

## Doctrinal Impact on the Function of Funerary Architecture in Fatimid Egypt

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### Abstract

The arrival of the Fatimid conquerors to Egypt was a turning point which brought forth a radical impact on both political and religious sides of life. Coming from quite a different doctrinal background, the Fatimids had a predominating aim to spread their beliefs between the Egyptian populace. Perhaps one of their workable tactics to diffuse the shī'ī doctrine was the introduction of mausoleums (*mašhads*), devoted to the burial of their Fatimid imāms—who claimed the ultimate descent from “al-Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib”. Although Islam has strict traditions against funerary architecture, the Fatimid *mašhads* did the trick; they were, and still are, highly venerated by the Sunnī populace of Egypt. This research is an attempt to reach a better understanding of the influence of the Shiite doctrine on the function of funerary architecture in Fatimid Egypt, while shedding light on women’s vital role in achieving this objective.

**Keywords:** Doctrine influence, Funerary, Architecture, Fatimid Egypt

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### Introduction

It is difficult to tackle the sectarian influence on the function of the funerary architecture without a thorough understanding of the Shī'ī<sup>1</sup> doctrine and its role in the working of the state. The Shī'ī Fatimids developed clearly different doctrines from those adopted by the Sunni Muslims. For the Shī'ā themselves, shī'ism is one response to the message of Islam, in which ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib has a pivotal role. They see their genesis in the special rapport that existed between the Prophet and ‘Alī, they believe that Prophet Muḥammad appointed ‘Alī to be his successor at Ghadīr Khumm not long before he died.

The Shī'ā also disagreed among themselves, the disputes between different groups often centered on genealogy. They, thus, fell into three campuses: The Zaydī Shī'ā (*Zaydiyya*),<sup>2</sup> The Twelver/ Imāmī Shī'ā (*īthnā ‘šrya*),<sup>3</sup> who believe in the return of the twelfth (hidden) imām<sup>4</sup> and accord even more importance to this belief than a powerful concept as the day of resurrection, and Ismā'īlī Shī'ā (*Ismā'īliya*),<sup>5</sup> also called as-Sab'īya (Sevener Shī'ī) and al-Bāṭiniya.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the two abovementioned groups, who in fact did not hold to a doctrine of continuing designation, Ismā'īlī Shī'ā dogmatized that each *imām* in turn must designate his own successor.<sup>7</sup>

### The concept of Imamate

The division between these groups, based on their own understanding of the genealogy, sheds light on the importance of the Imamate in their concept; specially the Ismā'īlī version of it, they believe that the succession to rule derives from the very root of shī'ism, they only allow designation *naṣṣ*,<sup>8</sup> for them, the Prophet literally “designated” ‘Alī as his sole successor. Each imām designates his successor during his lifetime. This concept of *naṣṣ* eventually faded in importance except for the Ismā'īlīs who believed in its critical religious meaning and significance.<sup>9</sup>

In *al- Kāfi*, one the most trusted Shī'ī *ḥadīths* sources, we can find the following *ḥadīths* reinforcing the concept of Imamate, the importance of having, and following, an imām, who is considered as a witness from Allah over his creature, and confirming his Divine authority.

*Al- Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad has narrated from Mu‘alla ibn Muḥammad from al-Ḥassan ibn ‘Alī al- Washsha’ who had said the following:*

*“Allah’s holding people accountable remains unjustified without the Imām who would teach people about Him”<sup>10</sup>*

They also believed that the Imām should have a holy nature that we can understand through the following *ḥadīth*:

*Al- Ḥassan ibn Muḥammad has narrated from Muḥammad ibn Mu‘alla ibn Muḥammad from some of our people from Abū ‘Alī ibn Rashid from Abū al- Ḥassan (a.s.) who he said the following: “The earth is never without a person with Divine authority and I swear to Allah that I am the person with Divine authority”.<sup>11</sup>*

The same meaning can be found in another *ḥadīth*, but this time emphasizing on the absolute need to an imām among the people.

'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm has narrated from Muḥammad ibn 'Issā from al- Fudayl ibn Abū Ḥamza who had said the following: "I asked Abū 'Abdallah (a.s.), 'Can the earth be left without the Imām?' "the Imām (a.s.) replied, "were to remain without Imām it would obliterate its inhabitants." <sup>12</sup>

The necessity of the belief in the *imām* goes to the extent that the faith was questioned when one does not follow an *imām*; evidence could be traced from the following *ḥadīth*:

Ahmed ibn Idrīs has narrated from ibn 'Abd al- Ġabbar from Safwān al- Fudayl from al- Ḥārith ibn al- Mughīra who has said the following: 'I said to Abu 'Abdallah (a.s.), 'The messenger of Allah has said, "Whoever would die without knowing who is his Imām in he would die as if has died in ignorance (of religion). "The Imām (a.s.) said, "That is true." I then said, "Is it the ignorance of uneducated people or ignorance of ones not knowing his Imām?" The Imām (a.s.) said, "It means the ignorance that is disbelief, hypocrisy and error." <sup>13</sup>

Based on the above belief, one who does not follow an Imām with Divine authority would endure punishment from God.

Narrated Hišām ibn Sālim from Ḥabīb al- Saġīstānī from Abū Ġa'far (a.s.) who has said the following: "Allah, the Most Holy, the Most High, has said, 'I will cause to suffer punishment all those who live a religious life in Islam under the guardianship of unjust Imāms who possess no authority from Allah even though such followers would be virtuous and pious in their deeds. I will forgive all those who live a religious life in Islam under the guardianship of an Imām who is just in his dealings and possess authority from Allah even though such followers in their dealings would be unjust sinners." <sup>14</sup>

### **Ḥukm in building funerary domes**

Despite the large number of surviving shī'ī mausolea in the Islamic world, the funerary architecture was prohibited by the Prophet, many *ḥadīths*, found in shī'ī books, expressed forbiddance of building on the grave or even cover it with clay. <sup>15</sup>

Narrated Abī Ġa'far ibn 'Alī from Muḥammad ibn al- Ḥussin ibn Abī al- Khaṭṭāb from ibn 'Alī ibn Asbāt from ibn 'Alī ibn Ġa'far said: "I asked Abū al-Ḥassan Mūsa (a.s.) about building on a grave or sitting on it, if it was acceptable? He replied that it was not acceptable to build on the grave, nor sitting on it, nor plastering it, coat or cover with clay". <sup>16</sup>

This meaning is consolidated by other *ḥadīths*:

Narrated Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm from his father, from al- Nufalī, from al- Sakūnī from Abī 'Adb Allah (a.s.) said: Amir al- Mu'minīn 'Alī (r.a.) said: "the messenger of Allah has sent me to destroy the graves (extra buildings on it), and breaking of pictures". <sup>17</sup>  
 Narrated Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb from 'Alī ibn al- Ḥussayn said: "Whatever is (build) on the grave besides the mud of the grave, then it is a burden on the dead". <sup>18</sup>

Although the forbiddance of building on the graves was clear in the above mentioned *ḥadīths*, others were found holding an opposite meaning, or at least providing a sort of permission to build on graves.

