

## THE FOUNDING OF CAIRO

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The ʿUmayyad dynasty fell on 29 Safar 202 (Jan. 10, 905) and Egypt once more became a province ruled by Governors (mostly Turks) appointed by the ʿAbbāsīd Caliph.

But anew power was arising in the West – the Fātimids – who had put an end to the Aghlabids of Qairawān in Djumāda II, 290 (Feb./Mar. 909), and who were destined later on to conquer Egypt and to rule it for just over 200 years. The origin of this dynasty is still involved in obscurity. ʿUbayd Allāh, the first Fātimid Caliph, founded his capital on a piece of land which projected into the sea in the Gulf of Gabes between Sūsa and Sfax. He had a thorough belief in astrology and traced its plan under the sign of the Lion, on 5 Dhu'l – Qn'da 304 (May 916). The walls were finished in 305 H. (917/18) according to al-Bakri, or in Rabi' I 304 (Sept. Oct. 916), according to Ibn Adhāri.

Maqrīzī says that (each half of) the gate was made of three layers of iron fastened together with great rivets and that owing to their great weight the Maḥdī decided that the pivots should be of glass, so that a single man might open and shut them. We shall find the same legend related about Fātimid Gates of Cairo.

ʿUbayd Allāh built himself a palace, the entrance of which faced west and opposite, on the other side of a Maydān, was the palace of his son Abū'l-Qāsim, the entrance of which faced east. The position of these two palaces, facing each other on the east and west sides of a Maydān, resembles the position of the Greater and Lesser Palaces in the future Fātimid Cairo. It was in 308 H. (920/21) that ʿUbayd Allāh left Rakkadu to take up his residence in his new capital.

ʿUbayd Allāh sent two expeditions against Egypt, both commanded by his son Abū'l-Qāsim, in the first of which the Fātimid army actually occupied Alexandria on 8 Muḥarram 302 (3rd August 914), but thanks to re-inforcements sent from Baghdād, it was finally defeated on 22 Djumāda II, 302 (12th Jan. 915) and driven out. In 306 H. (918/19) another army was sent against Egypt, but met with the same fate.

Abū'l-Qāsim died on 13 Shawwāl 334 (18th May 946), and was succeeded by his son Ismā'il al-Manṣūr, who founded Ṣabra. He died in Shawwāl 341 (Feb. 953), and was succeeded by his son al-Mu'izz. The ambition of his life was the conquest of Egypt, for which purpose he had amassed a fortune of 24 million dinars, and spent two years digging wells and building rest-houses on the road to Alexandria.

De Goeje suggests that al-Mu'izz was led to meditate this attack on Egypt on account of the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the sign of the Ram in 356 H. (967). In support of this view he shows by numerous examples the enormous part astrology played in the daily life of the mediaeval East, especially among the Fātimids. He mentions the books on astrology and the occult sciences of which 'Ubayd Allāh (later the Mahdi) was robbed near Tahuna when he was a fugitive in Africa. These books, which were recovered by al Qā'im during his otherwise profitless campaign against Egypt, are supposed to have contained the prediction, current at that time, that the rule of the Arabs in the West would cease at the end of the third century of the Hijra. This prediction, according to de Goeje, was undoubtedly connected with the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the sign of the Ram, due in 296 H. (908), the year which actually did witness the fall of the Aghlabids and the inauguration of Fātimid rule at Qairawān. It is known that the Fātimids expected that a new era, the era of the true religion, would begin with a state of the heavens due in 316 H. (928). The origin of his dynasty dating from 296 H. (908), de Goeje suggests, with great probability, that al Mu'izz, who is known to have been well versed in astrology, was prompted by a similar conjunction in 356 H. (967) to commence in this year the equipment of his great expedition against Egypt. He reminds us that even Hülegü Khān in 656 H. (1258) at the summit of his power did not dare to attack Baghdad until his astrologer, the celebrated al-Tūsi, had reassured him.

These considerations may well have influenced al-Mu'izz but we shall see that Ya'qūb ibn Killis played an important part as well, in fact the most important part according to Abū'l-Mahāsīn.

