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A Mamluk Monument "Restored": The *Dār al-Qur'ān wa-al-Ḥadīth* of Tankiz al-Nāṣirī in Damascus

INTRODUCTION

Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz al-Nāṣirī governed the province of Syria and played a central role in the polity of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn throughout most of the sultan's lengthy third reign.¹ Installed as *nā'ib al-shām* in 712/1312–13, Tankiz remained in this post until his deposition in 741/1340. An active architectural patron, Tankiz initiated numerous restoration projects, infrastructural endeavors, and new buildings throughout the Syrian province.² The pattern of his patronage has shown him to be not only a prolific builder, but also a sophisticated planner whose individual projects were predicated on long-range urban development schemes. This building program constituted one of the primary tools in the construction of the patron's public image. Moreover, Tankiz's patronage played a significant role in the development of Mamluk urban and architectural design. However, the corpus of Tankiz al-Nāṣirī's architectural work is represented today by only a few, geographically dispersed fragments in varying states of preservation. Some of his commissions survived into the last century and were documented—at least in part—by photographs or drawings. Others are known only through inscriptions or references in geographical texts, historical chronicles, or biographical compilations. In some instances, the only physical remnants of his commissions consist of *ex situ* fragments, sometimes re-used in later architecture. In a few cases, the patron's buildings still stand, although altered over time. This article will deal with one such case: a *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* erected by Tankiz in Damascus, between 728/1327–28 and 739/1338–39. It will investigate the extent to which the original building can be reconstructed hypothetically, situate the

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¹Sources for Tankiz's biography include: Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, ed. Hellmut Ritter et al. (Wiesbaden, 1962–), 10:420 ff; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah et al. (Cairo, 1934–72), 2:509 ff. Summaries of his career are found in S. Conermann, "Tankiz," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 10:185b; L. A. Mayer, *Saracenic Heraldry* (Oxford, 1953), 218–19; Michael H. Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem, an Architectural Study* (London, 1987), 223; Ḥayāt N. Ḥajjī, "Al-Amīr Tankiz al-Ḥusāmī Nā'ib al-Shām fī al-Fatrah 712–741 H/1312–1340M," in *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh Salṭanat al-Mamālīk fī Miṣr wa-al-Shām* (Kuwait, 1986), 199–283.

²On the subject of Tankiz's architectural and urban patronage, see Ellen Kenney, "Power and Patronage in Mamluk Syria: The Architecture and Urban Works of Tankiz al-Nasiri, 1312–1340" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2004).

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reconstructed building in the corpus of Mamluk architecture, and explore aspects of the foundation's social and political context.

Not surprisingly, of all the cities in the province, it was Damascus—the seat of the *niyābah*—to which Tankiz devoted the most attention over the longest period of time. His civil engineering and infrastructure projects included extensive repairs to the city's canalization system and revitalization of the agricultural zone to its south-east; reconstruction of sections of the city wall and at least one of its gates; numerous street widening and clearing campaigns, both inside and outside the city walls; and the rebuilding of at least one of the city's bridges.³ Among the commercial projects Tankiz commissioned in Damascus are the construction of two *qaysārīyah* buildings and a *khān*, as well as the renovation of Khān al-Zāhir.⁴ He carried out major restoration projects at the Umayyad Mosque, and also renovated other historic mosques in the city.⁵ His new monumental commissions include a congregational mosque and mausoleum, a bath, at least one new palace, a mausoleum for his wife, and the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* under discussion here.⁶ However, the priority that Tankiz gave to developing Damascus is not reflected in the city's