Narrated Sahl ibn Ziyād from ibn Maḥbūb from Yūnis ibn Ya'qūb said: "on the return of Abū al- Ḥassan Mūsa (a.s.) from Baghdād, one of his daughters died, so he buried her and ordered some of his followers to plaster her grave, write her name on a board and place it on the grave". <sup>19</sup>

Should this story be true, it could be considered as a kind of license for building on graves and appears to be an entrance to the building of *mašhads* in the shī'ī world. Hillenbrand detailed another point of view about the origins of the mausoleum; he believed that Syria and its neighborhood, which were saturated with classical and Christian culture<sup>20</sup>, was considered a remaining source of inspiration, in whose culture the mausolea held an honored place. At the time of the Arab invasion, the martyrism was already omnipresent; its impetus was still not entirely exhausted. <sup>21</sup>

### **Ḥukm of the ziyāra**

One of the most important Shī'ī doctrinal practice is visiting the Shī'ī *imāms'* *mašhads* (*ziyārāt*), since the pilgrimage to Mecca was until recent times, beyond the means of most of shī'ī residents in Iran and Iraq. Therefore, they considered visiting the *imāms* shrines as an alternative to the hazardous journey to Mecca, a custom that exceeded, in the eyes of the believers, the pilgrimage. It was a frequent activity in their religious life to visit the shrines of 'Alī at Najaf, al- Ḥusayn at Karbalā', the seventh and ninth *imāms* at Kāzimayn, of *imām* Riḍā at Mašhad and of Fāṭima ma'sūma, the sister of *imām* Riḍā, at Qumm. It became customary that persons who visited the shrines at Karbalā' and Mashhad were entitled Karbalā'ī and Mašhadī, in parallel with the designation of Ḥajjī, given to those who performed the pilgrimage to Mecca al- Ḥāj. <sup>22</sup>

Visiting the shrines of the *imāms*, especially those of Ahl- al- Bayt, the descendants of 'Alī, was regarded as one of the most prominent religious rituals; one of the *ḥadīths* reveals the significant value of this ziyāra:

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*Narrated Muḥammad ibn Yihyā from Muḥammad ibn al- Ḥussien from Muḥammad ibn 'Ismā'īl ibn Bazī' from Sāliḥ ibn 'Uqba from Zayd al- Ṣaḥām said: "I asked Abu 'Abd Allah (a.s.): what is the reward for the people who visit one of you (Ahl al- bayt)? And he replied: the same reward for those who visit the Prophet (s)."*<sup>23</sup>

*Narrated Abu 'Alī al- Aṣ'arī from Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al- Gabbār from Muḥammad ibn Sinān ibn 'Alī said: "the Prophet (s) said: O 'Alī .. who visits me during my life or after my death or visits you during your life or after your death or visits your sons during their life or after their death.. I will ensure to save him from horrors during the day of resurrection.. and he will be with me at the same degree."*<sup>24</sup>

*Prophet (s) said: "You shall be killed in Iraq and you shall also be buried there!" I (Imām 'Alī said: O Messenger of Allah! What shall be the reward of the one who will visit our graves, beautify them and maintain them?" He (s) said to me: "Your grave and that of your sons are among the edifices of paradise and among its fields."*<sup>25</sup>

Emphasizing on the importance of *ziyāra*,<sup>26</sup> other *ḥadīths* can be found in their books in order to encourage the public to visit their honored *imāms*.

*Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl has narrated from al- Fadl ibn Shadha from ibn abū 'Umayr from Mansur ibn Ḥazim from Abū 'Abdullah (a.s.) said: "The holy Prophet (s) said: Association with religious people is an honor in this life as well as in the next life".*<sup>27</sup>

Based on the above-mentioned *ḥadīths*, in Cairo, *ziyāra* to the tombs of holy persons received official patronage in the tenth and eleventh century, under the Isma'īlī Fatimids, who promoted the veneration of the 'Alids.<sup>28</sup>

Although such veneration was affiliated to the visiting (*ziyāra*) of the religious people, building *masjids* there was prohibited. A number of our people have narrated from *Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad from 'Uthmān ibn 'Isā from Sama'ah who has said the following: "I asked the imām (a.s.), about visiting graves and building Masjids there. He said, 'There is no offense in visiting graves, but Masjid must not be built there'."*<sup>29</sup>

### Women and *ziyāra*

Women practiced the visiting (*ziyāra*) of the graves of relatives and holy individuals, a practice shared with men.<sup>30</sup> However, certain places or saints<sup>31</sup> became the focus of women's piety because of their association with childcare and birth.<sup>32</sup> The *zuwwār* came to the Qarāfa for numerous reasons, one of which was to contemplate the exemplary lives of the *awliyā'*. Hence, they came to share the *baraka* or blessing bestowed by God upon the saints, they also came to offer *du'ā'* in the hope that the saints might intercede with God on behalf of them,<sup>33</sup> it brought them into closer proximity to the saint and thus, to his blessing.<sup>34</sup>

The preponderance of female saints honored in the Qarāfa might be due to their general appeal to the women of Fustāṭ whose chief social and religious outlet was in the visitation of the dead in al-qarāfa. These points could be an indicator of an atmosphere of religious fervor for the saints and/or an official manipulation to create such an atmosphere.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the 'Alid women officially or popularly honored (Sayyida Nafisa, Umm Kulthum, 'Ātika and Ruqqayah) could represent a sort of conciliation, at a popular level, of the *shī'ī* rulers and the *sunnī* population.<sup>36</sup>

This point of view is supported by Jonathan M. Bloom who indicated that the cult of 'Alid saints in the cemeteries of Egypt became a central portal through which the Fatimid *da'wa* entered the country, and the women of Egypt became its principal transmitters among the local population:<sup>37</sup>