As a result of internal disorders, famine caused by a low Nile, and plague, Egypt lay helpless and open to an invader, and its precarious position was fully reported to al-Mu'izz by the refugee Ya'qūb ibn Killis, an Iraqi Jew, born in Baghdad in 318 H. (930). He migrated to Palestine and started business at Ramla. Ibn Khallikān (quoting Ibn 'Asākir) says: "He was a Jew, perverse and crafty; he embezzled (*kasara*) the property of the merchants (*l'afīyat al-A'yūn*, II, 499, 11. 17-18). At a suitable moment he fled from his creditors, but it must have been a very profitable bankruptcy, for soon after in 355 H. (966), when he was only thirty-six, he appears in Egypt as a wealthy merchant, doing a large business with its ruler

Kāfūr. He rose higher and higher in favour until one day it was reported to him that Kāfūr had said: "Were he a Muslim he would be the right man for Wazīr (Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., II, p. 499. 1. 20; Maqrizī, II, p. 5 11. 28-9). The realization of the fact that the only bar to his promotion to Wazīr was the fact that he was a Jew, and the discovery that Islām was the only true religion were simultaneous! As Ibn Khallikān (II. p. 96, 11. 11-12 and p. 99, 1. 20; and Maqrizī, II, p. 5. 11. 29-30) say: "He craved for the Wazīrate, so he became a Muslim in 356 H." (967).

But the actual Wazīr, Ibn al-Furāt, was thoroughly alarmed at the thought that Ya'qūb was now eligible for his post, and the following year, when Kāfūr died, he promptly had Ya'qūb thrown into prison (Ibn Khallikān, II, p. 406. 11. 15-17; Maqrizī, II, p. 5, 11. 32-4). Thanks to his wealth he was able to obtain his release by bribery, and fled to the court of the Fātimid ruler of North Africa. In spite of his "conversion" we are told that when at Mahdiyya he associated entirely with Jews (Ibn al-Qalanisi, p. 32. 11. 9-11).

But he longed to be revenged on Egypt so he adopted a simple technique, viz: to encourage the country in which he had taken refuge to attack that from which he had to flee. Abū'l-Mahāsīn (II. p. 396. 11. 5-6) says that he was one of the most important factors in inducing al-Mu'izz, by suitable propaganda to send Djawhar against Egypt. He accordingly made as much as possible of the financial crisis, low Nile, crop failures, famine, epidemics, and the weakness of the Egyptian Government. But when Djawhar started on his expedition he did not go with his army, but kept well out of danger, not merely until the country had been conquered, but until it had been pacified and stabilized as well, and he only left for Egypt three and a half years later when al-Mu'izz went to his new kingdom (Ibn al-Qalanisi, p. 32, 1. 11; Ibn Khallikān, II, p. 499, 1. 2; and Maqrizī, II, p. 5. 11. 34-5).

Once arrived there he embarked on a vast financial ramp—the introduction of a new dinar—which caused the Rādī dinar to slump to one third of its value and "resulted in great losses to the common people" (Maqrizī, II. 2-6.) Shortly after he became Wazīr.

The decision having been taken, the Arab tribes were summoned, and Djawhar at the head of 100,000 men, with ample stores and equipment marched from Qairawān on 14 Rabī' 1. 358 (5th Feb. 969). He arrived at Giza, on the 17th Sha'bān 358 (6th July, 969), forced the passage of

the river and totally defeated the army drawn up on the east bank. The city then surrendered; the Fātimid army passed through Fustāt in triumph, and camped on the great sandy plain to the north, a plain which was bounded to the east by the Muqattam, and on the west by the Khalidj, a canal which left the Nile to the north of Fustāt, passed by the ancient Heliopolis, and finally entered the sea at Suez. This plain was free from buildings except those belonging to the Garden of Kāfūr, a Coptic monastery called Dayr-al-'Idām (the site of which was later occupied by the Mosque of al-Aqmar) and a little building called Qaṣr al-Shawq, the name of which still survives as the name of a quarter.

That very night Djawhar marked out (*ikhlatfa*) the site of the palace destined for al-Mu'izz, and when the notables of Fustāt came next morning to congratulate him, they found that the foundations had already been excavated. He also made an enclosure, about 1,200 m. square of sun-dried bricks. Maqrizī says that in his day a long section of this wall still existed "50 cubits behind the present wall" (i. e. of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn), between the Bāb al-Barqīyya and the Darb Batūt, until it was destroyed in 803 H. (1400). He remarks on the astonishing size of the bricks - 1 cubit long and two-thirds of a cubit wide - and says that the wall was thick enough for two horsemen to ride abreast. It is curious to find that Yāqūt uses the very same expression when speaking of the thickness of the walls of the Qaṣr of Maḥdiyya, the first capital of the Fātimids.

