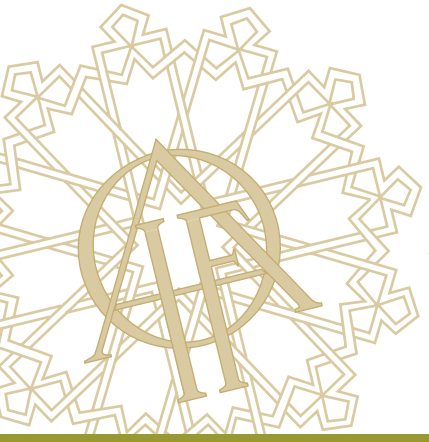
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Nelly Hanna

Bayt al-Isṭambullī: an Introduction to the Cairene Middle Class House of Ottoman Period [avec 4 planches].

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BAYT AL-IṢTAMBULLĪ :

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CAIRENE MIDDLE CLASS HOUSE OF THE OTTOMAN PERIOD *

Nelly HANNA

The middle class house is a family home, in which lived the extended family, including parents, children (married and unmarried), uncles, widowed or divorced aunts. This pattern, prevalent until recent times, has now disappeared and the houses that were the architectural expression of this way of life are now also disappearing [1]. The pattern of the extended family prevailed over the high and middle social strata [2], but whereas the palaces are to a certain degree protected from destruction, houses of the middle class, for various reasons, are not. Studies on Cairene housing have in general tended to concentrate on palaces [3]. This tendency is reflected in the houses listed by the state as national monuments. The *Index of Mohammedan Monuments* includes such houses as Bayt al-Suhaymi (*Index* n° 339) and Bayt al-Kridliya (*Index* n° 321) but has on the whole failed to list the middle class house [4]. Not only has this category of housing been

* My acknowledgements to Mrs. Laila ʿAli Ibrahim and Dr Geoffrey King for their helpful comments on the manuscript.

[1] Evidence for the family house at an early date is contained in the Geniza documents, see S.D. Goitein, « Urban Housing in Fatimid and Ayyubid times », *Studia Islamica*, vol. 47, 1978, p. 15.

[2] Very little is known of the social patterns or the architecture of the poorer urban class.

[3] E. Pauty, *Les Palais et Maisons d'époque musulmane au Caire*, Cairo, 1932; J. Revault et B. Maury, *Palais et Maisons du Caire du 14e au 18e siècles*, 3 vols. Cairo, 1975-1979; A. Lezine, *Trois Palais d'époque ottomane au Caire*, Cairo, 1972 and, « Les Salles nobles des palais mamelouks », *Annales Islamologiques*, vol. X, 1972, 63-148.

[4] Of the houses of Ibrāhīm Aġā in Darb al-Ahmar, which belong to this category, only the façades were listed (*Index* nos 595, 613 and 619) because they formed a harmonious ensemble with the street. The Members of the *Comité de Conservation des monuments de l'art arabe* specifically noted that the architecture of these houses was of no interest (*Exercises* 1946-53, Facs. 40, Report 890, p. 187). Concerning the building called Rabʿ Ibrāhīm Aġā, see M. Zakariyā, « Le *Rabʿ* de Tabbāna », *Annales Islamologiques*, vol. XVI, 1980, 275-297.

inadequately studied and catalogued, but what is more serious is the fact that it has not attracted the attention of restorers. Moreover with the decrease of *waqf* revenues these houses have passed on almost exclusively to the poorer class who are barely able to maintain them or to undertake the most basic repairs.

The middle class type of house under consideration was the dwelling of a strata of society that came between the upper middle class whose members (such as Ğamāl al-Dīn al-Ḏahabī) could live in houses that did not differ much from princely dwellings, and the lower middle class many of whom lived in *rabʿ*/tenement buildings. The category of people living in the middle class house had sufficient means to build or own a house and probably included a considerable proportion of merchants and scholars.

The purpose of this study is to record a middle class house because they are disappearing very fast. I have found eleven houses that can be classified in this category : Bayt al-Isṭambullī at 6 Ḥārat Qasawāt, Būlāq; the two houses of Ibrāhīm Aġā in Darb al-Aḥmar at 27 and 45 Bāb al-Wazīr (façades listed under *Index* n^{os} 619 and 595); Bayt al-Ğawharī at 8 Zuqāq al-Ğawharī, Mūskī; 12 Darb Qirmiz, Ğamāliyya [1]; Bayt al-Dabbūssīya at 16 Darb Masʿūd, Būlāq; 33 Darb Masʿūd, Būlāq; Bayt Shaqrūn at 28 al-Kaʿkiyīn; 18 al-Dardīr; two other houses in Būlāq at 23 Darb al-Labbana and 2 Ḥārat Zaʿtara; of these I have chosen Bayt al-Isṭambullī, because it is representative of the middle class house and it is in relatively good condition [2].

Bayt al-Isṭambullī in its Physical and Social Setting

Bayt al-Isṭambullī is located in Būlāq, a suburb to the north west of Cairo, which from the 15th to the mid-19th centuries was the main port of the capital, receiving goods from Upper and Lower Egypt, Ottoman and European markets,

[1] Located opposite the Madrasa of Miṭqāl (*Index* n° 123) which was recently restored by the German Archaeological Institute under the supervision of Dr Michael Meinecke.

[2] The house was first introduced at the Seminar « Islamic Cairo : architectural conservation and urban development of the historic centre », which took place in October 1978 under the auspices of the Goethe Institute and the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo (proceedings to be published soon).

the Red Sea trade and part of the African trade [1]. It was thus a centre of intense commercial activity, where goods were stored, taxed and shipped. To house this activity, large numbers of *wikālas* (warehouses) were built, in particular in those parts that were near the river, which constituted the main artery of trade, and near the roads leading to and from Cairo.

The area where Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī stands must have been among the busiest parts of the town, precisely because of its proximity to a main thoroughfare, Sūq al-ʿAṣr, which is perhaps the equivalent in Ottoman Būlāq of the medieval *qaṣaba* (commerial thoroughfare) of Cairo (see fig. 1-2) [2].

As of the Circassian period (1382-1517), the enormous profits of this transit trade were monopolized by the Sultans and ruling princes, who could supervise their business from their residences in Cairo, some two to three kilometres away. During the Ottoman period (1517-1798), a merchant aristocracy, referred to by al-Ǧabartī as *aʿyān Būlāq,* emerged. Further testimony to the emergence of this group can be found in the *waqf* documents of the later Ottoman period, in which the founder is a resident of Būlāq, his property is in Būlāq and, very often, its income serves to support a religious institution in Bulaq, too. The *waqf* of Yūsuf Saʿīd, for instance, specifically refers to him as « min aʿyān tuggar ... Būlāq » (of the merchant aristocracy of Būlāq) [3]. Like their peers in Cairo, this group of people made their money from trade. But except for a few families, the most notable perhaps being the Ḫaššabs [4], the merchant families of Būlāq did not equal in wealth of power the great merchant families of Cairo, like the Sharaibis who made their money from the coffee trade [5].

[1] André Raymond, *Artisans et Commerçants au Caire au 18e siècle,* Damascus, 1973, vol. I p. 107-202; Terence Walz, *Trade Between Egypt and Bilād As-Sūdān 1700-1820,* Cairo, 1978, p. 67-68, 130; Estève, « Mémoires sur les finances de l'Egypte », *Description de l'Egypte,* Etat Moderne, Tome I, Paris 1809, p. 337-365.

[2] A Map of the extant monuments of Bulaq is included in Nelly Hanna, «Bulaq — An Endangered Area», to appear shortly in the *Proceedings of the Seminar on Islamic Cairo.*

[3] *Waqf of Yūsuf Saʿid,* Ministry of Waqf Archives, nº 947 dated 1114/1702, p. 6.

[4] al-Ǧabartī, *ʿAǧā'ib al-Aṯār,* Beirut, undated, vol. I p. 450 and André Raymond, *Artisans* vol. II, p. 686-687.

