

The Architecture of the Rasūlids

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Introduction

The question whether Rasūlid architecture actually represents the climax of Yemeni art is difficult to answer as only few buildings from that period have been preserved. Two points may, however, safely be made:

firstly, that Rasūlid architecture, at least in the area of cult buildings, is quite indigenous and original in spite of a number of borrowed elements;

secondly, that it constitutes a modernisation of traditional elements and thereby a strengthening of the bond which ties it to the common Islamic koiné.

While it would be wrong to judge the past by modern standards it must surely be true to say that the take-over by the Ayyūbids and the subsequent Rasūlid rule must have meant a decisive change for the country. The Yemen had never been cut off from the artistic developments in other Islamic countries. Especially in the area of ornamentation repeated influences from the northern countries (Egypt, Syria, Iraq etc.) can be observed, but sacred architecture at least had remained conservative.

The first wave of new architecture arrived in the country with the work commissioned by the Ayyūbids, who ruled the land in the years between 1173 and 1228/29 A.D. and, as in other regions under their rule, were keen to be seen as generous builders and donors. The introduction of the madrasa (college) not only constituted a generous foundation but, just as in Syria and Egypt, it was at the same time politically motivated. It was necessary, in contrast with the Zaidiya and with the Šī'a-orientated dynasty of the Sulaiḥides, to re-establish orthodox belief and to create seats of learning which preserved and defended it.

According to the present state of research — a premise always to be kept in mind — none of the Ayyūbid madrasas have been preserved and we therefore have not seen their architecture. Literary sources mention that the first iwan was built in the Yemen by Atabek Sunqur around 1200, in the Madrasa ibn Dahmān in Zabīd. It is also to be assumed that the Madrasa al-Asadiya in Ibb, with its still remaining mosque, was modelled on Ayyūbid examples. The only still existing remains of Ayyūbid origin known to us are the minaret of the Great Mosque of Zabīd, the two towers of the Great Mosque of Ṣan'ā', and the mihrāb of the Great Mosque of Ġanad. The beautifully structured minaret in Zabīd, whose octagonal shaft is articulated by arches and whose top is crowned by a stalactite dome, testifies to the knowledge and introduction of architectural elements current in Iraq and the Ġazīra, even though it is not easy to find direct models for it. This tower, in turn, appears to have served as a

model to the greatest Rasūlid ruler al-Muẓaffar for the minaret in the Mosque of al-Mahġam.

The area of sovereignty of the orthodox rulers extended above all to the south of the land and in the Tihāma, while the areas north of Ṣan'ā' were intermittently ruled by the Zaidite Imām. Apart from the towns, the country also abounded in fortresses, which were necessary to control the surrounding areas. Thus there were very large and important castles, as e.g. *Dū Marmar*, north of Ṣan'ā', *Dumluwa* near Ibb etc., which must have been of architectonic interest as well. But our present state of research does not allow any conclusions as to their architecture, for they have been neither explored nor recorded.

Equally poor is our knowledge of the houses and palaces of that time or of the baths which might have been introduced to the Yemen under the Ayyūbids. We only possess the description of a palace which was built under Sultān al Mu'ayyad in 708 H/1308/9 A.D. in Ta'bat, a place on the slopes of the hills of Ta'izz, and which is reputed to have been indescribably beautiful:

Secular Architecture

The throne room, which was spanned by a double ceiling, was laid out in the shape of a rectangle, 10 m × 12.50 m. It was considered worthy of mention that the gilded and ornamented ceiling was completely unsupported by any pillars, i.e. that it may have been a barrel vault. Four look-out towers, which may have been positioned in the centre of each wall, similarly perhaps to the arrangement at the Cuba in Sicily, contained four windows each and were decorated with golden lattices. Most remarkable were the laidout gardens, which were new and unique for the Yemen and were modelled on gardens in Baghdad and Cordoba. In front of the throne room lay a pool, 50 × 25 m, surrounded by bronze animal statues. These animals — birds and probably also lions — spouted jets of water into the basin in a way similar to the arrangement in the Partal of the Alhambra in Granada, where they can still be seen today. In addition to these, a high fountain rose up in the centre of the pool, and a *šadirwān* (wall fountain) supplied the basin with fresh water.

Another palace, which the Sultān had erected in 712 H/1312/13 A.D., was obviously a design with four iwans. The state room, an iwan of about 22 m in length, contained the ruler's throne.

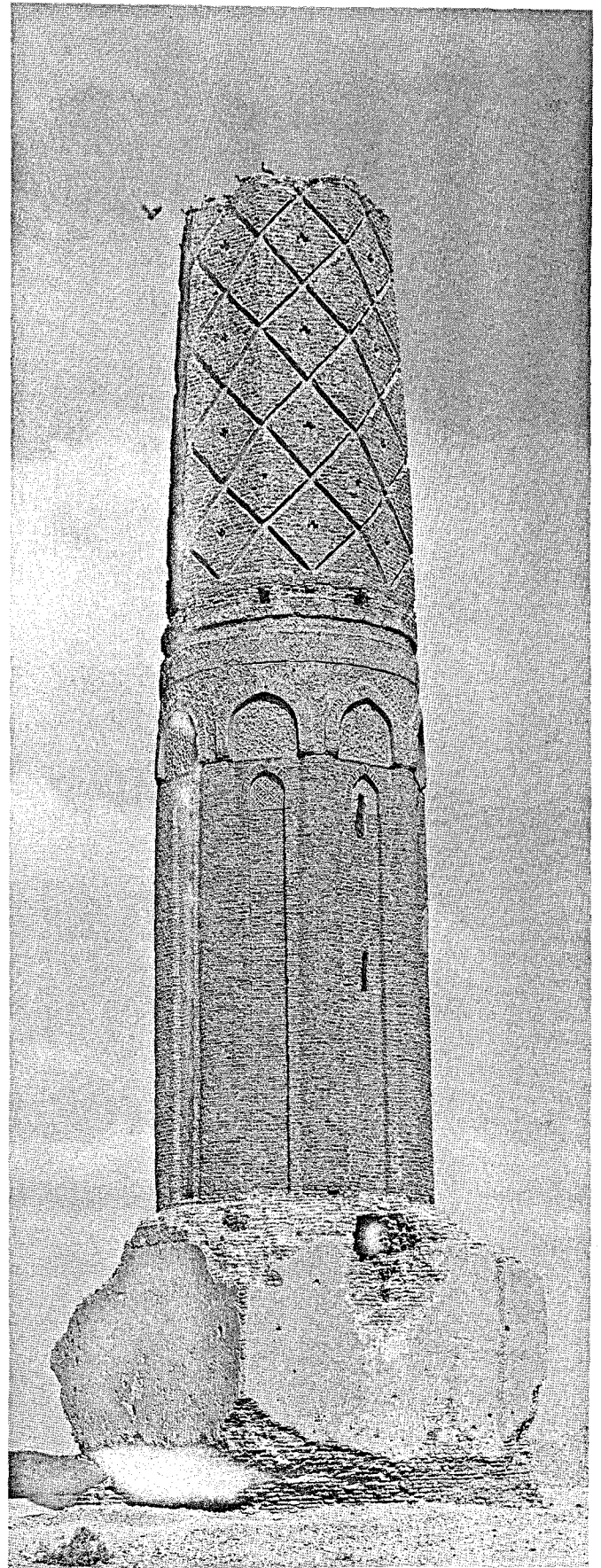
Like the Ayyūbids before them, the Rasūlids were generous builders: the first Rasūlid ruler Nūr ad-Dīn, in the tradition of the earlier Yemeni rulers, furnished the