The intention of Djawhar is very clearly expressed by Ibn Duqmaq who says that "he built palaces for his master so that he and his friends and their armies were separate from the general public" as (later on) was the custom of the kings who were the sons of 'Abd al-Mu'min, and who did so in Marrākesh and Tlemcen and other places.

It was first named al-Manṣūriyya, the Victorious, evidently after the palace-city, al-Manṣūriyya, founded outside Qairawān by al-Manṣūr b'illāh, the father of al-Mu'izz. This coincidence in names struck Kay, who remarks (J. R. A. S., 1882, p. 233) that the foundation of an isolated and fortified palace city appears to have been simply in accordance with the already established custom of the Fātimid court, and that al-Manṣūriyya, although it neither became the nucleus of a new city nor superseded Qairawān, the ancient capital, was doubtless the prototype of al-Qāhira. It is pretty evident that Djawhar must have had orders to

build a palace-city which should stand in the same relationship to Fustāt as Manṣūriyya did to Qairawān, and in this connection it is interesting to note that two of the gates of Manṣūriyya were named Bāb Zuwayla and Bāb al-Futūḥ, names which we shall see adopted for two of the gates of Cairo. It recalls in many of its aspects the arrangement at Pekin, of the Chinese City, the Tatar City, and the Forbidden City, as laid out by Kubilai Khān three centuries later. As Kay has pointed out, there is nothing to show that either Djawhar or his Master intended to found a new city in the ordinary sense of the word, or foresaw what afterwards happened, viz. that the population of the triple city Fustāt, al-'Askar, al-Qatā'i' would gradually move to the immediate vicinity of the Imperial stronghold, and eventually, on the extinction of the dynasty by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in 567 H. (1171), would overflow the enclosure and erect mosques and secular buildings on the site of the rapidly decaying pavilions. Until then no person was allowed to enter the walls of al-Qāhira but the soldiers of the garrison and the highest officials of the State. Maqrizī (I. p. 361 ll. 30-31) expressly says that Cairo became the residence of the Caliph whilst his subjects continued to live in Fustāt.

Djawhar had the astrologers summoned and told them to choose a propitious moment for the foundation of the city, so that the Fātimid dynasty would never be dispossessed of it. All along the lines of trenches, dug to receive the foundations of the walls, were fixed posts, connected by cords, on which were hung bells so that, when the exact moment arrived, the astrologers could send a signal down the line. They told the workmen to stand by, ready to throw into the trenches the stones and mortar which were placed within their reach but, before the right moment arrived, a crow alighted on the cord, the bells tinkled, and the workmen, thinking that the signal had been given by the astrologers, set to work. At this moment the planet Mars was in the ascendant. This planet was for them Qāhīr al-Falak, the Ruler of the Sky, and this they considered an evil omen. It would appear from the somewhat disjointed account of Maqrizī (I. p. 377) that the new city was first named al-Manṣūriyya, evidently after the palace-city founded outside Qairawān by the third Fātimid Caliph al-Manṣūr b'illāh and that it was only when al-Mu'izz came to Egypt four years later and from his own reading of the horoscope, saw a good omen in this fact, that the name al-Qāhira - "the Sub-

jugator or "the Triumphant" - was given to the city.

The story about the astrologers and the crow is so clear and circumstantial that none of the authors (Ravnisse, Lane, Lane-Poole, Becker, O'Leary, Richmond, etc.) who have discussed the foundation of Cairo have thought of doubting its authority. It appears to have escaped their notice that an almost identical story is told by Ma'ūdi (A. D. 943) in his obviously legendary account of the foundation of Alexandria by Alexander the Great. (*Prairies*, II, pp. 423-5). He says that the workmen, by order of Alexander, placed themselves along the lines marked out for the new city. Stakes were fixed in the ground at intervals along these lines, and a cord was attached to them, one end of which was fixed to a marble pillar in front of the King's tent. Bells were attached to the cord and the workmen waited for the signal to be given, on hearing which they were all at the same moment to start work on the foundations. Alexander hoped by this means to ensure that a fortunate hour and horoscope should prevail at the foundation of the town. But alas, when the day and moment chosen had arrived, his head felt heavy and he slept, and a crow at a chance moment alighted on the line, set the bells ringing, and the workmen set to work. Alexander awoke and, when he realized what had happened, said, "I had wished one thing, but God wished otherwise."