[5] For the obituary of Muḥammad al-Dādā al-Šarā'ibī, see al-Ǧabartī, *ʿAǧā'ib al-Āṯār,* vol. I, p. 136-137 and Aḥmad Šalabī ʿAbdu l-Ġanī al-ʿAynī, *Awḍaḥ al-Išārāt fī man Tawalla Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-Bāšāt,* éd. ʿAbdu l-Raḥīm ʿAbdu l-Raḥmān ʿAbdu l-Raḥīm, Cairo 1978, p. 443-445.

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A few rungs below the great merchant families were those like the builder of Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī [1]. Iṣṭambullī may have been the builder or an owner of the house. The identity of this person remains a mystery, since he is not mentioned in the chronicles and he has no traceable *waqf* document.

Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī in the Context of other Middle Class Houses

Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī presents a number of peculiarities. The fact that it is not built around a courtyard but on one side of an enclosure and that it is divided into living units makes its architecture different from Cairene palaces; at the same time, it is not a *rabʿ* (tenement building) : the structure of the unit is different; moreover, the use of some expensive materials such as granite columns and Anatolian tiles indicates that its inhabitants were wealthier than those of the *rabʿ*. In other features (reception area, cooking facilities, bath) Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī comes somewhere between the palace and the *rabʿ*.

It seems appropriate to examine these features in the light of other houses of the same type and to evolve a preliminary model for the middle class house, based on the architecture and the socio-economic patterns implied in this type of dwelling.

a) *Division into Living Units.*

This feature is common to all the middle class houses I visited. The middle class house usually has two floors above the ground floor which, like in all other types of Cairene dwelling, is not inhabited. Ground-floor rooms are either used for storage or, if they look to the street, as shops. The living units can vary in size and arrangement. A unit can consist of a single room with a small adjoining room used to prepare food (see fig. 5 unit 3); of a room and mezzanine (as in the house of Ibrāhīm Aġā at 45 Bāb al-Wazīr); or of several rooms (see fig. 4). In a one-room unit, the latrine may be situated outside the unit in a passage, but

[1] The different categories of people involved in trade, *tuǧǧār* (merchants), *mutasabbibīn* (traders) and *dallālīn* (agents) are discussed by T. Walz; *Trade Between Egypt and Bilād As-Sūdān*, p. 79-83.

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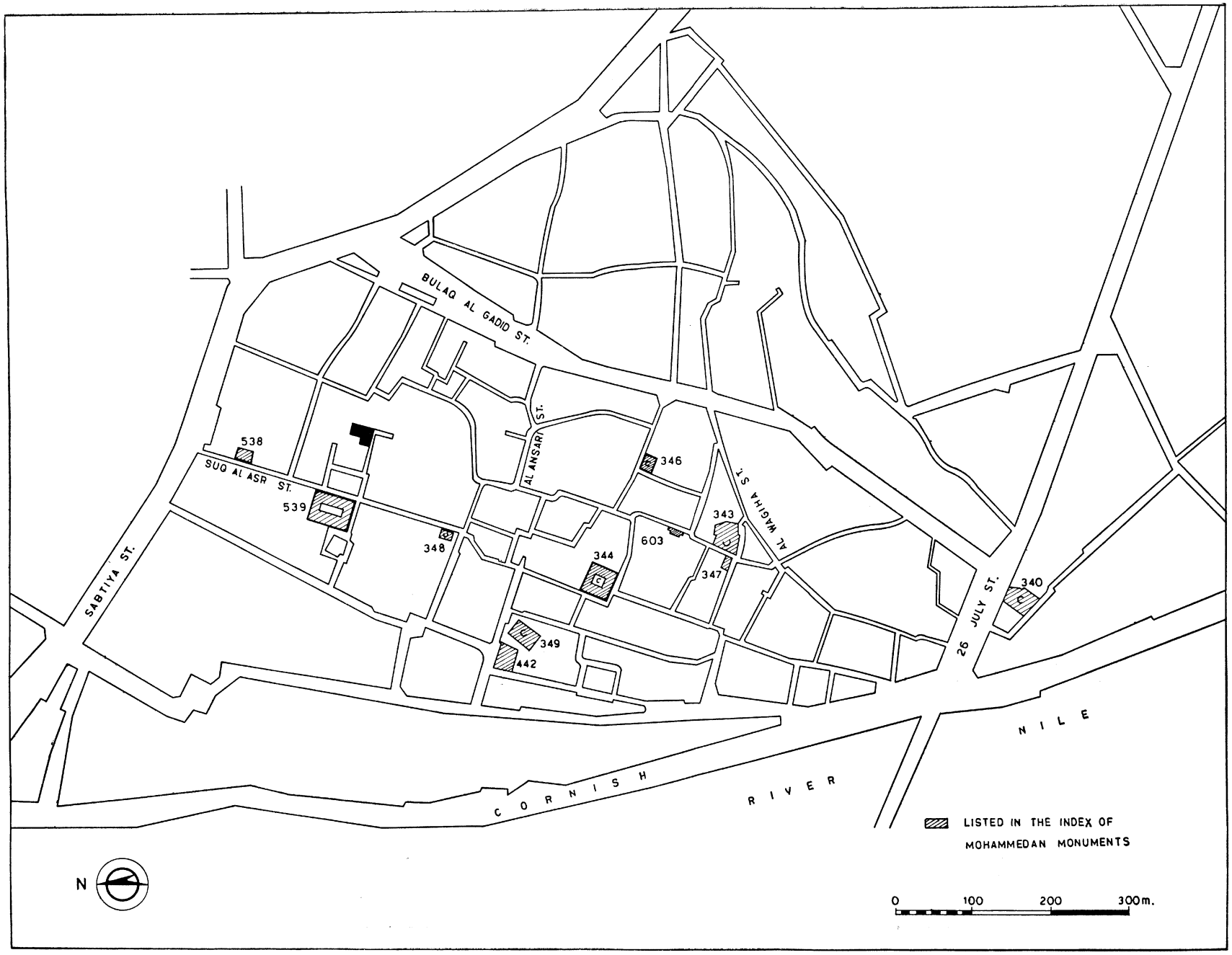


Fig. 1. — Map of Būlāq showing the 11 surviving monuments listed in the *Index of Mohammedan Monuments* and the location of Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī.



Fig. 2. — Location of Bayt al-Isṭambullī.

1. Rabʿ al-Ḫuzāma.
2. Wikālat Gul Muḥammad.
3. Wikālāt al-ʿĀsī (now destroyed).
4. Bayt al-Isṭambullī.
5. Wikālat Ibrāhīm Sarḥān.

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if it is larger, the latrine can be inside. Often each unit occupies a different floor level.

Because the *rab*ᶜ is also divided into living units, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between it and the middle class house. Although the actual unit of the *rab*ᶜ can be similar in plan to that in the middle class house (a one-room or two-room unit plus utilities) there are two important differences. First, the units of the *rab*ᶜ are usually identical in plan; secondly, where the middle class house can have some 3 to 5 units, in a *rab*ᶜ there may be up to 40-50 units, sometimes more [1].

Moreover, the *rab*ᶜ was built primarily as a form of investment and the units were rented out. This is not the case with middle class houses, where the units were meant to house the different members of the extended family and were not originally built to be rented out [2].

b) *The Courtyard.*

Several factors should be taken into consideration in the absence of an inner courtyard in Bayt al-Isṭambullī. As a general rule, middle class houses either have no courtyard or a small courtyard, which in a sense symbolizes the closer ties that the inhabitants of these houses had to street life. Facilities which in a palace were offered by a courtyard would have to be undertaken outside the house. The absence of a well, for instance, meant that people had recourse to the *saqqā'īn* (water sellers) and to the *sabīl* (public fountains); the absence of a mill or of storage space for cereals meant that they had to buy these on a daily basis.

Economic considerations : The absence of the courtyard, however, has more than a symbolic dimension. The main motive for having a small courtyard or none at all is economic : the desire to make optimal use of a given piece of land. The rents for house without courtyard were cheaper : Wilkinson advises prospective travellers that houses in Cairo

[1] Laila ʿAli Ibrahim, « Middle Class Living Units in Mamluk Cairo : Architecture and Terminology », *AARP* vol. 14, December 1978, p. 24-30.