roads with fountains and mosques. Above all, the towns of the Tihāma received new mosques, which, with their domes, must have shaped the character of the landscape, and their descendents have perpetuated this characteristic aspect until the present day. Not only the rulers themselves were generous donors but also their wives and sisters, their subjects and commanders, just as it was the case in all other Islamic countries at that time. Madrasas were amongst the most popular foundations, serving not only as places where orthodox religion could be taught — and thereby the ruling house politically supported — but also as mausolea for these families. In this, the Rasūlids continued a custom which had been observed already by the Ayyūbids. Apart from this, it may also have been fashionable to donate madrasas rather than solely mosques.

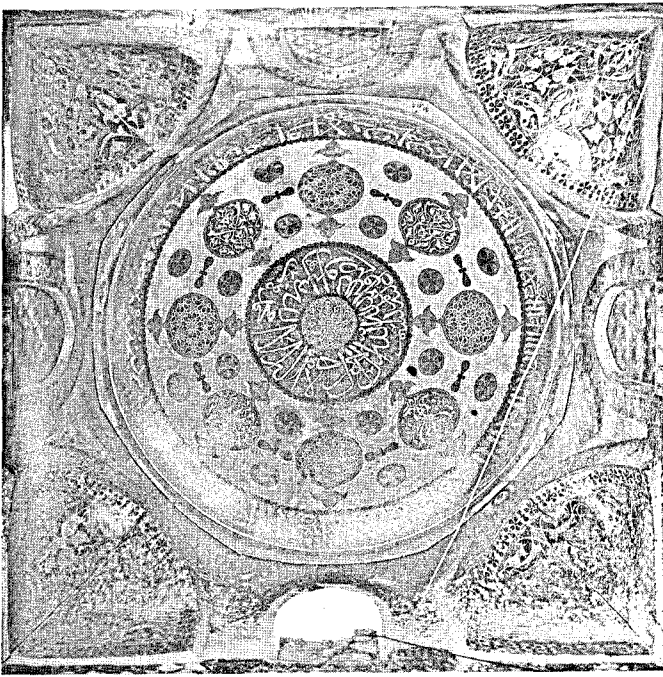
Sacred Architecture

None of the great mosques of Rasūlid times have been preserved. Only in al-Mahġam the beautiful minaret testifies to the former glory of the famous mosque, which was still standing when C. Niebuhr saw it. The minaret rose in the south-eastern corner of the complex, which must have been very extensive indeed. We know from literary sources that the entire Qur'ān was written on the walls and that the roof, probably consisting of domes, rested on 300 columns.

If we regard the Madrasa al-Asadiya in Ibb in its present form as an individual mosque rather than part of a madrasa complex, it must surely constitute a typical mosque of its time. The wide ḥaram (prayer hall with niche) with its large domed central hall and the adjoining double vaults to east and west, also crowned with domes, form an elongated rectangle together with the antejacent courtyard and its surrounding arcades. The entrance was positioned axially and led down some steps into the courtyard. The mosque rises above a parapet, similar to the earlier Fātimid Mosque of Ṣāliḥ at-Ṭalā'i in Cairo (555 H/1160 A.D.), comprising several shops and forming the premises for the foundation of the madrasa. The rooms of the madrasa, or at least some of them, which must have been located in the eastern part of the mosque, have, however, been destroyed. The lay-out is of a type common in the Iranian regions and was also used, with small modifications, by the Ayyūbids in Syria. There, the two vaults adjoining the centre dome on both sides often show a different type of vaulting. A completely new concept in Yemeni sacred architecture is the technique by which the walls are broken by windows and arches (some quite large) which, in the case of the Madrasa al-Asadiya, lead (and probably always have led) through to the sūq. Here, not only does the courtyard on the western side open outward in a large arch but the ḥaram



Minaret of the mosque of Sultan al-Muzaffar I in al-Mahjam (Tihāma).



Ta'izz, al-Mu'tabiya, dome of the mihrāb.

does so as well, through square windows which are cut into the lower part of high, elongated decorative niches. Thus an unusually great amount of light is allowed into the room, which in addition is lit through the windows in the tambour of the dome.

Ornamentation in these simple and harmonious buildings consisted of colourful wall paintings, which presumably covered all areas. What traces remain in the courtyard of intricate patterns allow a glimpse of their former riot of colours. The interiors of the domes were painted as well, with medallions which radiated outwards from the top in the shape of droplets. No minaret remains. Typical of Rasūlid architecture is the tower-like protrusion in the wall of the qibla, which also makes it possible to distinguish the mihrāb clearly from the outside, in the façade.

The most beautiful still remaining mosque from the Rasūlid period is without doubt the present day Ġāmi' al-Muzaffar in Ta'izz, which was originally, however, conceived and executed as a madrasa. The ḥaram with its divers domed vaulted sections is considerably wider than average and, together with the qibla wall, presents an impressive façade towards the town of Ta'izz. Three domes of equal size, which rise above the middle and the two ends of the ḥaram, accentuate the building. Two double vaults with domes above are inserted on the eastern side, two to the west, creating an unusual balance in that complex, which is only cancelled out by the exceptionally rich paintings in the mihrāb dome. The ḥaram, therefore, constitutes a variation on the theme of the centre dome with attached vaults, but at the same time its distribution of main domes carries on an idea which was already present in the Mosque of al-Ḥākim in Cairo. To the south, the dome vaults are continued by two flat-roofed

naves whose arcades create an irregular rhythm and are part of a later phase of restoration. Even so, these two naves can be identified as the madrasa, which was situated in close vicinity of the place of worship.