³On the canalization project, see Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah fī al-Tārīkh* (Cairo, 1932–39), 14:144 ff., and al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:289. For the patron's works in the Ghūṭah, see Muḥammad Farīd Kurd 'Alī, *Ghūṭat Dimashq*, rev. ed. (Damascus, 1952), 86. References to his repairs of the city walls include Mufaḍḍal ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, *Al-Nahj al-Sadīd wa-al-Durr al-Farīd*, ed. and trans. Samira Kortantamer (Freiburg, 1973), 18 and 86, and Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:157. On his rebuilding of Bāb Tūmah, see *ibid.*, 165; Zayn al-Dīn 'Umar Ibn al-Wardī, *Tatimmat al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar*, ed. Aḥmad Rif'at al-Badrāwī (Beirut, 1970), 2:436; and Gaston Wiet et al., *Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe* (Cairo, 1931–82), 15:35, cat. #5650. Tankiz's rebuilding of a bridge over the Turah River is documented in an inscription published in Wiet et al., *Répertoire*, 15:48, cat. #5670.

⁴Sources for Tankiz's commercial works include Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:74, 156, 157; Wiet et al., *Répertoire*, 14:108, cat. #5368; and Jean Sauvaget, "Caravansérais syriens du Moyen-Age," *Ars Islamica* 7 (1940): 4.

⁵On the restorations at the Umayyad Mosque during Tankiz's governorship, see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:92, 128, 133 ff., 148; 'Abd al-Bāsiṭ al-'Ilmawī, *Mukhtaṣar al-Ṭālib wa-Irshād al-Dāris*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1947), 270; H. Sauvage, "Description de Damas," *Journal Asiatique*, 9th ser., no. 7 (1896): 214; K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1969), 1:1:161, n. 3. On his restorations at other Damascus mosques, see Michael Meinecke, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien* (Gluckstadt, 1992), 2:132, cat. #9C/135 and 185, cat. #9C/404.

⁶References to Tankiz's *jāmi'*, *turbah*, and *ḥammām* are found in Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:81, 88; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, 2:184; 'Abd al-Qādir Ibn Muḥammad al-Nu'aymī, *Al-Dāris fī Tārīkh al-Madāris*, ed. Ja'far al-Ḥasanī (Cairo, 1988), 2:425–26; al-'Ilmawī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 228; Sauvage, "Description," 237 ff. On his intramural palace, see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:133 and al-Nu'aymī, *Dāris*, 1:123. On his wife's mausoleum, see Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:151; al-Nu'aymī, *Dāris*, 2:274; and Wiet et al., *Répertoire*, 14:267–68, cat. #5589.

extant architecture. His works either have disappeared altogether or survive in poor or fragmentary condition.

In the following pages, I will outline the history of this *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth*, review its modern historiography, situate the building in its urban framework, and describe its architectural characteristics based on a preliminary survey conducted in 1997.⁷ In the next section, I will synthesize this information to re-assess the preservation status of the building, to evaluate its role in the patronage program of Tankiz, and to analyze its place in the wider context of Mamluk architectural history.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Ibn Kathīr first mentions Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* in his entry for the year 728/1327–28. That year, the *nā'ib* made one of his almost annual visits to Cairo to visit al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who lavished him with gifts and honors. While in Cairo, Tankiz purchased some real estate in Damascus, including a house known as Dār al-Fulūs near Sūq al-Buzūrīyīn—a market located south of the Umayyad Mosque in a quarter sometimes referred to as al-Khaḍrā'. After reporting Tankiz's transformation of the old house into a new palace called Dār al-Dhahab, Ibn Kathīr continues: "and he demolished Ḥammām al-Suwayd near it [i.e., Dār al-Dhahab] and he made it into a *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* of the utmost beauty. He provided it with endowments and organized its shaykhs and students as will be described."⁸ Later in his chronicle, under the entry for the year 739/1338–39, he states:

Among the events of this year was the completion of Dār al-Ḥadīth "al-Sukarīyah."⁹ Shaykh al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Mu'arrikh al-Islām Muḥammad ibn Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī took over as shaykh of hadith in it. Thirty were appointed as traditionists (*muḥaddith*), each of whom were provided rations (*jirāyah*) and pay (*jāmiqīyah*) every month of seven dirhams and half a *raṭl* of bread. For the shaykh, thirty dirhams and one *raṭl* of bread were assigned. Thirty persons were assigned to read the Quran, with one shaykh for every ten [of them]. For every one of the readers there was a counterpart among the traditionists. A prayer

⁷I am grateful to the administration, faculty, and students at the Kāmilīyah School for their assistance and forbearance with this survey.

