

# CAIRO II

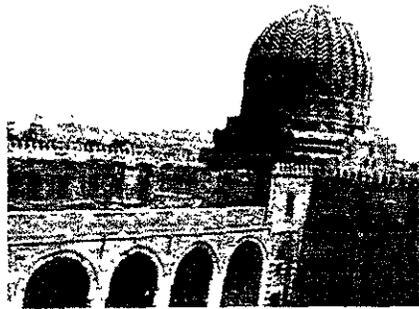
Information supplement From :  
Institut Français D'architecture

## The twelfth century: The Cairo of Salah al-Din

The arrival of Salah al-Din in 1176 opened up a new chapter in the history of the development of the city of Cairo. From this period on, it was no longer the town that changed location, but the seat of political power. The city of Cairo, while in full expansion and overflowing its own walls, gained full stability. Salah al-Din abandoned the seat of Shi'ite power in the very heart of Cairo in order to construct a real fortress, Al-Qala'a (the Citadel), on the Muqattam Heights to the south of the Fatimid town. Egypt had only just emerged from the Crusades, which underlined the necessity of having the town or the towns fortified by walls. And for the first time a project to enclose all the towns within the same walls was proposed (and for the first time) this enclosure was to boast of true fortifications. The project had foreseen a prolongation of the eastern wall as far as Muqattam and the extension of the fortifications eastward as far as the Nile and along the river up to the fort of Qasr al-Shami. A third wall was to join the east of Fustat to the Citadel. All this work was not accomplished during Salah al-Din's rule - only the northern section extended as far as the Nile. The wall that was to link Fustat to al-Qahira was never finished and the other, which was to run along side the Nile, was over started.

The decision to install the military quarters and the seat of power in the citadel, which had become a real fortified castle, was a strategic one. But this was not the first construction to be erected on those heights. In the ninth century, the Tulunids had already built a castle with a race course at the foot of the hill. However, what Salah al-Din had built was a true fortress including a garrison and residential quarters for the soldiers.

The achievements during the Ayyubid era greatly affected the growth of the town. The emergence of the Citadel and the shifting of the seat of power towards the south as well as the unification of al-Qahira and Fustat caused the town to expand in that direction. This expansion



continued later under the reign of the Mamluks and culminated only when all the land between Fustat and al-Qahira was built up. The town then spread uniformly in the south as far as Qasr al-Shami fort. The extension of the northern wall to the Nile also gave the town room to expand in a north-westernly direction. Further out, in the south-west in the mid-eighteenth century, Malik al-Salih decided to build a castle and a fortress on the isle of Rawdah. The government dignitaries followed the Ayyubid prince and the island became populated.

### The Citadel

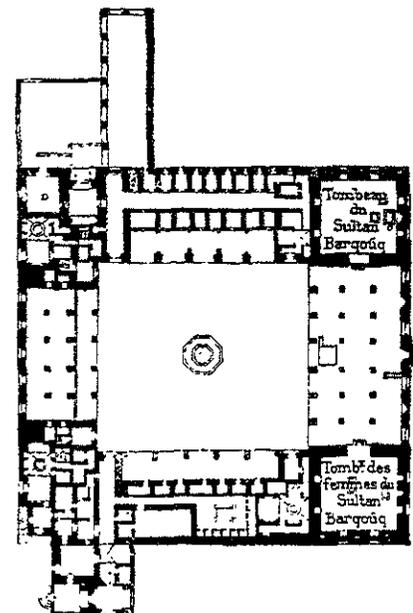
From the twelfth century onwards, the site on which the Citadel stood gained importance. This spot continued to represent the seat of power throughout the Mamluk and the Ottoman era up until the arrival of Mohammad Ali. The Citadel was comprised of three adjoining and distinct sections, each enclosed by a rampart and watch-towers. The construction of the Citadel began in 1167 and was finished in 1207. It contained a castle, a palace with its annex buildings, where the sultan held audience, armeries, stables and houses. During the Mamluk era, the sultans Beibars, Qalawun and Nasir Muhammad, added many other buildings to the town. The Qalawun mosque (1318-35) has survived until today.

