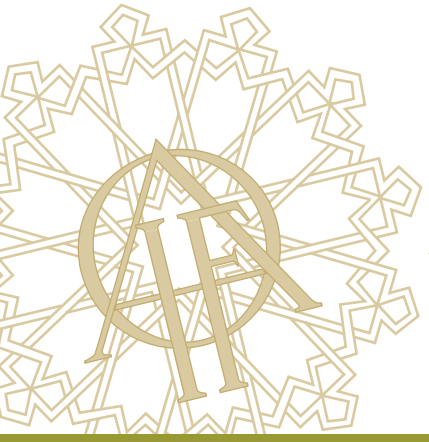
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Nicholas Warner

The Fatimid and Ayyubid Eastern Walls of Cairo: missing fragments.

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Nicholas WARNER

The Fatimid and Ayyubid Eastern Walls of Cairo: missing fragments

THIS ARTICLE is an attempt to reappraise the topography of the north-eastern portion of the mediaeval city of Cairo and the walls which surrounded it at different periods. Such an assessment is necessary in the light of excavations, from the 1950's to the present day, that have revealed more fragments of these walls and hitherto unknown gateways into the city. The route of the Fatimid walls in this area is reviewed in relation to the little-known *Bāb al-Tawfiq* dating to 480 AH / 1087 AD. The section of Ayyubid wall under consideration is a continuation of the wall of *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn* extending south from the *Burǧ al-Ẓafar* to the circular tower at the entrance to Darb al-Maḥrūq. This portion of the wall, which is bisected by the modern *Šāriʿ al-Azhar*, includes numerous round-fronted towers and another hitherto buried gateway to the city.[1] The question of the relationship between the *Bāb al-Tawfiq* and this later wall is also discussed.

THE FATIMID WALLS

The Fatimid walls around *Al-Qāhira* were built in two distinct periods. The first wall was constructed by *Ǧawhar al-Ṣiqillī*, the general of the *Ḫalifa al-Muʿizz*, and dates to 971 AD. It was built out of mud brick, and its location can generally be traced in topographical descriptions such as that of *Al-Maqrīzī*. The layout of this enclosure, starting from relatively virgin ground, has been described as orthogonal. If we are to believe the account of the traveller *Nasri Ḫusru* who visited Egypt in 1047 AD, this wall was by then no longer in existence.[2] It fell to *Badr al-Ǧamālī*, acting for the *Ḫalifa al-Mustanṣir*, to

[1] I am grateful to the staff of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (Egypt) for sharing their discoveries with me. I would also like to thank Hans Barnard for his patient help in surveying, and M. Aboul Amayem, L. Seton-Watson, Dr H. Den Heijjer and Dr N. Hampikian for sparing time to discuss aspects of the fortifications of Cairo.

[2] See P. Casanova, "Histoire et description de la citadelle du Caire", *MMAF* VI, Le Caire, 1894, p. 525.

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undertake the construction of a new wall in 1087 AD. *Badr al-Ǧamālī*, unlike his predecessor, built the major elements of his wall (such as gates) in stone, although *Al-Maqrīzī* states that the rest of the wall was fired brick.[3] The three gates of *Bāb al-Naṣr*, *Bāb al-Futūḥ*, and *Bāb Zuwayla* were built on his instructions some distance out from their earlier equivalents. The putative routes of both these walls are indicated on plans by Casanova,[4] Ravaisse[5] and Creswell,[6] but all these authorities differ in their interpretation of where *Badr al-Ǧamālī* built his wall on the eastern side of the city. Casanova considers the wall of *Badr al-Ǧamālī* to have been built directly on top of *Ǧawhar*'s wall, while Ravaisse marks its route as a distinctly separate construction slightly outside the earlier wall. Creswell does not commit himself but the presumption from his plan is that the later wall also followed the route of the earlier one.

In the north-eastern sector of *Al-Qāhira*, with which we are concerned here, textual evidence for the precise route of the Fatimid walls is lacking.[7] It seems likely that *Ǧawhar*'s wall, built *ex novo*, would have been straight, as is shown on Ravaisse's plan. The wall of *Badr al-Ǧamālī* might then have been built slightly beyond this to accommodate any organic expansion of the city to the east, and might thus have followed a more irregular course. The line of such a wall can be clearly seen on the maps of the *Description de l'Égypte* (1798) (fig. 2) and Grand Bey (1874) (fig. 3). The route of this wall, which includes a prominent projection to the east, is also clearly indicated on the ground today by a radical change in the urban fabric on either side of this line (fig. 4). Whilst it may be bold to assume that the wall represented on these maps is the work of *Badr al-Ǧamālī* himself, it is less unreasonable to consider it a rebuilding over time of an ancient perimeter to the city, particularly in the absence of detailed textual records. The curious fact is that this wall obviously had a greater longevity than the later wall of *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn* built outside it, for on both the above-mentioned maps the Ayyubid wall is shown submerged beneath rubbish-mounds. This would have given the inner wall an added defensive validity, especially in view of the fact that any attack on the city was most likely to come from the north-east. No previous commentators have thought this worthy of remark. There are two surviving architectural features that occur along or in close proximity to this inner wall which also lend credence to its claim to antiquity. The first of these is the *Bāb al-Tawfiq* (see "B" on fig. 4). This gate is examined in detail below, but it is worth noting here that it provides irrefutable evidence of the furthermost extent to the east of the Fatimid city under *Badr al-Ǧamālī*. It is furthermore topographically very close to the south-eastern corner of the easterly projection of the city shown on the maps of the *Description* and Grand Bey, although it is not included on these maps since it was still buried. The second of these features is a defensive tower built of stone (see "A" on fig. 4).

[3] Casanova 1894, p. 531. The use of fired bricks is open to question. See K.A.C. Creswell, *Muslim Architecture of Egypt I: Ikhshīds and Fāṭimids, AD 939-1171*, Oxford 1952, p. 182.

[4] Casanova 1894, pl. II.

[5] P. Ravaisse, *Essai sur l'histoire et sur la topographie du Caire, d'après Makrizi*, *MMAF* 18, Cairo, 1886, pl. 2.

[6] K.A.C. Creswell 1952, fig. 10.

[7] See Al-Makrīzī, *Description historique et topographique de l'Égypte*, tr. P. Casanova, *MIFAO* 50, Cairo, 1920, p. 97 note 4, and Creswell 1952, p. 23.

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REPAIRS TO THE FATIMID WALL

The Ayyubid walls of Cairo were started by *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ayyūb* who ruled Egypt from 1171-1193 AD. His work, like that of his Fatimid predecessors, has also been divided into two phases. The first of these was a reconstruction of the existing but, by then, much disintegrated defences of *Badr al-Ǧamālī* in 566 AH/ 1170 AD before he came to power in his own right.[8] The second phase will be considered below. If we follow the route of the wall that may have been constructed by *Badr al-Ǧamālī* on the eastern edge of the city as shown on the maps of the *Description* and Grand Bey, we come to a tower on the northern corner of the eastern projection of the wall. This tower was first documented by the Czechoslovak architect Edouard Matasek[9] in 1902, whose drawings of the walls and gates of Cairo still survive in the Documentation Centre of the Supreme Council of Antiquities together with the numbering system he devised for the towers and gates along the eastern wall. He gave the tower the number 18, in a sequence that included all the towers and gates whose location was then known.[10] The tower now stands surrounded by buildings rather than in the isolation depicted by Matasek (see figs. 7 & 9).

Tower No. 18 takes the form of a circle with numerous arrow-slits around its perimeter, one segment of which has been truncated by a straight wall. This is broadly consistent with the design of a corner tower built to defend a ninety-degree angle in the wall at this point. It originally had at least two storeys, with the possibility of a third storey underground.[11] The external wall is of rough stonework rather than fired brick or ashlar masonry, and has dressed stone elements only around its one surviving entrance and in its interior. This entrance seen in fig. 10 is now approximately 1.5m above current ground level and might have once served as a doorway onto a curtain wall returning to the south. It is possible that the most recent rebuilding of the tower was undertaken by the French Expedition in 1798, for the embrasures on the upper floor appear to have been widened to adapt them to cannons,[12] but there is no documentary evidence of this activity. Openings in the third round-fronted tower to the east of the *Bāb al-Naṣr* also bear similar signs of conversion by the French into cannon emplacements.

None of the other towers that must have been built along the length of this wall have survived, although they are clearly marked on the map of the *Description.* If Tower No. 18 is accepted as an Ayyubid construction (albeit modified), its physical position would suggest that it may have been part of *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn*'s initial rebuilding of the wall of *Badr al-Ǧamālī* on this line.

[8] See Casanova 1894, p. 541 and pl. III, and K. A. C. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt II: Ayyūbids and Early Baḥrite Mamlūks, AD 1171-1326,* Oxford 1959, p. 2.

[9] Matasek is better known for his architectural endeavours as partner in the firm of Matasek and Cattaui. See S.W. Rafaat, *Maadi 1904-1962: Society and History in a Cairo Suburb,* Cairo 1995, p. 39 and p. 53.

[10] On the Survey of Egypt 1:1000 Plan Sheet 39M dated 1912, this is simply marked "Old Tower". On the 1924 Map of Mohammedan Monuments of Cairo it is marked as Tower No. 18, following Matasek's system.

[11] The current occupants of the tower claim that this existed and was filled with rubble.

[12] As was done on the *Bāb al-Naṣr.* See Creswell 1952, p. 168-169 and 175.