Thus it would appear that the story related by Maqrīzī had been in circulation twenty-six years before the foundation of Cairo, the city to which he applies it.

This puts the matter in quite a new light; Maqrīzī's account can no longer be accepted without great reserve, in fact, I consider that the foregoing fully entitles us to regard it as a legend.

The outline of the enclosure of Djawhar can be traced throughout the greater part of its circuit with considerable accuracy, thanks to the information given by Maqrīzī, except for the part between the Bāb al-Naṣr and the Bāb al-Barqiyya for which we have no details. Owing to the fact that the preliminary work was done at night and in great haste, it was observed on the following morning that there were irregularities in the layout of the Palace, the lines not being straight. No doubt this was the case with the walls of the main enclosure also. Nevertheless it was a fairly regular rectangle measuring about 1,100 m. from east to west and about 1,150 m. from north to south. The south wall faced Fuṣṭāt, the east the Muqattam, the north the open country, and the west ran

along the Canal, but at a short distance from it for on the space left were later on erected the House of Gold, the House of the Pearl, etc. The Canal existed until 1898, when it was filled in and a tramway laid down. It is now called Shūrī' al-Khalīdj al-Miṣri.

Parallel to it is a street called Shūrī' Bayn al-Sūrayn. Maqrīzī says: "There exist to-day two rows of buildings, one of which looks on to the Canal, the other on to the road which goes from the Bāb al-Qanṭara to the Bab al-Sa'āda and they call this street Bayn al-Sūrayn (- between the two walls)."

The later wall, that of Ṣalāh al-Dīn, was therefore between this street and the Canal, on the site of the row of houses whose balconies once overhung the Canal, and whose front doors open on to the Shūrī' Bayn al-Sūrayn, that is to say, close up to the Canal, for the space between the latter and the street is seldom more than 15 m. The other (earlier) wall must consequently have been on the other side of this street between it and the Darb Sa'āda, say 30-50 m. behind the later wall.

According to Maqrīzī there were eight gates, as follows: in the south wall the double-arched Bāb Zuwayla; in the west wall the Bāb al-Farādj (this must be a slip, for it can be shown that it was in the south wall), the Bāb Sa'āda and the Bāb al-Qanṭara; in the north wall the Bāb al-Futūḥ and the Bāb al-Naṣr; in the east wall the Bāb al-Barqiyya and the Bāb al-Qarrātīn (later named Bāb al-Mahrūq). There was one more gate the Bāb al-Khankha, which Maqrīzī says "was made, I believe, after Djawhar". None of these gates exist to-day for they were all replaced by later gates, built some 150 m in front of them, when Cairo was enlarged, some by Badr al-Djamālī others by Ṣalāh al-Dīn. Three of these enlargements still exist and are well-known, viz. the Bāb Zuwayla, the Bāb al-Futūḥ and the Bāb al-Naṣr.

Thanks to the laborious and painstaking topographical researches of Ravaisse, based on the *Khiṭaṭ* of Maqrīzī, we now know with considerable accuracy the extent and limits of this palace, and the alignment of its principal façades.

Although some of the gates which still existed at the beginning of the fifteenth century were seen by Maqrīzī, not the least fragment of any part of the Palace has been found in modern times, nor does Maqrīzī give any architectural information concerning any of its halls.

All we know is that according to Nāṣir-i Khusrav the palace rose in the middle of the walled enclosure of Cairo and stood free, for the nearest build-

ings were set back from it, so that none was in contact with it. He says: "When one looks from outside the city, the Palace of the Sultan" (read Caliph) looks like a "mountain because of the number and height" of the buildings composing it, but from within the city it is not possible to see anything because the ramparts are high."

This palace is composed of twelve pavilions. "Ten gates give access to this enclosure". I "have named in the following list those which are level with the ground, and excluded those which are subterranean: Bāb al-Dhahab (Golden Gate), Bāb al-Bahr, Bāb al-Sirāj ('Oil-lamp' Gate), Bāb al-Salām (of Peace), Bāb al-Zaburdjad (Emerald Gate), Bāb al-Zuhūma (Gate of the odour of Cooking), Bāb al-'Id (Gate of the Festival), Bāb al-Futūh (Gate of Conquests), Bāb al-Zallāqa, Bāb al-Sariyya (the Gate of the Night Journey) . . . The walls of the pavilions are of cut stone so (well joined) that one would think they were cut from a single block . . . and below the ground level is a door by which the Sultan goes out on horseback (Schefer's ed. p. 43, 11. 22-4). And outside the city (*shahr*) a palace has been built (this must be the Lesser, or Western Palace to which this passage leads."

