

MINARETS IN NORTH AFRICA AND SPAIN

BY

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After the conquest of Egypt, 'Amr proceeded to invade Barca and made peace with the inhabitants in A.D. 642. No permanent conquest was made until 50 H. (670).

'Uqba ibn Nūfi' was appointed over the Maghrib by Mu'āwiya, so he invaded Ifriquiya and founded Qairawān. Date of completion of mosque of 'Uqba at Qairawān as given by Baladhuri who quoted Waqidi, is given as 55 H. (674/5).

The present minaret of the great mosque at Qairawān corresponds to that described by Al-Bakri and it was built by order of the Khalif Hishūm, son of 'Abd El-Malik, the Omayyad Khalif (105-9 H.) (724-727/8). This minaret is composed of three receding storeys, all square, the first being 18·87 m. in height, the second 5 m. and the third 7·50 m. The lowest storey is about 10·60 m. square at the base and tapers slightly upwards. Although these dimensions, measured by Creswell, correspond to those given by Al-Bakri, nevertheless, the first believes it possible that the minaret really dates from Ziyādat-Allah in 221 (836). In my opinion, the lower storey dates 105 (724) and the upper two storeys of later dates 221 (836).

The minaret of Qairawān was merely a continuation of Syrian tradition and had no connection with the Pharos as Thiersch⁽¹⁾ tried to prove.

Minarets in North Africa were given the term "Sawma'a". Another second Sawma'a in North Africa dating IInd century H.—

(1) H. Thiersch, *Pharos*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1909, pp. 123-126.

VIIIth century A.D., was the minaret of the mosque of Zeituna at Tunis, *i.e.* before its restoration in the XIXth century. The ancient reproductions ⁽¹⁾ represent a square lower storey without ornaments surmounted by an upper octagonal one of smaller section. Round this upper storey, which appears as a collonaded gallery, runs a platform. This upper storey is believed to have been repaired in 1653.

'Abd El-Raḥmān I, born in 113 (731), was the founder of the reigning dynasty of Andalusia. He was an Umayyad refugee from Syria, and his entourage was mostly of Syrian origin.

It was 'Abd El-Raḥmān III (Al-Nāṣir), who erected a new stone minaret at Cordova in 340 H. (951/2). It was of the square type and had two independent staircases, one in the eastern and the other in the western half. The position of the minaret was almost the same as that at Damascus, except that the minaret at Cordova is placed to the west of the corresponding axis, drawn from the centre of the minaret to the centre of the transept, instead of being immediately to the east of it.

The minaret of Al-Nāṣir was severely damaged by the great storm of 1589. The shaft of this minaret still exists inside the lower part of the present Campanile ⁽²⁾. Al-Idrīsī (548 = 1154) gave a brief description of this minaret. It was considered as a model for other following minarets built in Seville and Morocco.

The minār of the mosque of the Ribāṭ at Sūsa 206 H. (821/2) stands at the S.E. corner rests upon a small platform, 75 cm. higher than the rest of the roof. It is crowned by a small square lantern. It probably served a double purpose; to give the call to prayer and to sound the fire alarm at night. The Ribāṭ was a small fortified barracks built on the frontier of the territory of Islam and garrisoned by volunteers. Men attached to a Ribāṭ was called murābiṭīn.

⁽¹⁾ Reprod. K. d. O. IX; Kühnel, Maurische Kunst (VI).

⁽²⁾ See Terrasse, L'Art Hispano-Mauresque, pp. 80-82

Marçais⁽¹⁾ has published accounts of the remarkable minaret of the great mosque of Sfax, which may be another. Grosvel suggests, that the minarets of the Fāṭimid Mosque of Al-Hikm in Cairo,

This suggestion would be valid if the minaret of Sfax can be attributed to the Berbers of the Šarhuja period, presumably the Zirid branch. They ruled at Qairawān, first as governors for the Fāṭimids after the departure of Al-Mu'izz for Cairo in 362 H. and later as an independent dynasty until (972) middle of the 12th century. The minaret is composed of three storeys, all square, of which the lowest is very massive and is decorated by bands of simple horizontal mouldings. At the top of this storey is a dog-tooth moulding, then a base band and then two friezes, the first composed of shallow saucers and the second of a ūfic inscription, the whole crowned by an open-work cresting. Above this is a second storey, much less in height, crowned by a similar frieze and cresting. The whole is surmounted by a square lantern with a pointed fluted dome and a scalloped arched opening in the middle of each face. This upper storey has an engaged column at each corner.