In this same period, women became more and more involved in religious activities in the great cemeteries, and it seemed likely that Ismā'īlī propagandists were active in them as well, for there they could reach large numbers of people, exploit the 'Alid emphasis on genealogy and avoid official wrath. The graves of 'Alid descendants were natural places for their work. Because women were so frequently there, it is likely that they were numerous among 'Alid converts and sympathizers.<sup>38</sup>

The cemeteries were certainly the center of religious devotion for women in the ninth century.<sup>39</sup> The association of woman with funeral lamentations and cemeteries goes back to the pre-Islamic period, and apparently the Prophet's prohibiting lamentations (*bukā'*) had no effect, wailing women at the graveside of the deceased remained to be a continuing custom over the centuries. The 'Alid poet Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ provided a testimony when he once passed beside the grave of an Abbassid prince in Samarra where he noticed girls wailing and beating their faces, while in Egypt, the governors reprimanded those who offended the strict orders against wailers.<sup>40</sup>

### Fatimid domes

With the settlement of the Fatimid dynasty, many mausoleums were erected; this type of construction was an architectural manifestation of the officially sponsored cult of the 'Alid saints and martyrs, founded in parallel with the uprising Ismā'īlī propaganda in order to generate loyalty and support for the Ismā'īlī *imāms*. These remaining tombs and domes of the Fatimid Period in Cairo represent the earliest and largest related group of funerary architecture surviving from the first six centuries.<sup>41</sup>

In Fatimid Cairo, mausoleums construction started with the beginning throughout their reign, various patterns of this type of architecture are preserved, such as *mašhad* Ḥadra al-Šarīfa (501/1107), *mašhad* al- Lu'lu'a (406/1016), *mašhad* Iḥwat Yūsuf (beginning 6 H./ 12 J.C.), etc..., some examples will be detailed later in this paper.

It is noteworthy that funerary domes, founded at earlier dates, can be traced,<sup>42</sup> like *mašhad* al- Ḥussayn in Karbalā' erected in 61/680,<sup>43</sup> *mašhad* for the head of Zayd ibn Zayn al- 'Abidīn in Cairo which was transferred from ' Amr ibn al- 'Āṣ mosque,<sup>44</sup> *mašhad* 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib 170/786 in Nagaf.<sup>45</sup> Following the sunna of the Prophet, the Fatimid caliphs were buried in their residences, with the arrival of al- Mu'izz to Cairo in 972, he buried the bodies of his predecessors, their wives and their children<sup>46</sup>, inside the Eastern Palace, al- Mu'izz himself was buried there. This funerary chapel was known as "turbat al- Za'farān" or "tomb of saffron".<sup>47</sup> Other members of the caliphs' family were buried in the extreme south of the qarāfa cemetery and later, they used the area to the north of Bāb an- Naṣr.<sup>48</sup>

Construction in the city was monopolized by the men of the court, during the Fatimid rule in North Africa the women of the *īmām*'s household are never mentioned either by name or position, however, both suddenly emerged after the establishment of the dynasty in Egypt. The tradition of female 'Alid saints, Sayyida Nafīsa, umm Kulthum and Sayyida "Zaynab, had obviously taken firm hold on pre- Fatimid Egypt.<sup>49</sup>

#### **Mašhad of Umm Kulthum<sup>50</sup> (Monument No. 516)**

This *mašhad* was erected before 516/1122, in the area of the *qarāfa* reserved for *ahl-al-bayt* and descendants of 'Alī.<sup>51</sup> (Pl. 1) The *mašhad* is partly ruined, and according to Creswell, who suggested an original plan, it had a square plan with a dome covering the central portion, which is connected to an ambulatory on three sides.<sup>52</sup>

Only a *miḥrāb* remains of this building, the date of the death of Umm Kulthūm (254/868) is marked on a marble plaque on the *qibla* wall to the right of the *miḥrāb*. (Plate 1) The *miḥrāb* is made of stucco, a fluted shell hood of ten ribs emanating from a raised spiral boss occupies the semi-dome above the concave recess, five stars to a row, each star contains either the name "Muḥammad" or the word "and 'Alī", the top row begins and ends with "and 'Alī". A plain niche is set on each side of the *miḥrāb*, most probably, these niches served as *miḥrābs* at the end of each of the side aisles.<sup>53</sup>

#### **Mašhad of Sayyida Ruqayya (Monument No. 273)**

One of the largest and most impressive of the surviving *mašhads*, built (1133) she was 'Alī's daughter, though not by Fāṭima, she was reportedly buried in Damascus, and this shrine was built for her in Cairo in response to a dream or a vision "*mašhad ru'yā*", a visual memorial.<sup>54</sup> The *mašhad* has the form of a rectangle, separated into three bays; a dome covers the central one and flat wooden roofs cover the side one, there are five *miḥrābs* in this shrine, three of them in the *qibla* wall and two on either side of the entrance.<sup>55</sup> (Pl. 2)

The main *miḥrāb* is located in the central bay, considered one of the most impressive examples of late Fatimid stucco work, sixteen ribs radiate from a central boss, in which the name "'Alī" is surrounded six times by the name "Muḥammad".<sup>56</sup> (plates. 2-3) The sixteen ribs end in an arch with a fluted edge laid against two rows of flat niches, above the arch, a band of Koranic inscription.

The two other *miḥrābs*, managed inside the side bays, are similar and yet smaller than the main one, they are crowned by a cresting of seven rounded bud shapes separated by trilobed leaves.<sup>57</sup> The two other *miḥrābs* are of lesser importance. The *miḥrābs* are decorated with many Qur'anic verses, used as proof of 'Alī's right to the Imamate of the Muslim community. Under the dome is a splendid cenotaph.<sup>58</sup>

#### **Mašhad of Sayyida Nafīsa<sup>59</sup> (Monument No. 394)**

A grand-daughter of al- Ḥassan, she was an authentic saint of the city, she immigrated from Higaz to Egypt and settled in Fuṣṭāṭ, she had a great reputation for Baraka (bless of God), this is the reason that many people were buried beside her grave, after her death. The present *mašhad* was built during the Ottoman reign; Sayyida Nafīsa was buried in her house, which the *mašhad* later replaced. The building was a simple square construction with a door embedded in the north wall of the hawsh.<sup>60</sup> (Pl. 4) The wooden *miḥrāb* of this shrine is considered one of the finest late Fatimid examples.<sup>61</sup> The caliph al- Ḥāfiz renewed the dome over the grave and ordered a marble lining for the *miḥrāb*. (Plate 4)

Among the woodworks remaining of this *mašhad* is a top half of window filling, bearing a koufīc inscription referring to *Ahl al- bayt*, this verses could be of appropriate use for an *īmām* who was asserting his claim to legitimacy.