Speaking of the Eastern Palace he says: "There were twelve pavilions (*quṣūr*) touching each other, and all were square in shape. Every one "I entered was more beautiful than the last; each covered 100 square cubits (*arash*), except the last which covered 60 only. In the latter was a throne occupying the whole width of the hall . . . The kitchens are outside the palace and a subterranean passage leads from the pavilions to the kitchens".

Maqrīzī, fortunately, gives us a little brief architectural information on four of the gates of the Palace two of which, the Bāb al-Riḥ and, the Bāb al-'Id, still existed in his day. He says:

"The Golden Gate was on the site of the Madrasa of Baybars. It was the main gate of the Palace. Above the vault was a *manāra*, or belvedere, at the windows of which the Caliph showed himself on certain occasions" (*Khīṭāṭ*, I, p. 302, 11. 16-18).

The Bāb al-Riḥ (Gate of the Wind), of which (he says) "I have been able to see the two doorposts and the lintel, on which were some lines in Kufic characters." It was built "entirely of stone, and lasted until the Emir Djamāl al-Dīn Yūṣuf . . . had it demolished" (I, p. 302, 11. 20-21). In another place (I, p. 434, 11. 26-30) he says that the passage-way was very long and dark.

"The Bāb al-Bahr, the vault of which was supported by a colonnade, hence its name Dildiz

al-'Amūd (Corridor of Columns), was constructed under al-Hākīm (A. D. 996-1021)".

From the above we learn (i) that at least one of these gates (the Bāb al-Riḥ) was built entirely of stone, although the walls of the city were built of mud brick and the Mosque of al-Azhar (see below) of burnt brick; (ii) that one gate (the Bāb al-'Id) had a dome, or more probably a domed chamber, above it, after the fashion of the gates of Baghdād of al-Manṣūr in 147 H. (764/5); (iii) that another (the Golden Gate) had a chamber (called a *Manāra* by Maqrīzī) above it, at which the Caliph showed himself on certain occasions; (iv) that one (the Bāb al-Bahr) had a vaulted passage-way resting on columns; (v) that one (the Bāb al-Riḥ) had a passage way 10 cubits (c 5 m.) wide, but very long and consequently very dark, thus recalling the Saqifa al-Kahla at Maḥdiyya; and that one (the Bāb al-Riḥ) had a Kufic inscription.

Underground corridors appear to have been a common feature of early Muslim palaces. For example at Baghdād the Caliph al-Mu'tadid connected the Ḥasanī Palace with the Qasr al-Thurayya (the Palace of the Pleiades) by a vaulted underground corridor two miles long by means of which he could pass from one to the other, without being seen. (Yāqūt, I, p. 808, 11. 21-2, and p. 925, 11. 12-14).

The Fāṭimid Palace was no exception, for there were many long vaulted underground passages by which the Caliph went from one part to the other, always mounted on a mule or donkey (Qalqashandī, III, p. 522, and Maqrīzī, I, p. 387.), likewise ramps to the upper part, as at Ukhaīdir.

There was also an underground passage from it to the Qasr Lu'lu'a (near the Bāb al-Qantara, for Maqrīzī says: "Among the Caliphs who had died in the Qasr Lu'lu'a were al-'Āmir, al-Hāfiẓ li-Dīn Illāh, and al-Fā'iz. They were transferred thence to the Qasr al-Kabir by the Sardāb. (I, p. 469, 11. 1-2.). The late 'Alī Bahgat, in a note to his edition of Ibn Sairafī, (*Qānūn Dīwān al-Rasā'il*, p. 81) says that in 1903 he saw beneath a house in the Bayn al-Saḥāridj, at a depth of 10 m., a low vaulted passage running east and west, which he believed to be one of these passages.