The next step in the development of the Rasūlid madrasa can be seen in the Madrasa al-Ašrafiya in Ta'izz, whose carefully thought out and perfected plan has even received praise in Arabic literature. Unfortunately though, the quality of execution encountered in this building is not in keeping with its promising plan. Its architectonic novelty consists in the structure of the complex and the ingenious arrangement of the required rooms, with the mosque and the college and library rooms next to it forming an inner complex, which is surrounded and made accessible by a U-shaped corridor. On either side, east and west, this corridor, which appears to have been modelled on the architecture of palaces, is connected with the outside world by wide arcades which end on the north side in a pair of domed kiosks. The idea was borrowed from the Asadiya but here developed to its final consequence. The madrasa thus opens out into the world — spacious gates lead into the porticos from east, west and south — at the same time the mosque and college still remain a self contained unit with the lecture halls and library rooms sealed off from direct communication with the outside world. The mosque presents a broad, dominating façade to the town and, in contrast to the inner rooms, it is flooded with light. The theme of the centre dome with adjoining vaults is varied by the introduction of two domed double vaults on either side. The central inner courtyard is surrounded on the east and west side by two barrel vaulted lecture and library rooms, which are entered through the corridor and from the mosque. A vaulted connecting room with the axis slightly to one side leads from the outer, central south gate, which is heavily decorated, into the courtyard. Until recently the two large rooms next to the main gate served as a Qur'ān school for children, who thus appear to have been kept out of the college proper. The south corners of the core structure are marked by two minarets of a highly complex design.

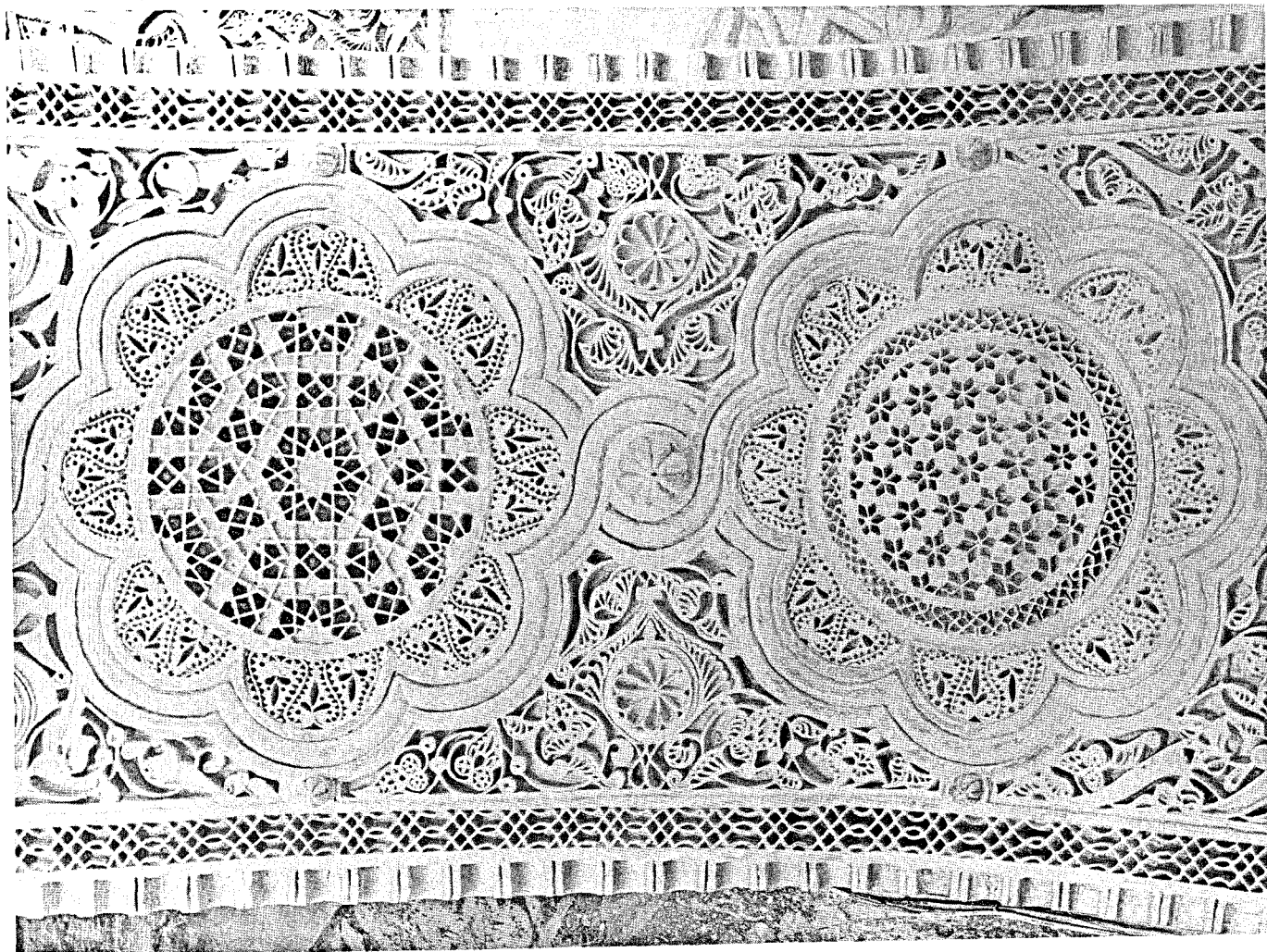
On a smaller scale, the earlier Madrasa al-Mu'tabiya in Ta'izz displays the same ingenious plan as the Ašrafiya, with possibly even more harmonious and well balanced proportions. It may well be the work of the same architect, who in this building designed a possible lay-out for smaller madrasas. The complex, in the shape of a long rectangle, is clearly divided into two parts: the domed mosque consists of six vaulted sections and is surrounded by a portico in the shape of a U; the courtyard has lecture rooms to one side and the entrance portal at the front along the central axis. A narrow corridor with a tunnel vault above separates the domed vestibule and its adjacent barrel vaulted sections from the courtyard, creating a lay-out reminiscent of that of the Ašrafiya. This architecture with its cubic shapes, its domes and arcades, results in a work of art which seems to be dictated solely by the laws of aesthetics. As in the Ašrafiya,

ablution fountains adjoin in the southern corner. This well balanced ground plan of the Mu'tabiya, whose decorations consist entirely of wall paintings, was to be the model for the buildings of later periods.

Of all the other religious buildings of some size apparently only one ḥānqāh (i.e. living quarters for a religious brotherhood) is preserved in the Great Mosque of Hais. The building is unusual for the Yemen and, probably for that reason, has never been imitated. In spite of its square ground plan the building is conceived unsymmetrically, as the entrance, an antejacent "pištāq", leads into the interior of the building from the south-east corner. The complex is remarkably self-contained and difficult to enter because of the angle of the axis. The broadly based, barrel vaulted entrance room with the cistern in it leads to the courtyard and conveys a completely enclosed and severe impression. Only to the south a wide, high iwan opens out, which originally afforded a view of the town through an arcade. The ḥaram is of the same

width as the courtyard and consists of two barrel vaulted naves which run parallel to the qibla wall. Two further barrel vaulted rooms make up the side east of the courtyard, domed vaults from a later period of restoration the west side. An additional entrance gives direct access to the ḥaram on the north-eastern side. The ablution fountains are attached to the south-west corner. From the large number of main and subsidiary rooms as well as the domed vaults in the north-east and south-west corners may be deduced that this building was in all probability a ḥānqāh. Structural elements like the relatively small barrel vaulted rooms, the entrance in the shape of a pištāq with a superimposed turret (guldasteh) and the iwan are derived from the architectural tradition of Iran. Execution and ground plan on the other hand point to models from the Anatolian region. Decorations, apart from the characteristic twin arcades at the entrance, consist exclusively of shallow stucco and calligraphic ribbon motifs.

