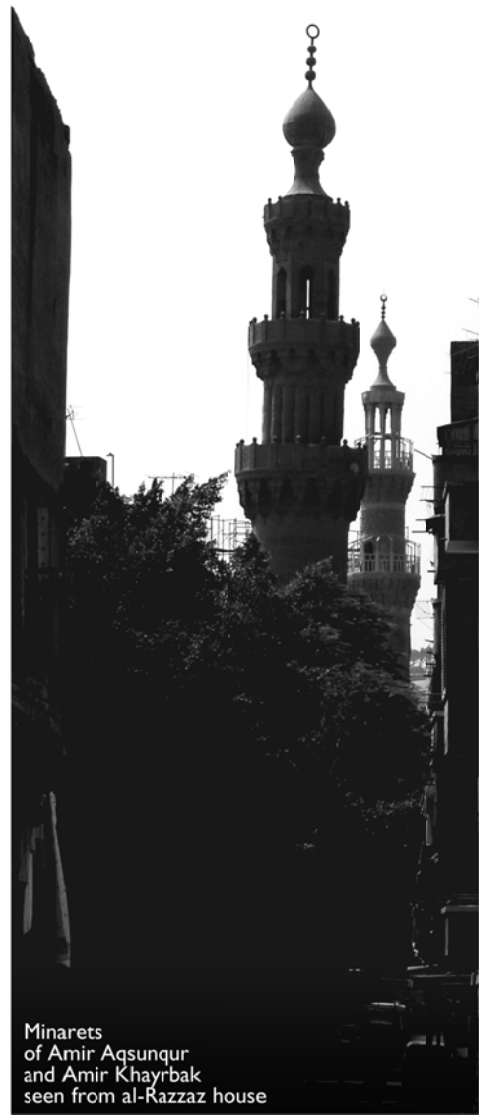


The Monuments of al-Darb al-Ahmar, Cairo



Minarets
of Amir Aqsunqur
and Amir Khayrbak
seen from al-Razzaz house

9 Mosque of Amir Qijmas al-Ishaqi (Abu Hurayba)

A.H. 885-86 / A.D. 1480-81
Monument number 114

Qijmas al-Ishaqi was governor of Alexandria, then Cairo and finally Damascus, where he died in A.D. 1487. The building is on a triangular plot, with a three-stepped façade enabling a view of the elaborate entrance when approaching from Bab Zuwayla. The mihrab bears the name of the decorator Abd al-Qadir - a rare instance of a medieval artist signing his work. Additional rooms can be accessed by a small bridge which crosses the narrow street leading to the mosque of Aslam al-Silahdar. The complex is locally known as the mosque of Shaykh Abu Hurayba who was buried here in 1852.

12 House of Ahmad Kathkuda al-Razzaz

9th -12 c. A.H. / 15th - 19th c. A.D.
Monument number 235

The current Bayt al-Razzaz was originally composed of two large houses with fronts on two different streets. The properties were joined through a marriage contract in 1817. The western side remained the main residence; the eastern part with its entrance on al-Darb al-Ahmar, was divided into apartments and shops. Eventually, there were 190 rooms and two courtyards with only one connecting passage. The decoration in the restored eastern area, including many painted ceilings, dates to the Mamluk and Ottoman eras. The complex was named for Ahmad Kathkuda al-Razzaz who died in A.D. 1833.

15 Mosque of Amir Khayrbak

A.H. 908-27 / A.D. 1502-21
Monument number 248

Khayrbak, who served as Mamluk governor of Aleppo, defected to the Ottomans in 1516 and was rewarded by being named governor of Ottoman Egypt after its conquest in 1517. In 1520 he added a madrasa-mosque complex to the mausoleum he had begun here in 1502. The elaborate entrance to the mausoleum from the prayer hall predates the mosque. The prayer hall, which is not correctly oriented towards Mecca because of space constraints, is unusual in consisting of three cross-vaults supported by pointed arches. Khayrbak also annexed an adjacent earlier palace as his residence.

10 Mosque of Amir Aslam al-Silahdar

A.H. 745-46 / A.D. 1344-45
Monument number 112

The patron was a sword bearer for one sultan and then governor of Gaza for another. He died there in A.D. 1346. Aslam first built his mausoleum at this site and later added the mosque so that the mausoleums' monumental entrance is now inside the building. The mosque resembles in plan the numerous cruciform madrasas of Cairo, with four *liwans* - covered rectangular halls with one side entirely open onto a central courtyard, which is sometimes roofed. In this mosque however, side *liwans* have colonnaded arcades or *riwaqs*. The minaret was rebuilt in the 17th century in an Ottoman style.

