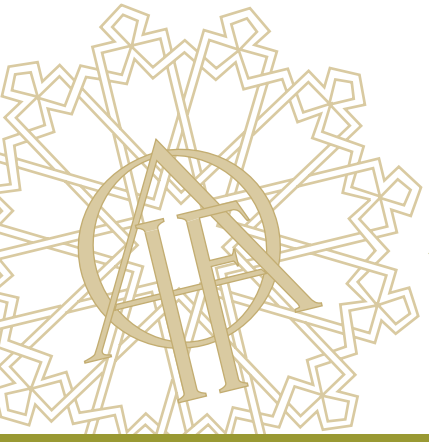
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AnIsl 25 (1991), p. 133-138

Th. Emile Homerin

The Domed Shrine of ibn al-Fāriḍ [avec 3 planches].

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Th. Emil HOMERIN

THE DOMED SHRINE OF IBN AL-FĀRIḌ

جز بالقرافة تحت ذيل العارض وقل السلام عليكم يا ابن الفارض

Cross over to the Qarāfa
beneath the hem of al-ʿĀriḍ
and say : "Peace be upon you
Oh Ibn al-Fāriḍ ! " [1]

The celebrated Egyptian Ṣūfī poet ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ died in Cairo on the second of Ǧumādā I 632/1235. According to our earliest sources, he was buried the next day in Cairo's al-Qarāfa cemetary below the al-ʿĀriḍ mosque at the foot of Mt. Muqaṭṭam [2]. This mosque, no longer extant, was originally the site of a cave cut into the mountain by a certain Abū Bakr Muḥammad "the grandfather of Muslim al-Qārī." There, Abū Bakr had experienced a vision of the prophet Muḥammad and so, built the mosque to which was later added a minaret by the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥākim (r. 386-411/996-1021). According to one tradition, Ibn al-Fāriḍ frequented the cave for spiritual retreat, and this may account for his burial in the area. Whatever the case, a stone was placed on the poet's grave soon after his death, though a shrine was not erected [3].

Interestingly, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's grandson, Sibṭ ʿAlī (fl. 735/1334), claimed in his hagiography of Ibn al-Fāriḍ that the Ayyubid sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Kāmil (r. 615-635/1218-1238) proposed to construct a tomb for the poet beneath al-Šāfiʿī's dome and next to the grave of the sultan's mother. When Ibn al-Fāriḍ declined this proposal, al-Malik al-Kāmil offered to build the poet his own personal shrine. But according to Sibṭ ʿAlī, Ibn al-Fāriḍ likewise refused this offer, committing his death, and burial to God's keeping and not to some corruptible earthly sovereign [4].

Sibṭ ʿAlī deeply venerated his grandfather, and he may have related this story in an attempt to explain why Ibn al-Fāriḍ's tomb had not been patronized in a manner befitting a holy man. This is undoubtedly the point of a second story from Sibṭ ʿAlī which tells of some respected šayḫs who once visited Ibn al-Fāriḍ's tomb and found

1. Sibṭ ʿAlī, "Dībāǧat *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*," in *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḫāliq Maḥmūd (Cairo : Dār al-Maʿārif, 1984), p. 25.

2. See Zakī al-Dīn al-Munḏirī, *al-Takmila li-Wafayāt al-naqala*, ed. Baššār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Cairo : Maṭbaʿat ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1968), 6:13, and Ibn Ḫallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut : Dār al-Ṭaqāfa, 1968), 3 : 454-456.

3. Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa'l-iʿtibār bi-ḏikr al-ḫiṭaṭ wa'l-āṯār*, (Bagdad : Maktabāt al-Muṯannā, 1970), 2 : 456, and Ibn al-Zayyāt, *al-Kawākib al-sayyāra*, ed. Qāsim Muḥammad al-Raǧab (Bagdad : Maktabat al-Muṯannā, 1967), p. 296. Perhaps the site of the al-ʿĀriḍ mosque was the limestone cliff which now supports the ḫānqāh of šayḫ Šāhīn Ḫalwatī (10th / 16th c.).