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THE FATIMID BĀB AL-BARQIYYA

The north-eastern Fatimid wall as built by *Ğawhar*, extended by *Badr al-Ğamālī*, and repaired by *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn*, had two gates along its length according to *Al-Maqrīzī*: the *Bāb al-Qarraṭīn*[13] and the *Bāb al-Barqiyya*. It is the latter gate which concerns us here, and its position has been the subject of minor debate and major confusion. *Al-Ğabartī* states that the *Bāb al-Barqiyya* was also known as the *Bāb al-Ġurayyib*, and was located close to the mosque of *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Katkḫuda* (Monument Number 448) which still stands within the precincts of the Al-Azhar University Campus.[14] A gate with this name is clearly shown in this postion on the map of the *Description*. The *Bāb al-Ġurayyib* survived until the 1930 s, for it appears on the 1:1000 scale Survey of Egypt map of this area[15], with the additional name "Bawwabet el-Khala". A gate by this name was first registered by the *Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe* in conjunction with the façade of the mosque of *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Katkḫuda* in the Bulletin of 1915-1919[16] only to be separately re-registered on the 15th of January 1931.[17] It was subsequently given the number 551[18] but was later deregistered. From the absence of discussion of this gate one may conclude that the gate that stood on this site was of a much later period than the original Fatimid *Bāb al-Barqiyya*, and may have been contemporary with the adjacent construction of *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Katkḫuda*. The longevity of names in Cairo, however, might also lead one to suppose this to be the site of a much older entrance to the city. *Al-Ğabartī* also comments that after the first revolt in Cairo during the French occupation of the city, the *Bāb al-Barqiyya* alias *Bāb al-Ġurayyib* was readied for defensive purposes, blocked up and then unblocked. The strategic importance of this gate was because it led to the only practicable route through the rubbish mounds to the desert and the *Muqaṭṭam* hills on this side of the city: a route which is clearly marked on the map of the *Description* along with the two forts, Fort Reboul and Fort Dupuis, which commanded the heights above it. The *Bāb al-Barqiyya* was originally so named because of its adjacency to the camp of a section of the Fatimid army who came from *Barqa*, west of Egypt (just as the *Bāb Zuwayla* was named after the *Zuwayla* brigade of the army).[19] The Ayyubid *Bāb al-Barqiyya*, built slightly to the east of its eponymous Fatimid predecessor(s), has thus far been repeatedly sought by excavation, but may only recently be given a more definite attribution (see below).

[13] For the Fatimid *Bāb al-Qarraṭīn*, see Creswell 1952, p. 27. For the Ayyubid *Bāb al-Qarraṭīn*, see Creswell 1952, p. 24-25.

[14] See Creswell 1952, p.27-28 and note 1. For this mosque, see A. Raymond, "Les Constructions de l'Émir *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Katkḫuda*", *AnIsl* XI, 1972, p. 241 no. 8.

[15] Sheet 39L, surveyed in 1912, revised in 1934, and published in 1935.

[16] *Bulletin du Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe* 1915-1919, p. 775 [henceforth *BCCMAA*].

[17] *BCCMAA* 1915-1919, p. 697; *BCCMAA* 1930-1932, p. 32; *BCCMAA* 1933-1935, p. 153.

[18] Recorded in *Al-waqā'iʿ al-maṣriyya*, 115, December 17, 1951. For the significance of this list see Habashi, A. and Warner, N. "Recording the Monuments of Cairo: an Introduction and Overview", *AnIsl* 32, p. 93-94.

[19] See Casanova 1920, p. 42.

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THE BĀB AL-TAWFĪQ

In the late 1950's, a Fatimid gate was discovered under the rubbish mounds to the east of the city. The position of this gate is on an alignment with the street that runs east-west beside the mosque and mausoleum of *Abu al-Ġadanfar* (Monument Number 3), formerly a Fatimid *mashhad* dedicated to *Šayḫ Sayyid Muʿad* (see fig. 7). The inscription that was found on it, which names the gate as the *Bāb al-Tawfiq*, was subsequently published by Gaston Wiet in 1961, together with an account of what he thought to be the history of this gate.[20] If one accepts the veracity of *Al-Ǧabartī*'s comments on the site of the *Bāb al-Barqiyya* mentioned above,[21] which Wiet himself quotes in support of his conclusion that this newly-discovered gate was the *Bāb al-Barqiyya*, then Wiet's observations were mistaken. Wiet himself never seems to have visited the site, working instead (as he states in his article) from information sent to him by *Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Wahhāb*, then head of the Service des antiquités. Had he done so, he would have been aware that the physical location of the gate whose inscription he translated is some four hundred metres from the gate known to *Al-Ǧabartī* as the *Bāb al-Barqiyya / Bāb al-Ġurayyib* (see figs. 4 and 7), marked as such on all maps starting with the *Description* and ending with the 1935 Survey of Egypt plan. Furthermore this gate was still buried beneath several metres of debris at the time of the French Expedition. Therefore the historical background he gives for the construction of this gate should be applied to the *Bāb al-Barqiyya* near the Mosque of *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Katkḫuda* rather than this gate. If on the other hand one accepts the correlation of the *Bāb al-Tawfiq* with the *Bāb al-Barqiyya*, bearing in mind *Al-Maqrīzī*'s statement that there were only two gates into the city on its eastern extremity (*Bāb al-Barqiyya* and *Bāb al-Qarraṭīn*), one must discount *al-Ǧabartī*'s identification of the *Bāb al-Barqiyya* with the *Bāb al-Ġurayyib*. This might be justified by the rather indiscriminate use of the term *Barqiyya* to describe anything that fell within the general area known as *Barqiyya*: even the nearby rubbish-mounds bear this appellation. Creswell seems to have made the same mistake as Wiet, for in a hand-written *marginalia* in his personal copy of *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt* Vol. I[22], he comments alongside the section that concerns the *Bāb al-Barqiyya* (also identified by him as the *Bāb al-Ġurayyib*): "= Bab al Taufiq according to newly excavated inscs from time of Badr."

The inscription, which still survives *in situ* today, is five lines in floreated kufic carved on a single block of marble (292 cm wide x 40 cm high).[23] The text of this inscription is almost identical to that found on the *Bāb al-Futūh*. There is an invocation of the *Qur'ān*

[20] G. Wiet, "Une nouvelle inscription fatimide au Caire". *Journal asiatique* 1961, p. 13-20. I am grateful to Dr Bernard O'Kane for drawing this article to my attention, which also contains two photographs of the gate as it appeared soon after excavation.

[21] Which Casanova, for one, did: see Casanova 1894, p. 544.

[22] Now in the Special Collections and Rare Books Library of the American University in Cairo, p. 27.

[23] *Badr al-Ǧamālī* placed a stylistically similar four-line kufic inscription on a single block of marble (260 cm wide x 45 cm high) over a doorway into the mosque of *Ibn Ṭulūn*, dated to *Safar* 1070, September 1077, that commemorated the restoration of this mosque. See K.A.C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture I*, Oxford 1940, p. 336 and pl. 97b.

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(II, 256) that includes reference to *ʿAli* as the friend of God (as one would expect in a *šīʿa* context), followed by references to the builder *Badr al-Ğamālī* (named here as *Abu al-Niğm Badr*) and his patron *Al-Mustanṣir*, ending with the date of construction (*muḥarram* 480 AH, April-May 1087 AD). This date is exactly the same date as the construction of the *Bāb al-Futūh* and the *Bāb al-Naṣr*. Most importantly, the gate is named in the inscription the "*Bāb al-Tawfiq*", or "Gate of Divine Assistance", rather than the *Bāb al-Barqiyya*. Wiet cites the fact that the *Bāb al-Futūh* and the *Bāb al-Naṣr* were originally named in their dedicatory inscriptions the *Bāb al-Iqbāl* and the *Bāb al-ʿIzz*,[24] yet retained the names of the earlier gates of *Ğawhar* they replaced, as supporting evidence for the change in name of this gate. But faced with the possibility of the *Bāb al-Barqiyya*'s existence in a different location, this argument cannot remain unquestioned.

The *Bāb al-Tawfiq* has a number of peculiarities about it which should be noted (see figs. 5, 6 and 7). Its scale falls far short of the grandeur of the other gates of *Badr al-Ğamāli*. The inscription is, as one would expect, mounted on the outer face of a stone-vaulted, pointed arch whose width is 4.59 metres.[25] It is, however, almost totally concealed by the later construction of a machicoulis supported on corbels let into the stonework of the earlier arch. The two phases are also distinct in the stonework. While the pointed arch, on the outer face of which the inscription is mounted, is of perfectly dimensioned flush-pointed ashlar masonry, the pointed arch fronting the machicoulis is irregular in its block sizes (particularly in the voussoirs which are truncated by the horizontal coursing above them), and has bevels on all its joints. The actual width of the opening of the first arch has been narrowed by infill masonry, which originally would have reduced the height of the opening as well as its width by virtue of a shallow arched lintel (now substantially missing and shown dotted on fig. 6) approximately 1.15 m below the apex of the second arch.

The later stonework, with the exception of the corbels which are currently propped by fired-brick supporting piers built by the Antiquities Department at the time of the discovery of the gate, is not bonded into the older gate. These corbels may have once rested on stone piers, as do the corbels either side of the entrance to the *Bāb al-Naṣr*, but these have since decayed. In fact, the later stonework seems to abut the remains of what appear to be ninety-degree returns either side of the original arch. This argues that the original door was set back within walls that extended outwards on either side of the entrance. There may, in fact, have been flanking towers to the gate as on the other Fatimid gates of the city, although the stratigraphy of the fill to either side of the gate, which stands at least three metres below present ground level reveals no sign of major stonework at all, which is surprising. Perhaps this stone gate was abutted by a mud or fired brick wall, of which no trace survives. Alternatively it may have been incorporated into the wall of *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn* built on an alignment further to the east. Here again there is a lack of physical evidence to confirm either theory.

[24] G. Wiet, "Nouvelles inscriptions fatimides". *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* XXIV, 1942 p. 149-153.

[25] Compared, for example to the 5.93 m width at the narrowest point of the *Bāb al-Naṣr*.