The minaret of the Qal'a at Beni Ḥammād is considered as the only Fāṭimid example still existing. It was erected in 393 (1001) and damaged in 1152 by the Almohades⁽²⁾. It is of the form of a vertical square tower. The south façade is divided into three vertical divisions (strips); the central division is wider than the laterals. The middle vertical strip is composed of a vertical arched recess with an entrance at the bottom, surmounted by five arched recesses. Each of the two flanking strips is composed of vertical semi-circular elongated niche surmounted by two arched recesses decorated with ceramics of a Mesopotamian influence.

⁽¹⁾ Manuel d'Art Musulman : L'Architecture, I, pp. 162-5 and Fig. 91.

⁽²⁾ Saladin, Bull. arch., 1904, p. 243 and the following pages; and Marçais, G.: Manuel d'Art Musulman : Paris 1926, p. 122.

In the period from XIth to XIIth centuries A.D., Islamic Spain and the Berbers of North Africa were ruled by several Empires⁽¹⁾. Al-Manṣūr, the minister succeeded to be the founder of a new dynasty called "Ṭāifas". He was followed by the 'Abbadids of Seville 1042-1091 under the rule of Al-Mu'raḍid and Al-Mu'tamid. Ibn Tachfin, afterwards succeeded to the throne and founded the Almoravid's Empire. Morocco was the capital and Extreme Maghrib, central Maghrib up to the limits of Algeria were governed by this dynasty. Also Islamic Spain at the beginning of the 12th century was ruled by the Almora-vids. Al Mahdi ibn Toumer succeeded to found the Almohade's Empire and Tinmal was the capital.

Of the mosques belonging to this period which were constructed in Algeria are the following :—

The great mosque al Algeria⁽²⁾, to which a square minaret was added during the XIVth century at the N.E. corner. The great mosque at Tlemcen⁽³⁾, built 530/1135 and had a square minaret built 70 years after the construction of the mosque proper (as considered by Marçais, whereas date is given by Qirtās as 548-1153 and constructed by 'Abd Al-Mu'min).

During Almohade's Period, 'Abd-Mu'min ordered the construction of the minaret at Merrakesh⁽⁴⁾, which was finished by Ya'qūb Al-Manṣūr in the year 1196. Tinmal's minaret was also built during Almohade's by 'Abd Al-Mu'min in 548 (1153) and at the same time he ordered the construction of the mosque at Taza which reached its present form during the 13th century.

(1) Marçais, G., *Manuel d'Art Musulman* Vol. I, Paris 1926, Chap. IV p. 293.

(2) Marçais, Manuel, p. 306, plan Fig. 166 p. 307.

(3) Cf. W. et G. Marçais, *Les Monuments Arabes de Tlemcen*, pp. 140 ss and Marçais, Manuel, p. 313.

(4) The first Kutubiya at Merrakesh constructed by 'Abd El-Mu'min was destroyed and he ordered to rebuild the second minaret which was completed by Ya'qūb Al-Manṣūr at 1196.

The minaret of the mosque at Tinnal⁽¹⁾ was a tower of a rectangular form measuring (9·50 m. × 5·50 m.) rising behind the mihrab.

The works of Ya'qūb Al-Manṣūr as we are told by Al-Qirṭās⁽²⁾ (date is given as 1195 and corrected in Al-Istibṣār to 1196):—

1. Mosque of Ḥassan with its minaret at Rabāṭ.
2. Al Qaṣaba at Merrākesh.
3. Giralda at Seville.
4. Al-Kutubiyah at Merrakesh (which began during the time of 'Abd Al-Mu'min).

Although the minarets of these mosques were built by the same prince, yet they differed in decoration. The minaret of mosque of Ḥassan at Rabāṭ is of the form of a square tower standing in the middle of the N.W. façade, lapping⁽³⁾ on the outer north-western wall.

Most of the minarets of N. Africa have got a lantern at their summits called "Azri". The minaret of Qarawiyīn is an exception: it has no lantern. It is also noticed that the proportions of height to width is 4 times in nearly all these minarets, only the Kutubiya at Merrakesh⁽⁴⁾ is 5 times and so appeared elegant and tall minaret.

(1) Cf. H. Basset et H. Terrasse, Tinnal (Sanctuaires et Forteresses Almohades), ap. Hesperis, 1924, pp. 9-91 and Marçais, Manuel Fig. 180, p. 325.

(2) Qirṭās, ed. Tornberg, p. 179, in fine. [L'année 593 commença 25 Novembre 1196. Sur cette chronologie, cf. Henri Basset et Terrasse, le Minaret de la Kotoubiya], ap. Hesperis, 1925.