[2] Subsequently these houses came to be divided and let out, as moreover happened with palaces, some time in the 19th century.

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were let much below the usual rent if without the advantage of a well or courtyard [1]. Its absence was therefore not so much a matter of taste as an economic consideration. Limitations of space, a major factor in the conception of the middle class house, can also explain why the courtyard, if there is one, is invariably located at one side of the house rather than in the centre, sharing a wall with the neighbours. This is the case with the houses at 12 Darb Qirmiz, 16 Darb Masʿūd, 23 Ḥārat al-Labbāna and 27 Bāb al-Wazīr. The same feature was already noted in regard to the houses of Rosetta [2].

Lighting and Ventilation : Aside of the activities which took place in courtyards of palaces, their other function was to provide lighting and ventilation, particularly important in buildings occupying a large surface of land. In palaces, it also formed an enclosed garden, cut off from the noise and dust of the street. A *maqʿad* (loggia) on its southern side received the northern breeze and at the same time offered a view on the garden. Because some middle class houses have no inner courtyard (Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī, bayt Šaqrūn) Ibrāhīm Aġā at 45 Bāb al-Wazīr and Bayt al-Ǧawharī [3] while others have only a small one (23 Darb al-Labbāna and 2 Ḥārat Zaʿtara), other solutions were used for lighting and ventilation. One of these is to have a *sāḥa* (terrace) in the

[1] Sir Gardner Wilkinson, *Hand-Book for Travellers in Egypt*, London, 1847, p. 119. Other travellers who have hinted at houses without courtyards are E. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, reprint of the 3rd edition, London, 1890, p. 8, who says that, « *almost* every house that is *sufficiently* large encloses an open unpaved courtyard », and St. John, *Egypt and Nubia*, London, 1845, p. 105, « all the palaces of the great and *many* houses of a humbler character open behind into gardens ».

[2] A. Lezine et A.R. ʿAbdul Tawwab, « Introduction à l'étude des maisons anciennes de Rosette», *Annales Islamologiques*, vol. X, 1972, p. 158.

[3] This house, situated behind the Mosque of al-Ǧawharī (Index n° 462) is of particular interest because of the historical material available about the Ǧawharī family : al-Ǧabartī, *ʿAǧā'ib al-Āṯār*, vol. II, p. 22 and 441-443 (obituaries of Shaykh Muhammad al-Ǧawharī and ʿAbdu l-Fattah al-Ǧawharī; ʿAlī Mubārak, *al-Ḫiṭaṭ al-Tawfīqiyya*, Būlāq, 1889, vol. IV p. 77-79; *Ḥuǧǧa of Muḥammad Abū l-Maʿalī al-Ǧawharī*, n° 1295 dated Rabīʿ II 1244 and n° 3191 dated Ḏū l-Ḥiǧǧa 1229, both in *Dār al-Waṯā'iq al-Qawmiyya*. The house is today inhabited by the impoverished descendents of the Ǧawharī family.

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upper storeys [1]. In Bayt al-Isṭambullī, the *sāḥa*s are in the interior of the units and could serve both as a common room and to offer a breeze to those room having only a southern façade. The *sāḥa* can also be located in the exterior of the units (as in 45 Bāb al-Wazīr). Another method of lighting and ventilation that is commonly found in the middle class house is to omit having a roof over the staircase shaft.

Topographic considerations : The relative unimportance of the courtyard in the middle class house is a major factor in its architectural conception and can be related to the topography of the city. The existence of street gates which cut off the quarters from each other, the relative shortness of most streets, the frequency of dead-end alleys, the homogeneous character created in the quarters by the fact that people of the same craft or profession tended to agglomerate in one place : all these factors made of the street the open space often missing in the middle class house.

Comparison with the houses of Rosetta : The absence of the courtyard has been considered as one of the unusual features in the houses of Rosetta, influenced by Turkish domestic architecture [2]. Without denying the peculiarities of these houses (the use of unplastered red brick and the arrangement of the rooms), it is clear that some of the features that were considered as unique and for which influences from diverse sources were attributed are in fact related to an indigenous building tradition. The position of the courtyard, its size and its frequent absence are among these features. The solutions to lighting and ventilation problems used in Rosetta resemble those of Cairo. In Rosetta, a square or rectangular hole was made in the ceiling of the main room, usually in the second floor, surrounded

[1] The term *sāḥa* is used in *waqf* documents to mean an upper storey open court. See for instance *Waqf of Ḥāǧǧa Salmā*, Ministry of Waqf Archives, n° 603 (new series) dated 709 H.

[2] Lezine and ʿAbdu l-Tawwab, « Introduction à l'étude des maisons anciennes de Rosette », *Annales Islamologiques*, vol. X, 1972. p. 159 and p. 190.

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by a gallery. This let in the light and allowed the hot air to rise [1]. The principle is the same as the upper storey *sāḥa* (terraces) of the Cairene middle class house. Another obvious alternative for houses without a courtyard was to have windows opening towards the street, and this method was used both in Cairo and in Rosetta [2].

c) *Reception area.*

The pattern of reception rooms varies between the palace, the middle class and the *rabʿ*. The palaces contain different types of reception rooms : the *mandara* (ground floor reception room); the *taḫtabūš* (ground floor reception room with an open front to the courtyard); the *maqʿad* (loggia); the *qaʿa* [3]. These form part of the public apartments, where meetings with people who did not have access to the private apartments could take place. The private apartments are distinct, located in the upper floors, having their own entrance and sometimes their own courtyards. In the *rabʿ*, one cannot talk of reception rooms because no architecturally defined space was alloted to this function. A medium situation prevails in the middle class house. It does not have this large variety of reception rooms, but usually only one, most commonly a *mandara* [4]. Because the *qāʿa* is located within the living unit, it is not a reception room but simply a common room where people ate, sat and slept. The *mandara* can either be on the enclosure or courtyard (Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī and Bayt al-Gawharī) or, if there is no courtyard, by the

[1] The authors of « Introduction à l'étude » related this feature to the atrium of the ancient houses of Tuscany (p. 178). But in a subsequent article, A. Lezine found the origins of this method of lighting from above to be in ancient Egypt, in buildings with no courtyard. Their descendents were the multistorey houses of Fustat observed by al-Muqadasi in the 10th century. Lezine linked the houses of Fustat to those of Rosetta. See « Persistance de traditions pré-islamiques dans l'architecture domestique de l'Egypte musulmane », *Annales Islamologiques*, vol. XI, 1972, p. 1-22, especially p. 13-16.

[2] Lezine, « La Protection contre la chaleur dans l'architecture musulmane d'Egypte», *Bulletin des Etudes Orientales*, vol. 24, 1971, p. 1-17.

[3] A *qāʿa* is a room which has two *īwān*s (recesses), usually slightly raised in level, with a *durqāʿa* (central section) between them. In the palace the *qāʿa* is the main reception room. It can also be a family room if it is in the private section of the house. The term *qāʿa* is also used to refer to complexes in which the main constituent is the *qāʿa*.

[4] Bayt al-Dabbāssīya at 16 Darb Masʿūd has remains of a *taḫtabūš*.

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entrance overlooking the street (27 Bab al-Wazir). Guests could apparently also be entertained in the upper floors, particularly in houses with no *mandara* [1] (as must also have been the practice in the *rabᶜ*). Meetings with strangers could, moreover, take place on the *masṭaba* (stone seats) outside the house [2] or in one of the numerous coffee houses of the city.

d) *Food.*

Kitchens in palaces were planned on a scale where food could be prepared not only for a family but for a retinue of slaves and servants and for large-scale entertainment. In the middle class house and in the *rabᶜ*, a recess or annex attached to a main room serves as a pantry for food preparation. It does not have a flue, so that there are certain foods that could not be prepared there. However, medieval Cairo was famous for the large number of what Lane calls « cook shops », where a variety of foods, including different kinds of meat, fish, cheese, desserts and sweets were cooked and sold [3]. People seldom ate there but could send for the food and eat it elsewhere. Lane specifies the category of clients of these cook shops by saying that they were the ones who could not conveniently prepare food in their own houses [4].

e) *Bath* [5].