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The fact that the stonework on the second phase of the gate's construction has bevelled joints relates it directly to the style of the masonry on the towers on the *Bāb al-Naṣr*, the *Bāb al-Futūh*, and certain sections of the *Bāb Zuwayla*. Here there are identical bevels of about 1cm. The pattern of radiating voussoirs of the outer arch is also paralleled by roof level arches at the backs of the *Bāb al-Futūh* and the *Bāb Zuwayla*. There seems little question that on stylistic grounds, the second phase of the construction of the gate is also Fatimid. This is despite the curious fact that the original founding inscription was so completely obscured by subsequent construction. A final surprise is that a symbol which resembles the letter 'A' in a pseudo-Roman font is carved above the apex of the arch of the second phase surmounted by a cross with diagonal lines (see fig. 6). There is an identical stonemason's mark, albeit cruder, on the keystone of the apex of the rear arch of *Bāb Zuwayla*.[26] This leads to the conclusion that the same masons who built the second phase of the *Bāb al-Tawfiq* were also engaged on the construction of the *Bāb Zuwayla*. As the latter gate was built some five years after the *Bāb al-Naṣr* and the *Bāb al-Futūh*, the deduction would be that the second phase of stonework on the *Bāb al-Tawfiq* was undertaken five years after the first phase. This article is not the place to speculate on the identity of the masons involved in the construction of the Fatimid gates of Cairo, but the conclusion that these are foreign stonemasons' marks is not unreasonable, especially given the putative involvement of Armenian builders with the project.[27]

THE AYYUBID WALL

The work of restoring the fortifications of *Badr al-Ǧamālī*, first undertaken by *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn* in 566 AH/ 1170 AD was superseded by a bold new concept for the defence of the city. This was to enclose the Fatimid royal enceinte of *Al-Qāhira*, the earlier city of *Fusṭāṭ* to the south, and the port of *Al-Maks* to the north with a single wall that had at its centre a new citadel constructed on a spur of the *Muqaṭṭam* hills. A further wall, intended to run from *Al-Maks* to *Fusṭāṭ* along the bank of the Nile, was never executed. The area thus enclosed was referred to as *Al-Qāhira al-maḥrūsa*, or 'Cairo the Well-Guarded'. Owing to the extremely ambitious nature of this plan, however, the perimeter defences and the wall around the Citadel (what is today the northern enclosure) were not completed in the lifetime of *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn*. Instead, it fell to his successors–most notably his brother *Al-ʿĀdil* who ruled from 1200-1218 AD–to complete the project.

According to *Al-Maqrīzī*, *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn* entrusted the work of building the Citadel and the walls of Cairo to the *amīr Bahā' al-Dīn Qaraqūš* in 572 AH (1176/7 AD). To accomplish this "he destroyed the mosques and tombs on the Citadel site. He also destroyed

[26] A variety of other, apparently random, stonemasons' marks can also be seen on the rear of *Bāb Zuwayla* at the level of the first platform. I am grateful to Dr N. Hampikian for pointing these out to me.

[27] Cf. Creswell 1952, p. 162-164.

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the small pyramids which were at *Ǧīza* opposite *Misr* (*Fusṭāṭ*)–they were very numerous– and moved the stone which he found and used it to build the wall, the Citadel, and the *Qanāṭir al-Ǧīza*."[28]

On the north-eastern flank of the city, *Qaraqūš* chose to extend the line of the northern Fatimid wall eastwards to the position now marked by the *Burǧ al-Ẓafar*, and thence to the south. This wall had a ditch outside it, traces of which were seen by *Al-Maqrīzī*, by whose time the walls were already in a state of ruin.[29] The decision to build outside the city limits allowed the new wall to follow a comparatively regular ground plan. It also had the effect of enclosing a large section of terrain between the old walls of *Ǧawhar* / *Badr al-Ǧamālī* and the new wall of *Qaraqūš* / *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn* (see figs. 1-4). This area seems never to have been built up, which is an anomaly in Cairo. In other analogous areas the space created by extending the wall outwards was soon filled up with construction to the new limit of the wall. In the case of the wall under consideration here, no structures of any significance were built on the interstitial ground for seven hundred years after the construction of *Qaraqūš*. Today the area is occupied by modern buildings of no distinction following a regular grid plan. One can only speculate as to why this lacuna was left: perhaps the area was a military zone for exercises or a camping ground–a kind of northern equivalent to the *Rumayla* below the Citadel. It has been argued[30] that this area, shown on the 1549 Pagano Map of Cairo scattered with ruins (Fig. 1) was the *Ḥārat al-ʿUṭufiyya* which went into decline at the end of the 14th century. The actual location of the *Ḥārat al-ʿUṭufiyya* on other maps,[31] however, is in an area running parallel to the Northern Wall from *Bāb al-Naṣr* eastwards well within the boundary of the eastern Fatimid wall rather than outside it.[32]

THE AYYUBID BĀB AL-BARQIYYA

Along the length of the north-eastern wall built by *Qaraqūš* were three gates: the *Bāb al-Ǧidīd*, the *Bāb al-Barqiyya*, and the *Bāb al-Maḥrūq* (formerly known as the *Bāb al-Qarraṭīn*). The first and the last of these were initially studied by Matasek whose drawings were later used by Creswell in the compilation of his own authoritative account of the city-walls and gates in 1959.[33] The location of the missing Ayyubid gate, also called the *Bāb al-Barqiyya* like its Fatimid predecessor, obviously bothered Creswell, for in 1942 he persuaded the *Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe* (of which he was then a committee member) to reopen the search for this gate initiated by *ʿAli Bahǧat* in the

[28] *Al-Maqrīzī*, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, Cairo 1853 v.2, p. 203. For a summary of the defences of *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn* see N.D. MacKenzie, *Ayyubid Cairo: a Topographical Study*, Cairo 1992, p. 51-58.

[29] Casanova 1920, p. 89.

[30] See B. Blanc, S. Denoix, J-Cl. Garcin, and R. Gordiani, "À propos de la carte du Caire de Matheo Pagano", *AnIsl* XVII, 1981, p. 207 and J. Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious*, Princeton 1971, p. 43.

[31] See Ravaisse 1886, pl. 2 and the *Description de l'Égypte* map, section VII, 133.

[32] See also Casanova 1920, p. 45. The contemporary designation of the street that runs east-west parallel to the northern wall on its southern side is "*Al-ʿUṭuf*".

[33] Creswell 1959, Chapter 3.

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late 1910 s.[34] *ʿAli Bahğat* had found, on the edge of the rubbish mounds to the east of the mosque of *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Katkḫuda*, what was initially thought to have been a flanking tower of the gate, but the subsequent excavations of the *Comité* conclusively proved this to be merely an extension of the Ayyubid wall itself.[35] Despite the fact that the work had exposed to view a hitherto hidden tower (now destroyed) and section of curtain wall (see fig. 8), no drawn records survive of what was discovered at that time. The legacy of this curious episode survives in the 1:5000 Map and Index of Monuments from 1951: this section of the wall and the tower were registered under the number 614[36] under the false name of the *Bāb al-Barqiyya*. After this episode, Creswell speculated that the position of the Ayyubid *Bāb al-Barqiyya* lay further to the north where the present-day *Šāriʿ al-Azhar* runs.

Recent groundwork for the construction of the Opera Square to *Šāriʿ Ṣalāḥ Sālim* road tunnel briefly exposed a well-preserved round-fronted tower in this location prior to its destruction without documentation.[37] The approximate position of this tower is marked on fig. 4. Further excavations carried out under the auspices of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in December 1998 have now revealed three towers to the south of *Šāriʿ al-Azhar* together with a gate which might be the missing Ayyubid *Bāb al-Barqiyya* (figs. 8 and 11). A further round-fronted tower, between this gate and the round tower at the entrance to the *Darb al-Maḥrūq*, is indicated on the 1924 Map of Mohammedan Monuments in outline and still awaits excavation. The only alternative location for the Ayyubid *Bāb al-Barqiyya* is in the unexcavated area adjacent to the *Bāb al-Tawfiq* on the north side of *Šāriʿ al-Azhar*. There is a tangential argument for this in that an apparent symmetry governs the location of the towers and gates along the Ayyubid wall between the *Burğ al- Ẓafar* and the round tower at the entrance to the *Darb al-Maḥrūq* (see fig. 4). These two towers are similar in their form (large multi-storey round corner towers). A single round-fronted tower separates each from a gateway. Five further round-fronted towers, proceeding south from the *Bāb al-Ğidīd*, brings us to another large round-fronted tower whose style of masonry and scale are similar to the round corner towers. Four round-fronted towers can be traced on the equivalent southern stretch of the wall before the rubbish mounds obscure construction, perhaps concealing a fifth round-fronted tower. It is entirely possible that the large round-fronted tower at the approximate centre of this composition (that has the *Burğ al-Ẓafar* and the round tower at the entrance to the *Darb al-Maḥrūq* as its end points) is one half of another major gateway into the city. Only further excavation will prove or disprove this theory. If another gateway were to be found in this central location, textual evidence will again be proved wanting since the number of gates on the ground would exceed those described in the sources.

[34] Creswell 1952, p. 28. See also *BCCMAA* 1915-19, p. 748.

[35] *BCCMAA* 1941-45, p. 144. See also *BCCMAA* 1920-24, p. 341 and *BCCMAA* 1941-45, p. 127, p. 130-131 for the full history of this investigation.

[36] On the 1:500 Cadastral Plan Sheet 864 dating from 1943 this fragment is actually numbered 352 (the same number as the Fatimid Northern Wall).

[37] I am grateful to Seif al-Rashidi for bringing the existence of this tower to my attention.

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CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Maps are of considerable help in ascertaining the route of the north-eastern Ayyubid wall. The schematic annotated map produced by the Venetian, Matteo Pagano, in 1549[38] clearly shows the *Burǧ al- Ẓafar* and the north-eastern wall running to the Citadel as intact, although the towers are for the most part innacurately drawn as square rather than round-fronted. Also shown is the 'empty space' between the eastern edge of the city and the Ayyubid walls, and the Mamluk tomb complexes located in the desert to the east of the wall (fig. 1).

