

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MUSALLA OF AL MIRJANIAYA MADRASA



SBAH - Ministry of Culture of Iraq
Monumenta Orientalia, MAECI - Italy

Concept: Roberto Parapetti
Executon: Ala' H. Al Anbaki

THE LOST MIRJANIYAH MADRASA OF BAGHDAD: RECONSTRUCTIONS AND ADDITIONAL NOTES

In 2011, Monumenta Orientalia submitted to the competent Iraqi and Italian authorities a new project for the reconstruction inside the Iraq Museum of the musalla (prayer hall) of the lost madrasa al-Mirjaniya, demolished in 1946, one of the colleges of greatest historical interest of Baghdad. The project, which was accepted and financed by the Italian side, represented an effort to continue the renovation of the National Archaeological Museum of Iraq¹.

The project was inspired by the errors observed in the recomposition of some fragments of the 14th-century musalla's decorative apparatus that were removed from the monument prior to its demolition to be displayed in the museum. A new, more accurate recomposition of the fragments in a new structure was envisaged based on the available documentation. Once it was chosen to connect it directly to the museum's Islamic Gallery, the adjacent secondary court proved to be the most suitable place for locating the reconstruction.

¹Since the fateful month of April 2003, the Italian government has been engaged in works for the 'reconstruction' of the Iraq Museum by institutional and private bodies. The new project discussed here, managed by Monumenta Orientalia (2012–2016), is the latest such effort. Between 2004 and 2012, the Centre of Archaeological Research and Excavations of Turin (CRAST) had already redesigned the following sections of the museum: Large Assyrian Gallery, Medium Assyrian Gallery, Islamic Gallery and Central Courtyard. All above mentioned projects were carried out by Eng. Ala' al-Anbaki's Iraqi company.

A metal structure, the size and shape of the interior of the lost original musalla, was built. A copy of the colonnaded portico added in the 19th century to the musalla's courtyard side, as wide as the façade, was also constructed to create a transition zone between the current Islamic hall and the new room. The interior surfaces are of mesh panelling finished in plaster. The fragments of decoration have now been replaced in their correct position. The outside is then simply a plain surface with no architectural design.

The Mirjaniya Madrasa 1946-2016

Until 1946, that is until its almost total demolition (only the entrance portal with the minaret was spared), the then Jami' al-Mirjan, the ancient madrasa al-Mirjaniyah, was known as one of medieval Baghdad's few monuments of historical and artistic importance to have come down to us substantially intact.* **1**

Lively debates in the decades before that had examined the question of whether to save the building or demolish it because of its extremely precarious condition and the high cost of any consolidation work. All attempts to save the building were futile, and in the end it was demolished. In reality, The demolition was actually functional to remove the obstacle that the urban madrasa constituted between the two sections of the main commercial artery, what is today Rashid Street, in the heart of Baghdad's eastern sector. The building stood inconveniently across a bend in the road, effectively bisecting it. Too late, in September 1945, K.A.C. Creswell, one of the leading experts on Islamic architecture of the day, was invited by the government to visit the Mirjaniyah and express his opinion. Creswell reported: "The musalla of the Mirjaniya... is an outstanding monument of Muslim architecture not only

for its splendid ornaments... but also on account of the fact that it is the only example surviving in Iraq of this early type of triple-arched, laterally developed and domed, hall of prayer”.

On March 26, 1946, during the regency of Arshad al-Omari, the Amanat al-Asima (the Municipality of Baghdad) the demolition started. It had been decided on January 20 of that year, in a meeting coordinated by the distinguished British archaeologist Seton Lloyd in the role of British Advisor of Antiquity, and with the technical managers most directly involved, engineers from the Amanat al-Asima and the Awqaf (Ministry of Religious Affairs). The minutes were forwarded to the Director General of Antiquities, Naji al-Asil, so that he might follow up the process.

While the demolition was under way, the DGA was finally able to appreciate the full architectural importance of the monument. The rich decorative and epigraphic apparatus of the walls was rediscovered in full beneath the 18th-19th century plaster. Next, the architecture of the complex ground floor and first floor was surveyed, as were the internal fronts and the façade on the courtyard of the madrasa prayer hall, the musalla. A brief report by Seton Lloyd himself and the study of the monument by Nasir al-Naqshbandi, inspector archaeologist, were also promptly published. A more exhaustive study on the madrasa and Khan Mirjan*² was also published in 1982, by Tariq Jawad al-Janabi. The first intervention works of the planned recovery of the monument, which included mainly the reconstruction “as it was and where it was” of only the musalla, which had become Jami’ Mirjan, continued until the 1960s. The function and the spaces of madrasa-college died down. The area was delimited and redesigned incorporating the surviving portal and the only new mosque. However the peculiar institutional spaces of the madrasa and the tomb of the founder were not, reconstructed. The tomb was considered devoid of epigraphical or artistic value. Finally, the project of the lengthwise