<sup>62</sup> إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

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### Conclusion

Based on the previous tackled issues, some points are to be concluded and highlighted:

- In shite doctrine, visiting the tombs of the *šī'ī imāms*, was regarded as one of the most prominent religious rituals, on the other hand, one can assume that the 'Alid cult patronized by the Fatimids was only one aspect of a larger and already well-established social and religious phenomenon centered on the veneration of the holy dead.
- "*Turbat al- Za'farān*", the great mausoleum where the Fatimid caliphs, their ancestors and their families were buried, was not a place for public visitation,<sup>63</sup> however, the shrines dedicated for 'Alīd descendants "*Ahl al- Bayt*" was erected in al- *Qarāfa*, between the Fatimid new city al-Qāhira and Fuṣṭāṭ, therefore, it is understandable that they did not intend to be buried near their saints.
- The site, chosen by the Fatimids, for the construction of their saints' shrines is an indicator of the already "politico-religious" set plan, they were clever enough to build at the *qarāfa*, a place frequently visited by the *sunni* Egyptian populace, in order to propagate the *šī'ī* doctrine, privileging of the respect and veneration the *sunni* Muslims have towards the 'Alīd saints "*Ahl al-Bayt*".
- Women played a pivotal role in spreading the *Šī'ī* doctrine among the Egyptian populace since *ziyāra* to the tombs of the dead, especially holy ones, was a popular ritual and remained the basic and central activity of the cult of Muslim saints, performed mainly by women.
- Mausoleums represent the largest single category surviving from the Fatimid period, those designated as "*mašhads*" follow the plan of an open courtyard, a central domed chamber and two side flatly roofed ambulatories, a plan that offer a disposition especially favorable for the customary visitation of burial places.
- The specific use of ornamental features, in favor of the spread and substantiation of the *shī'ī* belief is traceable:
  - The use of the names of "Muḥammad" and "'Alī" where the latter is at the center, According to the *Shī'ī* doctrine, this form present a significant religious indication, the name "Muḥammad", the Prophet in whom all the prophets are contained and who is the seal of the Prophets, is repeated six times, in reference to the days of the world's creation, and on the seventh day, it would be the seed of "'Alī", the *imām* who is in all the *imāms*, and who would bring the reign of God on Earth.
  - The use of epigraphic decoration, especially those engraved on the main *miḥrāb*, to emphasize the holiness of *Ahl al- bayt*.
- The conflict between *Sunnā* and *shī'ā* goes beyond its sectarian aspect, in a matter of fact, it was, essentially, a conflict over power, from a political perspective, the Fatimids conquered Egypt in order to strengthen their existence and serve their expansion in the Muslim world against the already well-established *Sunni* Abbassids in *Baghdād*.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>. The term *Shī'ā* literally means "follower" or "supporter", it refers conventionally to the group of Muslim who, after the death of the Prophet, believed that the leadership function in the Islamic community was the prerogative of 'Alī and his successors, and they were regarded as *ma'šūm*.  
- المعجم الوجيز، مجمع اللغة العربية، القاهرة، 1994، ص 357.
- <sup>2</sup>. This group believed that the Prophet designation of 'Alī extends only to Ḥassan and Ḥussayn but not beyond the Prophet's grandsons; nevertheless, further *imāms* will arise from Ḥassan and Ḥussayn progeny but will not be known by an exact designation on the part either of the previous *imām* or the Prophet.
- Sobhani, A.J.; *Doctrines of Shi'i Islam*, I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, London, 2001, P 97.
- <sup>3</sup>. In the Twelver *Shī'ī* concept, after the Prophet's death, the legitimate Muslim leadership started with 1. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and went through his lineage as following: 2. Abū Muḥammad al- Ḥassan ibn 'Alī, known as *al- Muḥtabā* (the chosen) 3. Al- Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, 4. Abū Muḥammad 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, known as *Zaynu'l -'Abidīn* (the ornament of the worshippers) 5. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, known as *al- Bāqir* (the splitter) 6. Abū 'Abdḥ' llāh Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, known as *aṣ-Ṣādiq* (the truthful) 7. Abu'l- Ḥasan Mūsā ibn Ja'far, known as *al- Kāzīm* (the forbearing) 8. Abu'l- Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Mūsā, known as *ar-Riḍā* (the approved or acceptable) 9. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, known as *al- Ṭaqī* (the God fearing) 10. Abū'l- Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad, known as *al- Hādī* (the guide) 11. Abū Muḥammad Ḥassan ibn 'Alī, known as *al- 'Askarī* 12. Abū'l- Qāsim Muḥammad ibn

Ḥasan, known as al- Mahdī (the guided) and *al- Munṭanzar* (the awaited), after the later began his rule, they insisted on the fact that all twelve imāms were previously designated by the Prophet himself.