4. Sibṭ ʿAlī, p. 35.

AnIsl 25 (1991), p. 133-138 Th. Emile Homerin
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the stone piled with dirt. This sorry state of the grave did not surprise these religious men who knew that the world was rarely kind to the spiritually elect who had left the world for God. So, out of respect for the saintly Ibn al-Fāriḍ, the šayḫs personally cleared away the dirt [5].

Sibṭ ʿAlī also noted in his hagiography that the poet was buried below al-ʿĀriḍ because this was the gravesite of his grandfather's mystical teacher and guide, the Šayḫ al-Baqqāl, the old greengrocer. Though sources earlier than Sibṭ ʿAlī — including accounts by some of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's students — are silent regarding this figure and any reason for burying Ibn al-Fāriḍ beneath al-ʿĀriḍ, Sibṭ ʿAlī went on to recount fabulous tales involving the funerals of the two men there. The miraculous wonders which were said to have occurred on these occasions were clear proof to trusting believers that the greengrocer and Ibn al-Fāriḍ were among God's chosen Friends and this, in turn, sanctified the site and imbued it with sacred power [6].

That Ibn al-Fāriḍ's grave was increasingly regarded as holy ground is evident from guidebooks on the Qarāfa, written during the 8-9th/14-15th centuries. Al-Muwaffaq Ibn ʿUṯmān (fl. 770-779/1369-1378) related several stories of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's spiritual powers in his guidebook, while Ibn al-Zayyāt (d. 805/1402) quoted large portions of Sibṭ ʿAlī's hagiography of Ibn al-Fāriḍ [7]. Significantly, Ibn al-Zayyāt mapped out the tombs and shrines near Mt. Muqaṭṭam in terms of their positions in relation to Ibn al-Fāriḍ's tomb thus implying that the poet's grave was the spiritual center of the area. A later Mamluk writer Ḫalīl ibn Šāhīn al-Ẓāhirī (d. 872/1467), went so far as to compare the holiness of this site to that of Abraham's shrine in Hebron [8].

Given Ibn al-Fāriḍ's rising popularity, it was only natural that his grave would become the recipient of Mamluk patronage. No doubt Mamluk patrons endowed this and other tombs in order to secure the esteem of their subjects and to enrich family members who might oversee the endowments. But, as importantly, this Mamluk elite hoped to gain religious reward through their attentions to holy persons whether living or dead. In Ibn al-Fāriḍ's case, the endowments began around 864/1460, as noted in the Qarāfa guide compiled by ʿAlī al-Saḫāwī (fl. late 9th / 15th c.) [9] :

The šayḫ's grave was without a screen (*ḥāǧiz*) for a long time. But, then, during the reign of the sultan Īnāl (r. 857-864/1453-1460), one of the Turks, named Timur al-Ibrāhīmī — the emancipated slave of the sultan Barsbāy — was entrusted with the visitation (*ziyāra*) of the grave, along with his protégé Barqūq al-Nāṣirī — the emancipated slave of sultan Jaqmaq — and a group of their party. The two of them began to administer its endowments (*awqāf*) and to feed

5. Sibṭ ʿAlī, p. 41.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 23-25, 40-41. See n. 1 for earlier sources.

7. Al-Muwaqqaf Ibn Uṯmān, *Muršid al-zuwwār ilā qubūr al-abrār*, ms. 5129 (*Ta'rīḫ*), Cairo : Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīya, fols. 204 b - 205 b; Ibn al-Nāsiḫ, *Miṣbāḥ al-dayāǧī*, ms. 1416 (*Ta'rīḫ*), Cairo : Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīya, fol. 135 b, and Ibn al-Zayyāt, p. 297-300.

8. Ḫalīl ibn Šāhīn al-Ẓāhirī, *Zoubdat Kachf el-Mamālik*, ed. Paul Ravaisse (Paris : Imprimerie Nationale, 1894), p. 30.

9. ʿAlī al-Saḫāwī, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb wa-buġyat al-ṭullāb fī'l-ḫiṭaṭ wa'l-mazārāt*, ed. Maḥmūd Rabīʿ and Ḥasan Qāsim (Cairo : Maṭbaʿat al-ʿUlūm wa'l-Ādāb, 1937), p. 382-383.