The provision of water was ensured through two wells and an aqueduct which was diverted from the Nile at the tip of the Khalij (the existing Fum al-Khalij) to reach the Citadel. The Ottoman Turks also brought about considerable changes

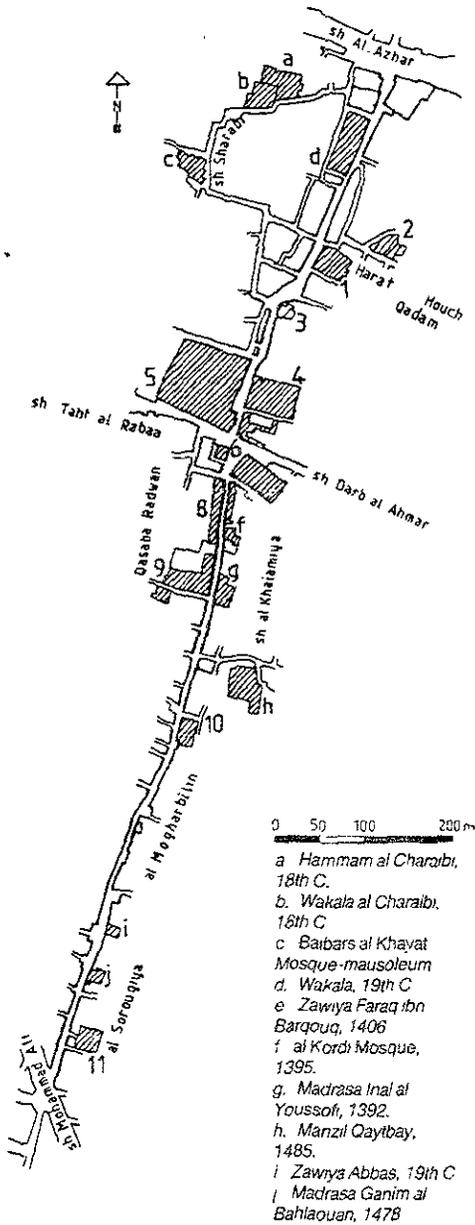
in one section of the enclosure and rearranged certain of the buildings. Later, in the nineteenth century, Mohammed Ali destroyed a large section of the old palace in order to build his mosque.

### The thirteenth century: Mamluk Cairo

The Mamluk era, which lasted over three centuries, from 1250 to 1517, was an important period of construction and urbanisation for the city of Cairo. One could point to three distinct settlements; Al-Qahira, the Citadel and Fustat. The town witnessed an uninterrupted surge of construction within, and a massive expansion without. As it was mentioned before, the emergence of the Citadel in the south of the Fatimid town resulted in an expansion of the town in that direction. Important constructions sprung up between the Bab Zuwayla and the Citadel, around the Darb Al-Ahmar street. Still further to the south, the town extended to fill the region that stood between the Citadel and Fustat, thus bringing the two conurbations closer together. In the north, al-Qahira spilled over its boundaries, set during



**Al-Mouiz  
Secteur sud**



- a Hammam al Charabi, 18th C.
- b. Wakala al Charabi, 18th C
- c Baibars al Khayat Mosque-mausoleum
- d. Wakala, 19th C
- e Zawiya Faraq ibn Barqouq, 1406
- f al Kordi Mosque, 1395.
- g. Madrasa Inal al Youssofi, 1392.
- h. Manzil Qaytbay, 1485.
- i Zawiya Abbas, 19th C
- j Madrasa Ganim al Bahlaouan, 1478



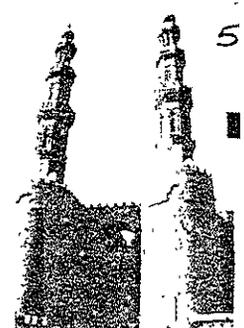
1. al-Kakanani mosque, 1735  
3. Mohammad Ali Sabti, 1820