- Momen, M.; An Introduction to Shi'i Islam, The History and Doctrine of Twelver Shi'ism, Yale University Press, London, 1985, pp. 23-45.
  - <sup>4</sup>. Hidden *imām*: Twelver shī'ī doctrine holds that the twelver imām did not die but went to a spiritual form of existence known as occultation, and will return at the end of time as a messianic Mahdi to restore Justice and equity on earth.
  - Esposito J. L.; The Oxford Dictionary of Islam, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, pp. 111-112.
  - <sup>5</sup>. This group is named after Ismā'īl, the eldest son of Ga'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, the sixth shī'ā Imām, they believe that Ismā'īl is the rightful heir to the Imamate after Ja'far's death instead of Ja'far's son Mūsā al- Kāzim.
  - <sup>6</sup>. They emphasized on the difference between zāhir (outward) and Bāṭin (implicit / inner secret) meanings of the Quran and other religious texts and symbols.
  - <sup>7</sup>. Walker, P.; Succession to the Rule in the Shiite Caliphate, *JARCE* 34, Cairo, 1997, p 3.
  - <sup>8</sup>. In order to enunciate the principle of Imamte, Al- Bāqir postulated some prerequisites for it, including *naṣṣ*, *'ilm*, *nūr*, and *'iṣma*, according to this principle, the *imām* had to be divinely appointed and this appointment had to be precise and clear *al-naṣṣ al- jalī* (explicit designation). To ensure sufficient credence to this theory, al- Bāqir had to begin with 'Alī, who had been explicitly appointed by the Prophet, from his view, several occasions witnessed this designation culminating in the event of Ghadīr Khumm. Also, al- Bāqir claimed that, before the death of the Prophet, he was commanded by God to convey the legacy of knowledge and prophethood to 'Alī, therefore, this divine heritage would be transmitted through the Prophet's progeny. Actually, this hereditary character of *naṣṣ*, emphasized by al-Bāqir was a kind of restriction for those who might attempt to claim the *naṣṣ* and thus, acquire a license for leadership.
  - Az-Zanjanī, 'Aqqā'id al- imāmiyya al- Ithnā 'Aṣriyya, Intishārāt Ḥadrit Mahdī, 5th edition, 1982, pp. 88-93.
  - Lalani, A. R.; Early Shī'ī Thoughts (the teaching of Imām Muḥammad al- Bāqir), I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd., London, 2000, pp. 76-77.
- For more information on Imamate (Imāmā) and designation (*naṣṣ*) in Shī'ī theology, read:
- Doctrines of Shī'ī Islam (A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices), I.B.Tauris, London, 2001, pp. 96- 120.
  - Lalani, A. R.; Early Shī'ī Thoughts, pp. 76-83.
  - Valuable here to state that Shī'ā also relay on some Sunnī sources to give 'Alī the credit for being first such as: - Tirmidhī; Sunan, Vol.2, pp. 300-301.
  - Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, Vol. I, pp. 209-210.
  - <sup>9</sup>. Walker, P.; Succession to the Rule in the Shiite Caliphate, p 3.
  - <sup>10</sup>. Al- Kulaynī, Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb Al- Kāfī; Vol. 1, ḥadīth No. 425.
  - 11. Ibid.; Vol. 1, ḥadīth no. 436.
  - Al- Maḡlisī, Muḥammad ibn Bāqir; Biḥār al- Anwār al- Gāmi'a li durar al- A'imma al-Aṭḥār, 2nd edition, 107 vols. 1983, Vol. 98, p 153.
  - 12. Al- Kulaynī; Al- Kāfī, Vol. I, ḥadīth no. 437.
  - Ibn Bābūya; Abi Ga'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al- Ḥussayn al- Qimmī; kamāl ad- dīn wa tamām an-ni'ma, Mu'asasat al- A'lamī lil Maṭbu'āt, Beirut, 1991, Vol. I, p 201.
  - <sup>13</sup>. Al Kulaynī; Al- Kāfī, Vol. II, ḥadīth no. 977.
  - Al- Maḡlisā; biḥār al- Anwār, Vol. 8, p. 362.
  - Al- Ṭūsī; al- Rasā'il al- 'aṣr, p. 317.
  - <sup>14</sup>. Al- Kulaynī; al-Kāfī, Vol. II, ḥadīth no. 973.
  - <sup>15</sup>. Funerary architecture was a rather late development in Muslim building; it did not come into wide use before the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Creswell claimed that the Arabs showed no interest in commemorating the dead with built structures both during the *Jahiliyya* and after they adopted Islam.

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- Creswell, K.A.C.; *Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, New York, 1982, Vol. 1, p 110.

For further reading on Šarī'a and funerary Architecture, see: Leisten, T.; *Between Orthodoxy and Exegesis: some aspects of attitude in the Shari'a Toward Funerary Architecture*, Muqarnas, Vol. 7, 1990, pp 12- 22.

16. Al- Ṭūsī, Abī Ğa'far Muḥammad ibn al- Ḥassan (d. 460 H.); *al- Istibšār fīmā uḥṭulif min al- Aḥbār, Dār al- Adwā' lil ṭibā'a wal Našr*, 2nd Edition, Beirut, 1992, Vol. 1, p 337.

- Al- Ṭūsī; *Tahthīb al- Aḥkām, Mu'asasat al- A'lamī lil Maṭbu'āt*, 1st Edition, (10 vols.), Beirut, 1992, Vol. 1, p 461.

17. Al- Kulaynī; *Al- Kāfī*, Vol. 6, p 528.

18. Al- Ḥur al- 'Āmilī; Muḥammad ibn al- Šeikh Ḥassan ibn 'Alī (d. 1104 H.); *Wasā'il al- Šī'a Ila taḥṣīl masā'il al- Šarī'a, Mu'asasat Āl al- Bayt li I'yā' al- Turāth*, 2nd edition, (16 Vols.), Qum, 1894, Vol. 3, pp. 202-203.

19. Al- Ṭūsī; *Al- Istibšār*, Vol. 1, p 337.

20. A large number of Roman mausolea survive in Syria, the Christian memorial structures, known as martyria, housed the relics or bodies of saints or Biblical personages, they had varied forms, however, they maintained the modest scale of the classical mausoleum from which they derived. This simple form was relatively adequate with the prime commemorative purpose of the building

21. Hillenbrand, R.; *Islamic Architecture*, Columbian University Press, New York, 1994, pp 254- 255.

22. It appears that these designations vary from an area to another depending on the distance to the shrines, for example, there is no particular designation for visiting the shrines in nearby Karbalā' and Najaf, but a Khurāsānī or Afganistānī visitor to Karbalā' becomes karbalā'ī.

- Momen, M.; *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 181-182.

23. Al- Kulaynī; *al- Kāfī*, Vol. 4, p 579.

24. Al- Kāšānī, Muḥammad ibn al- Murtada (1091 H.); *al- Maḥagga al- Baydā' fi Tahthīb al- Iḥyā'*, Dār al- A'lamī lil Maṭbu'āt, 2nd edition, (8 vols.), Beirut, 1983, Vol. 4, p 45.

25. Al- Maḡlisī; *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 100, p. 120

26. Under the authority of the shī'ī *imāms*, particularly the fifth and sixth *imāms*, to who are attributed many of the *ziyāra* traditions, the pilgrimage to these "secondary shrines" were not sanctioned.

- Al- Ḥur al- 'Āmilī; *Wasā'il al- Šī'a*, Vol. 2, p 7.

