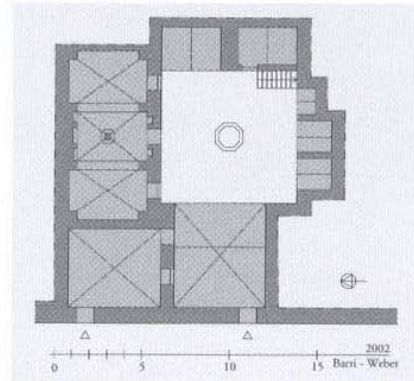


Fig. 32. Sidon, Bait Baraka, ground floor (1:400).

today is filled to the level of the *tazar* but the elements of these two rooms are the same. There is only a slight difference in the arrangements from all the rooms we know from the 17th, 18th and early 19th century (compare fig. 1 and fig. 2).

Fig. 33. Sidon, Qasr Debbané, *qa'a* (1134/1721-22).

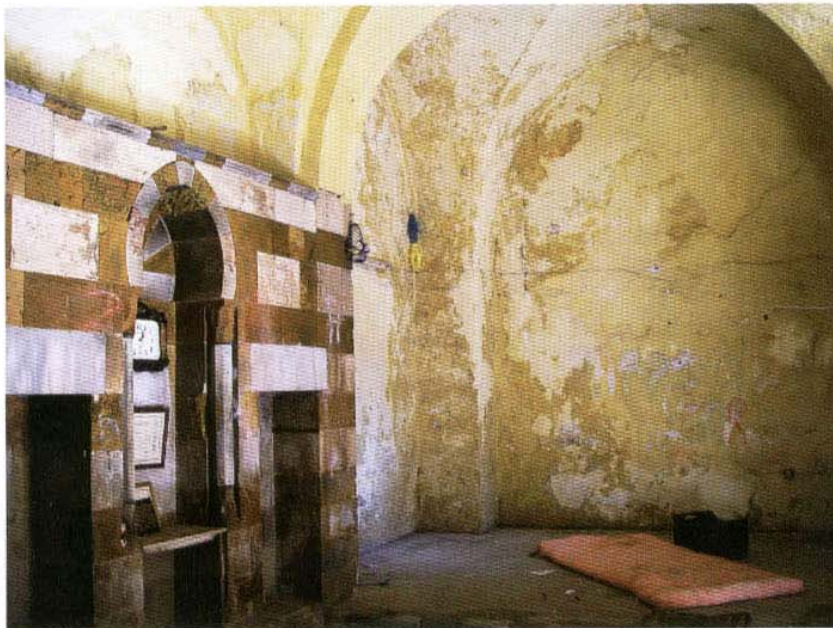


But one should be cautious not to read into these connections a linear and absolute evolution. As seen above some *qa'as* in Damascus had domes. The overlapping and intermingling of different types and fashions is one of the major characteristics of urban residential architecture. Tripoli, Aleppo, Damascus or Sidon have not always adhered consistently to local schools of architecture. Residential architecture is especially open to changes and influences brought about by changing needs, fashions and techniques.

A good example of this is Sidon in the 18th century where, at the same time, one finds a continuation of the local style of cross-vaulted *qa'as*, domed *qa'as* similar to the buildings described above (like the building used today as Restaurant Istiraha), or *qa'as* in an imported Damascene style. The *qa'a* of the Qasr Debbané with a wooden ceiling in 'ajami is an example of the latter.

Foreign construction and decoration workshops were very prominent in 18th century Sidon. Interestingly, one finds a mixture of north Syrian construction techniques and Damascene decoration techniques. A possible reason for this may be that governors from Syria – the most prominent members of the 'Azm family – often served as governors in Sidon in the first half of the 18th century. Hama or northern Syria might be the place where those who built the 'Istiraha', or the

Fig. 34. Sidon, Bait Baraka, *qa'a*.



house to the south of Khan al-Franj (see fig. 8) or the Saray Yusuf al-Shihabi in Deir al-Qamar (see fig. 12) originated. But it is absolutely sure that a Damascene workshop was employed to design the rooms and *qa'as* of the Hammud family, one of the city's main tax farmers and the most influential family in the first decades of the 18th century. The *qa'a* of the house of 'Ali Agha Hammud (cadastral-No. 166-1), built in 1134/1721-22 and – in the 19th century – becoming the Qasr Debbané, employed the colour paste techniques and '*ajami*' ceiling made by a Damascene workshop. This *qa'a* has a great resemblance to the very important Damascene *qa'as* (fig. 2).