Neither Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī nor any of the other middle class houses have a bath, as do many palaces such as Bayt al-Razzāz (*Index* n° 235) or Bayt al-Suḥaymī (*Index n°* 339). This meant that people living in the middle class house made

(1) Lane, *Manners and Customs*, p. 162.

(2) St John, *Egypt and Nubia*, p. 107.

(3) Many European travellers noted this feature : Von Heberer Von Bretten, *Voyage en Egypte 1585-86*, trans. and annot. by Oleg Volkoff, Cairo, 1976, p. 128; Felix Fabri, *Voyage en Egypte 1483*, trans. and annot. by Jacques Masson, Cairo, 1975, p. 568-569 counted 12,000 cook shops in Cairo. For the controls that the *muḥtasib* had on cook shops, see Ibn al-Uḫuwwa, *Kitāb al-Qurbā fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisba*, ed. Muḥammad Maḥmūd Šaʿbān and Siddīq ʿĪsā al-Muṭīʿī, Cairo, 1976, pp. 156-57, 176-79, 181-184; Ibn Bassām, *Nihāyat al-Rutba fī Ṭalab al-Ḥisba*, ed. Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Samarrāʾī, Baġdād, 1968, pp. 21-24, 44-49, 56-57.

(4) Lane, *Manners and Customs*, p. 294.

(5) E. Pauty, *Les Hammams du Caire*, Cairo, 1933; André Raymond, « Les bains publics du Caire à la fin du 18ᵉ siècle », *Annales Islamologiques*, vol. VIII, 1969, p. 129-150.

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use of the *ḥammām* (public bath) from which no one was too far away [1]. In fact, even when the palace had a bath, this did not prevent people from participating in what was a social as well as a hygienic institution, the public bath [2].

The House

Dating : The house has no dating inscription. On stylistic grounds, it is datable to the late Ottoman period : the shallow arch (over the northern doorway, for instance); the masonry made up of alternating narrow and wide stones; the torus moulding (over the southern staircase) made up of alternating symetrical and elongated hexagons are all typical of the 17th and 18th centuries. The dating can be narrowed down to the end of the period on account of a) the numerous and large windows of *qāʿa* and *mandara* (the openings on the northern façade of the *qāʿa* take up a considerable proportion of the wall) b) the presence of tiles in the *qāʿa*. Tiles were used unfrequently in domestic architecture and their use here could be an imitation of the first floor of Bayt al-Suḥaymī [3]. In this case, Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī would probably have been built after the 18th century additions of Bayt al-Suḥaymī.

Building Materials : The lower part of the house, to about the level of the first floor is built in stone. Plastered brick is used above that. Where the plaster has fallen off, layers of wooden beams, alternating between the layers of brick, are visible. The floors are in stone. There is no sign of marble panelling or of marble floors. The ceilings are made of exposed wooden beams. They are free of ornament except for the baguette ceilings in a star pattern used above the doorway of the northern staircase (Pl. XIX, A), on the eastern *īwān* of the *mandara,* and in the small room adjoining the main room of the first unit of the northern staircase (fig. 6 n° 4), in all three cases over a limited surface.

[1] There are today 5 public baths in Būlāq of which 4 are still functioning.

[2] My acknowledgements to Dr. Margot Badran, with whom I discussed much of the social information.

[3] Revault and Maury, *Palais et Maisons,* vol. III, p. 110.

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Disposition of structure : The house, built at the side of an enclosure [1], has a ground floor containing store rooms and a *mandara,* and two storeys above that which contain five living units. There are two staircases that lead upstairs, one to two units and the other to three units. Each unit has a different plan and occupies a different floor level. The two parts of the house are connected about the level of the first floor by a short flight of stairs that join the two staircases [2].

Description of the House

The Ground Floor : (see fig. 3).

The entrance opens onto a small vestibule and one reaches the enclosure through a bent entrance. Near the eastern part of the enclosure wall stand three granite antique columns (Pl. XVII, A). A fourth one in concrete, of recent construction, has been added to strengthen the structure. These columns support the *qāʿa* located in the first storey which projects from the eastern façade of the building (Pl. XVII, B) [3].

The eastern façade of the house has two doors, one of which has been blocked with layers of brick and the other is always locked. I was thus unable to see the room it opens on, which is probably a store-room (1).

The two other doorways on the same side of the house lead to the staircases which will henceforth be referred to as the southern and the northern staircases. The door to the southern staircase (2) has a small *masṭaba* (stone seat) on each side and a stone torus moulding ornament around it. The ornament of the northern staircase (3) is richer for to the right, going in, is a small marble column, only

[1] In the absence of a *waqf* document, one cannot determine what the larger part of the enclosure, to the north of the house, contained (at present two sets of huts stand to its east and west). Because the house has openings on its three sides, it is most unlikely that it extended any further than its present limits. But the enclosure may very well have contained another building of some sort, as seems to be the case with the enclosure of Bayt al-Ğawharī which has more then one building.

[2] Due to technical difficulties I was unable to take a section of the house.

[3] The possibility that the area below the *qāʿa* might be a *taḥtabūš* was suggested to me by Mr. J. Revault.

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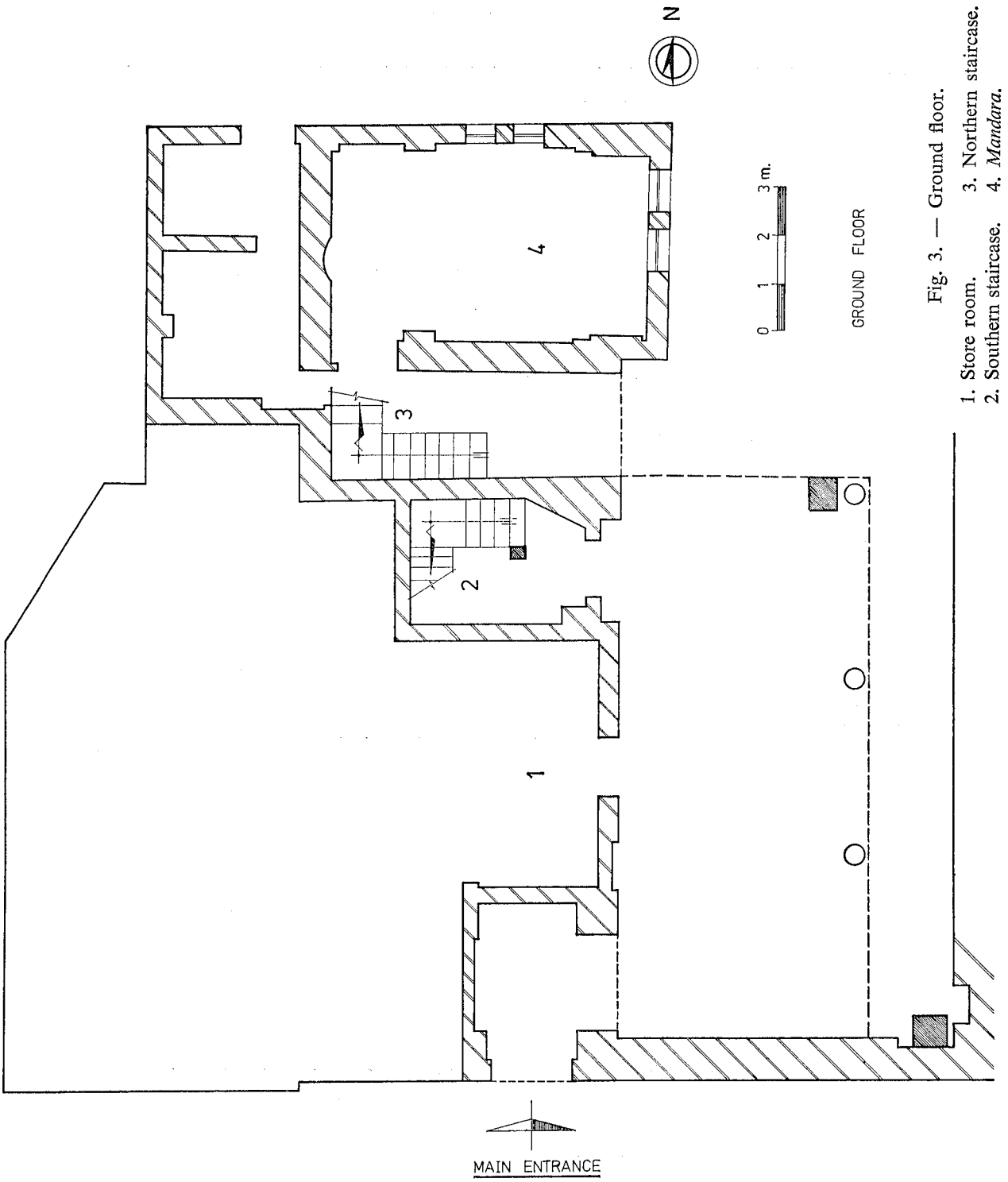