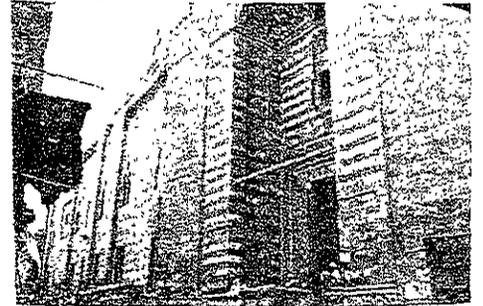
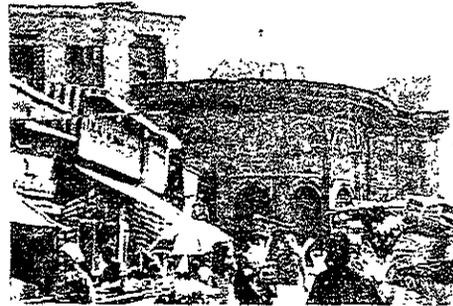
2. Bayt Gamal al 'Uin al Dahibi, 1637



4. Wafisa al-Bayda Sabil-Kuhab and Wekala, 1796



6. Bab zuwaylah, 1092



5. al-Mu'ayyad Mosque, 1415

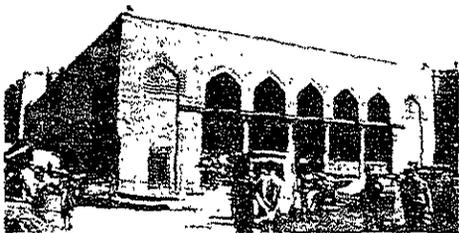
the Fatimid rule and an important district, called Hisainniyya, emerged on the other side of the Bab al-Futuh and the northern wall. This important district continued to expand even later under the Ottoman rule. The expansion was always northwards along the historical axis. Sultan Baybars had, in 1266-69, built a large mosque in that district (whose only remnant today is its wall which stands in the Al-Zahir district). In the west, the expansion of the town was equally considerable; large parts of the reclaimed land on the other side of the Khalij were built upon. In this land of marshes and canals, parcels of land were distributed amongst the emirs, who built large country houses and gardens.

The extension of the western part of the town started with constructions that developed around the two transversal axes, which connected the Fatimid town to the Khalij and beyond that to the Nile. In the north, the extension started from Bal al-Shairiyya towards Bab al-Bahar and connected them to Bulaq; the other, in the south, started from Bab al-Kharg towards Bab al-Luq and terminated in the same port (Bulaq). This movement of expansion eventually developed around the marshes and the canals. The isle of Rawdah, on the west bank of the Nile also witnessed the spread of country houses and gardens.

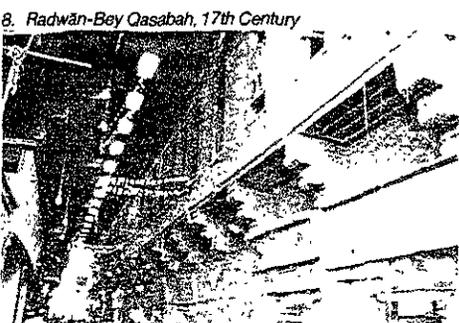
Inside the town, once the two Fatimid palaces had been destroyed (this demolition work had started under the 'Ayyubids), construction work mushroomed rapidly.

On the site of the two palaces, a number of buildings were erected of which many have survived and bear witness to the importance of architecture during that era. A large part of the west side of the existing Al-Mu'izz street, (the present Al-Mu'izz street, which had previously been called