The difference in style becomes very clear in comparison with the oldest house we found so far in Sidon. The Bait Baraka (cadastral-No. 248-2) could have been built between the 15th and the middle of the 17th century. However, due to the lack of comparable examples from that period in Sidon an accurate dating is not possible, but derivation from the 16th century seems likely. This *qa'a* shows no colour paste or '*ajami*', few stone carvings, but stucco ornaments, and cross vaulting over the '*ataba*' and '*tazars*'. It is a completely different style than the 18th century *qa'as* of the Hammud family. Even in the 18th century, cross-vaulted main rooms of houses were to be seen, quite often next to domed rooms with '*ajami*' wood ceilings. Different ways of building a reception hall or a residential unit were applied at the same time in the same place.

What is true for Sidon in the 18th century could also be true for Damascus in the 15th century. There are different ways of building a *qa'a*. While buildings like the Qa'at al-'Imadi or al-Muradi, with domed *qa'as* and normal '*ataba*'/*tazar*' arrangements could have existed next to each other in 15th and 16th century Damascus, domed *qa'as* never really caught on there, so wooden roofed *qa'as*, as those known in Cairo, became more dominant. Judging from material evidence and written sources one could state that the *qa'a* of Bayt al-Aqqad in Damascus may, or – most probably – may not have had a dome, as would have been the case in Aleppo, Homs, Sidon or Tripoli. The reason might be that different building techniques were applied, or that Damascene residential architecture was more interrelated with Egyptian Mamluk architecture than other cities.

References

- Abdel Nour, Antoine 1982. *Introduction à l'histoire urbaine de la Syrie Ottomane (XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle)*. Beirut.
- al-Ansari, Sharaf al-Din Musa 1991. *Nuzha al-Khatir wa-Bahjat al-Nazir. 946 – ba'd 1002*, Vol. I-III. Edited by 'Adnan Muhammad Ibrahim. Damascus.
- Barbir, Karl K. 1979/80. 'From Pasha to Efendi: The Assimilation of Ottomans into Damascene Society, 1516-1783', *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 1, 68-83.
- Behrens-Abouseif, Doris 1989. *Islamic architecture in Cairo. An introduction*. Cairo.
- D'Arvieux, Laurent. *Mémoires par Laurent D'Arvieux*. (Extracts published by Antoine Abdel Nour from Mémoires du Chevalier D'Arvieux). Beirut. Vol. I, 251-463; Vol. II, 324-471; vol. III, 341-370.
- David, Jean-Claude 1996. 'Le consulat de France à Alep sous Louis XIV. Témoins architecturaux, descriptions par les consuls et les voyageurs', *Res Orientales*, VIII, 13-24.
- David, Jean-Claude 1998. *La suwayqat'Alī à Alep*. Damascus.
- David, Jean-Claude forthcoming. 'La qa'a de la maison Wakil à Alep: origine d'un nouveau modèle d'espace domestique.' In: Julia Gonnella & Jens Kröger (eds.): *The 'Aleppo-Zimmer' Symposium in Berlin*. 12.-13. April, 2002. Kunst des Orients.
- Deguilhem, Randi 1995. 'Le Khan des Français à Sidon: un waqf ottoman loué par la France'. In: Daniel Panzac 1995. *Histoire économique et sociale de l'Empire ottoman et de la Turquie (1326-1960)*. 133-144.
- Eldem, Sedad Hakkı 1969. *Köşkler ve kasırlar*. Istanbul.
- al-Ghazzi, Kamil al-Bali al-Halabi 1926. *Kitab Nahr al-Dhabab fi Tarikh Halab*. 2 vols. Aleppo.
- al-Ghazzi, Najm al-Din Muhammad 1981. *Lutf al-Samar wa-Qatf al-Thamar. Min Tarajim A'yan al-Tabaqa al-Ula min al-Qarn al-Hadi 'Ashr*. Edited by Muhammad al-Shaykh. 2 vols. Damascus.
- Ibn 'Asakir 1954. *Tarikh Madinat Dimashq*. Edited by Salah al-Din al-Munajjid. Damascus.
- Korn, Lorenz 1996. 'Das Bait az-Zahrāwī in Homs: Ein Stadtpalast und seine Stellung in der syrischen Wohnarchitektur', *Damaszener Mitteilungen*, 9, 263-280.
- Maury, B., J.-C. Garcin, J. Revault & M. Zakariya 1982. *Palais et Maisons du Caire. I Epoque Mamelouke (XIII^e – XVI^e siècles)*. Paris: Éditions du Centre National e la Recherche Scientifique.
- Maury, B., A. Raymond, J. Revault & M. Zakariya 1983. *Palais et Maisons du Caire. II Epoque Ottomane (XVI^e – XVIII^e siècles)*. Paris: Éditions du Centre National e la Recherche Scientifique.
- al-Muhibbi, Muhammad Amin 1970 (1868). *Khulasat al-Athar fi A'yan al-Qarn al-Hadi 'Ashr*. 4 vols. Beirut.
- Northedge, Alastair 1992. *Studies on Roman and Islamic 'Amman*. (Vol. 1: History, Site and Architecture). Oxford.
- al-Rawwaz, Muhammad Hasan Hilmi 2003. *Tarikh Sayda al-'Uthmani*. Sidon.
- Reuther, Oscar 1925. 'Die Qa'a', *Jahrbuch der Asiatischen Kunst*, 205-216.
- Revault, Jaques 1984/5. *Le fondouk des Français et les consuls de France a Tunis 1660-1860*. Paris.
- al-Rihawi, 'Abd al-Qadir 1972. 'Qusur al-Hukkam fi Dimashq I', *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes*, 22, 31-71.