⁸Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:133.

⁹Akram al-'Ulubī considers this term a scribal error for "Tankizīyah" (*Khiṭaṭ Dimashq* [Damascus, 1989], 61).

leader (*imām*), a hadith reciter, and substitutes (*nawāb*) were appointed, and twenty dirhams and eight *awāq* of bread were provided for the hadith reciter. It turned out to be very beautiful in its appearance and construction. It is located in the direction of Dār al-Dhahab, which was commissioned by the founder, amir Tankiz. He endowed upon it many places, among them Sūq al-Qashāshīn in Bāb al-Faraj. Its length was twenty *dhirā'* from east to west. He registered it in the *waqf* document, along with Bandar Zaydīn and the old *ḥammām* in Hims. He also endowed on it shares from other villages. However, he struggled with everything other than al-Qashāshīn and Bandar Zaydīn and Ḥammām Ḥimṣ."¹⁰

Ibn Kathīr's organization of this information suggests that the project began in 728/1327–28 at the same time as the start of the Dār al-Dhahab rebuilding. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, in his obituary for Tankiz, is more explicit in dating the construction to that year: "in the year 28, he built Dār al-Dhahab and opposite it he built a *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth*."¹¹ It appears, however, that construction was not carried out promptly, but took nearly eleven years to finish. To extrapolate from Ibn Kathīr's remarks, the bath property, which served as the site for the new building, may have been acquired at the same time as the palace property, during the patron's visit to Cairo. However, no specifics are provided: did Tankiz purchase this property, did he receive it as a gift, or was it obtained through a confiscation? Who was its former owner? About the exact dimensions and boundaries of the property nothing is mentioned, nor is there any indication whether the bath was operational or defunct, and what its physical condition was at the time of acquisition. An earlier topography of the city counts Ḥammām al-Suwayd among the baths of Damascus, but only says that it was located next to the house of a certain Ibn Munzū.¹²

Several years later, in 739/1338–39, the construction of the new *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* was finished. This completion date, chronicled by Ibn Kathīr, is corroborated in the inscription on the lintel of its entrance (fig. 6):

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate. This blessed school (*madrāsah*) was founded and endowed for the mendicants (*fuqarā'*) occupied with the Glorious Quran and the scholars (*fuqahā'*) and the listeners (*masma'īn*) of the Prophetic Traditions,

¹⁰Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah*, 14:184.

¹¹Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, ed. Adnan Darwich (Damascus, 1977–94), 2:146.

¹²Nikita Eliséef, trans., *La Description de Damas d'Ibn Asakir* (Damascus, 1959), 279, #15.

by His Most Noble Excellency Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz al-Nāṣirī, Guardian of the Noble Provinces of Syria, the Well-Protected, in the year 739, at the behest of (*bi-mubāsharah*) the poor slave Aydamur al-Mu‘īnī.¹³

From the mid-fourteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, the only explicit references in literary sources to the Tankizīyah that I have found refer to personnel at the institution, rather than physical changes to its structure.¹⁴ Undoubtedly, during this long period the building underwent alterations. It is unlikely that it would have remained unscathed throughout the chronology of destructive events in the subsequent history of Damascus, including the revolts of the late fourteenth century, Timur’s invasion of 803/1400, and a series of natural disasters, notably the earthquake of 1173/1759.¹⁵ The latter was responsible for the collapse of the domes on an adjacent building, the Khān Asad Bāshā. In the normal course of events, the building would have been subjected to periods of poor upkeep, subsequent restorations, and possibly the depredations of later architectural patrons, who were known to have quarried old buildings for valuable materials.¹⁶