(3) Marçais, Manuel, plan Fig. 182, p. 330, the minaret Fig. 183, p. 332 and p. 328 and Qirṭās, ed. Tornberg: Lt.-Colonel Dienlaffoy, la mosquée d'Ḥassan, ap. Mémoires de l'Académie des insc. et b. lettres XLII, pp. 167-315.

(4) Marçais, Manuel, p. 334.

The minaret of Hussein is built of regular courses of stone while the mosque at Seville is constructed in brickwork. This last minaret is the tower of the cathedral now called "The Giralda". The base of the Qasbu at Merrākesh is of ashlar masonry with angles in brickwork, while the upper part surmounting the base is in brickwork.

Most of the minarets of North Africa are decorated with lozenged network design called "Derj or Ktef" (1) surmounted by a horizontal frieze of coloured mosaics.

A series of minarets were built at Fez and Northern part of Morocco. They are well described by Boris Maslow. Of these mosques was the great mosque at Tāza (2), founded by the Almohade 'Abd Al-Mu'min (1152-1163) and enlarged by the Merinide Abu Yu'qūb and restored by Abu 'Inān. It is considered as the best example in North of Morocco after Al-Qarawiyn. It is also of a square tower form, slightly tapering at its top ending with a crenellation. Above this huge tower is another smaller one serving as lantern, ended also with crestings and capped by a shallow dome. This lantern has an arched opening.

The great mosque at Fez (3), founded by Al-Amīr Abu Yūsuf (674 H.—1275 A.D.). The square minaret is placed at the S.W. angle of the edifice. Eastern and western faces of minaret are decorated with lozenged network (Derj ou Ktef à double Boujat). The South face is decorated with a rectangular panel with interlacings of simple "Derj or Ktef" supported by two lobed arches. Also the northern face is decorated the same (Pl. XXIII, phot. 47, Boris Maslow).

(1) Boris Maslow, *Les Mosquées de Fès et du Nord du Maroc*. (Belgique 1934).

(2) Plan Fig. 5, p. 18 (Mosquée Almohade) and Fig. 6 plan de la *Jama'at Kbir de Taza* (Mosquée Mérinide).

(3) Boris Maslow, p. 38, Figs. 12, 13, pp. 48-49.

Other examples of minarets of the same form are found in the Jama' Hamra (1), Jama' ez-Zhar (2) (759 H.—1357 A. D.), Jama' Chrabliyin (3) at Fez (Merinide XIV) and restored by Moulay Slimān (1792-1823).

The just mentioned types of minarets represent the most decorated and embellished with deeply shaded network of squared and lozenge decorations and also with scalloped and horse-shoe arches. More recent minarets are found in several towns of Morocco, Fez, Tetouan, Tanger, etc.

The type found in Algeria is represented by that of Tlemcen and other minarets, dated XIII-XIV A. D. They are embellished with bold decoration of network in relief. A Moorish aspect is found also in the minaret of the great mosque of Al-Manṣūra erected by a Merinide (701-1302).

So the square form of minarets was the predominating type in all western countries of North Africa and Andalusia. Later on, at XVI A.D., an octagonal tower appeared. This is considered by Saladin as a result of Hanafite influence.

(1) Boris Maslow Figs. 17, 18, pp. 60-61.

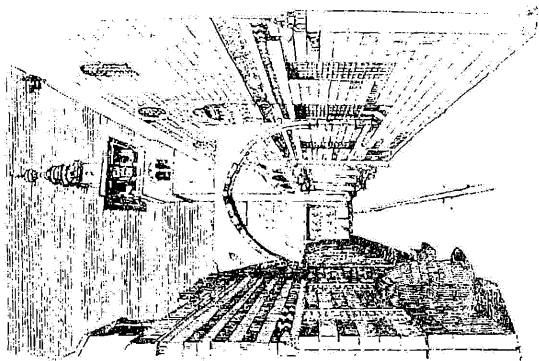
(2) Boris Maslow p. 70, Pl. XXXII, p. 65 and Fig. 23.
p. 71, Pl. XXXIII.

(3) Boris Maslow Pl. XXXIV, Figs. 68 and 69 (p. 78, Fig. 26).

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3. Creswell, K.A.C. Early Muslim Architecture, Vol. II.
4. Encyclopédie de l'Islam, Tome III, Paris, 1936.
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6. Marçais, G.: Manuel d'Art Musulman, Vol. I, Paris, 1926.
and Marçais et W., Les Monuments Arabes de Tlemcen.
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9. Thierch, H., Pharos, Leipzig-Berlin, 1903.

PLATES



(Briggs)
FIG. 2.—Damascus: The Great mosque.
The 'Arus Minaret.