AnIsl 25 (1991), p. 133-138 Th. Emile Homerin
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and give alms to the mendicants (*fuqarā'*) there. Then in the 860's/1460's, Timur endowed the šayḫ with portions of his *iqtāʿ* which he purchased from the treasury, and he had a blessed shrine (*maqām mubārak*) built for (Ibn al-Fāriḍ), establishing there a paid care-taker (*ḫādim*), and he made Barqūq the overseer.

Then Timur died in Cyprus, killed fighting the Franks, and Barqūq administered the splendid endowments at this shrine — which went toward preparing food and reciting the Qur'ān — until the sultan Qa'it Bāy was invested (872/1468). For he made Barqūq viceroy of Damascus (*al-Šām*), appointing another person as his substitute for (administering the endowments) until Barqūq died in Damascus. Then his son took his place in overseeing (the shrine) until this day.

It would appear from ʿAlī al-Saḫāwī that the Mamluk amirs Timur al-Ibrāhīmī and Barqūq al-Nāṣirī were the major patrons of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's grave, and we are fortunate that Timur's endowment deeds have been preserved in Barqūq's own *waqf* document dated, 875/1470. From this to we learn that one-ninth of the revenues accruing to Timur's properties was to pay for the building and maintenance of a *zāwiya*, a Ṣūfī hostel, on the site. Any surplus funds were to be spent on bread, water, and other basic food-stuffs for the mendicants at the *zāwiya* and, after their needs were met, on the mendicants of Mecca and Medina. A second Timur endowment donated 225 dirhams annually for Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *mawlid*, or saint's day, to be held at the shrine every 14 Rabīʿ I. This sum helped to feed the poor and those in attendance at the event, and paid the Qur'ān chanters [10].

Unfortunately, Barqūq's valuable document says nothing about the architectural features or materials used in the erection of the *zāwiya*, but the Egyptian historian Ibn Īyās (d. ca. 930/1524) noted that it was Barqūq who had the dome raised over Ibn al-Fāriḍ's grave prior to 877/1472 [11]. This small dome (Index no. 601; Pl. 1) is typical of the period; it is made of stone blocks with a carved masonry zig-zag pattern [12]. The dome rests on four stalactite pendentives which descend into the small square shrine room. Between the pendentives and within each wall is an arch which reaches to the floor. The shrine may be entered by a door in the arches on the southeast and southwest. The arches on the northeastern and northwestern sides have large windows; the northwestern window is flanked by two stone columns on its exterior [13].

The erection of this dome was a prestigious sign of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's religious reputation. Although more conservative religious scholars occasionally denounced the poet for monistic doctrines associated with his verse and rebuked the visitation of his tomb, this did little to limit Ibn al-Fāriḍ's fame throughout the Islamic world, and when the

10. Al-Sayfī Barqūq, *Waqf* 169 (*Ḥuǧǧat Šarʿīya*), Cairo : Dār al-Waṭā'iq.

11. Ibn Īyās, *Badā'iʿ al-zuhūr fī waqā'iʿ al-duhūr*, ed. Paul Kahle and Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Istanbul : Maṭbaʿat al-Dawlah, 1936), 3 : 80.

12. See Christel Kessler, *The Carved Masonry Domes of Mediaeval Cairo* (Cairo : American University Press, 1976), p. 26-29.

13. The dome's diameter is approximately 2 m. 65 cm.; the dome rises about 4 m. above the sides of the shrine which measure approx. 4 m. 70 cm. × 3 m. ht. I would like to thank Dr. Aḥmad Harīdī, Minya University, for helping me to measure the shrine.

AnIsl 25 (1991), p. 133-138 Th. Emile Homerin
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Ottoman traveller Evliyā Çelebī (d. ca. 1095/1684) visited Cairo around 1080/1670, he paid a visit to Ibn al-Fāriḍ's shrine [14] :

> It is a large shrine with a *tekye*, a congregational mosque (*ǧāmiʿ*), with a soup kitchen (*ʿimāret*) with mendicants attached. All the endowments are the pious works of al-Malik al-Kāmil since (Ibn al-Fāriḍ) died at the end of his reign in 632/1235.