Fig. 3. — Ground floor.
1. Store room. 3. Northern staircase.
2. Southern staircase. 4. *Mandara*.

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partially visible because it is embedded in brick of recent construction A mashrabiya (lattice work window) above the doorway lights the staircase shaft. Above the entrance, a wooden ceiling is decorated in baguettes in a star pattern (Pl. XIX, A). The passage to the northern staircase leads to the *mandara* (4), facing north. The passage goes on and turns right to a small doorway (blocked by a mound) on the northern façade of the house.

The description of the upper floors includes 3 units reached by the southern staircase and then the 2 units reached by the northern staircase.

First Unit — Southern Staircase (see fig. 4).

The doorway to this first floor unit, the largest one in the house, opens on a *sāḥa* (terrace) (1) forming the centre of the unit from which the other parts of the apartment can be reached. To the right of the *sāḥa,* a passage leads to the latrine (5) : the ceiling of the passage is held up by a slender wooden column (Pl. XX, A).

To the left of the *sāḥa,* a horse-shoe arch wooden doorway leads to the *qāʿa* (main room) (2), the only one in the house, similar in size and proportion to other Cairene *qāʿa* of the Ottoman period [1]. Like these, the entrance is from the *durqāʿa* (central section). It has, however, neither *malqaf* (air-catch) nor a *fisqiyya* (fountain).

The *ṣuffa* (built-in-shelf), plastered over in white, is in front of the entrance. Above it are remains of what may have been a panel of ceramic tiles, of which only two tiles, in a blue, turquoise and white floral motif, are left *in situ* (Pl. XIX, B-C). Large *mašrabiyya* windows to the north and south allow for a certain amount of air circulation. The northern *īwān* has a small adjoining room (3) slighty raised in level, which may originally have been a pantry.

The rest of the unit, consisting of three rooms and a second latrine (4) can be reached by passing again through the *ṣāḥa.* This part of the house is uninhabited and badly in need of repairs [2].

[1] See Lezine, *Trois Palais d'époque ottomane,* p. 48 and figure on p. 50. Today each of the two *īwān* is inhabited by a family and wooden separations have been installed.

[2] The walls between these 3 rooms seem to be new, since where the plaster has fallen off cement is visible between the layers of brick. They are, moreover, thinner than the other walls of the house.

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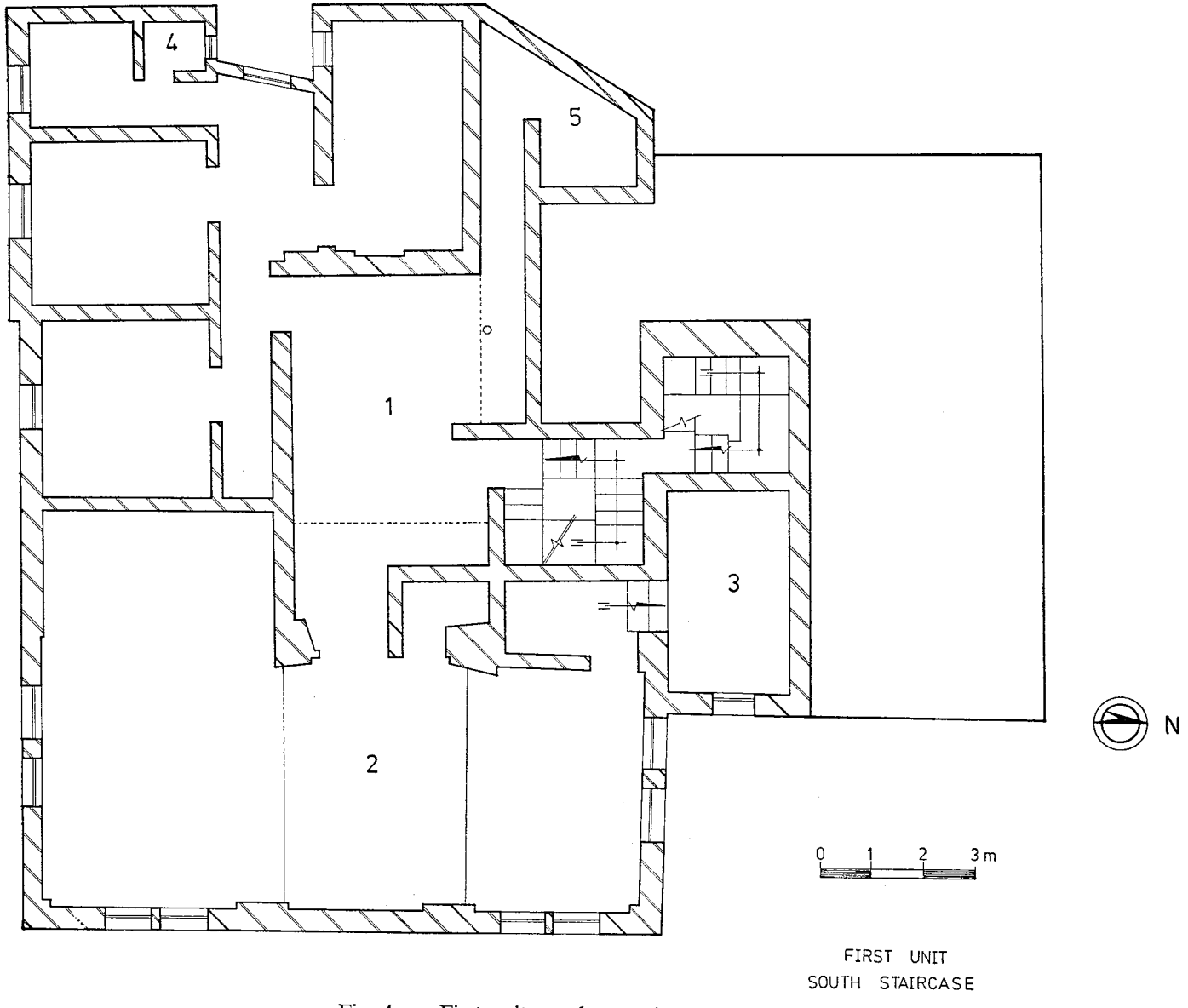


Fig. 4. — First unit, southern staircase.

1. *Sāḥa.* 2. *Qāʿa.* 3. Annex to main room. 4. Latrine. 5. Latrine.

Second Unit — Southern Staircase (see fig. 5).

This unit, on the second story, has two entrances, one facing south and the other west. Entering the one facing south, one passes into a small vestibule (1) and from there to three rooms and to a terrace which has a latrine (4) on its north-east corner. To its north, a short flight of stairs leads to an elongated room facing north (5).

Third Unit — Southern Staircase (see fig. 5).

Although this unit is reached from the southern staircase, it is located in the northern part of the house. It consists of a single room (7) with a small adjoining room (8). It has no latrine.