The sections of wall that escaped burial under the rubbish-mounds are also shown very faintly on the map of Cairo in the *Description de l'Égypte* (fig. 2). The *Burǧ al-Ẓafar* and four towers to its south are included, although they too are schematically drawn as square in plan. This is peculiar given the general level of accuracy exhibited in the work of the *Description*, and suggests that what is recorded on this map are later square constructions built on top of the original curved plans of the towers on the wall and the *Burǧ al- Ẓafar* in order to combat the steady increase in height of the rubbish-mounds. The next point of reference on this flank of the wall is No. 46, marked as the "Bab Derb al-Mahrouq". This was an error since No. 46 is not part of a gate but is the still-extant circular tower located to the north of the real *Bāb al-Maḥrūq*.[39] The intervening stretch of wall is not shown on the *Description* map as it has only just been released from the vast "montagnes de décombres" that existed outside the boundary of the wall. Creswell's description of the origin and nature of these mounds (sometimes referred to as the hills of *Barqiyya* [40]) cannot be bettered:[41]

"Immense mounds of debris about 400m in width run parallel to the east wall and, as late as 1920, extended for its whole length from the Bab al-Wazir to the Burg al-Zafar. As for their origin Maqrizi says that the space between the east side of Cairo and the Muqattam was originally bare ground until the Caliph al-Hakim ordered debris to be thrown there to prevent the water of the wadis from entering Cairo. But the amount for which he was responsible must have been trifling compared with the vast accumulation to be seen today, which far overtops the east wall and which, until about 1920, entirely covered the northern half from the Darb al-Mahruq to within 300 or 400 m of the great corner tower of Burg al-Zafar.

"These immense mounds, which in some places rise to a height of 50 metres above the general ground level of Cairo, might almost be taken for geological formations, They are comprised of builder's refuse, broken *qulla* bottles, pottery, worn-out matting, and rubbish of every sort. When a house built more or less of rubble is demolished, only about 10 percent of the cubic contents of the masonry can be used again (so poor is the Muqattam

[38] See Blanc *et al.*, 1981, for a comprehensive study of this document.

[39] This tower is numbered 17 according to Matasek's system, and is named the 'Burg al-Maqlab' or 'Tower of the Dump' on both the 1912 Survey of Egypt 1:1000 scale map sheet 40L (reprinted in 1930) and the 1924 Map of Mohammedan Monuments of Cairo. This designation has, however, fallen into disuse, perhaps due to its unsavoury connotations. For Creswell's discovery of the true *Bāb al-Maḥrūq*, see Creswell 1952, p. 24-25.

[40] See Casanova 1920, p. 49.

[41] Creswell 1959, p. 41.

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stone); the 90 percent remaining has gone during many centuries to increase these mounds which, at the time of Salah-al-Din must have been negligible, otherwise they would have interfered with the field of fire from his arrow-slits."

The dumps of *Al-Ḥākim* on the eastern side of the city must, in fact, have been outside the first wall of *Ğawhar* and therefore inside the wall of *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn*.

The Grand Bey Map of Cairo of 1874 (fig. 3) also follows the *Description* map in showing the section of Ayyubid wall adjacent to the *Burğ al- Ẓafar* as intact, although the stretch of wall with its towers shown running west from *Burğ al-Ẓafar* on the earlier map had disappeared during the course of the 19th century. Grand Bey, however, represents the towers correctly as round-fronted. Both these maps clearly indicate the route of an earlier wall, punctuated with towers, at the eastern edge of the built-up area of the city. On both the 1924 map of Muhammadan monuments of Cairo[42], and the more widely accessible 1951 map of Islamic Monuments in Cairo, this wall is no longer shown: a testament to the continuing habit of dumping rubbish in this area well into the 20th century. While the 1924 map provides the registration number of the whole Ayyubid wall as 307, this number today belongs in the Index to the *Burğ al-Ẓafar* alone. The number 352, previously given only to the Fatimid wall between the *Bāb al-Futūh* and the *Bāb al-Naṣr*, and slightly to the west of the latter, is subsequently applied to the whole city wall regardless of whether it is Ayyubid or Fatimid construction.

The 1:500 scale Survey of Egypt Cadastral Plan Sheets 458 (1937), 463 (1937), and 868 (1943) clearly show the outline of the top of the Ayyubid curtain wall proceeding south from the *Bāb al-Ğidīd*. This comprises five towers including a re-entrant corner tower in the wall that marks a shift in its alignment. Creswell remarks that he saw three towers to the south of the second tower to the south of the *Bāb al-Ğidīd* (which are these towers) which were almost buried and whose interiors were inaccessible.[43] The much larger round-fronted tower to the south of this group, is not shown because it was at the time still buried by rubbish. The re-entrant corner tower[44] and round-fronted tower to its north[45] shown on Sheet 458 have since disappeared. Only squatter buildings appear in this area on the 1:5000 Survey of Egypt Plan Sheet J15 derived from aerial photographs taken in 1977.

[42] For details of this map, see Habashi and Warner, *AnIsl* 32, p. 90-91.

[43] Creswell 1959, p. 45.

[44] This round-fronted tower was recently partially dismantled by the Supreme Council for Antiquities as it obstructed the new increased traffic flow through *Šāriᶜ Šayḫ al-Ğaᶜfarī* caused by the tunnelling works in *Šāriᶜ al-Azhar*. The blocks from the upper part of the tower were numbered and are in storage awaiting reconstruction. The lower part was left *in situ*, filled with sand and asphalted over. I am indebted to Mr Medhat al-Minnabawi of the SCA for sharing this information with me.

[45] This is currently located in a car-park, evidenced by a slight hump in the ground.

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DETAILS OF THE AYYUBID WALL TO THE NORTH OF ŠĀRIʿ AL-AZHAR

The hitherto unrecorded section of Ayyubid wall to the north of *Šāriʿ al-Azhar* has three currently visible parts to it: first a section of crenellated curtain wall, second a small round-fronted tower, and third a large round-fronted tower (see figs. 7 and 12). All these components have been excavated from the surrounding rubbish mounds, and the trenches which surround them are now steadily being filled up again by debris.

The curtain wall itself conforms to a pattern of construction noted by Creswell for the remainder of the Ayyubid wall extending from the *Burǧ al-Ẓafar* to the *Bāb al-Maḥrūq*.[46] In other words, the outer face is built of large blocks of stone, while the inner face is built of smaller blocks which are smooth, with narrow headers of about 10cm in width. The wall was crenellated, and has two discharging chambers that are open on the inner face. The crenellations differ in size from those seen on the rest of the curtain wall much further to the south (in the stretch of wall that runs from the tower at *Darb al-Maḥrūq* to the *Bāb al-Wazīr*) but correspond to those in the recently excavated portion immediately south of *Šāriʿ al-Azhar*. A further small fragment of what may be another crenellated round-fronted tower,[47] separated from the main wall by a large rubbish mound but clearly built on the same line, can also be seen close to the Fatimid *Bāb al-Tawfiq*. This has obviously got a complex substructure that is filled by debris and is now inaccessible. From here, the curtain wall continues to the south under the *Šāriʿ al-Azhar*. If the identification of the *Bāb al-Tawfiq* with the first *Bāb al-Barqiyya* is accepted, its proximity to the Ayyubid wall at this point might suggest that not only its structure but also its name was absorbed into an Ayyubid gate near this point.

The small round-fronted tower in this section of the wall also conforms to a standard model: it is cruciform internally, with intersecting tunnel vaults. Creswell suggests that such towers were normally of two storeys, in which case the lower storey of this tower must still be buried underground.

The large round-fronted tower is unique, although it bears obvious similarities to the *Burǧ al-Ẓafar* and the round tower at the approach to *Darb al-Maḥrūq* in masonry design and construction. What can be seen of the external masonry is fair-faced like these towers, and the internal arrangement in plan is also similar. The tower has two surviving levels (see fig. 9). The lower level had a large double-height hexagonal vaulted room at its centre, with smaller rooms on the inner face, but the vault over the main space has collapsed and this room is filled with rubble. A staircase winds from this level to a hexagonal corridor running around the void formed by the double height vaulted space, which provides access to three discharging-chambers on the outer face of the tower with tapering vaults and a small room on the inner face. The whole construction, and particularly the hexagonal space whose stone vaults are still partially visible, is of the highest quality of ashlar masonry. This

[46] Creswell 1959, p. 58.

[47] The stonework is of approximately the same dimensions as the main section of wall to the north.

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tower's unusual scale and construction must mean that it accompanied a major event in the wall such as a gateway or a change in direction, but the answer currently lies buried beneath a mountain of debris.

It is not known precisely when the stretch of wall to the north of *Šāriʿ al-Azhar* was uncovered by the Antiquities Organization, although the cartographic evidence cited above would seem to indicate that this took place after 1977. The last published reports of the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* contain no mention of this portion of the East Wall.[48] It seems that following its excavation from the rubbish mounds which surrounded it, some minor restoration work was carried out on the wall, including new stonework to the northern doorway and stair at the top of the large round-fronted tower. As we have seen above, the remains of the *Bāb al-Tawfīq* were uncovered by 1961. This gate also had some stone conservation work carried out, and brick pier supports were added to either side of the opening to support the corbelled second phase construction (see above). No drawn or written records of the work on either the Fatimid or Ayyubid sections of the wall have been traced by the author. All the above sites are rapidly being filled in by the continuing slippage of the ancient rubbish mounds and the creation of modern dumps.