Ta'izz, al-Ašrafiya, vaulting.



Characteristic Elements of Rasūlid Architecture

The two large remaining madrasas, the present day Ġāmi' al-Muzaffar and the Ašrafiya, are among the main foundations of the Rasūlid rulers and stand out through their splendour. The Mu'tabiya is by comparison simpler and more modest but at the same time more harmonious. Common to all is the fact that in each case the mosque forms the focus of the complex, with the teaching institutes being of secondary importance. In this they differ from the madrasas in Syria and Egypt as well as from the four-iwan design of the Iranian madrasas. Small buildings, however, like e.g. the madrasa in Dū 'Uqab or the Šarafiya in Ġibla, are not always designed to a well balanced plan but put together haphazardly from elements which are not always connected in a harmonious way. Thus a cube shaped mosque might be opposite a hall with a flat ceiling, which, according to size, might open up towards the courtyard in one or several arcades, as e.g. in the case of the Šarafiya in Ġibla or that of the Farhāniya in Zabīd.

Within the madrasa complex no prestigious space is preserved for the tombs of the members of a family, as is the case in the Ayyūbid madrasas, but they are tucked away in the courtyard or in one of the rooms.

The felicitous solution which was found in the two late madrasas, the Ašrafiya and the Mu'tabiya, has no known model but was itself imitated in many later buildings; the same is true also of decorative elements. The qibla wall of the Muzaffariya, for example, cannot fail to impress with its simple rhythmic articulation, each window being surrounded by a blind niche with twin arches. Above this zone runs a broad plaited band which provides a horizontal accent that is only interrupted by small windows at regular intervals. The façade ends in a denticulated frieze and crenellations.

The building is unthinkable without a knowledge of the architecture of the Ġazira, of Anatolia and Syria, which also contains elements of the architecture of the Crusaders. The plaited ribbon is also one of the principal decorative elements of Ayyūbid architecture, presumably not least because of its (originally) magical connotation. Completely new for the Islamic architecture in the Yemen is the use of chamfer, sima, the framing of a portal with engaged columns and with relieved surrounds, as e.g. on the north portal of the Ašrafiya. Many of these formal elements were destined to be imitated again and again, though often in simplified or even mutilated form, as e.g. the twin arches which run into a profile-relieved console, or the false niches in the entrance of the Muzaffariya, which also rise out of consoles. Interlaced circles too, used as decorations on the main portals of the Muzaffariya or in the middle dome, still live on as a distant echo of Rasūlid art in the mosques of the Tihāma. New are the folded domes above the entrances of the portals, new the use of tunnel vaulting, as e.g. in the

Mosque of Hais, where iwan, pištāq, guldasteh and tunnel vaulting can be found together. New is everything that requires a solid tradition of stone masonry as well as the knowledge of classical and hellenistic architecture and elements from the tradition of Iranian architecture. At the same time, all formal elements acquire an independence and originality which make Rasūlid architecture different from previous styles. Characteristic of Rasūlid cultic architecture is, e.g., an opulently decorated domed mihrāb tower on the qibla wall, as are the heavily articulated minarets, decorated with blind arches. They rise above a tall parapet of square cross-section, their shafts being of octagonal design and twisted twice. The minaret of the Madrasa of Ġubail near Ta'izz, where one part of a shaft reputedly had a triangular cross-section, is reported to have been the most beautiful tower of all in Arabian literature. These towers invariably end in a domed kiosk, shaped like a pavilion.

The interior decoration of these cultic buildings also appears original, consisting in the main of wall paintings. Domes, vaults, arches as well as parts of the walls are covered in brilliant and colourful patterns. Apart from geometrical shapes, in the decor of the domes mainly palmette garlands are used, whose elegant, lily shaped leaf-petals may be arranged like stars. Particularly intriguing are the elegant nashī inscriptions in the apex of a dome, sometimes also surrounding arched shields. In Rasūlid buildings surfaces are always wrought in colours and shapes which shine and sparkle in the rays of the light entering through the many windows. In contrast, the decoration of Ayyūbid madrasas in Syria strikes one as sparing and precise.

Stucco decorations are also used, but not as lavishly as painting. There are beautifully executed stucco panels in the blind niches of the corbels and also in the arches of the minaret of al-Mahġam. Calligraphic banderoles alternating with delicately wrought rosettas weave around the arches as well as the upright sections, as is also the case with many other buildings of the time. In the Mosque of Hais stucco ornaments decorate the curves of the arches in the ḥaram, cover the arcaded arches of the tunnel vaults, or line the upper edges of the courtyard walls as ornamental friezes. On the façade too stucco is used, as e.g. on the Mosque of the Fātiniya in Zabīd, where a delicate lattice is superimposed on the brickwork and the tympanon of the entrance is decorated with a rich geometrical pattern.

The Importance of Rasūlid Architecture

It has already been shown here that Rasūlid, and before it, Ayyūbid architecture was innovative for the Yemen. The opening up of space, the new role which the light now plays in architecture, the creation of a homogeneous space like that of the domed mosque were fundamentally

new to the Yemen. A traditional mosque consisted of a cubic building with a square or rectangular ground plan, often with two rows of three pillars each, occasionally only with one. This cube was in the earlier period completely enclosed and could only be entered by one door. This cultic building is derived from an architectonic type from pre-Islamic times, which was obviously widely used in the Yemen and the Ḥiğāz in the first centuries A.D. but the question of their origin and dissemination still remains unsolved. The most famous building of that type is the Ka'ba in Mecca. Alongside this type the courtyard mosque was introduced, which had a ḥaram with several naves and surrounding porticos, with the roofed chambers communicating with the courtyard. Examples of this type are the Great Mosque of Şan'ā' or the Mosque of Şibām-Kaukabān. This type, however, seems to have been quite rare, for Ibn Rustah writes in the 10th century that apart from the Great Mosque in Şan'ā' no other mosque contained a courtyard.