It would appear that Evliyā Çelebī confused the story of al-Malik al-Kāmil's offer to build Ibn al-Fāriḍ a shrine with Timur's *awqāf*, but what is more significant in Evliyā's accounts is his specific reference to the mosque and other structures accompanying the poet's shrine. Evliyā also observed large crowds visiting the shrine every Friday in order to listen to recitations of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verse and to seek his blessings [15]. Evliyā Çelebī's descriptions of the site and the religious gatherings there were echoed by another traveller, ʿAbd al-Ġānī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731) who visited the shrine twice in 1105/1693 [16]. He observed that the mosque had a *minbar*, a *miḥrāb*, and a *sudda* for the muezzins. He further noted that he had watched the Friday session (*ḥaḍra*) there from a high gallery (*riwāq*) overlooking the participants, many of whom experienced ecstasy during the poetry recital [17].

About seventy years later, in 1173/1760, the Qāzduġlī Amīr al-Ḥaǧǧ, ʿAlī Bāy al-Ġazzāwī, renovated the mosque and repaired the dome [18]. While this attests to Ibn al-Fāriḍ's continued popularity, it also suggests that Timur's endowments were no longer operative since they were to pay for any needed repairs at the shrine. The warring Mamlūk factions of this period frequently appropriated endowment monies for themselves, and this may have been the fate of the shrine's revenues [19]. It is also likely that Timur's *awqāf* were formally annulled and replaced by a nominal stipend in 1807-1809 as Muḥammad ʿAlī (d. 1262-1848) attempted to control the religious establishment and increase his financial power [20].

14. Evliyā Çelebī, *Seyāhetnāmesi*, (Istanbul : Devlet Matbassi, 1938), 10 : 238, 573. I am grateful to Dr. Robert Dankoff, University of Chicago, for his translations of Evliyā's accounts of the shrine.

15. *Ibid.*, 10 : 238, 469-470, 573.

16. Al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'i-majāz fī riḥlat al-Šām wa-Miṣr wa'l-Ḥiǧāz*, ed. Aḥmad Harīdī (Cairo : Al-Hay'a al-Miṣrīya al-ʿĀmma lil-Kitāb, 1986), p. 195-198.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 279-280. For a detailed account of Evliyā Çelebī's experiences and those of al-Nābulusī at the shrine see my "Ibn al-Fāriḍ, a saint of Mamluk and Ottoman Egypt," in *Saints and Sainthood in Islam*, ed. Carl Ernst, forthcoming.

18. See ʿAlī Mubārak, *al-Ḫiṭāṭ al-Tawfīqīya al-ǧadīda* (Būlāq : al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kubrā al-Āmīrīya, 1887), 5 : 59, and Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī, *Ibn al-Fāriḍ wa'l-ḥubb al-ilāhī*, 2nd ed. (Cairo : Dār al-Maʿārif, 1971), p. 55. There were two ʿAlī Bāys at this time; the patron of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mosque appears to have been the elder of the two since he was Amīr al-Ḥaǧǧ in 1173/1760. See John Livingstone, "The Rise of the Šayḫ al-Balad ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr : A Study in the Accuracy of the Chronicle of al-Jabartī," *Bulletin for the School of Oriental and African Studies* 33 (1970) : 283-294.

19. See Peter Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism : Egypt*, 1760-1840 (Austin : University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 13.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 31, and see ʿAlī Mubārak's comments which follow.

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In any case, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's shrine was dilapidated when the topographer ʿAlī Mubārak (d. 1311/1893) visited it in 1292/1875. His account of the site, however, contains our best extant description of the original mosque [21] :

(The mosque) has a pulpit (*minbar*) and four marble columns bearing two stone arches (*bā'ika*). Its roof is an indigenous one made of wood and palm-stocks. It has two prayer niches (*qibla*), one of which is old flanked by two small black stone columns and inside of which is a small stone column; there are also traces of old mother-of-pearl work inside. The other (niche) is a new one of stone. (The mosque) has a minaret, but most of its structures are in ruins. Inside is the tomb of the master ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ, and it receives a stipend (*murattab*).