DETAILS OF THE AYYUBID WALL TO THE SOUTH OF ŠĀRIʿ AL-AZHAR

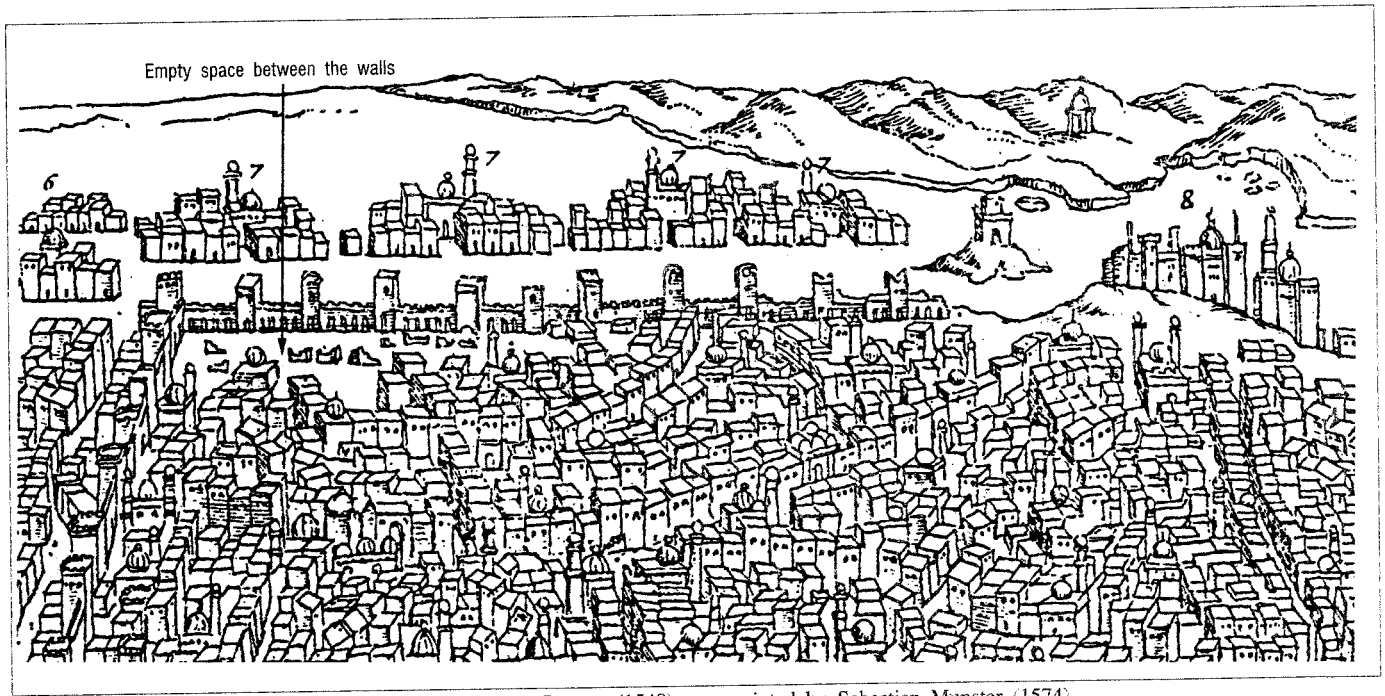
The masonry on this newly excavated section of wall (fig. 8) matches that on the wall to the north of *Šāriʿ al-Azhar*. The wall is a crenellated curtain wall that includes three round-fronted towers (at present), and eight discharging chambers for archers within the thickness of the wall. The central round-fronted tower has been substantially destroyed, and its counterpart to the north has major collapse of its vaulting. The southern tower is in a good state of preservation but is inaccessible. The plans of the only accessible tower is included on fig. 8. All these towers conform to the established pattern of round-fronted towers with cruciform-plan interiors noted above, with some exceptions. The northern tower has, for example, a vaulted room with an independent access adjacent to the main cruciform interior. The wall includes several pieces of pharaonic spolia which bear out *Al-Maqrīzī*'s comment (quoted above) that the wall was built using stone from ancient sites at Memphis and *Al-Ǧīza*. Steps descend from the top of the curtain wall in one location to the level of discharging chambers. The gateway (still only partially excavated) in this section of wall is a curiosity in that it does not have two flanking towers (fig. 11). This fact differentiates it from all the other Ayyubid gates in Cairo, with the exception of the *Bāb al-Mudarraǧ* in the Citadel and the *Bāb al-Qarāfa*. Instead, on the south side of the gate is a narrow projection of the wall, crenellated on both sides, that seems to have been built simply to shield the entrance from direct assault. The interior of the gate is a shallow dome, flanked by two groin-vaulted rooms. Immediately adjacent to the wall on its western side is a small stone

[48] See *BCCMAA* 1946-53, 207-208.

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structure composed of five vaulted rooms, built at a much later time since it occupies a completely different stratum from the wall. This may be the substructure of a tomb: a likely attribution in view of the historic use of this area as a cemetery. It is mentioned here as its presence has already given rise to confusion. Doubtless further discoveries will be made as clearance work in the area continues.

The issue of where the Fatimid walls of Cairo ran on the eastern perimeter of the city is still to be conclusively resolved in the absence of physical remains and precise textual indications. The complexity of this question is attested to by Casanova, who at the end of an exhaustive analysis of the walls in his *Histoire et Description de la Citadelle du Caire* felt obliged to include a two page résumé of his findings.[49] The reconciliation of historic texts with built reality is also problematic with regard to the suggestion that the Fatimid *Bāb al-Barqiyya* is the *Bāb al-Tawfiq*, and not the *Bāb al-Ġurayyib* as has previously been supposed. At the least it has been sufficiently demonstrated above that the two sites are topographically distinct, and that the *Bāb al-Tawfiq* marks the eastern limit of the Fatimid fortifications. Prior to further excavation in the area, it is reasonable to proceed on the assumption that the newly discovered Ayyubid gate on this flank of the city is in fact the later *Bāb al-Barqiyya*. The most striking fact that arises from any reconsideration of the defensive walls and gates of Cairo is that for most of their history they have been in an apparent state of ruin, providing symbolic rather than actual protection to the city within.



1. North-eastern walls of Cairo from the map of Matteo Pagano (1549), as reprinted by Sebastian Munster (1574).

[49] Casanova 1894, 552-553.

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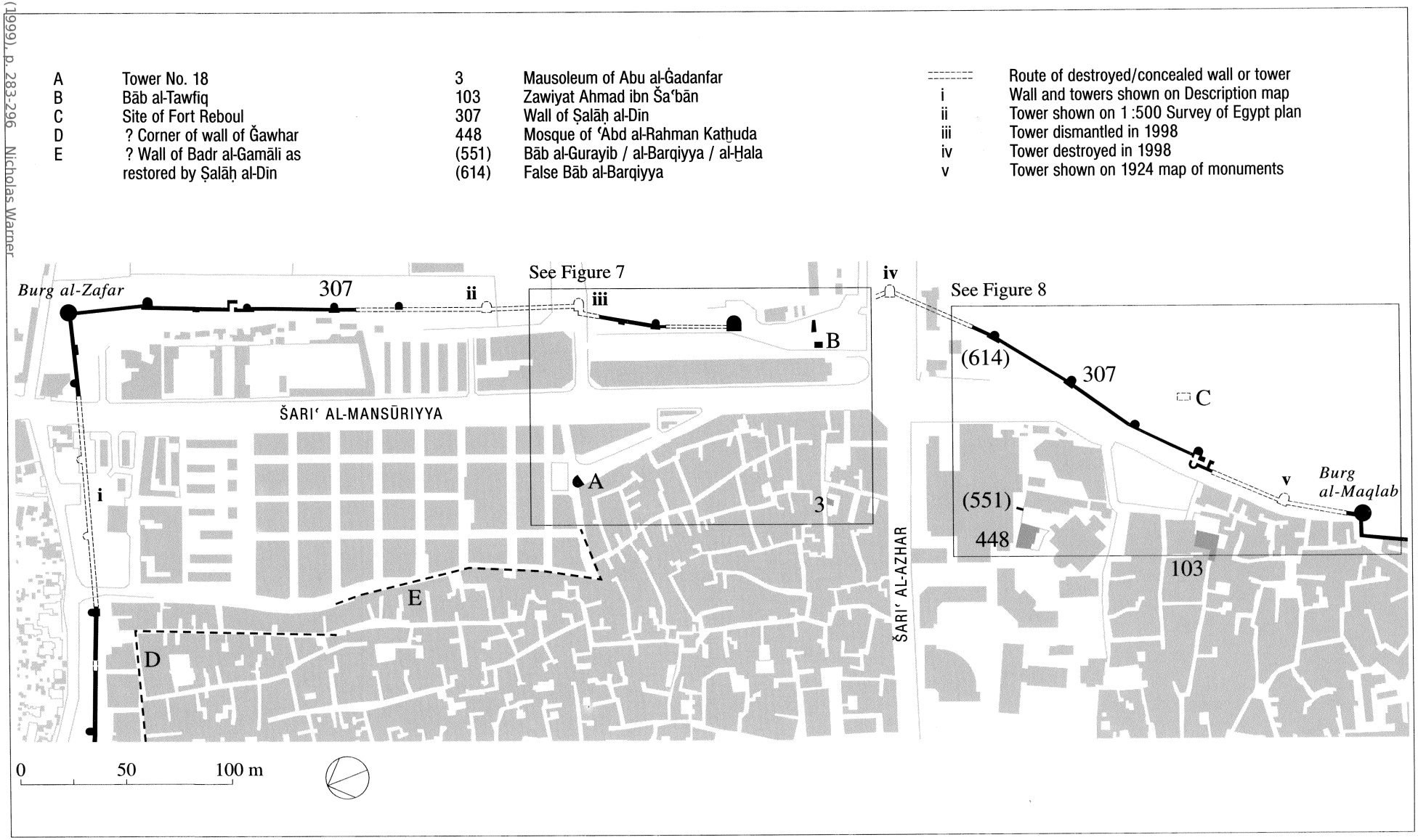