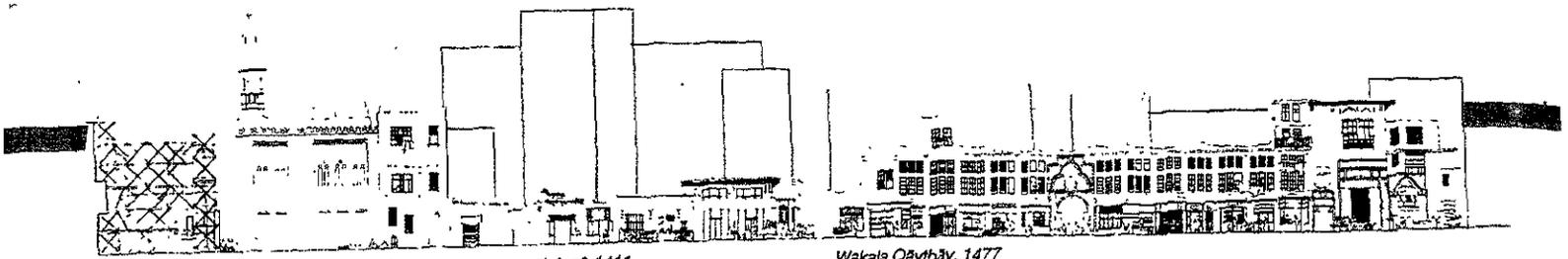
Bien Al-Qasrine had kept its name for a very long time after the demolition of the palaces, but later changed to al-Nahsin, the "street of boiler makers") where the western palace perviously stood, was rebuilt by constructions commissioned by Qalawun: this included the Nasir Qalawun Mausoleum (1295-1304), the madrasa and the maristan (which no longer exists) of Sultan Qalawun (1284-5), the mosque of Sultan Barque (1348-86) and the Kamliya madrasa (1225). Similarly, on the site of the eastern palace, various edifices were built such as the Beshtak Palace (1334-39), Bayt al-Qadi (of which there only remains a maq'ad and today this looks onto a large square, which had originally been the courtyard of this enormous house), the Khan al-Khalil, built at the end of the twelfth century under the reign of Sultan al-Ashraf Salah al-Din Khalil, and several other buildings. The Mamluks did not only build on the sites of the two palaces, but erected edifices and buildings throughout the town. Commerce gained great importance and a large number of wekalas, caravanserais and khans were built. A large part of the trading was centred around the principal north-south axis of the town. A number of markets joined together to form an entity and gave their names to the street junctions, on which they stood. Similarly outside the town, in the south and the west around the two transversal axes, other markets came together. Finally, the port of Bulaq in the west, played a significant role in the construction boom that took place in that area. It was an equally important centre for trade, and grew rapidly to become one of the most important ports of the Ottoman era. If during the post-Ayyubid era, the political power was transferred



7. as-Salih Tala' Mosque, 1160

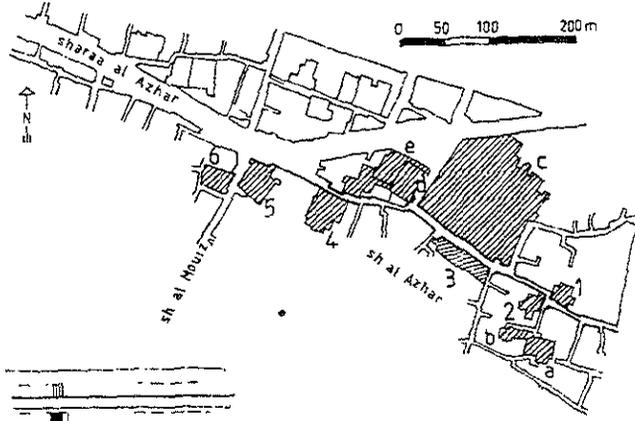
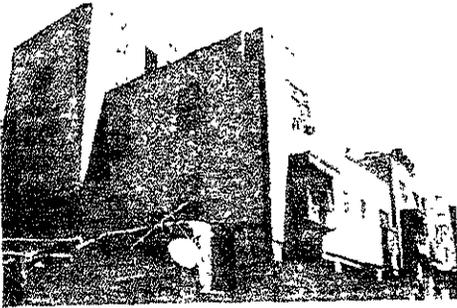