ʿAlī Mubārak's account makes no mention of the *zāwiya* or soup kitchen and, probably, they were the ruins of which he spoke. No trace of them or the minaret remains, but as for the mosque itself, it was largely rebuilt in 1307/1889. This restoration project was financed by Ǧamīla Hānim, daughter of the Ḫedive Ismāʿīl (r. 1280-1290/1863-1873), who built her own large domed crypt directly adjacent to the new mosque [22]. Whereas Ibn al-Fāriḍ's shrine had been in the southeastern corner of the older structure, his grave was incorporated into the middle of the northwestern wall of Ǧamīla's mosque. Ibn al-Fāriḍ's shrine, then, is no longer situated on the *qibla* side of the mosque but, rather, opposite the *miḥrāb* and pulpit which date from Ǧamīla's reconstruction. Ǧamīla also had a wood frame erected over the grave and this, in turn, bears her original and successive *kiswas*, ceremonial shrouds commemorating Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *mawlid* (Pl. 2). The roof of this newer mosque is made of wooden beams and supported by four octagonal stone pillars. Ǧamīla's mosque for Ibn al-Fāriḍ is a small one and lacks the gallery observed by al-Nābulusī in the original structure; other structures were not rebuilt. On the shrine side, the mosque opens into a spacious courtyard where ablutions are made and which may have been the site of the earlier mosque and *zāwiya*.

Though rebuilt late in the eighteen hundreds, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mosque has languished, through this century with little monetary support. As elsewhere in the modern world, a more secular scientific education has led many in Egypt to regard the saints and their cults as bearers of ignorance and superstition. This view gained the support of many reform minded religious authorities and, so, both the numerous pilgrims and generous financial resources that once graced the shrine have rapidly declined [23]. By

21. ʿAlī Mubārak, 5:59.

22. See the report of the Comité, *Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe* 5 (1887-1888), p. 61, and Louis Massignon in *Revue des conférences française en orient* 11 (janvier, 1938), p. 36. and Ḥilmī, p. 55. Sadly, the Comité permitted Ǧamīla Hānim to remove the original structures surrounding Ibn al-Fāriḍ's shrine because they considered them to be of no artistic importance. Suʿād Māhir, *Masāǧid Miṣr wa-awliyā'uhā al-ṣāliḥūn* (Cairo : Maṭābiʿ al-'Ahrām al-Tiǧārīya, 1976), 2:212, incorrectly ascribes the present mosque to ʿAlī Bāy, not to Ǧamīla Hānim.

23. See Louis Massignon, "La cité des morts au Caire," in *Opera Minora* (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), 3 : 271, and Ernest Bannerth, *Islamische Wallfahrsstatten Kairos* (Wiesbaden : O. Harrassowitz, 1973), p. 58-60.

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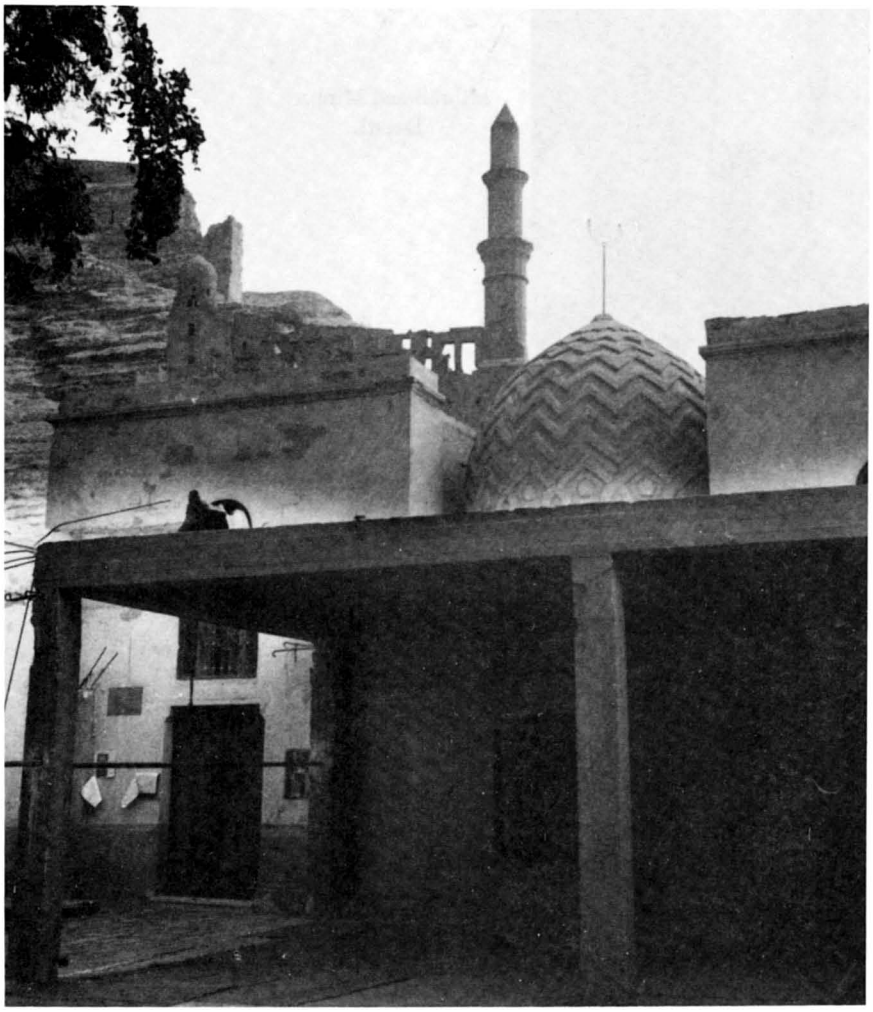
the 1960's, the *mawlid* was no longer held, but interest in Ibn al-Fāriḍ and his shrine was renewed by a branch of the Rifāʿīya Ṣūfī order which held a weekly session at the mosque [24].