27. Al- Kulaynī; *al- Kāfī*, Vol. 4, p 581.

28. The Shī'ī Hamdanids, who ruled Aleppo from (333/944- 392/1002), promoted the construction of shrines devoted to the 'Alīds and undertook repairing existing shrines. They even brought over religious scholars, in Kūfa and Karbalā', who instructed Shī'īs in performing *ziyāra* to the shrines of the *imāms*.

- Meri, J. W.; *A Late Medieval Syrian Pilgrimage Guide: Ibn al- Ḥawrānī's al- Ishārāt Ilā Amākin al- Ziyārāt*, *Medieval Encounters*, 7.1, Leiden, 2001, p 7.

29. Al- Ḥur al- 'Āmilī; *Wasa'il al- Shī'a*, Vol. 2, p 887.

30. In the Shī'ī belief, women's *ziyāra* was subject to different points of view; in this regard, Majlisī expresses thus: "*Ziyāra* is good and recommended for men, but concerning the *ziyāra* for women, there are two pertinent opinions; one opinion is that *ziyāra* for women is loathsome, and the other opinion is that it is permissible provided that they cover themselves from the sight of strangers (*ghayr mahram*)".

- AL- Majlisī; *Mir'āt al- 'Uqul fi Šarḥ Aḥbār al- Rasūl, Dār al- Kutub al- Islāmiya*, (26 Vols.), Tahran, 1375, Vol. 14, p 191

31. Women, like men, could become saints at least after their death, they obtained this status by being a Qur'anic personage, the wife of a Qur'anic figure or a male saint, or by their own pious actions like miracles or teaching.

- Meri, J.W.; *The Cult of Saints Among Muslim and Jews in Medieval Syria*, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp 80-81.

32. – The involvement of women in festivals of saints included, sometimes, the participation of women of different faiths.

-Cuffel, A.; *From Practice to Polemic: Shared Saints and Festivals as 'Women's Religion' in the Medieval Mediterranean*, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 68, Issue 03, 2005, p 401.

- <sup>33</sup>. - Taylor, C.; Saints, Ziyāra, Qiṣṣa, and the Social Construction of Moral Imagination in Late Medieval Egypt, *Studia Islamica*, No 88, 1998, p116.
- <sup>32</sup>. Ibn 'Uthmān, *Muwafaqad- Dīn*; (d. 615 H.), *Muršid az- Zuwwār ilā Qubūr al- Abrār, al- Dār al- Maṣriyya al- Libnāniyya*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Cairo, 1995, vol. 1, p 447.
- <sup>35</sup>. Williams, C.; *The Cult of the 'Alid Saints*, p 54.
- <sup>36</sup>. The visiting (*ziyāra*) of the saints mausolea were effected in specific days of the week, in his *khiṭaṭ*, 'Alī Mubarak stated that the *ḥaḍra* of 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn used to take place on Saturday's night, Nafisa's on Sunday's night, Fāṭima al- Nabawiyya's on Monday and Abū al- Su'ūd's on Tuesday's night.
- <sup>36</sup>. علي مبارك، الخطط، ج 1، ص ص 90-91؛ ج 2، ص 99؛ ج 4، ص ص 50-51؛ ج 5، ص ص 50-51.
- For more information about ziyāra days, see:
- De Jong, F.; *Cairene Ziyāra days*, *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 17, Issue ¼ (1976-1977), pp. 26-43.
- <sup>37</sup>. He explained that the spread of the Shī'ī belief among the Egyptian populace can be proved by the ease with which the Fatimid army conquered Egypt, while the sunnī bureaucracy did not accept the invaders for political and economic reasons, their religious affiliation was not deemed of significant importance for a large segment of the population.
- Bloom, J.; *The Mosque of the Qarafa in Cairo*, p 16.
- \* Another tackling of the spread of Shī'ī belief among Egyptians was addressed by Devin Stewart who reevaluated the Shī'ī influence on Egyptian popular culture.
- For more information, see:
- Stewart, D.; *Popular Shiism in medieval Egypt: Vestiges of Islamic Sectarian Polemics in Egyptian Arabic*, *Studia Islamica*, No. 84, 1996, pp. 35-66.
- <sup>38</sup>. Bloom, J.; *The Mosque of the Qarafa in Cairo*, p 16.
- <sup>39</sup>. For more information on cemeteries' visiting evolution, read:
- Taylor, C.; *In the Vicinity of the Righteous, Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt*, Brill, New York, 1998.
- <sup>40</sup>. Goldziher, I.; *On the Veneration of the Dead in Paganism and Islam*, *Muslim Studies*, Vol. 1, Chicago, 1966, pp. 209-239.
- <sup>41</sup>. Williams, C.; *The Cult of 'Alid Saints in the Fatimid Monuments of Cairo, Part II, The Mausolea*, *Muqarnas*, Vol. 3, 1985, p 39.
- <sup>42</sup>. An overview on the first funerary monuments was conducted by Yusuf Raghīb, where he mentioned a funerary monument erected in the year 7/628- 629, for one of the Prophet's *ṣaḥābī Abū Baṣīr* who died before joining the Prophet in Madina and most probably, his companions, newly converted to Islam, built this *darīḥ* ignoring the Prophet's prescriptions concerning the funerary constructions. Another example is a funerary mosque erected in 39/659-660 for Muḥammad bin Abī Bakr, where his head was buried on the site of his martyrdom, this first funerary mosque was demolished under the rule of Muḥammad 'Alī.
- Raghīb, Y.; *Les Premiers Monuments Funéraires de l'Islam*, *AnIsl* 9, le Caire, 1970, pp 21-25.
- <sup>43</sup>. the Shī'ā alleged that it was destroyed by Hārūn al- Rashīd, an accusation that was never mentioned outside the *imāmī* sources.
- <sup>44</sup>. This maṣhad contained a primitive miḥrāb which was still in place by the VI/XI century under the debris covering it.
- <sup>45</sup>. *Ibid.*; pp. 28- 30.
- <sup>46</sup>. According to Maqrīzī, on 'īd al- Fitr, Fridays and on leaving or entering the palace, the caliphs called on their predecessor graves.
- Al- Maqrīzī, *Taqī ad- Dīn Abi al- 'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Alī* (d. 854 H.); *al- Mawā'iz wal I'tibār bi Zikr al- Ḥiṭaṭ wal Athār*, 2 vols, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut, vol.2, p 125.
- <sup>47</sup>. This name "turbat al- za'farān" derived from the custom of anointing the tombs with that substance.