As late as 1129/1717, the institution was still running.¹⁷ By 1271/1855, however, Tankiz’s *dār al-qur’ān wa-al-ḥadīth* was being used as a private residence.¹⁸ ‘Abd al-Qādir Badrān, writing around 1330/1912, blames this shift to residential use on mismanagement of the foundation over time, which led to the gradual decline of the institution.¹⁹ He also includes a narrative about an intervention that prevented the owners from tearing down the portal, and ultimately resulted in the re-

¹³Wiet et al., *Répertoire*, 15:115, #5780.

¹⁴For example, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah, *Tārīkh*, 2:156, 510, 581; Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā Ibn Kannān, *Yawmīyāt Shāmīyah*, ed. Akram al-‘Ulābī (Damascus, 1994), 287.

¹⁵A description of the political unrest in Damascus of the late eighth/fourteenth century is found in Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ṣaṣrā, *Al-Durrah al-Muḍī‘ah fī al-Dawlah al-Zāhirīyah [A Chronicle of Damascus, 1389–1397]*, ed. and trans. William M. Brinner (Berkeley, 1963). On the damage to the city’s urban and architectural fabric during the occupation by Timur’s army, see a translation of Ibn Iyās’s account in D. S. Margoliouth, *Cairo, Jerusalem and Damascus* (London, 1907), 269–74. The damage from the earthquake of 1173/1759 is assessed in a report excerpted in Muḥammad A. Duhmān, *Fī Riḥāb Dimashq* (Damascus, 1982), 193–217, and in Mustapha A. Taher, “Textes d’historiens damascènes sur les tremblements de terre,” *Bulletin des études orientales* 27 (1974): 105. A new edition of the report is forthcoming from Verena Daiber.

¹⁶Asad Bāshā, the patron of two monuments in the same neighborhood as the Tankizīyah, a palace and a *khān*, was known for this practice (Shafīq Imām, *Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires, Palais Azem-Damas* [Damas, n.d.], 10).

¹⁷Ibn Kannān, *Yawmīyāt Shāmīyah*, 287.

¹⁸A. von Kremer, *Topographie von Damascus* (Vienna, 1853), 6.

¹⁹*Munādamat al-Aḥlāl wa-Musāmarat al-Hayāl* (Damascus, 1960), 64.

establishment of a school in the building. Badrān reports that under the superintendency of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥalawānī, the interior was "improved." More extensive renovation took place under al-Ḥalawānī's successor, Shaykh Kāmil al-Qaṣāb in 1329/1911, as is commemorated in a second inscription on the portal.²⁰ Shaykh Kāmil restored the building and installed "upper and lower structures" in it, according to Badrān. The precise nature of these structures is not entirely clear. No early photographs of any portion of the building other than the portal have come to light. Along with alterations to the building's physical structure came changes to its moniker: still called the Tankizīyah in the early eighteenth century, it became known as the Osmanīyah in the nineteenth century, and as the Kāmilīyah in the early twentieth century. The *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* was registered as a historic monument in 1367/1948.

MODERN SOURCES

Although the Tankizīyah has never been the subject of a detailed monographic analysis, it is mentioned in a number of publications cataloging the architectural and urban history of Damascus. In his mid-nineteenth century topographical survey of Damascus, A. von Kremer includes a very short notice on the building.²¹ He identifies it as a former madrasah, which in his day was being used as a private residence, and remarks on its beautiful stalactite portal and fine ashlar masonry. However, his incomplete reading of the foundation inscription led him to misattribute and misdate the building.²² In 1330/1912, Badrān published a survey correctly identifying the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* and providing some detail about its recent history.²³ On the subject of its architecture, he praises its portal and claims that the walls of the building retain some of their original construction. Badrān also reports that the building had undergone two phases of reconstruction in the period since von Kremer's publication.