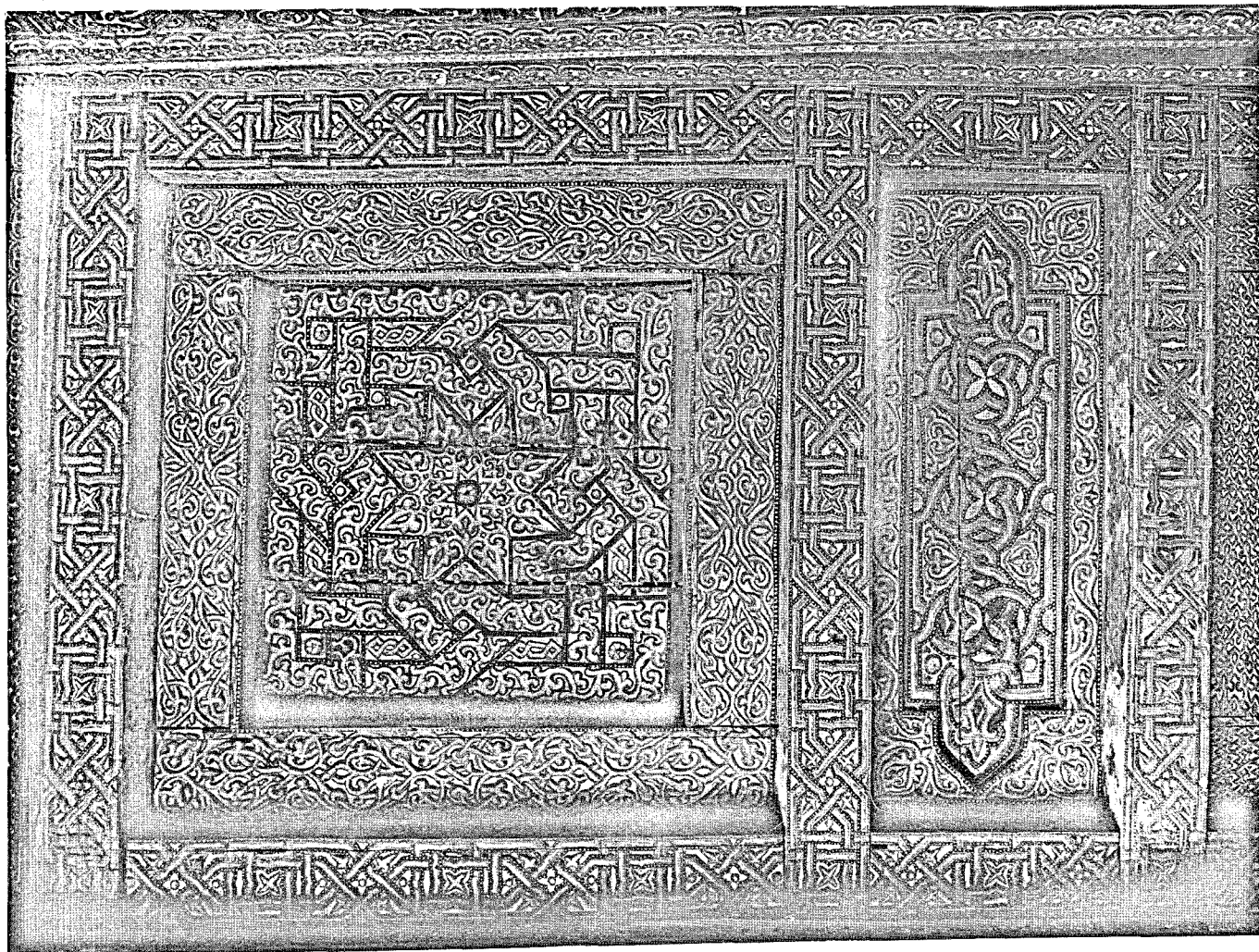
The ceiling may rest directly on the capitals of the columns, as e.g. in the Mosque of Şibām-Kaukabān, or it is supported by arches, as in the Great Mosque of Şan'ā'.

The coffered ceilings of these buildings are amongst the treasures of Islamic art, as no others have been preserved in any other cultic building of the early period. The Great Mosque in Şan'ā' contains paintings and carvings in its west riwāq which date back to at least the Umayyad period.

Especially opulent and exceptionally well preserved in their colours are the coffered ceilings of the east riwāq, which go back to the year 864. Equally precious and splendid is the coffered ceiling of the Mosque of Şibām-Kaukabān, which is moreover a good specimen of a mosque with a very simple ground plan and articulated solely through the decoration of the ceiling. In this complex the section in front of the mihrāb is set apart from the rest of the ḥaram by its decoration, and the vaulting of the mihrāb is accentuated by a superstructure in the shape of a dome or baldachin.

With the later courtyard mosques the ḥaram is the dominating element, being considerably higher than the surrounding riwāqs and detached from them. That type could be said to be more a ḥaram with an antejacent courtyard, the ḥaram frequently of square design and

Masjid al-'Abbās, coffered ceiling.



forming a self-contained unit. Today practically all ḥarams are closed towards the courtyard and form a proper place of worship (bait Allāh) to which non-believers are not admitted. Basically, we are confronted by yet another manifestation of the old type of temple of pre-Islamic days, which need not necessarily be an imitation but may have sprung from a similar perception of a cult situation.

During Rasūlid times, too, the traditional type of mosque was kept alive, as is shown e.g. in the cube shaped cult building of Ṣarḥa/Yarīm with its coffered ceiling. This is another clear example of the articulation of a space through the artistic treatment of the ceiling: a square is divided into sections forming a cross shape, and it is approached through an entrance nave. The centre is heightened by a kind of superimposed dome which, like the other coffers of the cross, is topped by an alabaster pane. This alone filters light into the room, similar to the design of the Ka'ba, which was built in 65 H/684/5 A.D. A new element in this type is the introduction of small windows below the ceiling, as e.g. in the Masġid al-Abbās in the Haulān (south-east of Ṣan'a'), which was erected in the year 519 H/1126 A.D. This mosque also has a particularly beautiful and lavishly carved ceiling, which structures the space below. Thus, the vaulted sections on the qibla wall are heavily ornate, while the mihrāb vault is accentuated by a kind of canopy. The walls of all these buildings remain white, with the possible exception of a calligraphic frieze which may run around the room below the ceiling.

The domed mosque, which must have been introduced already by the Ayyūbids, not only constituted a new departure but at the same time it stood for orthodoxy, for the Zaiditic imāms preserved the traditional cult building with its enclosed ḥaram and the antejacent courtyard, which were later enriched by arcades and contemporary ornamentation. In their sacred buildings they manifested their traditionalism, which was synonymous with the preservation of the heritage of their forefathers. The most important mosques of the Zaiditic area are the Mosque of Zafār Dībīn, which may be regarded as the palace mosque of Imām al-Manṣūr (from the early 13th cent.), the Mosque of Hūt (around 1200), and the Mosque of al-Hādī in Ṣa'da, with its funerary domes. They exhibit such wealth and splendour, particularly in their ornamentation, that they must be regarded as the climax of traditional architecture. Additional to the traditional pattern are the wealth of ornament, stucco, painting and carving, all ornamental extras rather than new architectonic elements. Out of these ornamental extras, gradually a certain code is established which remains valid for Zaidi architecture for centuries. A similar process can be observed concerning architectonic elements like the minaret or the mihrāb. Obviously, not all mosques were executed so lavishly and expensively, indeed, it may be presumed that a more restrained use of decor may well have been part of the design in some of the Zaidi mosques, as e.g. in the Mosque of al-Hādī from the early

14th cent., or in the beautifully proportioned Mosque of Rauḍa from the 17th century.