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- Williams, C.; The Cult of 'Alid Saints, p 39.
- <sup>48</sup>. Grabar, O.; The Earliest Islamic Commemorative Structures, Notes and Documents, *Jerusalem*, Vol. IV, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005,
- <sup>49</sup>. Bloom, J. M.; The Mosque of the Qarafa in Cairo, p. 17.
- <sup>50</sup>. She was the daughter of al- Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiqibn Muḥammad al- Bāqir ibn 'Alī Zayn al- 'Ābidīn ibn al- Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and the sister of Yaḥya al- Ṣabīh.
- <sup>51</sup>. Al- Ṭabāṭabā family, prominent descendants of al- Ḥasan, was buried in this maṣhad.
- Yeomans, R.; The Art and Architecture of Islamic Cairo, Garnet Publishing Limited, London, 2006, p 66.
- <sup>52</sup>. Creswell, K.A.C.; Muslim Architecture of Egypt, Oxford, 1952, pp. 11-15.
- <sup>53</sup>. Williams, C.; The Cult of 'Alid Saints, pp. 40-41.
- <sup>54</sup>. Erecting a shrine after a dream was not extraordinary at that time, this kind of supernatural interventions was a common motive for the religious constructions of Islam.
- Ibid.; p. 44.
- <sup>55</sup>. Five is a significant number in the Ismā'īlī doctrine since it refers to the number of the people of the cloak, Muḥammad, 'Alī, Fāṭima, al- Ḥasan and al- Ḥussayn.
- Corbin, H.; Histoire de la Philosophie Islamique, Gallimard, Paris, 1986, pp. 111-116.
- <sup>56</sup>. According to the Shī'ī doctrine, this form present a significant religious indication, the name "Muḥammad", the Prophet in whom all the prophets are contained and who is the seal of the Prophets, is repeated six times, in reference to the days of the world's creation, and on the seventh day, it would be the seed of "'Alī", the *īmām* who is in all the *īmāms*, and who would bring the reign of God on Earth.
- <sup>57</sup>. Williams, C.; The Cult of the Alid Saints, pp. 45- 47.
- <sup>58</sup>. Makarem, S. N.; Political Doctrine of the Isma'ilis, Caravan Books, New York, 1977, p 30.
- <sup>59</sup>. Al- Sayyida Nafīsa ibnat al- imām al- Ḥassan al- Anwar ibn Zaydibn al- imām al- Ḥassan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.
- Maher, S.; Masāgid Misr we Awliā'uha aṣ- Ṣāliḥīn, al- Maḡlis al- A'lā lil- Ṣu'ūn al- Islāmiyya, 1st edition, Cairo, 1983, p 122.
- <sup>60</sup>. Grabar, O.; Earliest Commemorative Structures, pp. 90-91.
- <sup>61</sup>. Williams, C.; Islamic Monuments in Cairo: The Practical Guide, the American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, 1985, p 121.
- see: Ragib, Y.; "Une Description Arabe Inédite du Mausolée d'al- Sayyida Nafisa au Caire", Arabica 3, 1976, pp37-41.

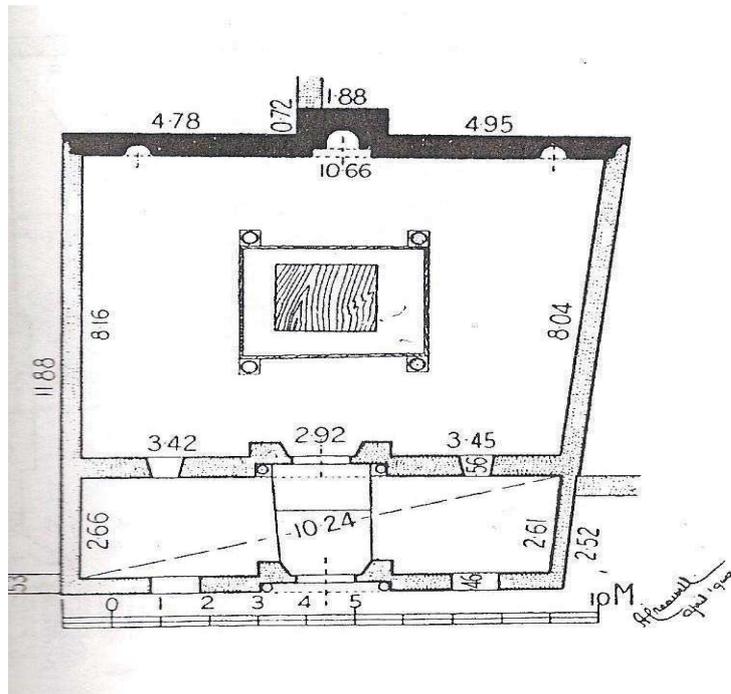
<sup>62</sup>. القرآن الكريم، سورة الأحزاب، الآية 22.

<sup>63</sup>. Though the tombs of the *īmāms* ancestors were venerated by the court on official occasions.

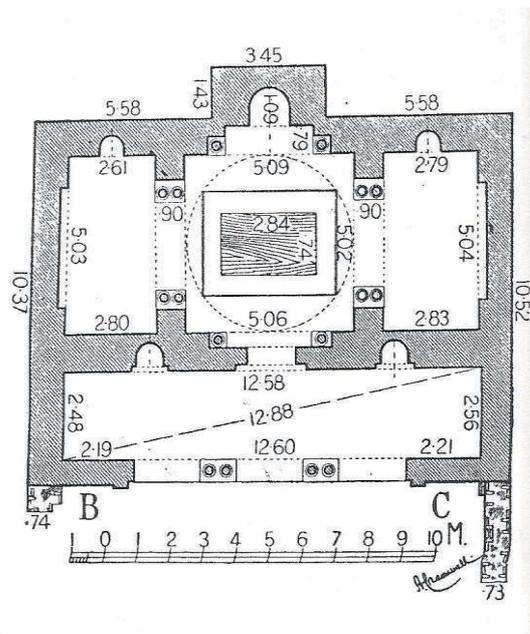
### التأثير العقائدي على وظيفة العمارة الجنائزية في مصر الفاطمية