After years of petitioning the Rifāʿī caretaker of the shrine, Šayḫ Ǧād, was finally given permission by the Ministry of Awqāf to hold again the *mawlid* beginning in 1981. This annual event has brought new revenues used to improve the shrine and its mosque which have been painted. A public address system and fans have been installed, and an ablution area with a water tank, a basin and latrines was constructed in the courtyard. A cement and metal awning was then erected below the dome and adjoining the shrine to shade pilgrims wishing to pray by the tomb in the courtyard (Pl. 1, 3). To what extent the *mawlid* and these renovations mark a renaissance of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's saintly reputation remains to be seen but, clearly, his shrine has not been forgotten [25].

24. See F. De Jong's review of Bannerth in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 21 (1976), p. 235.

25. I would like to thank Nora Walter for photographs 1-2, 5, and Stephen M. Goodman for photographs 3-4. I would also like to thank the late Šayḫ Ǧād, his wife Naʿīma, and their oldest son ʿUmar for their invaluable assistance and kindness at the shrine. I am also grateful to the Binational Fulbright Commission for their support in 1983-1984, 1988-1989, and to Dr. Ayman Fu'ād, Arab League Manuscript Institute, and Dr. Aḥmad Harīdī for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

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The Domed Shrine.



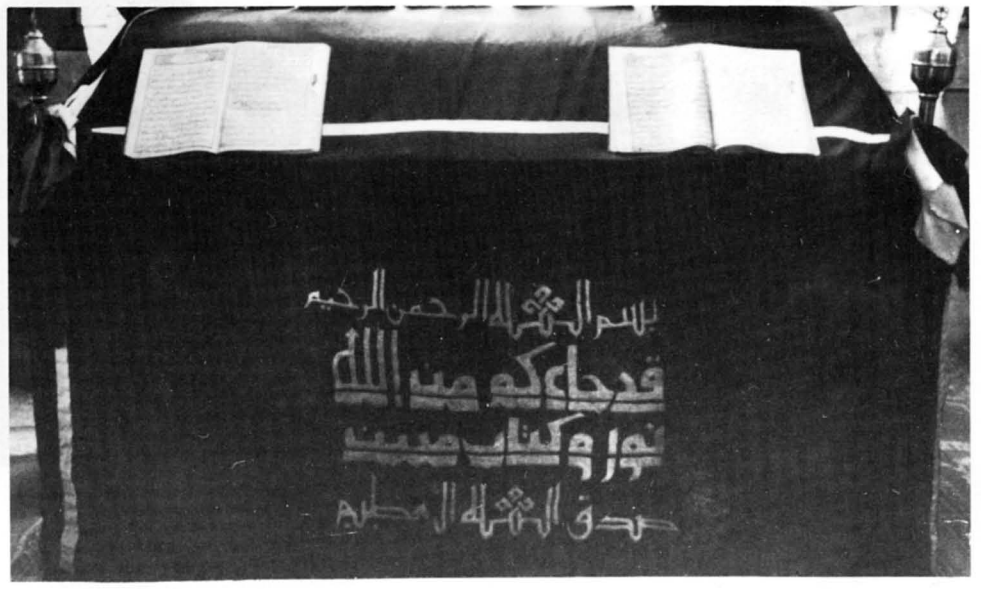
The Dome. Detail.