This development explains why Rasūlid architecture continued in the south even under the succeeding dynasty of the Ṭāhirids. Not only in the field of architecture do we find the continued use of an established code but the same can be said of painting as well. The Madrasa al-Manṣūriya in Ġubān e.g., which stands south of Ridā' and dates back to 1482, is a replica of the Mu'tabiya in Ta'izz, a design which achieved perfection in the Āmiri-ya in Ridā'.

Up to present times, as it has been mentioned above, the Tihāma has continued the style of the architecture of the Rasūlids, with domed mosques of three or six vaulted sections, and decorated with motifs from the Rasūlid ornamental code. Only under the Ottomans a new wave of ideas swept into the Yemen, bringing with it an architecture of a different kind, based on the traditions of mediterranean forms. This architecture, however, remained the language of the conquerors and did not take root amongst the people.

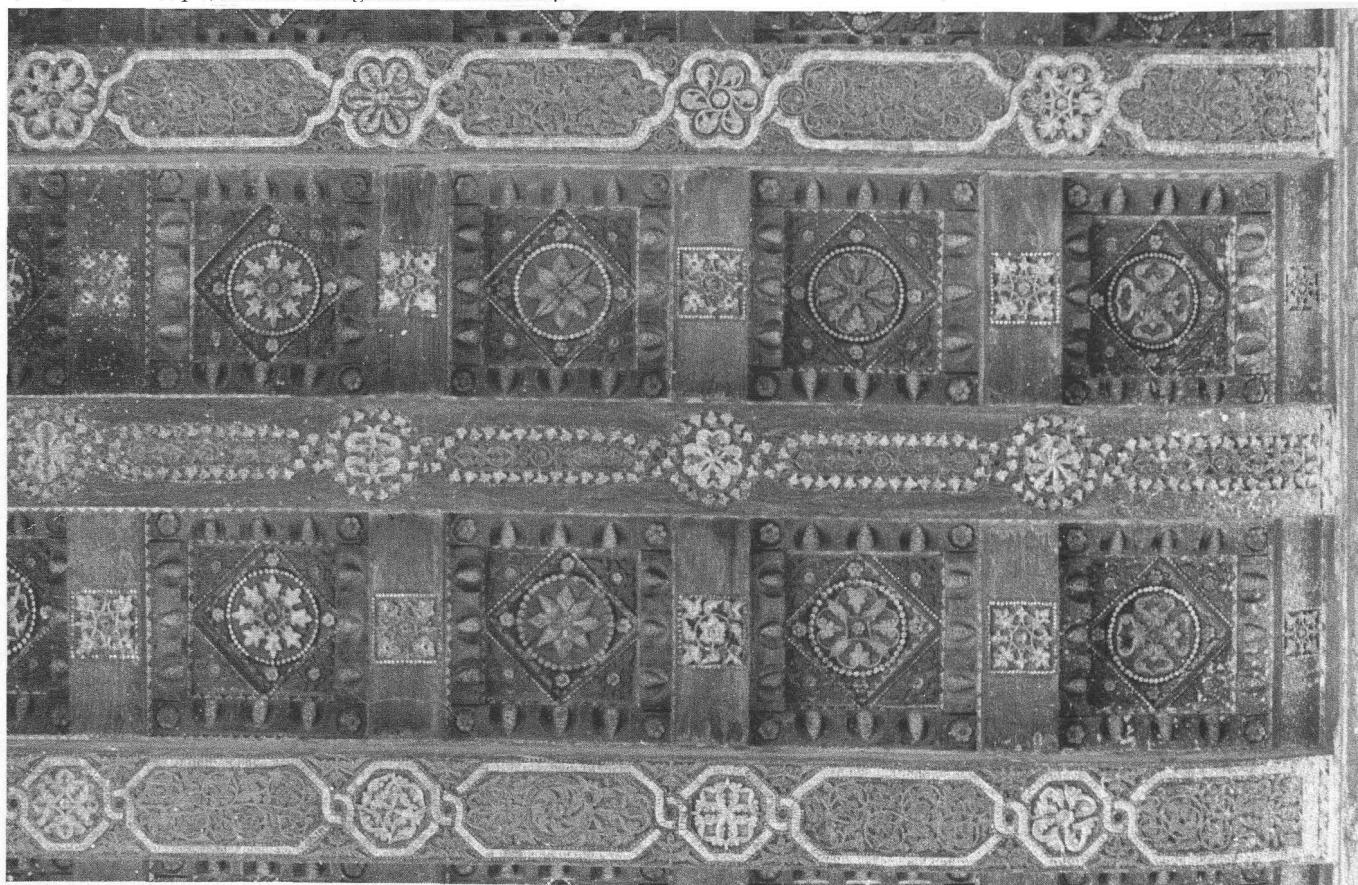
Buildings of the Rasūlids (buildings marked * still standing)

- before 638 (1240/1241) Amīr Badr ad-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Rasūl has a mosque built above the tomb of his father, Amīr Ṣams ad-Dīn, in 'Ukār (Ḥazraġī 67); according to the Ġāyat in 'Ukād near Zabīd (452, Qurrat 37). His daughter Ḥabība donates a madrasa in the village al-Māyan near Dū Ġibla (Madāris 100) and his daughter Zahrā' builds a madrasa in al-Ḥabālī (ibid.).
- 641 H (1243/1244) Manṣūr Nūr ad-Dīn builds the Madrasa Manṣūriya in Mecca (Ġāyat 426, Qurrat 12).
- 626—647 (1229—1250) he builds two madrasas in Ta'izz, the Waziriya and the Gurābiya, two madrasas in Zabīd*, a madrasa in Ḥadd al-Mansakiya in Wādī Sihām, builds in each village of the Tihāma a mosque, also founds new villages with mosques (Qurrat 18, Ḥazraġī 82 f.), according to the Aḥbār he builds a Mosque an-Nūrī between Zabīd and Ḥais (Zabīd 86); refurbishes the way from Mecca and Medina with several buildings (Ḥazraġī 83, Qurrat 18).
- Nūr ad-Dīn's sister, ad-Dār an-Naġmī, builds the Madrasa an-Naġmiya in Ġibla(*?), the Madrasa as-Ṣarafiya(*?) and Ṣahābiya. Her servant erects the Fāhiriya in Dū' s-Sufāl and the Madrasa az-Zātiya in Ġibla, and the Madrasa al-Barḥa (Madāris 59 ff).
- before 654 H (1256/1257) the eunuch Taġ ad-Dīn Badr ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Muzaffarī has the Madrasa at-Taġiya built in Zabīd, also the Madrasa al-Qurrā', a guest-house, a madrasa in the village of al-Waḥiz near Ta'izz (Ḥazraġī 113, Madāris 135 ff.).
- before 658 H (1259/1260) the eunuch Niẓām ad-Dīn Muḥtaṣṣ al-Muzaffarī builds the Madrasa Niẓāmiya in Zabīd, a Masġid as-Sābiq an-Niẓāmī, a Niẓāmiya in Dū Huzaim/Ta'izz, a madrasa in Ġibla and one in al-Waḥs, as well as ablution fountains for the Mosque of Dū Aṣraq (Ḥazraġī 152, Qurrat 49, Ḥazraġī 116, 123, Madāris 77, 84).
- Asad ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Rasūl builds an Asadiya in Ibb*, one in al-Ḥabālī and a dam in the village of Qarafa (Ġāyat 462, Ḥazraġī 179, Madāris 99).
- 659 H (1260/1261) Sulṭān Muẓaffar has a minaret built in the Ḥarām as-Ṣarīf (Ḥazraġī 120).
- before 664 (1265/1266) Amīr Ṣuġā'ad-Dīn 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Ġalīl 'Abd ar-Raḥman at-Taġlabī turns his house in Zabīd into a