Subsequent references to the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* tend to take more minimalist views of its preservation. The building is mentioned briefly in the topographical study on the city published by Wulzinger and Watzinger in 1924.

²⁰Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *Thimār al-Maqāsid fī Dhikr al-Masājīd*, ed. M. A. Ṭalas (Beirut, 1943), 215; al-'Ulabī, *Khiṭaṭ Dimashq*, 61; Muḥammad A. Duhmān, *Wulāt Dimashq fī 'Ahd al-Mamālīk* (Damascus, 1981), 172.

²¹*Topographie*, 7.

²²His transcription differs substantially from that published by Wiet. It leaves off after the term "*al-nabawī*" and resumes with "*bi-mubāsharah*"—thereby omitting the name and title of Tankiz and the date of the foundation. As a consequence, von Kremer erroneously attributes the foundation to "Aidemir-el-Muini," whom he identifies as a figure who died in the year 667/1268 (*Topographie*, 2:7, n. 2).

²³*Munādamat*, 64–68.

They provide the dates of its construction and of the later restoration, and then continue: "Inneres ganz verändert, Portalnische mit Stalaktiten."²⁴ The equally telegraphic entry in Jean Sauvaget's concise guide to the historical monuments of Damascus published roughly a decade later simply states: "Ecole de tradition prophétique bâti en 1338–39 par Tingiz. Beau *portail* à stalactites; intérieur remanié."²⁵ Muḥammad Ṭalas, in the appendix to his 1336/1943 edition of Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī's *Thimār al-Maqāsid fī Dhikr al-Masājīd*, includes a note on this building saying that it has a façade and decorated portal. He mentions the renovation of its upper level, and praises the building's masonry, ornamentation, and beautiful mihrab—but does not speculate about the dates for these elements.²⁶ An unnamed inspector from the Department of Antiquities leans toward the interpretation of Wulzinger and Watzinger and Sauvaget in his 1952 report, which claims that the façade and portal were all that remained of the original building.²⁷ Muḥammad Duhmān's 1963 study of Damascus in the Mamluk period states vaguely that the school still exists and retains much of its design.²⁸ Dorothee Sack's 1989 publication on the urban structure and development of Damascus mentions the building and echoes the Wulzinger-Watzinger/Sauvaget view: "teilweise abgetragen; Teile der Aussenwände und Portal erhalten."²⁹ Akram al-'Ulābī's topographical history of the city, published in the same year, reports that in his day the building was functioning as a children's school and retained its beautiful façade.³⁰ Michael Meinecke also treats the building very summarily in his catalog of Mamluk architecture, although he includes the portal and façade in a wider discussion related to architectural style.³¹

As this review of modern literature on Tankiz's *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* reveals, it is generally accepted that the remains of the Mamluk building consist of a portal and façade, the rest of the present structure belonging to a series of later reconstructions. On the basis of these studies, the initial goal of my field research at the Tankizīyah was to examine and photograph the façade of the building. Presumably, the interior would be of interest only insofar as it might

²⁴Karl Wulzinger and Carl Watzinger, *Damaskus, die Islamische Stadt* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1924), 75.

²⁵Jean Sauvaget, *Les Monuments Historiques de Damas* (Beirut, 1932), 69, #44.

²⁶*Thimār*, 215.

²⁷Archive, Department of Antiquities and Museums, Damascus.

²⁸*Wulāt Dimashq*, 172.

²⁹*Damaskus: Entwicklung und Struktur einer Orientalisch-islamischen Stadt* (Mainz am Rhein, 1989), 104, #3.44.

³⁰*Khiṭaṭ Dimashq*, 61.