First Unit — Northern Staircase (see fig. 6).

The door opens onto a small vestibule (1) in two levels containing a latrine and a pantry (2). The main room (3) contains a built-in cupboards which takes up all of the western wall and forms an arch over the doorway (Pl. XX, B). The window facing east has remains of a stained glass window with red, blue, green and yellow glass, which has a religious inscription in its horizontal panel (Pl. XX, C), the only one in the house.

To the south is an adjoining room (4) with a low ceiling decorated in baguettes forming a star pattern.

Second Unit — Northern Staircase (see fig. 7).

Smaller than the one below, this unit has an entrance that leads to a main room (1) and a second entrance leading to a latrine (2).

Architecture and Social Patterns.

Bayt al-Iṣṭambullī contains one *qāʿa* located on the first floor (see fig. 4, n° 2). This is the main room of the house, where the patriarchical head of the family lived. The rest of this unit may have been occupied by his mother and his married and unmarried children, while in the other units of the house lived different

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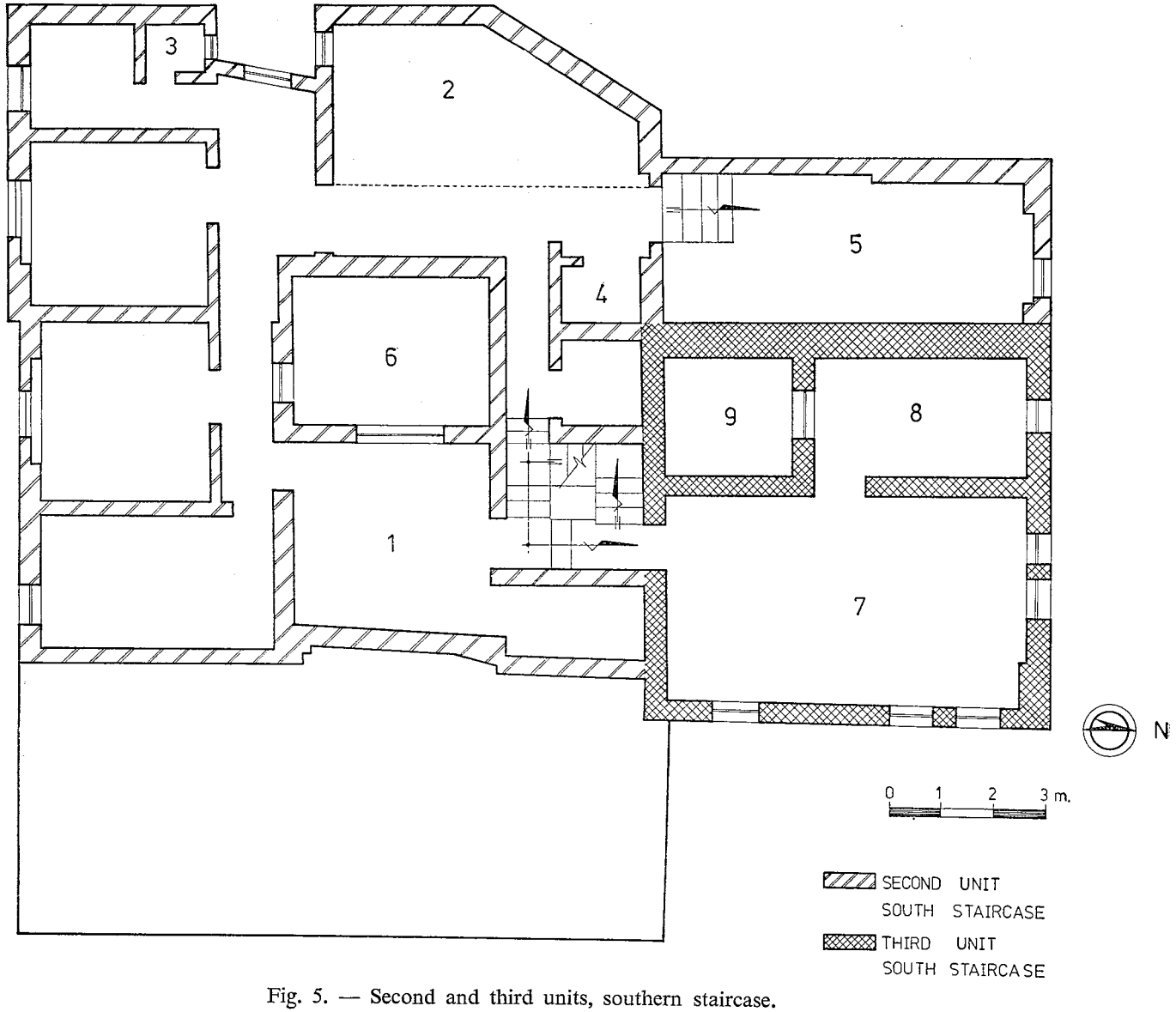


Fig. 5. — Second and third units, southern staircase.

1. Vestibule.
2. *Sāḥa.*
3. Latrine.
4. Latrine.
5. Room facing north.
6. Empty space above first floor *sāḥa.*
7. Main room of third unit.
8. Annex to main room.
9. Empty space above staircase shaft.

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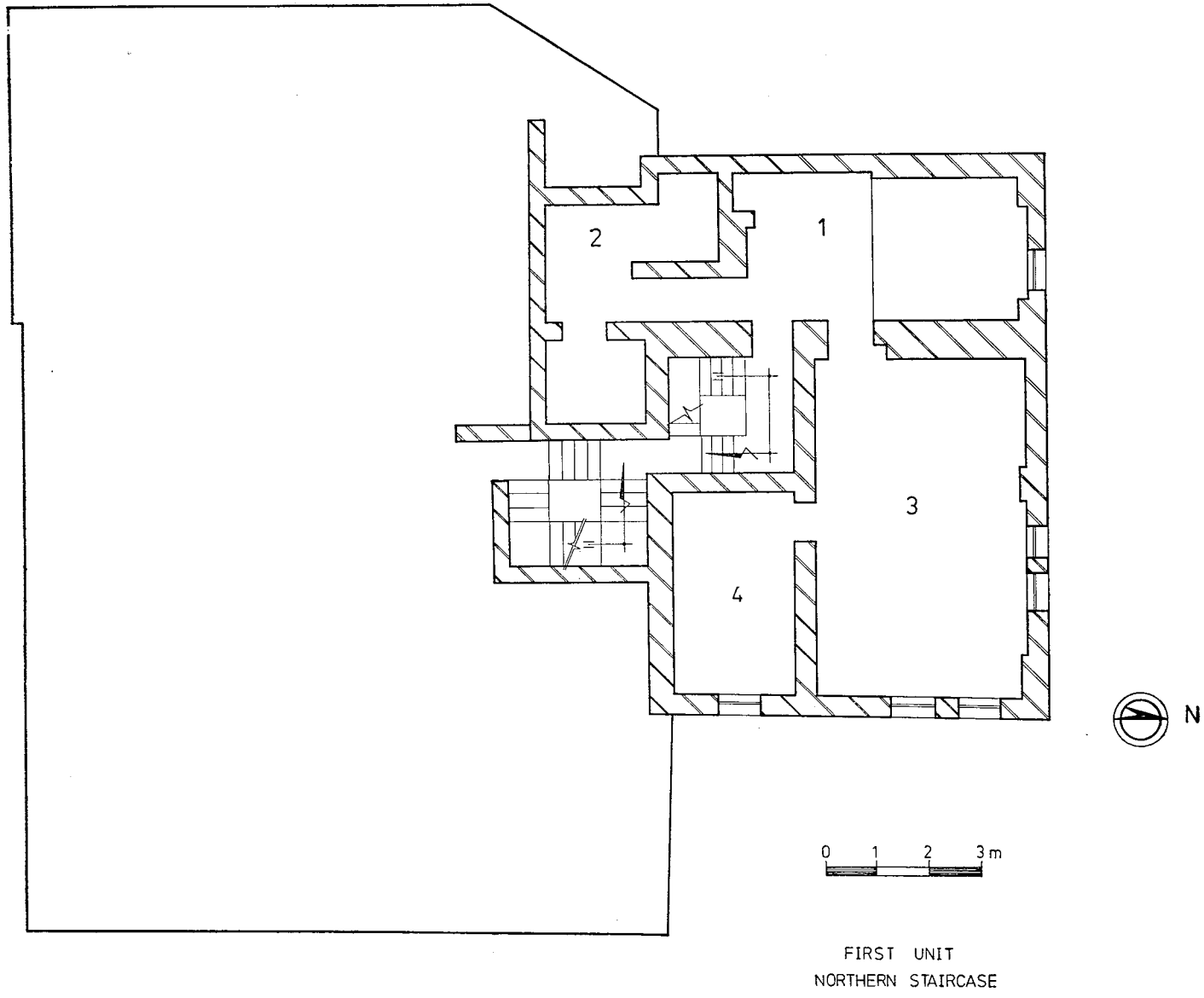


Fig. 6. — First unit, northern staircase.