يتناول البحث العقيدة الشيعية وأثرها على العمارة الجنائزية خلال الخلافة الفاطمية، ويلقي الضوء على مفهوم الإمامة والقداسة التي يضفيها الشيعة على أئمتهم، وهي عقيدة كان لها أثرها الواضح على بناء الأضرحة التي شيدت لتخليد ذكرى أئمة الشيعة. وقد كانت تلك القداسة هي مبعث ظهور عدد كبير من الأضرحة (المشاهد) في القاهرة الفاطمية والتي بنيت كمدافن لآل البيت، و لكن على الرغم من ذلك فإن الكثير منها كانت مجرد (مشاهد رؤيا). وكانت زيارة المقابر- وبالأخص قبور الأئمة- مقبولة بل وتعد من دعائم المذهب الشيعي، وهو طقس ظلت له مكانته وكان يعد من الأنشطة الطقسية الرئيسية طوال العصور الوسطى، كما يعرض البحث أيضاً الدور المحوري الذي لعبته المرأة في نشر المذهب الشيعي. ويركز البحث على تحليل أثر العقيدة الشيعية على العمارة الجنائزية الفاطمية ووظيفتها من خلال تناول المنظور الديني والبعث السياسي، كما يتعرض لأمثلة من الأضرحة الفاطمية الباقية بمدينة القاهرة.

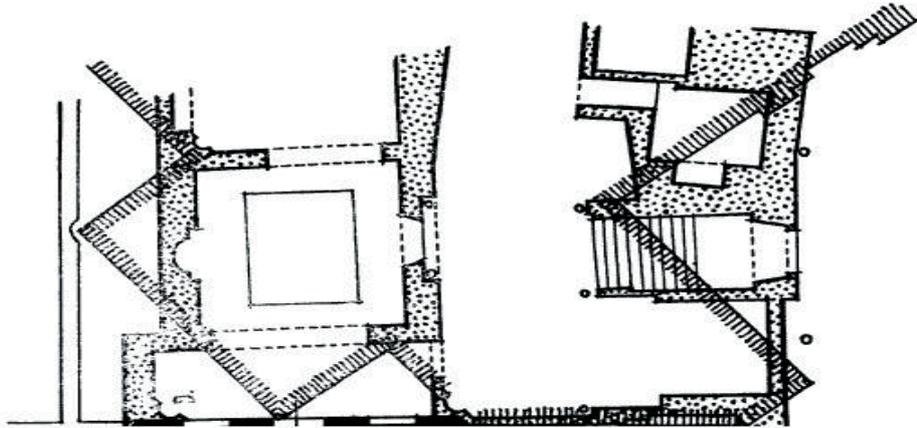
الكلمات الدالة: تأثير العقيدة، العمارة الجنائزية، مصر الفاطمية



**Plan 1 – Mašhad Umm Kulthūm – Horizontal plan**  
 (Creswell, K.C.A.; Al- ‘Imāra al- Islāmiyya fi Misr, Vol. 1, Fig. 165)



**Plan 2- Mašhad al- Sayyida Rukayya- Horizontal plan**  
 (Creswell, K.A.C.; Al- ‘Imāra al- Islāmiyya fi Misr, Vol. 1, Fig. 142)



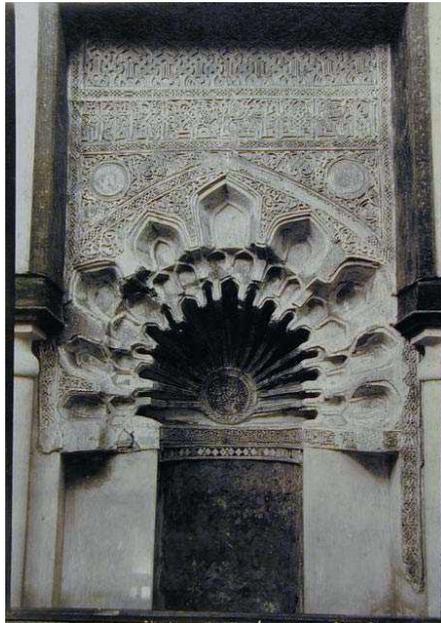
Plan 3 – Mašhad as-Sayyida Nafisa

(Russell, D.; Note on the Cemetery of the Abbasid Caliphs of Cairo and the Shrine of Saiyida Nafisa, *Ars Islamica*, Vol. 6, No.2, 1939, Fig. 1)



Plate 1 - Mašhad Umm Kulthum (main mihrāb)

(<http://archnet.org/sites/2249>)



**Plate 2- Mašhad al- Sayyida Rukayya (main miḥrāb)**  
(Creswell, K.A.C.; *Al- 'Imāra al- Islāmiyya fi Misr*, Vol. 1, plate 119 A)



**Plate 3- Mašhad al- Sayyida Rukayya (epigraphic decoration – main miḥrāb)**  
(Williams, C.; *The Cult of the Alid Saints in the Fatimid Monuments of Cairo, Part II the Mausolea, Muqarnas*, Vol. 3, 1985, Fig. 8)

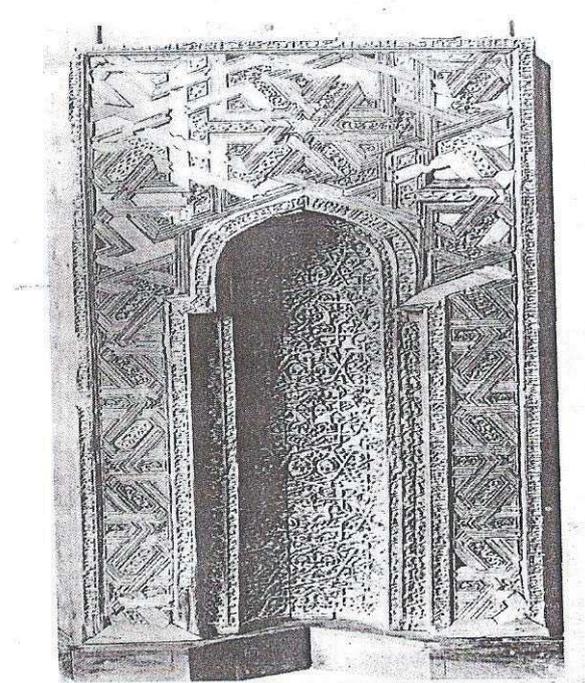


Plate 4- Mašhad as- Sayyida Nafisa – Main mihrāb  
(Creswell, K.A.C.; *Al- 'Imāra al- Islāmiyya fi Misr*, Vol. 1, plate 120 C)