8. Radwan-Bey Qasabah, 17th Century

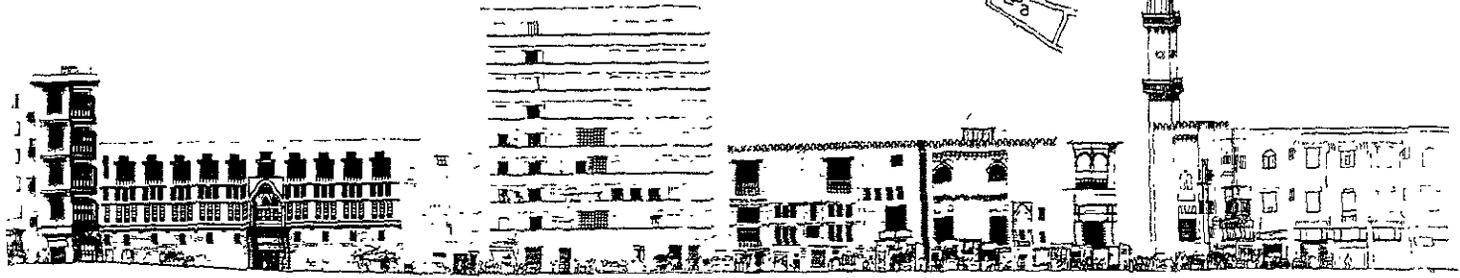


Bayt Zaynab Khatūn, 1468-1713    Mosque-mausoleum al-Aynī, 1411    Wakala Qāyṭbāy, 1477  
 Scale drawing by C. Jouenne and P. Drotcharen, diploma project "Urban rehabilitation in Cairo", 1984

5. Bayt Mustafā Ga'far, 1713 and bayt as-Sihaynū, 1648-1796



Bayt Sitt Wasīfa, 1664  
 Bayt al-Herāwī, 1731  
 Al-Azhar mosque, 970  
 Khan al-zarākīsha, 16th c.



Madrasa al-Ghūrī, 1504

Wakala al-Ghūrī, 1504

to the Citadel, in turn, it was now around the Qasaba, or the principal axis inside the Fatimid town that all the economic and cultural activities were concentrated. These activities took place around the theological university of al-Azhar, that was not far from the complex that Sultan Al-Ghuri had built in 1509. **The sixteenth century: Ottoman Cairo**  
 The appearance of Cairo did not change

very much during the Ottoman era, which lasted from 1517 to 1798. The expansion that had started under the Mamluks continued and new districts that had started to be settled in the thirteenth century grew and their population rose. On the west, where the town had already reached the Khalij, the town spread even further towards the Nile. The port of Bulaq became even more important, and with the impetus from new merchandise and trading

with Europe, the Ottomans used it as a transit port. As a result of its location as a large commercial centre and the focus of economic activity, a number of wekalas, khans and caravanserais as well as a shipyard emerged and alongside it a number of related businesses blossomed. Construction work that had been started in this western section under the Mamluks and the existence of two axes leading to Bulaq, only speeded up the growth and the urbanisation of this region. Around the Birkah al-Azbakiyya, a large number of big residential houses were put up and it became a leisure resort. The same applies for the Nasiriyya district, which was near Saiyda Zeinab and Birkat al-Fil. From the eighteenth century onwards, the construction boom gained further momentum around and beyond the Khalij. The southern districts that had also expanded in the fourteenth century, spread along the two urban axes in the eight-