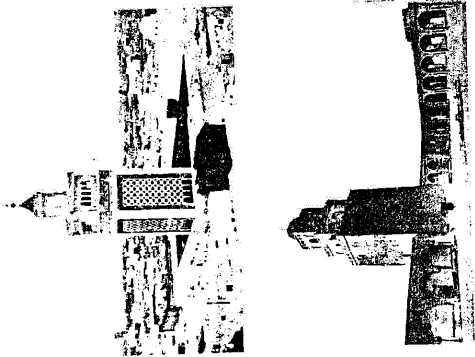


FIG. 1.—Minarets of Mosques of Zitūna,
Tūnis and the Great Mosque at
Qairawān.

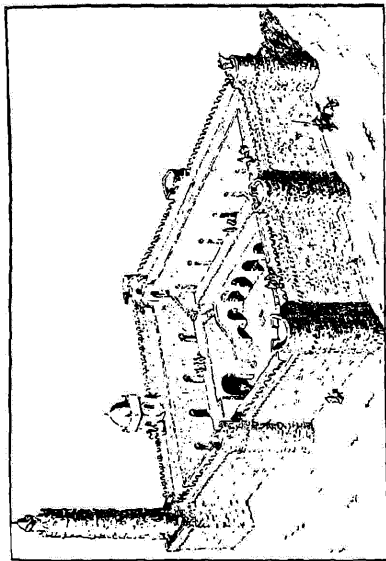


FIG. 3.—NŪSA: The Ribât, from the North-East
(From Marçais, Manuel).

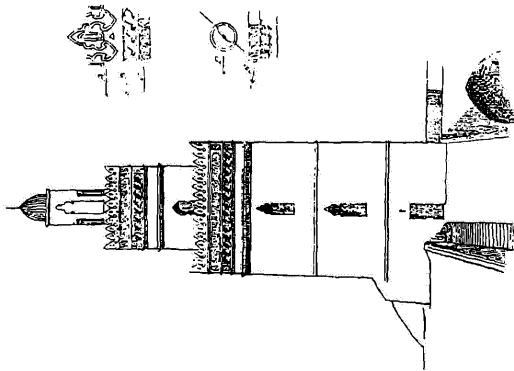


FIG. 4.—SFAÏX: Minaret of Great Mosque
(From Marçais, op. cit.)

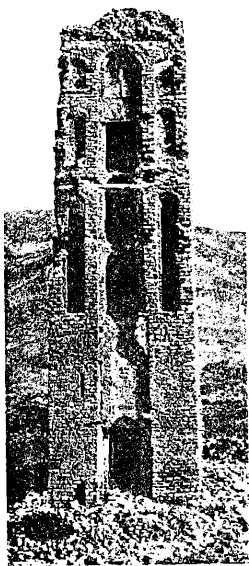


FIG. 5.—Minaret of Qal'a
of Beni-Hammād
(from Marçais)

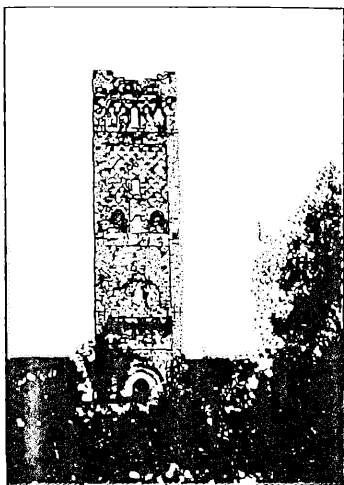


FIG. 6.—TLEMCEEN: The Minaret.



FIG. 7.—RABĀT: Minaret of Ḥassan,
North Face. (Marçais)

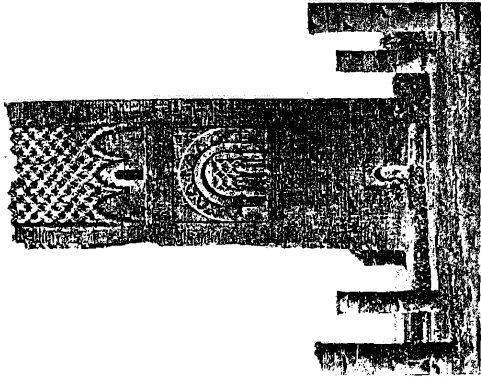


FIG. 8.—Rabāt: Minaret of Hassan (From Marçais)