2. Detail of the Map of the *Description de l'Égypte* (1798) showing the north-eastern perimeter of Cairo.

3. Detail of the Map of Gaudi Bey (1874) showing the north-eastern perimeter of the Cairo.

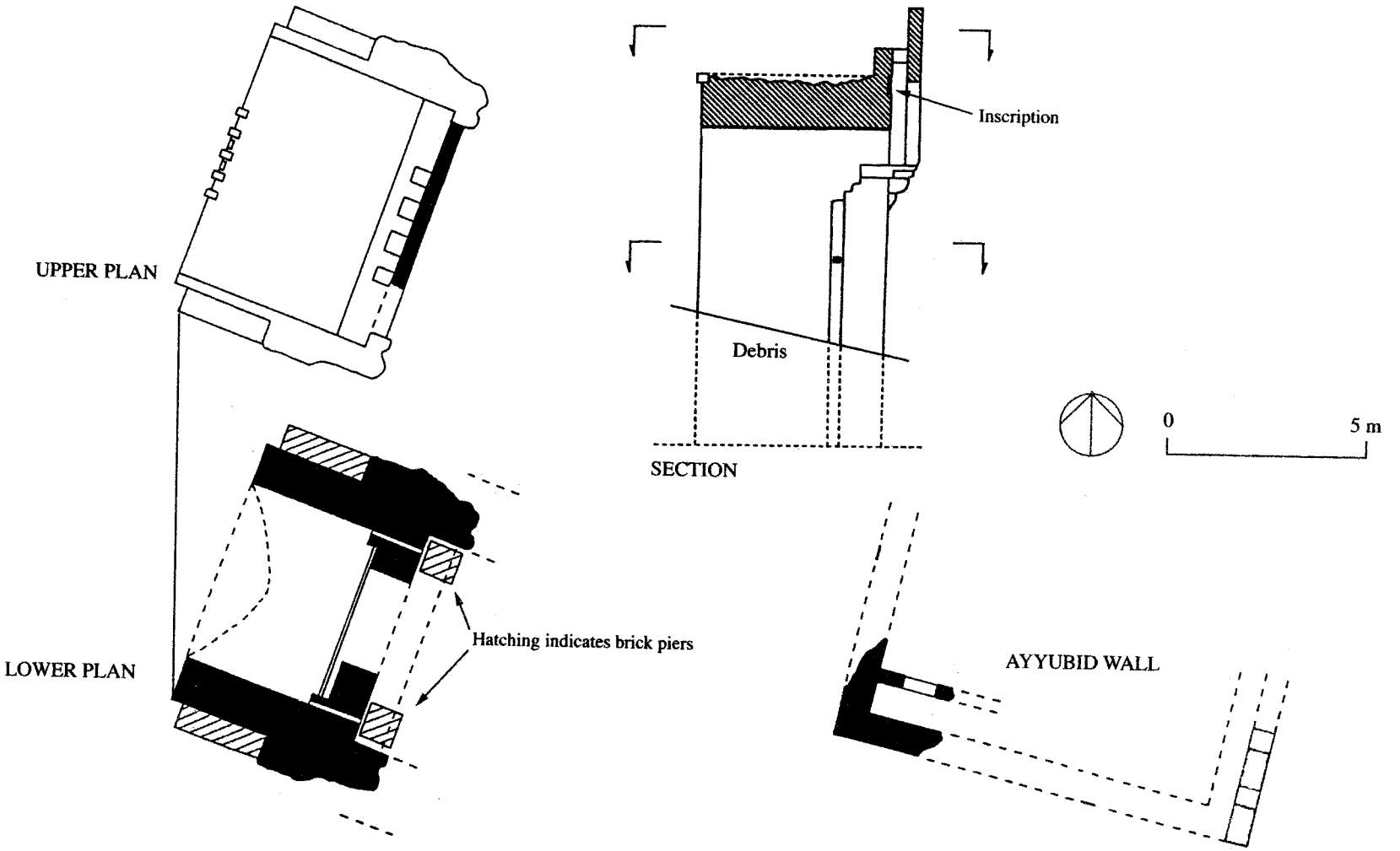
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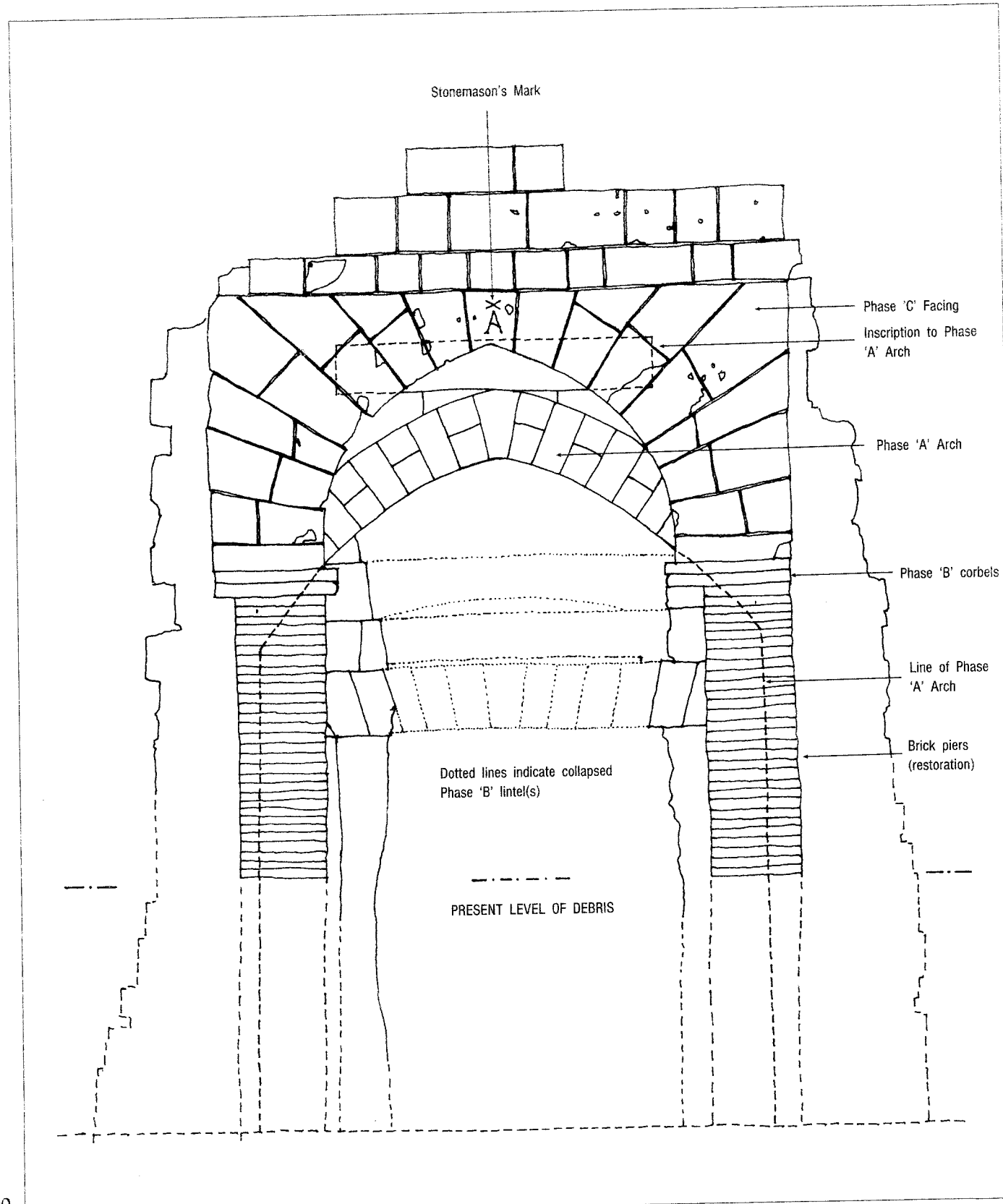


4. Current plan of the north-eastern perimeter of Cairo (drawn by W. Chan).

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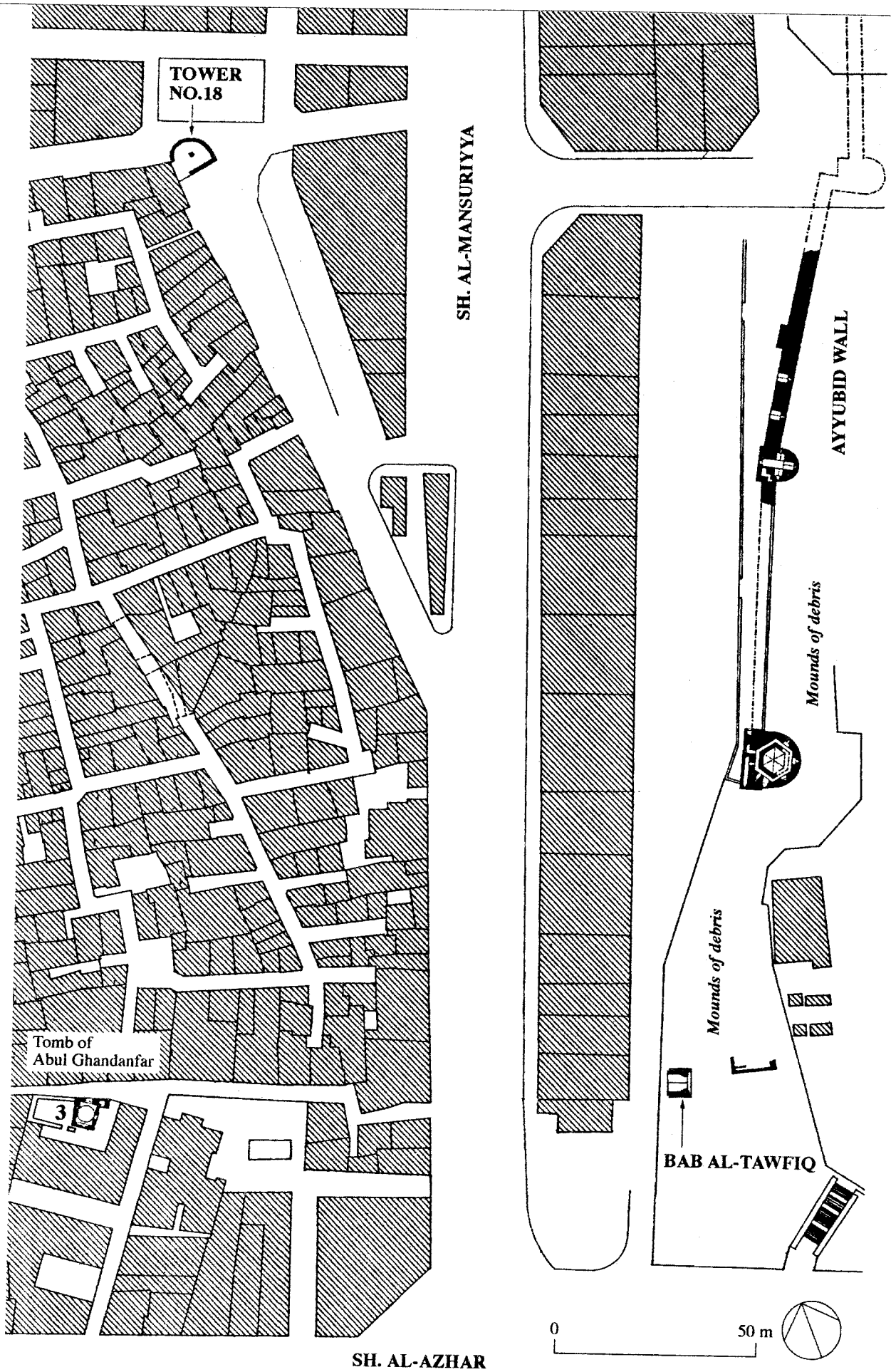