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Pl. XIX

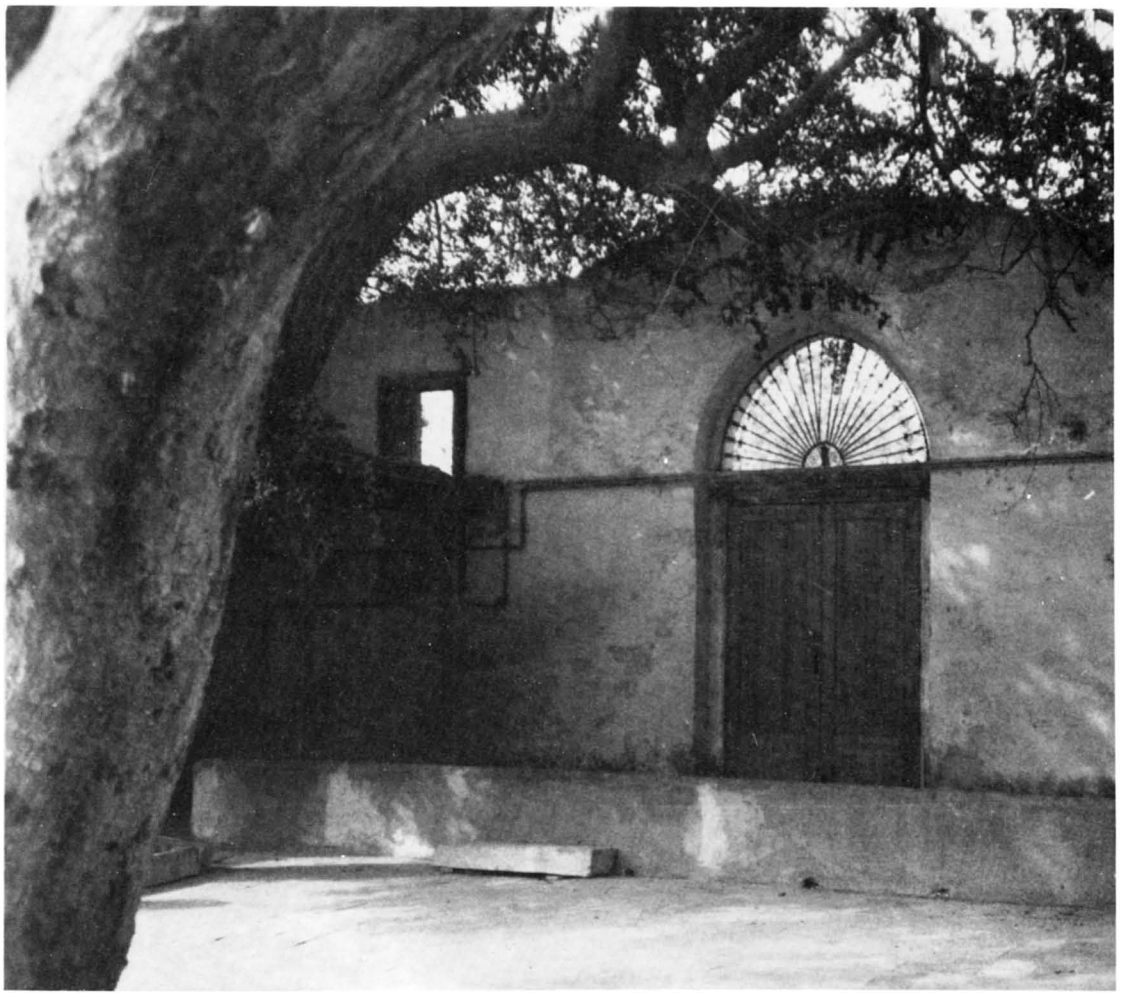


Miḥrāb and Minbar.
Detail.



In the Shrine.

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The Court yard.

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