15. Wakala Qāyṭbāy, 1481 and al-Hakim Mosque, 990



18. Sabīl-Kuttāb Oḍā Bāshī, 1673

16. Masjid al-Shohada, 19th c.    17. Khanṣāh al-Gāshankar, 1305

19. Wakala Dhu'l-Fiqār, 1673    20. Mosque of Marzūq al-Ahmadi, 17th c.

22. Khan al-Khalīl, 1511

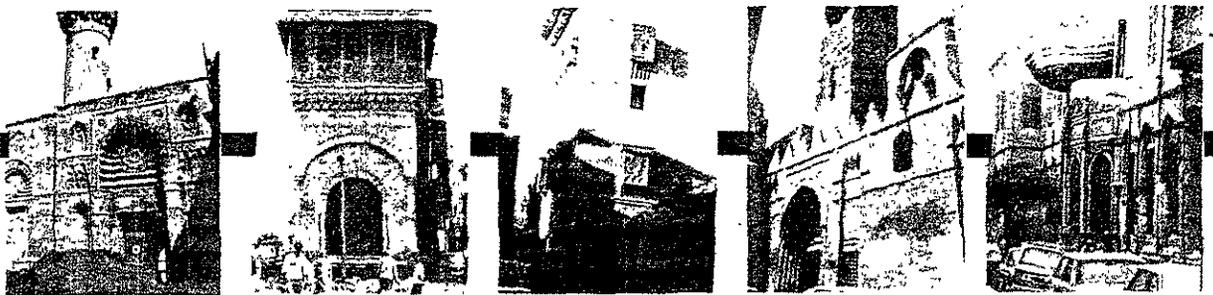


eenth century: the first, on the east, started from Bab Zuwaylah and rejoined the citadel by passing Al-Darb Al-Ahmar and Tabbana, and the second was the continuation of the principal axis of the town from Bab Zuwaylah to the old town of Ibn Tulun and ending up in Fustat. Inside the town itself, the Ottomans carried out some quite important works like the one attributed to Emir Radwan Bey (1736), which stood to the south of Bab Zuwaylah and ran along the principal axis, called, at this section, "Qasabt Radwan". This urban complex, a large part of which still exists today, comprised of a palace, rab's (on both sides of the street), a wekala and an indoor market. The urban development of the district went hand in hand with a surge in economic activities, which can be seen by the emergence of a large number of commercial buildings.

Whithin the town, around the main axis, trading increased and hence the number of wekalas, khans and caravan-serais did also, to the extent, that the rich traders and emirs were forced to flee the town to settle in more spacious districts on the west, where they were able to build large residential homes and gardens. On the outside, new market places sprung up in the residential quarters and the two axes linking the town to Bulaq developed into important commercial poles.

**The cemeteries**

The cemeteries of "The cities of the dead" - now changed to "The cities of the dead and the living" (as some people now live there - which is a controversial matter in Cairo, as elsewhere), presented, for a very long time, an interesting aspect from an architectural and urbanistic point of view. Two of them were particularly important as they contained a large number of historical monuments: the Qaitbay cemetery on the east, and the Imam al Chafei in the south of the ancient Fatimid city. They occupied a sandy, desert area, at the foot of the Muqattam heights, outside the walls of the old town. Today



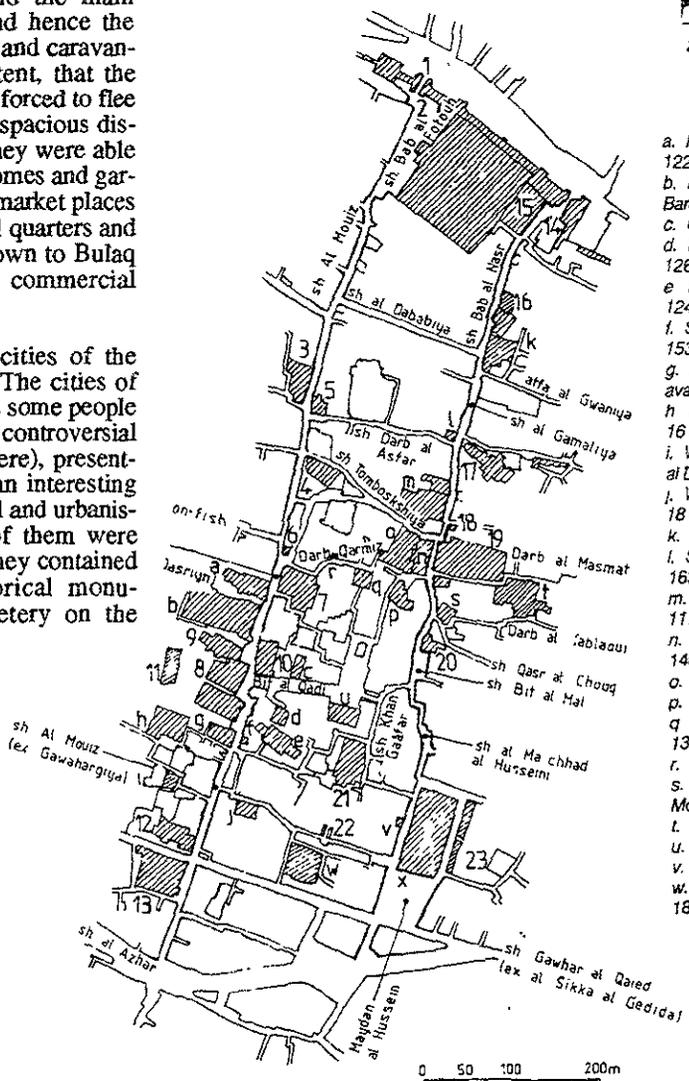
4. 1839 al-Aqmar mosque, 1125  
 6. Sabit-Kuttab Kathkuda, 1744  
 7. Beshlak Palace, 1334  
 9. Madrasa an-Nasr Muhammad, 1295  
 10. Sabit-Kuttab Muhammad Ali, 1828