13 Madrasa of Umm Sultan Sha'ban

A.H. 770 / A.D. 1368-69
Monument number 125

Khawand Baraka, a woman known for her piety, generosity and beauty, was the patron of this complex. It includes a mosque, two mausoleums, two religious schools (madrasas), a sabil for dispensing free drinking water, a school (kuttub) for young boys and even a water trough for animals. Khawand Baraka was the mother (*umm*) of Sultan Sha'ban which is why the complex carries her name. The larger mausoleum was reserved for the female members of the family and the smaller for the men. The upper part of the minaret collapsed in the 1884 earthquake and was reconstructed in the early 21st century.

16 Tomb and sabil of Amir Tarabay al-Sharifi

A.H. 909 / A.D. 1503-04
Monument number 255

Tarabay, one of the leading Mamluks under Sultan al-Qansuh al-Ghuri (1501 - 16), endowed a series of buildings which included a mausoleum and sabil-kuttub. They display excellent examples of late Mamluk *muqarnas* (stalactite) decoration. An unusual feature is the square base of the dome set at an angle in relation to the wall below it so it sticks out. It is not certain why it was built this way. The zigzag pattern on the dome and other decorative motifs, typically for Mamluk architecture, are carved in the structural limestone masonry. Excavations revealed that the original ground level was almost 4 meters lower than today.

11 Mosque of Amir Altunbugha al-Maridani

A.H. 739-40 / A.D. 1339-40
Monument number 120

Al-Maridani married one of the daughters of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad, served as his cup bearer and was then made governor of Aleppo where he died in A.D. 1343. The sultan assigned his master builder to work on this open arcaded courtyard (*riwaq*) mosque as evidence of his support for the project. Many of the columns, capitals and bases in the covered area were taken from pre-Islamic buildings including Pharaonic columns. The minaret is the earliest known example of an entirely octagonal shaft. At the time it was built it was considered the most lavish and best built mosque complex in Cairo.

14 Mosque of Amir Aqsunqur ("The Blue Mosque")

A.H. 747-48, 1062 / A.D. 1346-47, 1652
Monument number 123

Aqsunqur was governor of Tripoli for Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad. Later he returned to Cairo and married the sultans' widow. He first built a mausoleum for the widows' son, Sultan Kujuk (d. 1345) and then added the open arcaded courtyard (*riwaq*) mosque. Unlike most Cairene mosques, the weight of the ceiling of the main prayer area is carried on piers rather than columns, reflecting the artistic tastes of Syria. In the mid-17th century Ibrahim Agha Mustafizan redecorated the qibla wall with Iznik style tiles, and created a tile-covered mausoleum for himself, which is why the complex is known as the Blue Mosque.

Al-Darb al-Ahmar (The Red Way) refers both to an area of the city and to its main thoroughfare. The street (with different names for each section) ran from the foot of the Citadel constructed in the late 12th century and connected it to the earlier seat of power, the Fatimid city of al-Qahira. Mamluk sultans rode from their palace in the Citadel to the city in ceremonial processions, and dignitaries vied with each other to adorn the route with monumental buildings, many of which still remain. Today, al-Azhar Park adjoins al-Darb al-Ahmar district to the east, bordered by the 12th-century Ayyubid city wall.

The Monuments of al-Darb al-Ahmar, Cairo

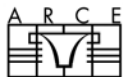
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A.H. 745-46 / A.D. 1344-45 No 112
- 11** Mosque of Amir Altunbugha al-Maridani
A.H. 739-40 / A.D. 1339-40 No 120
- 12** House of Ahmad Kathkuda al-Razzaz
9th-12th c. A.H. / 15th-19th c. A.D. No 235
- 13** Madrasa of Umm Sultan Sha'ban
A.H. 770 / A.D. 1368-69 No 125
- 14** Mosque of Amir Aqsunqur ("The Blue Mosque")
A.H. 747-48, 1062 / A.D. 1346-47, 1652 No 123
- 15** Mosque of Amir Khayrbak
A.H. 908-27 / A.D. 1502-21 No 248
- 16** Tomb and sabil of Amir Tarabay al-Sharifi
A.H. 909 / A.D. 1503-04 No255

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