- madrasa, builds the Mosque 'Abbās in the village of as-Salāmat, a madrasa in Abyāt Ḥusain, as well as one in Balad Dahr and in al-Ḥubail (Ḥazraḡī 140).
- before 667 (1268/1269) Amīr Naḡm ad-Dīn 'Umar, Muẓaffar's brother, builds a Madrasa al-'Umariya in Maḡraba/Ta'izz (Madāris 92).
- Šaraf ad-Dīn Mūsā ibn 'Alī ibn Rasūl has a Madrasa aš-Šarafiya built in Ġibla (*) (Ḥazraḡī 214).
- before 681 (1282/1283) Muḥammad ibn Naḡāh, Amīr of Šulṭān Muẓaffar, donates a Madrasa an-Naḡāhiya near Maḡraba/Ta'izz and one in Ganad (Ḥazraḡī 196, Madāris 133).
- 693 or 696 (1293/1294 or 1296/1297) Amīr 'Alī ibn 'Abdallāh builds a supporting wall (mašna'a)* in Tan'am (Qurraṭ 47, Ġāyat 474, Ḥazraḡī 229).
- 647–694 (1250–1295) Sulṭān al Muẓaffar builds the Madrasa in Maḡraba*/Ta'izz and the "New Mosque", the Great Mosque in Dū 'Udaina and a guest house, the Mosque al-Muẓaffari in al-Maḡgam, a mosque in Wasiṭ al-Maḡhālib, a madrasa in Zafār al-Ḥabūḍī (Ġāyat 475, Ḥazraḡī 233, Qurraṭ 48, Aḡbār 91).
- His wife builds the Madrasa Dār al-Asad in Ta'izz (Qurraṭ 49, Aḡbār 91, Madāris 106).
- 677 (1278/1279) the daughter of Šaraf ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn-'Alī ibn Rasūl builds a madrasa in Ḍarās as-Suflā (Madāris 164).
- before 687 (1288) the eunuch Iftihār ad-Dīn Yāqūt ibn 'Abdallāh al-Muẓaffari has the Madrasa Yāqūtiya in Maṣṣūrat ad-Dumluwa/Ma'āfir erected (Madāris 101).
- The servant of Šulṭān Muẓaffar, Tāḡ ad-Dīn Badr al-Muẓaffari, builds three madrasas in Zabīd and a guest house (Qurraṭ 49, Ḥazraḡī 233).
- 694–696 (1294/1295–1296/97) Ašraf 'Umar ibn al-Muẓaffar builds the Ašrafiya in Ta'izz, in which he is buried (Aḡbār 94, Madāris 141).
- before 695 H ad-Dār aš Šamsī, sister of Šulṭān Muẓaffar, builds a Šamsiya in Ta'izz and Zabīd (Qurraṭ 49, Ḥazraḡī 246).
- 702 (1362/1363) the wife of Muẓaffar, Miryam, builds a Madrasa Miryam in Zabīd (Aḡbār 91, Ḥazraḡī 288, Madāris 123).
- before 712 (1312/1313) she has a madrasa built in al-Maḡraba/Ta'izz, the as-Sābiqiya in Zabīd and one in Dū 'Uqāib*, where she is also buried (Aḡbār 91, Ḥazraḡī 288, Zabīd 84).
- Amīr Šihāb ad-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Ġāzī ibn al-Mi'mār donates a minbar for the Masḡid al-Ašā'ir (Aḡbār 91).
- The wife of Šulṭān Muẓaffar, mother of Mu'ayyad, builds the Madrasa Mīdiya in Wādī Zūbā, and a palace for herself (Madāris 129).
- Amīr Badr ad-Dīn ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh Muḥammad al-Hakkārī, who served al-Muẓaffar and al-Mu'ayyad, donates the Madrasa al-Hakkāriya* in Zabīd (Madāris 162).
- Amīr 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Ġalīl at-Taḡlabī builds the Madrasa 'Abbas in Wādī Surdud (Madāris 130).
- 702 H (1302/1303) Sulṭān Mu'ayyad builds a Madrasa in Maḡraba/Ta'izz and is later buried there (Ġāyat 495, Ḥazraḡī 285, Qurraṭ 66, Aḡbār 94); according to the Madāris in 672 H (1273/1274) (154), also the Madrasa Umm'Affīf and the Muẓaffariya in Ta'izz (161).
- before 704 H (1304/1305) Mu'ayyad's wife, al-Huḡḡat al-Mansūna bint Asad ad-Dīn, builds a madrasa in Ta'izz (Ḥazraḡī 300).
- 706–708 H (1306/1307–1308/1309), 712 (1312/1313) al-Mu'ayyad builds a splendid palace in Ta'bat, al-Ma'qili, followed by a palace with a four-iwan complex (Ḥazraḡī 329, Aḡbār 95, Qurraṭ 65).
- 716 H (1317) Sulṭān Mu'ayyad has the mosque of the Madrasa al-Muẓaffar built in Ta'izz, according to an inscription, or rather, he has it extended to the south.*
- before 712 H (1312/1313) Muẓaffar ibn as-Sulṭān Mu'ayyad builds a madrasa in Maḡhārib with a water basin (Ḥazraḡī 330).
- before 718 H (1318/1319) Dār ad-Dumluwa Nabīla, the daughter of al-Muẓaffar, builds a Madrasa Ašrafiya in Zabīd, a Madrasa in Ta'izz, a Mosque on Mount Sabir (Ḥazraḡī 350), Madāris

Šan'a, Great Mosque, coffered ceiling in the eastern Riwaq.