1. Vestibule. 2. Pantry. 3. Main room. 4. Annex to the main room.

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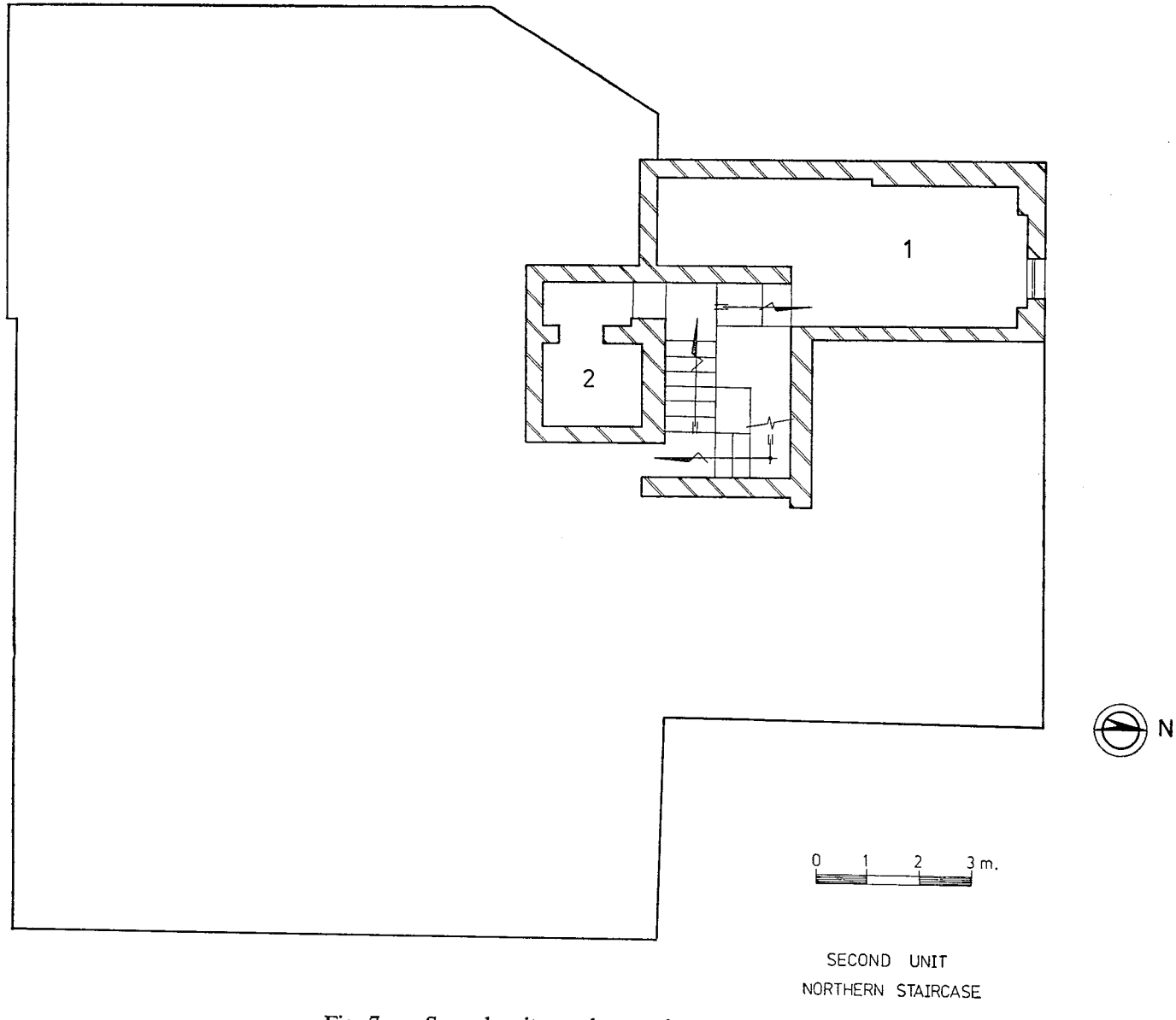


Fig. 7. — Second unit, northern staircase.

1. Room 2. Latrine

members of the extended family, probably following some kind of hierarchical order, an elder brother having priority over a younger one, a widowed aunt over an unmarried one. As Cairo is known to have been a crowded city, it is probable that a large number of people lived in the house, so that each room might lodge a family.

No particular space is allotted to such functions as eating and sleeping, any room in the house serving for these purposes. In summer, moreover, people could sleep in the terraces of the first and second units of the southern staircase (fig. 4 n° 1 and fig. 5 n° 2) and in winter in the small adjoining rooms (fig. 6 n° 4); the structure of the house implies a certain degree of mobility and interdependence between the units and consequently of intimacy between the inhabitants. For instance, people living in the third unit of the southern staircase (fig. 5 n° 7) would have to use a toilet situated in the interior of the second unit (for instance see fig. 5 n° 4); someone standing in the vestibule of unit two (fig. 5 n° 1) could look down into the terrace of the unit below (fig. 5 n° 6).

Guests were received in the *mandara* in the ground floor, but the head of the family might also receive some guests in the *qāʿa* where he lived. Male visitors who penetrated into the private apartments apparently announced their arrival as they went up to avoid surprising the women of the house unveiled [1]. The fact that strange men were allowed to penetrate into the interior of the house does not necessarily mean the absence of segregation, but rather that this segregation was not fixed by an architecturally defined space, and that devices other than architecture had to be used. The *qāʿa* being near the entrance of the unit, the women of the house could on such occasions keep to the inner rooms.

Conclusion

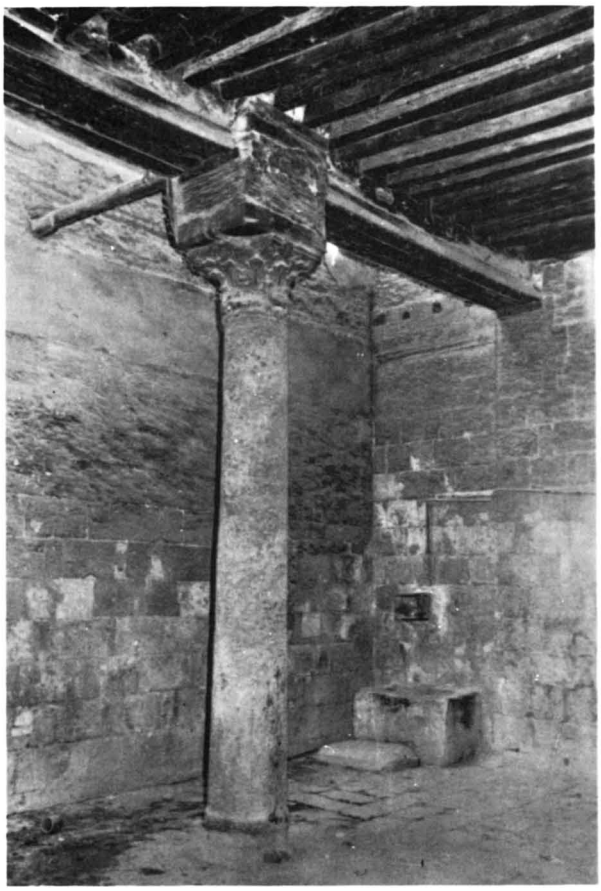
Bayt al-Isṭambullī and the other middle class houses mentioned earlier form a distinctive type of Cairene dwelling. This type of house is characterized from other kinds of private dwelling by its plan and structure and by a particular conception of space. Because socio-economic patterns play an important role in architecture, the features of middle class houses become meaningful when

[1] Lane, *Manners and Customs*, p. 162.