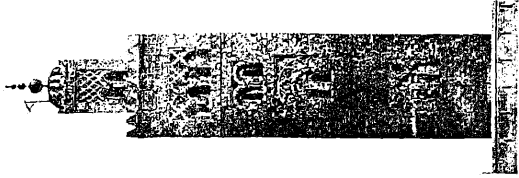


FIG. 9.—The Minaret of
Kutubiya at Marrakesh
(Springer)

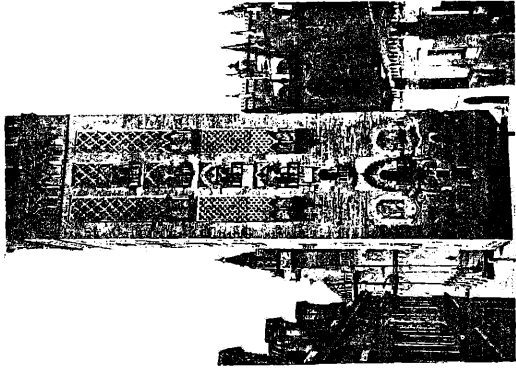


FIG. 11.—Giralda, Minaret of the Great Mosque at Seville. (Glick and Diez)

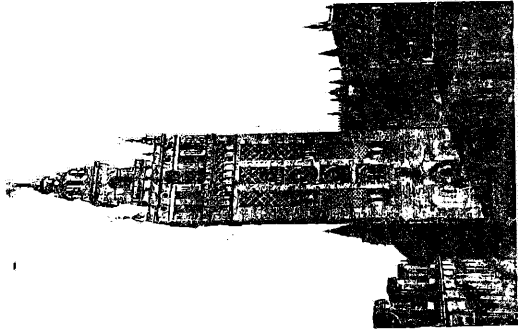
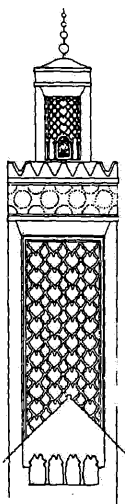
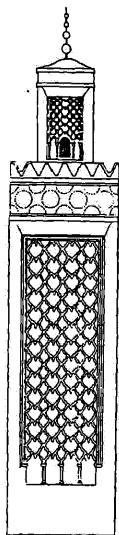


FIG. 10.—SEVILLE: Giralda; Minaret of the Great Mosque at Seville

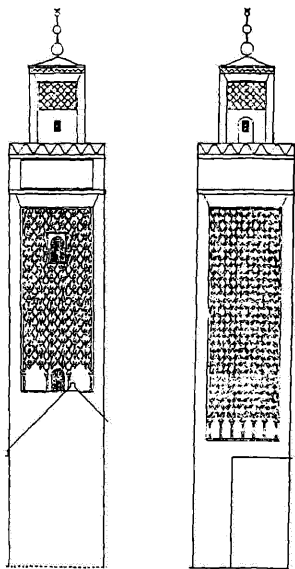


— Face Est du
minaret de la Jama'
'Kbir de Fez



— Face Ouest du
minaret de la Jama'
'Kbir de Fez

FIG. 12.—FEZ: Minaret of the Great Mosque (Boris Maslow).



Face est

Face ouest

18 — Minaret de la Jamé Hammra à Fez

FIG. 13.—FEZ: Minaret of Mosque of Hammra (Boris Ma-low).

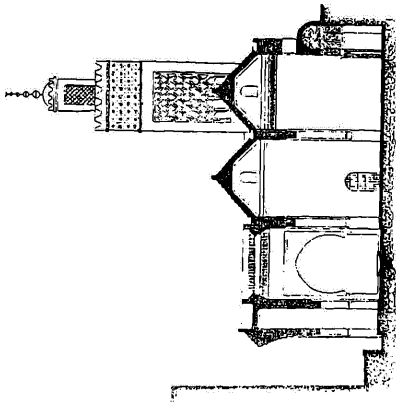


FIG. 14.—FEZ: Longitudinal Section through Mihrab of Mosque of Zhar. (Boris Maslow).

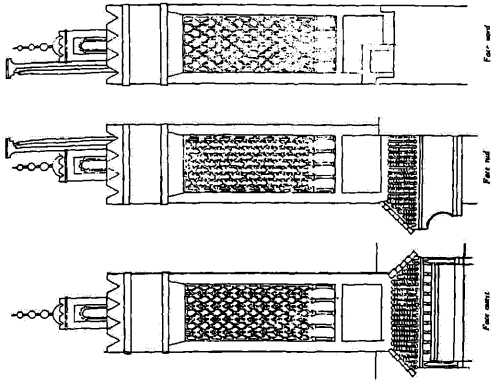


FIG. 15.—FEZ: Minaret of Mosque of Chrabliyyine (Boris Maslow).