Mosque of Imām al-Hādī Yahyā in Ṣa'da (view from the courtyard).

- 149); according to Madāris a Madrasa Wāṭiqiyya in Zabīd (153) and a Madrasa in Zafār al-Ḥabūdī (Qurrat 66).
- 734 H (1333/1334) Ṣulṭān Muḡāhid erects a wall round Ta'bat and proclaims the place a town. He builds a Great Mosque and palaces for himself (Aḥbār 99).
- 739 H (1338/1339) he has a road constructed in Zabīd, and gates and moats around the town renewed (Aḥbār 97, Qurrat 84).
- 740 H (1339/1340) he orders the building of the Madrasa Muḡāhidīya in Mecca (Qurrat 84).
- 721–764 H (1322–1363) Ṣulṭān Muḡāhid builds a Madrasa Muḡāhidīya in Ta'izz with his tomb, a Dār al-'Udaib in Ta'izz, a west extension to the Mosque al-Muzaffariyya in 'Udaina, a mosque in Ġubail, a mosque in an-Nuwaidra/Zabīd, and one of the mosques in the Bustān ar-Rāḥa in Zabīd; he also orders the fortress of Ta'izz to be restored; a mosque in al-Maḡālīb is ascribed to him and one in al-Maḡārīb, also the madrasa in the Dār al-'Adl in Ta'izz (Qurrat 94, Aḥbār 99, Madāris 174).
- around 730 H (1329/1330) His mother Āmina bint aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Isma'īl aṣ-Ṣāliḥ builds a Muḡāhidīya aṣ-Ṣalāhiyya in the village al-Muḡāliyya/Ta'izz, a madrasa in aṣ-Salāma, a madrasa in Zabīd, a ḥān-qāh in Zabīd, a Ḥānqāh aṣ-Ṣalāhiyya in the village al-Musallab in Wādī Zabīd, a small mosque in the village of al-Mimlāh, one in the village at-Turaiba in Wādī Zabīd, and three mosques in Zabīd (Aḥbār 99, Madāris 166).
- before 768 H (1366/1367) Mā'as-Samā', the daughter of al-Muzaffar, builds a mosque in ar-Rabaḍ in Wādī Zabīd and a small mosque in Zabīd (Aḥbār 100); according to Madāris also the Madrasa Fātiniyya* in Zabīd (178), the Wāṭiqiyya and a mosque in Ta'izz (153).
- 771 H (1369/1370)–779 H (1377/1378) Ibn Mikā'īl has madrasas and mosques restored in Zabīd, houses rebuilt in burnt brick which before had been built in mud brick, roads constructed (Aḥbār 101 f.), the Madrasa ibn Mikā'īl erected (Madāris 188).
- 764–778 H (1362–1376) Malik al-Afḍal builds the Madrasa al-Afḍaliyya in Ta'izz and a madrasa in Mecca; he restores the walls

- of Zabīd and builds a new moat; he builds, in the region of Ġubail, a madrasa with a wonderful minaret, with one square, one triangular, and one hexagonal tier (Qurrat 104, Madāris 183, Aḥbār 102).
- 779 H (1377/1378) Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn Abī l-Qāsim Mu'ayyad aṣ-Aṣ'arī, Wazīr of Ṣulṭān Aṣraf, builds the Madrasa Taḡiy ad-Dīn ibn Mu'aibid in Ta'izz (Madāris 196).
- 779–780 H (1377/1378–1378/1379) Ṣulṭān Aṣraf has the palace Dār an-Naṣr near Zabīd built (Qurrat 105, Aḥbār 103).
- 786 (1384) Ṣulṭān Aṣraf has the mosque of the Madrasa al-Muzaffar in Ta'izz extended — according to an inscription probably on the east side — and at the same time adds the minaret.
- 789 (1387) He builds the Mosque al-Mimlāh in Zabīd (Qurrat 110).
- before 796 H (1374/1375) The wife of Ṣulṭān Aṣraf, Ṣihat Mu'tab, builds the Mu'tabiyya* in Ta'izz (Madāris 208 ss.).
- 798 H (1395/1396) 800–801 H Ṣulṭān Aṣraf builds the Aṣrafiyya al-Kubrā* in Ta'izz and the east extension of the Ġāmi' 'Udaina in Ta'izz, a further madrasa in Ta'izz, the Mosque al-Ḥaḡmadiyya on the way to Ganād, lays out the garden of Saryāqūs al-A'lā with beautiful trees in Wādī Zabīd, builds several roads (Qurrat 110, 119, Aḥbār 104, Madāris 197 ss.).
- before 804 H (1401) the daughter of Muḡāhid 'Alī ibn al-Mu'ayyad builds the Madrasa Ṣalāma in Magraba/Ta'izz (Madāris 191).
- 803–827 H (1400–1424) Malik an-Nāṣir builds the Ḥuṣn al-Faṣṣ in Qawārīr and founds villages there like at-Turunḡa, al-Qāhira, a Dār in Baiḡhara, two in Baidaḡa with gardens and water courses, the Dār an-Nāṣirī (Aḥbār 108).
- before 836 the wife of Ṣulṭān Aṣraf, Hurra Ḡihat aṭ-Tawāṣī Ḡamal ad-Dīn Farḡān, donates a water basin in the Maṣḡid al-Aṣā'ir in Zabīd, the Farḡāniyya* in Zabīd, is also supposed to have commissioned buildings in Mecca, Laḡḡ and Ta'izz (Aḥbār 111, Madāris 213 s.).
- 832 H (1428/1429) Ṣulṭān az-Zāḡhir renews and fortifies the road of Zabīd and builds the Dār aṣ-Ṣalāḡ (Aḥbār 110).

Amīr Barqūq az-Zāhirī adds an extension to the Maṣḡid al-Aṣā'ir in Zabīd by adding west, east, and south riwāqs* and the maqṣūra for the women; he adds a treasury to the mosque and has the qibla wall decorated and gilded, and he donates a minbar (Aḥbār 112).

835 H (1431/1432). Ṣultān az-Zāhir builds the Dār al-'Udaib in Wādī Zabīd (Aḥbār 111); above the tomb of his mother he erects a large madrasa, he commissions the Madrasa az-Zāhiriya in Ta'izz with his own tomb. This building has two minarets, of which one is two-tiered, a design "only ever before seen in Ṣan'ā". He also builds a madrasa in 'Aden (Aḥbār 112) and rebuilds the collapsed minaret of the Great Mosque of Ganad (Aḥbār 112, Madāris 219 ss.).

His wife aṭ-Ṭāhira Ġihat aṭ-Ṭawāṣī Iḥtiyār ad-Dīn Yāqūt has the Madrasa Yāqūtiya built in Zabīd (Aḥbār 112).

842–845 H (1439–1442) Malīk al-Aṣraf II commissions a water basin in the Great Mosque of Zabīd (Aḥbār 115).

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