³¹*Mamlukische Architektur*, 1:87, 182, and 2:180, cat. #9C/380.

represent a sampling of turn-of-the-century architectural remodeling in Damascus. However, the site inspection suggested that the building's stratigraphy was not as straightforward as the literature indicated, and that its analysis would require a close reading not only of the façade, but also of the other external wall and of the building's interior. What follows is a description of the building based on this survey.

DESCRIPTION

The Tankizīyah is located inside the city walls in the area south of the Umayyad mosque (fig. 1). It is situated on a block outlined by Sūq al-Buzūrīyīn to the west, Darb Ibn Matrūd to the north, Darb al-Rayhān to the east, and Zuqāq al-Durr to the south (fig. 2). This block is immediately south of the former location of Dār al-Dhahab, the patron's new palace, at the present site of the Qaṣr al-'Aẓam. To the south lies the long commercial street, known in the Mamluk period as Sūq al-Kabīr, which runs east-west through the walled city. According to Ibn Kathīr, the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* replaced a pre-existing bath building known as Ḥammām al-Suwayd, which the patron apparently purchased and then demolished.³² The property occupies the north-east corner of the block. The north-west corner of the block houses another bath building, which predated Tankiz's construction: the large Ḥammām of Nūr al-Dīn (567/1171–72).³³ There appears to have been a narrow plot between the back of Ḥammām al-Nūrī and the east boundary of the *dār al-qur'ān wa-al-ḥadīth* site, which is filled today by a building. Whether this plot was built-up or unoccupied at the time of Tankiz's construction is uncertain. Al-'Ilmawī's information, which locates the Tankizīyah "to the east of Ḥammām Nūr al-Dīn al-Shahīd, below Dār al-Dhahab, behind Sūq al-Buzūrīyīn" could either suggest that there was no other building between it and Ḥammām al-Nūrī, or that what did exist there was unimportant, compared with these landmark buildings.³⁴ It is also possible that this plot formerly belonged to the property of one or the other of these two buildings, from which it was alienated subsequently. The plot south of the Tankizīyah is currently occupied by the Khān Asad Bāshā, constructed in 1166/1753. The sources are silent about this site in Tankiz's day, but reportedly two caravanserais, as well as several houses and shops were demolished to make way for the Ottoman *khān*.³⁵

The north façade of the Tankizīyah consists of the portal, situated at the west

³²Eliséef, *Description*, 279, #15.

³³This bath is also known as Ḥammām al-Buzūrīyīn.

³⁴Al-'Ilmawī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 21.

³⁵Al-'Ulabī, *Khīṭaṭ Dimashq*, 447; 'Abd al-Qādir al-Riḥāwī, "Khānāt Madīnat Dimashq," *Les Annales archéologiques de Syrie* 25 (1975): 64.

end of the building, and a wall of finely dressed stone, stretching eastward (fig. 4). To the east of the portal, two windows pierce the wall at the street level. Two projecting stories, constructed of plastered brick and timber, surmount the lower masonry wall. Around the corner, along the east façade, the same arrangement is found: a lower wall of stone surmounted by two projecting stories. A molding of carved stone forms a rectangular frame surrounding the finely dressed masonry of the monumental portal, although now the molding is lost in its lower segments. The portal consists of a deeply recessed rectangular niche, at the back of which opens the entrance to the building's interior (fig. 5). A flat arch, inscribed with a cartouche bearing the foundation inscription, surmounts the entrance (fig. 6). Above the inscription, a band of joggled *ablaq* revetment spans across and flanks the portal recess. Slightly above this band is an oculus, surrounded by a radial arrangement of joggled *ablaq* voussoirs, which together are outlined by a molding of deeply carved stone. The stone course at the base of this oculus bears the inscription commemorating the nineteenth-century renovations referred to above. Three courses of *muqarnas* form the transition zone from the rectangular niche to the semi-dome of the portal hood. The carvings of the hood represent a conch outlined by a zigzag pattern. Inscribed in the finely dressed masonry above the semi-dome and below the top of the molding frame is a long, recessed cartouche. It is unadorned, but may have been intended to receive an inscription.