Regarding the mosque of al-Azhar Maqrīzī (II, p. 273, 11. 21-7) says: "This mosque was the first mosque founded in Cairo; it was built originally (*ansha'a*) by the Qā'id Dīnwar, al-Kātib, al-Siqillī, Mawlā of the Imām Abū Tamīm Ma'add, the Khalīf al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Illāh, when he marked out Cairo. He began the building of this mosque on Saturday the 24th Djumāda I, 359 (4th April

970) and it was finished on 9th Ramaḍān 361. Round the dome which is in the first arcade (*rīwāq*) to the right of the *miḥrab* and the *minbar* there is an inscription: This is among the things which have been ordered by . . . al-Muʿizz to be built . . . at the hand of his servant Djawhar al-Kātib al-Siqillī, in 360. The first Friday prayer held in it took place on 7th Ramaḍān 361 (22nd June 972)."

This can only mean that there was a dome in the right-hand back corner of the sanctuary, and doubtless one in the left-hand back corner also, for symmetry, exactly as in the Mosque of al-Ḥākim.

In the year 378 (988/9) al-Azhar, in addition to being a Friday mosque became a University the oldest in the world. Some have assumed, that this must have involved structural alterations but there is no need to assume anything of the sort. Until the introduction of a special building the *madrasa*, for theological teaching, courses were given in the mosque, preferably in the sanctuary, each Shaykh sitting in front of a column, and addressing a circle of pupils. We have a perfect description of such a scene in Ibn Khallikān, when he tells us how two pupils of Imām al-Shāfiʿī, Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam and Buwaiti, disputed the honour of succeeding to his professorship in the Mosque of ʿAmr: Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥakam got angry and leaving the spot where al-Shāfiʿī used to give his lectures took up a position under an arch (*ṭūq*) farther away, separated from al-Shāfiʿī by another arch. Then Buwaiti established himself in the place of al-Shāfiʿī, under the arch where he used to hold his classes. (II, p. 516. 11. 8-14; de Slane's transl. IV, pp. 395-6).

In 709 H. (1309/10) the Ṭāybarsīyya Madrasa was built against the right half of the north-western façade of the mosque, part of its north wall being cut away. In 734 H. (1333/4), the Madrasa of the Emir Āqbughā was built against the left half of the north-west façade, the wall of the mosque being cut away as before.

What was the original Mosque like? The present complex measures about 120 m. each way, but if we remove the Ṭāybarsīyya and Āqbughāwiyya Madrasas, the works of Qayt-Bāy and al-Ghūrī, of ʿAbd al-Raḥman Katkhūdā, the Riwāq al-ʿAbbāsī etc., we are left with a mosque, roughly 85 m. wide and 60 deep with an entrance in the centre of the north-west side and an entrance to right and

left, so placed as to come opposite the centre of the corresponding sides of the *ṣahn*. The sanctuary consisted of five aisles running from right to left, cut through the centre by a transept, so that nine arches of each arcade are left to right and left . . . The arches rested on marble columns taken from earlier edifices and at the end of each arcade was a wall column. The arches of the transept rested on their own columns, so that the transept was flanked by pairs of columns. There were therefore twenty-two columns for each row going from one side to the other, except in the row next the *qibla* wall, where we must add two more for the dome-bearing arch which crosses the transept. We must also add two pairs of columns for the return of the lateral dome-bearing arches in the back corners. This makes 22 22 22 22 24 = 94 columns, excluding the arcade next the *ṣahn*.

But we have forgotten that there was a dome at the righthand back corner of the sanctuary, and doubtless one in the left-hand back corner also for the sake of symmetry, as in the Mosque of al-Ḥākim; extra columns must have been required at this point, probably two in each case as shown making a total of ninety-eight columns.

The columns being short, the roof was only 6.92 m. in height but this was remedied later, in the case of the transept, by raising it 1.77 m. at an early date so as to form a clerestory. The beautiful palm-tree ornament above the arches to right and left, and also that at the north end of the transept above the entrance arch, is original and in wonderful preservation, likewise two panels at the right end of the original back wall.

In view of what we now know about the Great Mosques of Cordova, Qairawān and Tunis, viz., that they did not originally have arcades on three sides of the *ṣahn*, we cannot be sure that the original Azhar Mosque had any either. But if it did have lateral *rīwāqs* there is no reason why they should not have been like the present ones except for the arcades next the *ṣahn* which could not have been keel-arched at that date. There was no *rīwāq* on the north-western side.

We actually know what the original cresting was like, thanks to Dr. Kessler, who noticed that a piece of it still exists, incorporated in the north-eastern parapet. It bears the closest resemblance to that of the Mosque of al-Djuyūshī, 478 H. (1085).