5. Plans and Section of the Bāb al-Tawfīq (surveyed and drawn by H. Barnard and N. Warner).



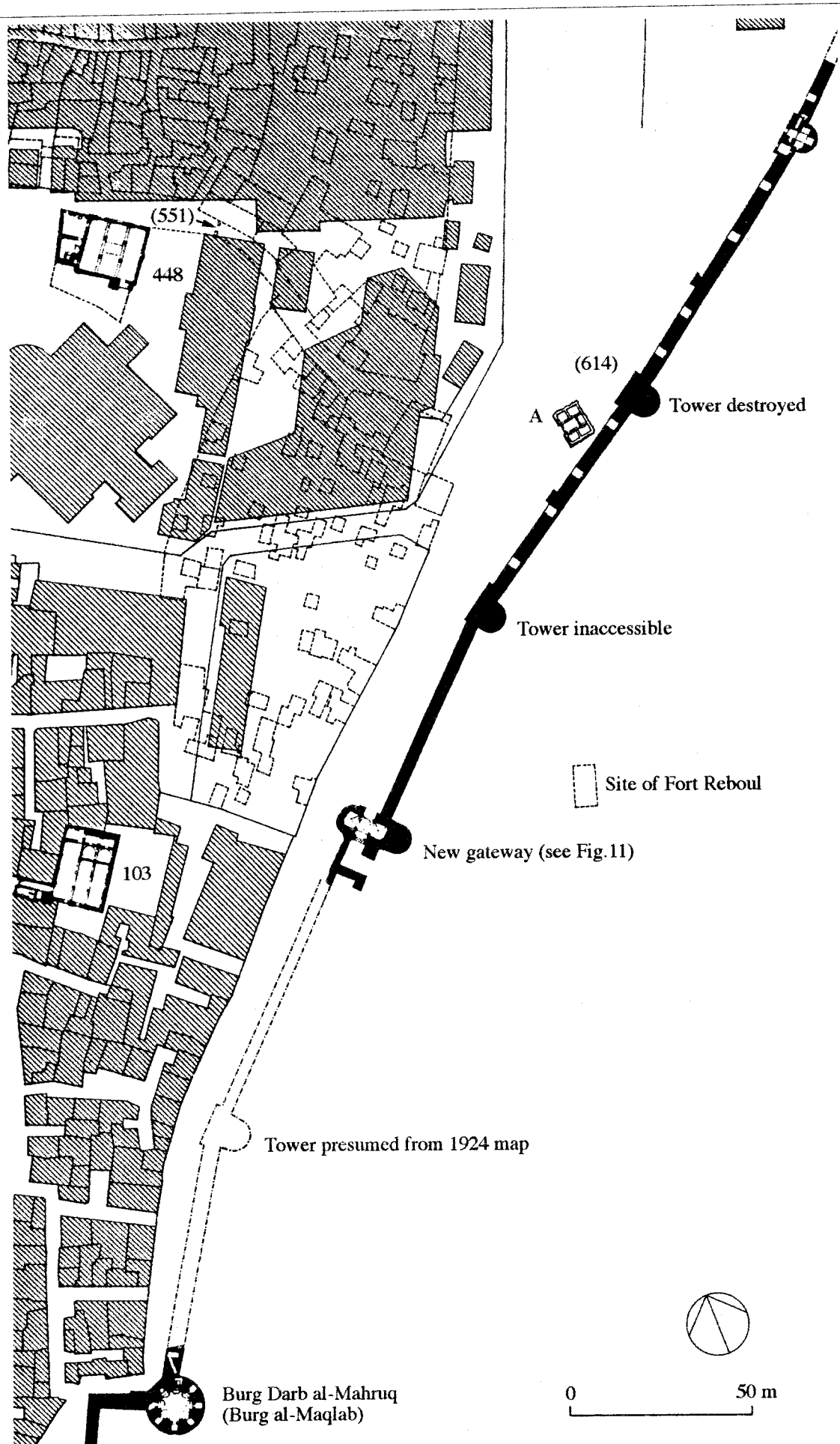
6. Sketch Elevation of the Bāb al-Tawfīq (surveyed and drawn by H. Barnard and N. Warner).

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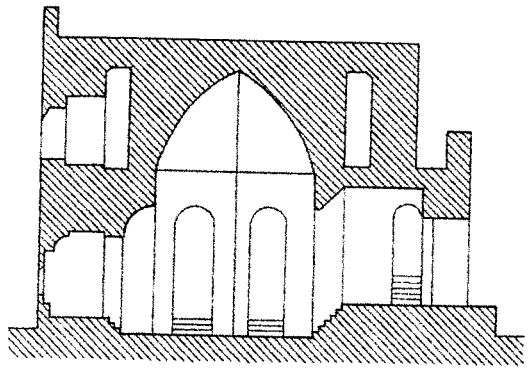
7. Detail of walls and towers to the north of Sūr al-Azhar, after map prepared by N. Warner for the Cairo Mapping Project of the American Research Center in Egypt. Egyptian Antiquities Project under a USAID grant. Additional survey information courtesy H. Barnard.

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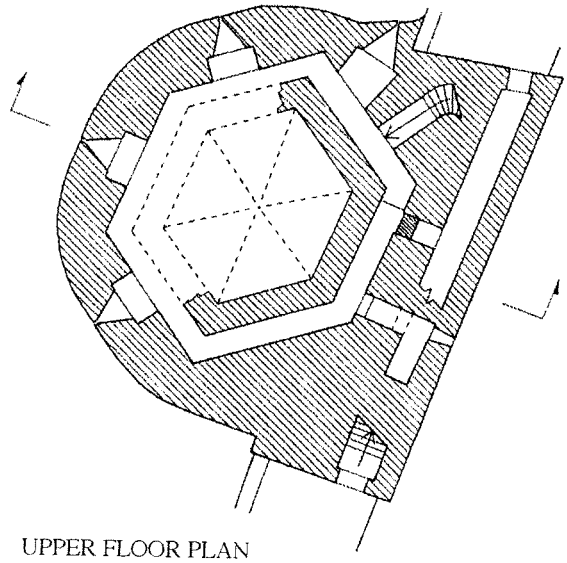


8. Detail of Ayyubid wall to the south of Sarī al-Azhar, after map prepared by N. Warner for the Cairo Mapping Project of the American Research Center's Egyptian Antiquities Project under a USAID grant. Additional survey information courtesy H. Barnard and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Egypt.

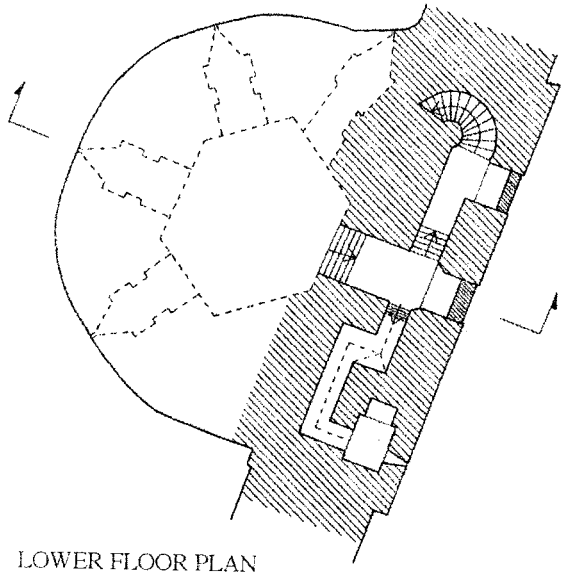
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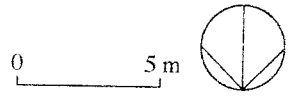
SECTION (RECONSTRUCTION)



UPPER FLOOR PLAN

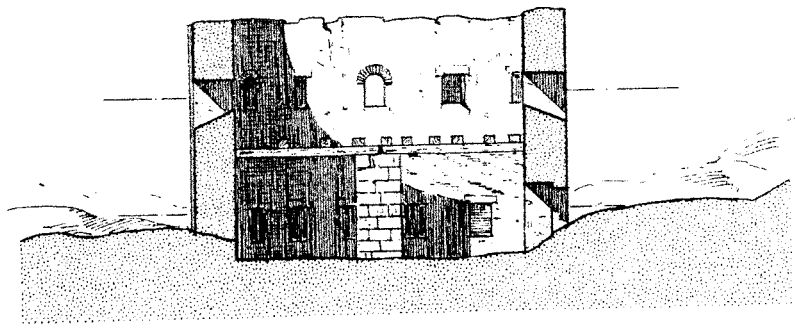


LOWER FLOOR PLAN

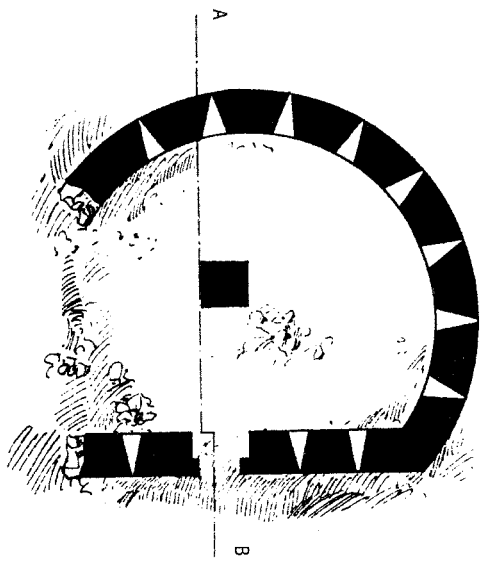


9 - Plan and section of large Ayyubid tower to the north of Sahn al-Azhar (surveyed and drawn by H. Barnard and N. Warner).