- Sack, Dorothee 1989. *Damaskus, Entwicklung und Strukturen einer orientalisches-islamischen Stadt*. Mainz.
- Sidky, Ahmed 1997. 'The development of the Cairene Qa'a', *Alam Al-Benaa*, 191, 6-9.
- Weber, Stefan 1997-1998. 'The Creation of Ottoman Damascus. Architecture and Urban Development of Damascus in the 16th and 17th centuries', *ARAM*, 9 & 10, 431-470.
- Weber, Stefan 2004 (in print). 'Walls and Ceilings.' In: John Carswell (ed.): *The Future of the Past*. The Robert Mouawad Private Museum.
- Weber, Stefan, Peder Mortensen & Marianne Boqvist (in preparation). 'A Period of Transition: Bait al-'Aqqad between the 15th and the 18th Century', In: Peder Mortensen (ed.), *Bait al-'Aqqad: History and Restoration of a House in Old Damascus. Proceedings of the Danish Institute in Damascus*.

Notes

- 1 The material for this article was collected during my surveys on Damascus, Sidon, Tripoli and the Lebanese Mountains. The Damascus Survey is based at the German Archaeological Institute in Damascus. The Tripoli Survey is based on a co-operation between the Municipality of Tripoli and the German Orient Institute in Beirut (OIB) located in the Qasr al-Nawfal. The Sidon Survey is carried out for the Debbané Foundation in co-operation with the OIB for the Debbané History Museum in Sidon. I would especially like to thank Beshr al-Barry, Youssef al-Khoury and Nathalie Chahine for their work in the measuring campaigns in Sidon and Damascus. Many thanks to Lana Chehade and Geraldine Zimmermann for their critical reading and Ustadhna Akram Ulabi for his supporting work on the records.
- 2 The southern section of the Bait al-'Ajlani/Bani Manjak (Qasr Jirun) in the northeast of the Umayyad Mosque could be from the 15th century. On the other hand it might be the *qa'a* which was after al-Muhibbi (1651-1699) built by the Amir Muhammad ibn Manjak (d. 1032/1622) around 1007/1598-99 between Bab al-Jirun and Darb al-Silsila (al-Muhibbi 1970 III, 230f). The *iwan* and the fountain and parts of the northern section of the Bait al-Quwatli (as-Samman/al-Muradi – north of the Umayyad Mosque) date from the 15th century. The Bait al-Misri/an-Nasiri in the north of the Bait Nizam has a Mamluk *iwan*, and the Bait Sallum, south west from there, contains a Mamluk *qa'a*-façade. For more details and the Mamluk elements in Bayt al-Aqqad and examples of Damascene *qa'as* in the 16th and 17th centuries see Weber, Mortensen & Boqvist.
- 3 Syrian National Archive (Markaz al-Wathaiq al-Tarikhiyya / MWT) S1/W5 (991/1583).
- 4 For these records: MWT S1/W264 (992/1584); S1/W11 (993/1585); S1/W594 (993/1585). Further mentioning of domes in houses: 991/1583 in al-Qanawat [S1/W30] and 1046/1636 north to the 'Adiliyya Madrasa [S4/W438]. One *qa'a* from 992/1584 with two domes in Bab Jirun in [S1/W494] and one dome on a *qa'a* in Uqayba in 1036/1627 [S2/W211].
- 5 Syrian National Archive (Markaz al-Wathaiq al-Tarikhiyya/MWT) in Damascus: Waqfiyya al-Qaramani. Also the Waqfiyyat al-Ghazzi (Ramadan 935) mentions domes and *qa'as*.

