

THE MOSQUE OF ASLAM AL-SILĀHDĀR

A THESIS

Submitted
to the Department of Arabic Studies
of the American University in Cairo
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
MASTERS OF ARTS

By
CHĀHINDA FAHMĪ KARĪM

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ABSTRACT

The subject of the present thesis is the mosque of Aṣlam al-Silāḥdār, founded by the emir Bahā' al-Dīn Aṣlam al-Silāḥdār and dated in the foundation inscription 746/1345.

There is very little either in the primary or secondary sources on the founder and his foundation and the extant building presents many problems of structure, decoration and building sequence. The present thesis is therefore divided into four parts. Chapter one is a historical review, based mainly on primary sources of the founder and his foundation including a brief topographical survey of the area where the foundation was built.

The second chapter describes the monument as it stands including the restorations done by the Comité. The third and fourth chapters are concerned mainly with problems of structure and decoration, because the mosque presents many unusual features for the Baḥrī Mamlūk period. Hence, the comparison of the various elements with contemporary Cairene monuments, separating thus the original from later additions and restoration work, and showing the originality of several decorative and architectural features of the mosque.

Plans of the area, a groundplan of the mosque as well as plans of the different floors with elevations and photographs

have been added to complement the text.

The system of transliteration adopted is that of the first ed. Encyclopedia of Islam with the following exceptions: q instead of k and j instead of dj. The orthography of mamluk names follow that of the arabic sources and the adoption of one particular spelling, where divergent forms exist reflects its most commonly cited form in the modern literature. The sources sometimes conflict, however, both internally and with local modern forms: to avoid embarrassment of forms I have used certain double forms where these diverge markedly from the "original" or received orthography eg. Cūkāndār / chūkāndār (actually chawgāndār), Gāshnekīr / chashnegīr, et.

In the bibliography each reference has an appropriate abbreviation which will be used in the note section found at the end of each chapter. The numbers added after the date of monuments mentioned in the text are those of the Index to Mohammedan Monuments in Cairo Survey of Egypt 1951. These are usually only added the first time a monument is mentioned in the text. Arabic technical terms used are underlined and given a translation only the first time used in the text. Following is a short glossary of Arabic terms whose translation was not added the first time mentioned in the text.

Niyaba = provincial rule.

Nā'ib = governor of a province