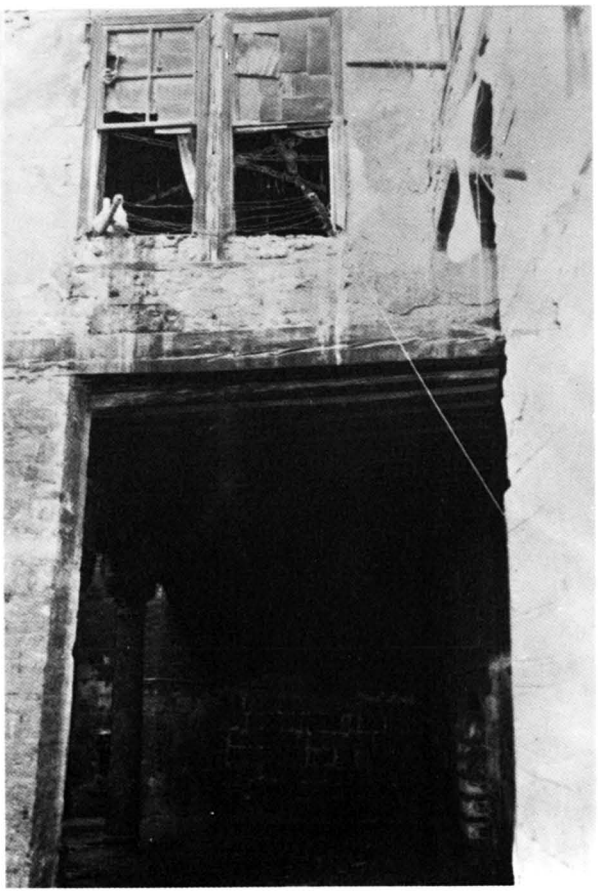
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seen in relation to the people for whom they were built. In fact the study of these houses can be an important source of information on the lives of the middle orders, on which so little is known. As it seems unlikely that the middle class house will benefit from measures of protection in the near future, priority usually being given to other historical monuments, it is particularly urgent to study them at this moment, while a few of them are still left standing.

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A. — Antique column by the eastern part of the enclosure wall holding up the *qāʿa* on the first floor.



B. — The *qāʿa*, protruding from the body of the building.

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Pl. XVIII



A. — Northern façade of the house.

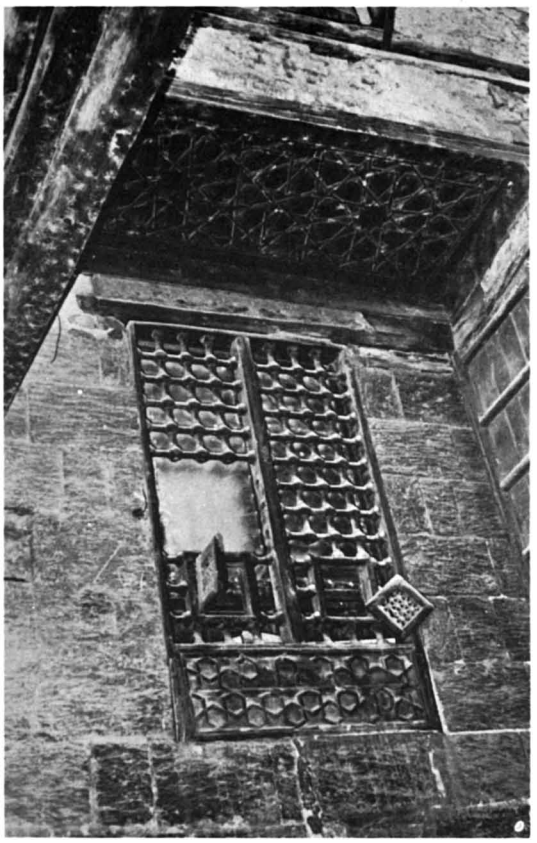


B. — Northern façade of the house.

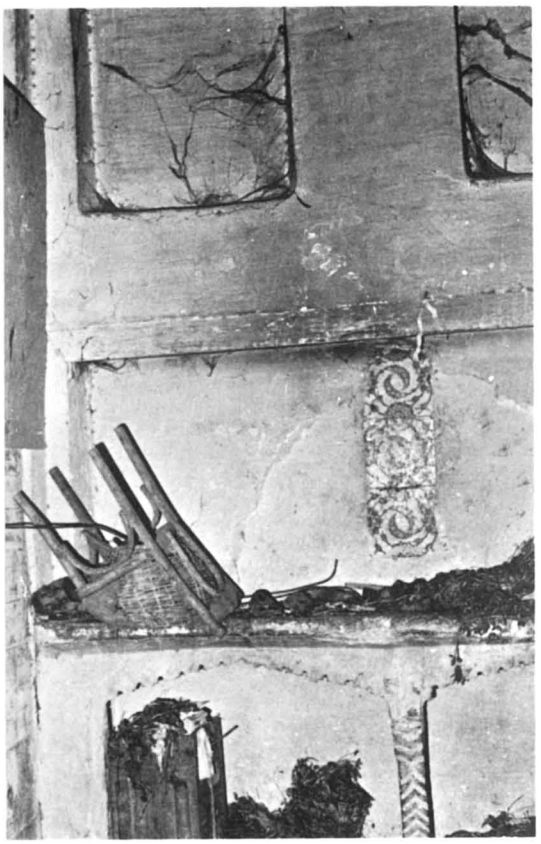


C. — Eastern façade of the *qāʿa* with the enclosure wall in the foreground.

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A. — Ornament above the northern staircase.

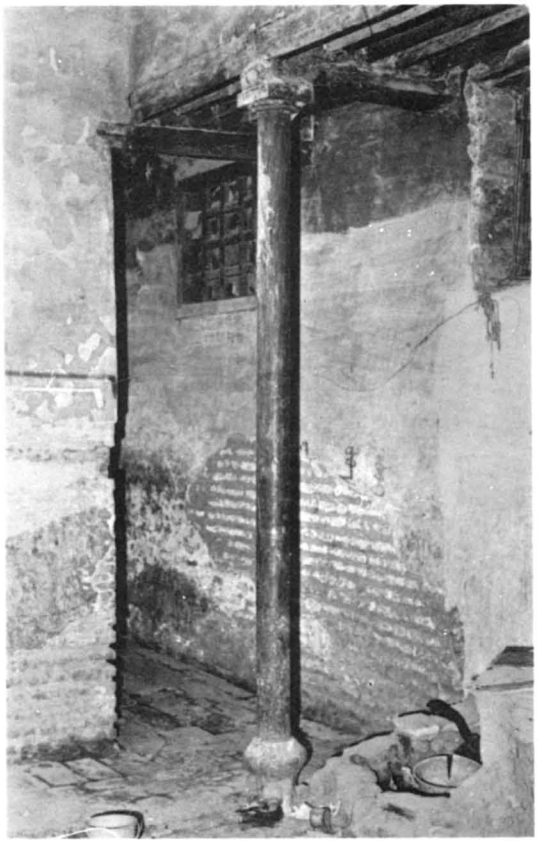


B. — The *qāʿa :* the *ṣuffa* with the tiles above.



C. — Detail of the tiles.

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A. — First unit south staircase : wooden column near passage leading to the latrine.



B. — First unit north staircase : doorway of the main room.



C. — Stained glass window with inscription.

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