East of the portal, another rectangular frame of stone encloses a pair of large rectangular windows. The masonry inside the frame, surrounding the windows, is finely dressed, like that of the portal. Both windows have been partially filled-in with cement, but their lower limits can be discerned one masonry-course above the bottom part of the frame. Flat lintels with relieving arches surmount the windows. Behind modern screens that have been installed in the remaining window portions, there are iron grills. Below the window frames, two and a half courses of unfinished masonry can be seen. In the area east of the window frame, five courses of masonry are visible, above which the wall is thickly plastered. While this masonry differs in quality from that inside the frames of the windows and the portal, it courses through precisely with the more finely dressed masonry. This suggests that all of the elements on the north façade of the building—the portal, the pair of windows, and the east extension of the wall—are contemporary with each other.

Around the corner, on the east side of the building, the same division of the elevation is found (fig. 7). Two tall upper stories project from the lower wall. The lower wall consists of six courses of exposed stone construction, surmounted by a thickly plastered wall. At the south end of the wall, fallen plaster reveals three additional courses of stone. About two-thirds of the way down the wall to the south is another large rectangular window surrounded by a rectangular frame of

stone molding (fig. 8). As on the north façade, the masonry within the molding is finely dressed. Here, too, the window is partially filled-in with cement. To the north of this window is another small opening, in the plastered section of the wall. Unlike the other windows, this one does not appear to have once been any larger than it is today. There is no evidence of in-fill in the masonry courses below it, nor is there any indication of the finely dressed masonry and molding frame that surrounds the large window to the south. The continuity of masonry courses between the north and east façades and the similarities in the treatment of the framed window compositions between the two sides indicate that the east façade is contemporaneous with the north.

Inside, the entrance leads into a vestibule space, which opens up into an *īwān*. The floor plan of the present building consists of four *īwāns* arranged around a central court with corner rooms in three of the four corners (fig. 3). The entrance vestibule occupies the northwest corner of the building in place of a corner room. On the west side of this vestibule rises a narrow wooden staircase. It is enclosed behind a plastered wall above its first several steps, which are built of stone. The vestibule leads into the west *īwān*, the back of which contains a built-in wooden cupboard constructed beneath part of the staircase and a tall rectangular recess in the wall. The west *īwān* opens onto the central court, which is uncovered. The walls of the interior are covered entirely with plaster which is coated with paint in the lower section. The *īwāns* on the east and west of the court are considerably shallower than those on the north and south. All four *īwāns* are covered with flat ceilings of timber.

The *qiblah* wall of the south *īwān* contains a large mihrab niche, also heavily coated with plaster and paint (fig. 9). Two engaged octagonal colonnettes flank the niche. Their square bases are chamfered at the upper corners to create a transition to the octagonal shafts. The capitals also correspond to the octagonal shafts, each face decorated with a shield-shaped *muqarnas* unit upon which is carved in relief a smaller *muqarnas* form and a tear-drop shape. The unity of the three elements—capital, shaft and base—suggests that they may have been conceived together. In the east and west walls of the *qiblah* *īwān*, doors lead into the south-east and south-west corner rooms, respectively.

The back wall of the north *īwān* is pierced by the two large windows on the north façade (fig. 10). On its east wall, a door leads into the north-east room. Corresponding to this door on the west wall of the north *īwān* is a recessed wall niche. In the east *īwān*, a broad staircase of stone construction lines the south side (fig. 11). It leads to a landing from which it continues in reinforced concrete to the upper story. Along the back wall of the east *īwān*, a row of faucets and a drainage basin have been installed. The large window on the east façade opens onto the east *īwān*, but it is partly blocked by the staircase.