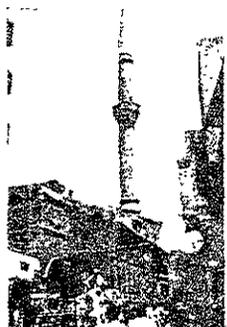
a modern artery that runs parallel to the aqueduct separates the cemeteries from the wall. The cemeteries are today real cities laid out in a grid formation. The tombs lie at ground level of the mausolea, whose forms lend themselves to habitation, and even to building upon them, so that simple transformation render them liveable. These "homes of the dead" are calle



11. New hospital in Qala'un, 1915  
 21. Wakala Waqf al-Haramam, 1856  
 23. Collective housing 1950



- a. Madrasa Kamiliya, 1225-1752
- b. Mosque Madrasa Barquouq, 1384
- c. Qa'ada Kathkoda, 1545.
- d. Madrasa Zahir Baibars, 1262.
- e. Madrasa Salih Ayyoub, 1243.
- f. Sabit-Kuttab Khosrou Pacha, 1535.
- g. Hammam al Nahasin, avant 1800
- h. Mosque Taghrn Bardi, 16 C.
- i. Wakala Sabit-Kuttab Gamal al Din, 1637.
- j. Wakala Badriya Chahin, 18 C.
- k. Wakala Odabachi, 1673.
- l. Sabit-Kuttab Qitasbay, 1630.
- m. Khanqa Saaid al Saada, 1173
- n. Mosque-madrasa Ostadar, 1408.
- o. Wakala Bazaraa, 17 C
- p. Madrasa Mitqai, 1348.
- q. Madrasa Tatar al Higaziya, 1348.
- r. Mausolee Sinan, 1585.
- s. Mosque Mahmoud Moharram, 1792.
- t. Palais Mosafirkhana, 1779.
- u. Maqaad Mamay.
- v. Sabit Ahmad Pacha. 1864
- w. Wakala Solayman Aqa, 1819.



3. Sabit-Kuttab Sulayman Aga, 1839

## ALAM AL BENAA

"hoch" in Arabic, which can also mean court.

In the fourteenth century the Mamluks had started to build magnificent tombs, which from this period onwards no longer constituted a mere mausoleum but real architectural complexes. The Barqouq Khanga, for example, built for Nasr al Din Farg in the Qaitby cemetery between 1400-1411, was adorned with two mausoleums (one for his father and one for himself) and a sabil Kuttab.

The town of Qaitby, which had lent its name to the cemetery, was built in 1472 and was also a good example of a true urban complex. It contained a mausoleum with a sabil-kuttab, a rab (collective houses and shops), a maq'ad (reception hall) and a drinking-trough, and was all enclosed by a wall, of which the portals still exist.

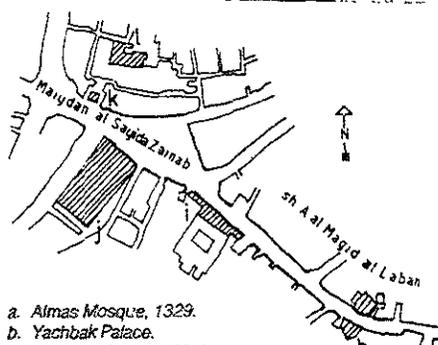
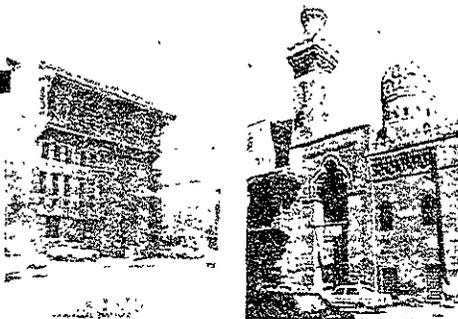
These two types of constructions, with the school and the fountain on the one hand, and the theological school and the houses on the other, show that the tradition of living in a cemetery probably goes back a very long way, but it was certainly within a different context.