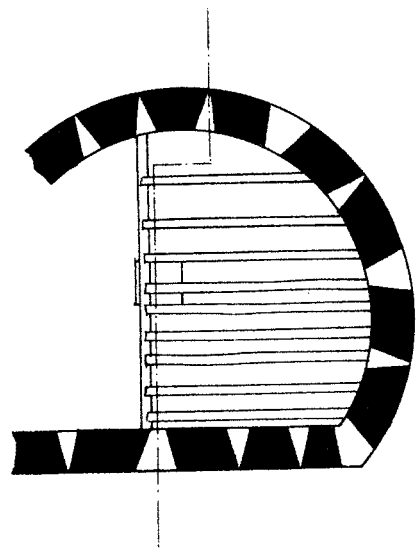
Anlsl 33 (1999), p. 283-296 Nicholas Warner
The Fatimid and Ayyubid Sections of the Sahn of al-Azhar
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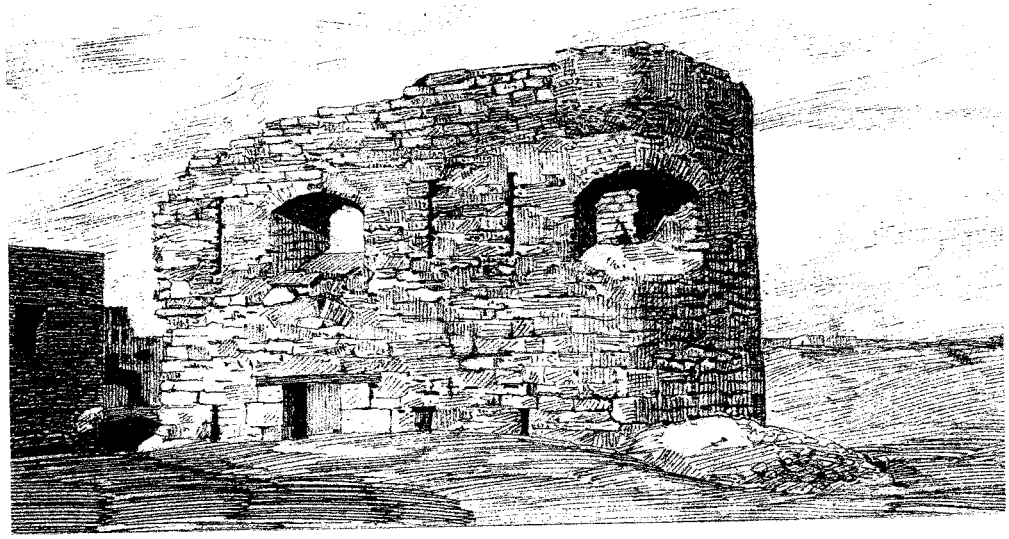
Section AB



Lower floor plan

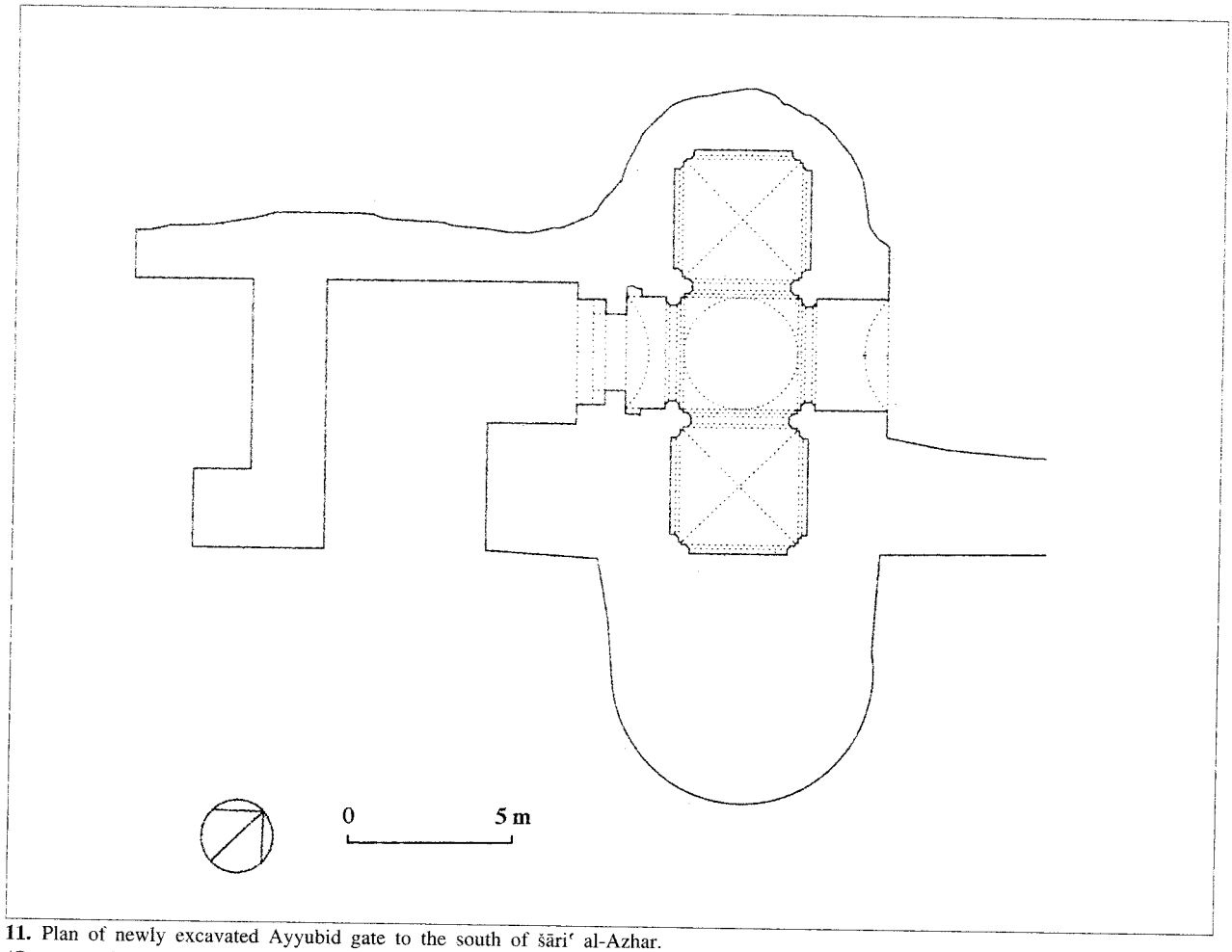


Upper floor plan

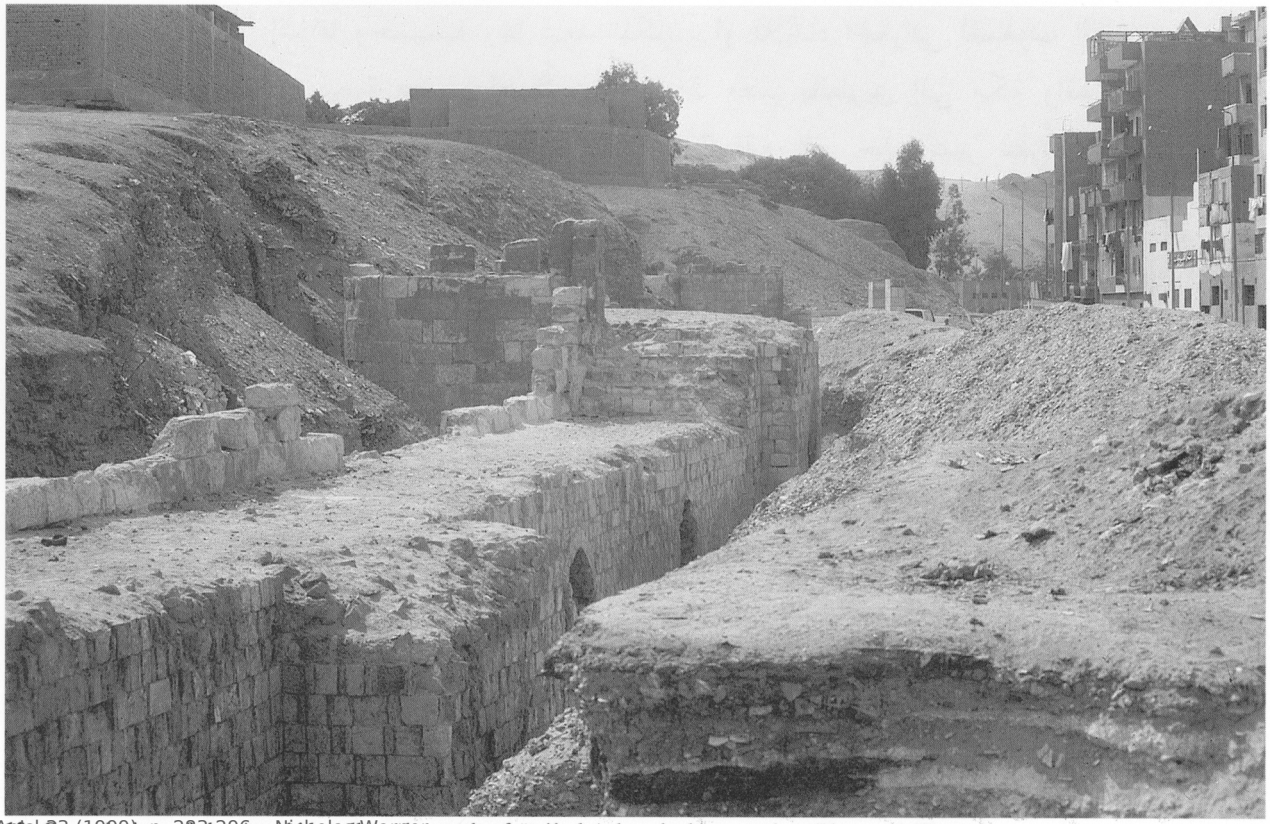


10. Section, plans and perspective view of Tower No.18 by E. Matasek (1902). Illustration courtesy of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

AnIsl 33 (1999), p. 283-296 Nicholas Warner
The Fatimid and Ayyubid Eastern Walls of Cairo: Notes from Fieldwork
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11. Plan of newly excavated Ayyubid gate to the south of šāriʿ al-Azhar.
(Courtesy of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Egypt).



12. General view of the Ayyubid wall to the north of šāriʿ al-Azhar, looking south. (Photo: N. Warner).

Anlsl 33 (1999), p. 283-296 - Nicholas Warner
The Fatimid and Ayyubid Eastern Walls of Cairo: missing fragments.
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