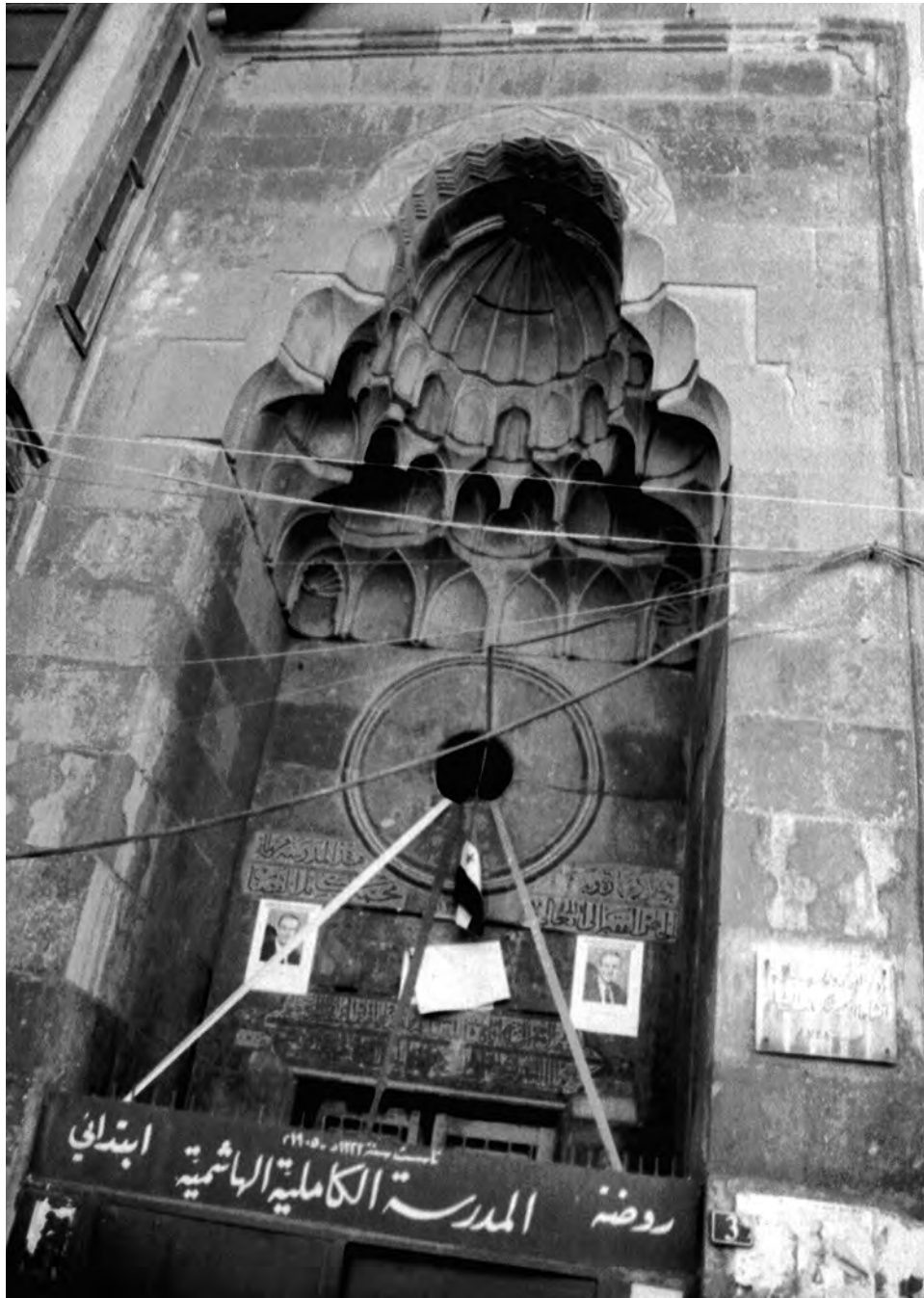


Fig. 5. Damascus, Tankiziyah: portal



Fig. 11. Damascus, Tankizīyah: interior, view of east *īwān*