- 6 Court records MWT S40/W458 (1140/1727). The term *qubba* was used next to proper domes maybe also for important vaulting systems. Toilets and passages next to it are sometimes covered by elaborate cross vaults. A quite detailed description in 1127/1715 of a toilet in the house of Hamida bint Muhammad al-Amin, the wife of Abd al-Muhsin ibn Muhammad Halabi al-Safarjalani, mentions a dome build of burned bricks (*qubba ma'quda min al-ajurr*). The house was in the northwestern corner of what became three decades later Qasr al-Azm. MWT al-Hujja 26 b.
- 7 More detail on the historical roots of domed *qa'as*: David, *maison Wakil à Alep* (forthcoming). I would like to thank Jean-Claude David for sending me his article before it was published.
- 8 Fig. 6 and 7: Centre for Restoration of the Lebanese University (Khoury, Rihan, Haddad and Abu Assaly), slightly changed by me for this article.
- 9 The name Khan al-'Askar (the soldier *khan*) is most probably not the original name of the building and might not refer to its first function. In the Ottoman provinces, *khans* were frequently used as barracks and often received their name due to that function. Khan al-Hummus (cadastral-No. 29-1) built in 1132/1721 by Ali Agha Hammud in Sidon was named Khan al-Qishla (*qishla* – Turkish for barrack) after it was turned into a military barracks.
- 10 For the house see among other: Archives Nationales (Paris) Affaires étrangères B1 1019, 1712-15, p. 168 f., 292, 498; 1021, 1719-25 p. 159; Deguilhem 1995. The neighbourhood of this house is extremely interesting. Directly south of the house one can find on the first floor a courtyard with doors to the Khan al-Franj and the church of the Latin Covent (1856, cadastral-no 203-3). The substructures of the church are made out of a large living / kitchen complex (cadastral-no 203-4) dated through a Latin inscription on the door to the western courtyard 1726. Based on stylistic features of its decoration, this house in the west (cadastral-no 206-1), which also contains a domed *qa'a* can be dated back to the late 16th or 17th century. Consulates in khans were quite common, see for the French consuls: Revault 1984/5 for Tunis, David 1996 for Aleppo, Deguilhem 1995 for Sidon.
- 11 AE/B1/1019, 1712-15, p. 498.
- 12 This Khan is generally attributed incorrectly to Fakhr al-Din al-Ma'ni and was first known by the name of Ibrahim Khan (al-Rawwas 2003, 161 ff; Abdel Nour 1982, 351, Deguilhem 1995, 138). Ibrahim Khan (d. after 1031/1621-2) the son of Sultan Selim II's daughter Esmakhan Sultan (d. 993/1585), and Sokullu Mehmet Pasha was the *mutawalli* of his father's *waqfs*. This also identifies the Muhammad Basha ibn Jamal al-Din Sinan and Ibrahim Khan of the famous *waqfiyya* in Aleppo (Khan Kumruk et al.), cited by al-Ghazzi (friendly hints by Stefan Knost). Sokollu Mehmed's father, who was administrator of a *waqf* in Bosnia was called Jemal ül-Din Sinan Beg after he converted to Islam. Al-Ghazzi (1926, II 415 ff) translated parts of the *waqfiyya* in Aleppo (dated 982/1574) and after this 'a new *khan* on the shore in the quarter of the sea in Saida' belonged to the *waqf* of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.
- 13 All relevant sources for this mosque given in Weber 1997-1998, 436.
- 14 See for Barawiz ibn 'Abdallah: Barbir 1979/80, 72; al-Ghazzi 1981, I, 340; al-Muhibbi 1970, I, 451. After al-Ansari 1991, II, 169 was Parwiz in 961/1553-54 *qadi*.

- 15 His houses next to the mosque and his *waqf* are also mentioned in: MWT (MSh) S407/W27 (1264/1848); S471/W48 (1270/1854); W471/W219 (1270/1854); S676/W181 (1293/1876); S676/W182 (1293/1876).
- 16 MWT (MSh) S36, S49 and 73 (1130/1717-18).
- 17 See for this technique Weber, Mortensen & Boqvist; Weber 2004.
- 18 See for those *qā'as* Behrens-Abouseif 1989, 20; Maury/Garcin/Revault/Zakariya 1982, 75-90, 101-105, 176-187, Sidky 1997. For the Ottoman ones: Maury/Raymond/Revault/Zakariya 1983.
- 19 See above and compare note 2 and the above-mentioned *waqfiyya* of Ahmad ibn Sinan al-Qaramani. See for the Bayt al-Aqqad Weber, Mortensen, Boqvist. I would like to thank Sarab Atassi (IFPO) for giving me this idea first.
- 20 For further details see Weber, Mortensen & Boqvist.