#### Cairo in the 1800's

At the start of the nineteenth century, just before the arrival of Mohammad Ali, the town had still retained its medieval features. It measured 793 hectares in area and even 883 hectares if you included its two ports, Bulaq, in the north and Hisr (in ancient Cairo) in the south. It had 263,700 inhabitants. The town itself - that is from north-east to north-west - was 2400 metres wide with a circumference of 240,000 metres. A major axis running from north to south divided the town in two portions, and measured 4600 metres. From Bab Al-Hussayniya in the north to Sayida Zainab in the south, seventy one gates protected the town. There were a number of inner gates. Amongst the exterior gates, twelve were important: four in the south, two in the east, four in the north and two in the west (today there are only two gates in the north, Bab al-Futuh and Bab al-Nasr and one inner gate, Bab Zuwaylah). Although the gates no longer exist, some of the districts have still kept their names (Bab al-Hadid, Bab al-Luq, bab al-Wazir...).

There were twelve lakes on the outskirts of the town, of which the two largest were the Al-Azbakiya lake and the Al-Fil.

Cairo was divided into 53 boroughs (harah), linked by eight major roads: three longitudinals (the most important one being the main north-south axis) and five transversals, three of which ran from



- a. Almas Mosque, 1329.
- b. Yachbak Palace.
- c. Qaitbay Mosque, 1413.
- d. Khanqa Chaykhau, 1355
- e. Sabil Amir Abdallah, 1719
- f. Bit of Kirichya, 1631
- Bit Amna Bent Salim, 1540.
- g. Lagin Mosque, 1449.
- h. Sabil Yousof Bey, 1634.
- i. Sabil al Monastiriy, 1714.
- j. Sayida Zainab Mosque, 1883.
- k. Sabil-Kuttab Sultan Mostafa, 1753.
- l. Bayt al Sirnary, 1794.

the Nile to the citadel. The town was surrounded by gardens, orchards and two large cemeteries, which stretched over an area, half the size of the town itself.

Two canals flowed on the west, one bordering the town and called Khalij Mouiminin and the second was situated between the first and the Nile.

Some parts of the surrounding wall of the town, as it stood in the twelfth century (under Salah al-Din), was engulfed by the north and westward expansion of the town, whereas the eastern and southern boundaries remained intact. This ancient wall, that is no longer in its complete form, was made up of a large wall fortified by round and square-shaped towers and equipped with gates, many of which had watch-towers and turrets. Inside the town, different ethnic communities were grouped together in districts, each containing their own place of worship, like the Coptic quarters, Harat al-Nasara, in the south of Azbakiyah square, the Greek quarters, Harat al-Roum, in the east of Sakhariya, the Jewish quarters, Harat al-Yahoud, between the Qalawun maristan and al-Muski, where there were ten synagogues (all located in very narrow streets), and finally Harat al-Afrang on the west of the canal next to al-Muski, where the Catholic churches were situated. ❀

## CPAS NEWS

\* Center of Planning & Architectural Studies has won the second & third prize by halves in the competition of designing the General Hospital in Ismailia of 500 beds capacity. CPAS has cooperated with Eng. Abu-Bakr Afifi due to his previous experience in designing hospitals. Also, the Architectural Dept. has handed over many architectural competitions during the last period.

\* Dr. Mohamed Abdelbaki has shared in the first conference of Ain-Shams University about Engineering & Environment, with his research "The Need to an Environmental Introduction for Planning the New Urban Communities". The conference was held at the guesthouse in the university during 9-10 May, 1998.

\* Dr. Gouda Ghanem, Head of Structural Unit at CPAS, was promoted to Assistant Professor. Administration of CPAS with the employees have celebrated in his honor.

\* Charitable Seweedy Association has contracted with the Execution Supervision Unit at CPAS for permanent supervision on the charitable complex that was designed by CPAS. Eng. Osama El-Nemr, Head of the Unit, is preparing the supervision team and work schedule in the project.

\* Editing Staff in the Magazine is preparing the second part from the Magazine Index after the first part that was printed. The second part will be specific for mentioning the Magazine issues including projects about housing, hospitals, educational buildings, airports...

\* Dr. Mohamed Abdelbaki is visiting many architects and consulting offices to get acquainted with their architectural & urban projects to choose the distinctive among them to publish on the Magazine pages in cooperation with the Editing Staff.