joining of two sections of Shara' al-Jedid, the New Street (now Rashid Street), already interrupted by the madrasa, was carried out. Many of the already detached original inscriptions and decorative panels were placed inside the new mosque, similar but not identical to the original musalla design. The original tripartite hall with a wider main central dome was built with three identical bays covered by domes of identical size, but on a lower impost. A new entrance to the complex was opened at the street level, on the southwest side, served by a stairway down to the ancient floor about 2 metres below. A further main part of the removed decorative panels was preserved and displayed in the current Iraq Museum (which reopened in 1966). Until the early 1970s, a few variations on the first project were carried out. In the 1960s, a new entrance room and one more room on the back side were added besides the new mosque and the extrados of the central dome was redesigned, raised, and reshaped with the forms of the lost domed tomb of Mirjan. The last restoration works of the portal decorations were carried out by the DGA in 1972-73. At present, the urban context, despite the events of the last decades, is only superficially changed. The Jami' Mirjan is still managed exclusively by the 'Awqaf; the DGA no longer cares for it; the Shorja market surrounding it continues its life despite the pedestrianization of that stretch of Shara'Rashid, all goods are carried with carts or on human/animal back as they were a hundred years ago.

The historical Madrasa

The madrasa building date must have been given in the long inscription on the madrasa main portal façade (iscr. 1), but only the ninth day of the month of Jumada (July-August) is readable, not the year (1354?), apparently eroded. The date of its completion, 758 (1357), during the reign of al-Shaikh Sultan

Mu'iz-ad-Din al-Hasan ibn Uwais Jalayri, is clearly mentioned in the fragmentary inscription (iscr. 6) discovered by chance in 1946 inside the well in front of the iwan on the south-east side of the madrasa courtyard, which had to complement the one preserved until then on the back wall of the same iwan, lacking of that fragment (fig. ...). Both inscriptions mention the madrasa founder, Amin al-Din Mirjan, governor of Baghdad in 756 (1354) on conferral of Sultan Shaikh Taj-ad-Din al-Hasan Buzurg Jalayri. The building in the Bab al-Agha area covered a quadrangle of about 1600 square metres. The cut-off north corner probably respected a pre-existing path of the al-Ghazal souk, today al-Shorja market, from there going forward. A photo taken before the World War I shows the madrasa's main portal still partly hidden by an arch of the souk leaning against it.*3

The building was built entirely of brick, most measuring 22 x 22 x 5 cm, with a typical gypsum (juss) local binder. The site plan of the madrasa is of the “four-iwan” type. The musalla, the prayer hall, was on the south-west side; an iwan was located at the centre of the north-east opposite side; the tomb of the founder was at the centre of the south-east side in front of the entrance. The building was articulated on two floors around the courtyard. On the ground floor, there must have been the common areas of the madrasa, upstairs, the student quarters, accessible via stairways next to the courtyard's inner corners and along open galleries. The flat roof was at a uniform height. A particular volumetric emphasis was given to the founder's domed tomb. The dome was a double-shell dome raised on a high drum. The outer shell, a slightly onion-shaped ‘false’ extrados, hides the vault of the burial chamber: a hemispherical dome with a stucco shell ribbed design intrados on muqarnas. The madrasa façades overlooking the inner courtyard effectively represented the distribution of space/function in an internal-external correspondence.

These were marked by five bays within grids of pilasters and string courses on each side. The full-height bay at the centre of each side corresponded, as internally, to the main destinations of the madrasa: the musalla, the iwan and the tomb. Exceptionally, the main entrance body was internally on two floors. Three full-height bays characterized the musalla courtyard façade, flanked by the stairways bays. Inside, the space of the prayer hall was divided in three by large four-centred arches that defined a domed square central area, the qibla space, and two rectangular domed aisles. The central dome is a twelve-sided domical vault on pendentives, each of three cylindrical sails, and mediated by a band with inscription. The lateral aisles have smaller domical vaults on a hexagonal high drum, connected by cylindrical sails.

In the Islamic architectural repertory of Iraq, the building presents aspects of remarkable originality, inspired by the inventions developed in the previous 11th and 12th centuries primarily in Seljuk Iran, ascribable in the political-cultural movement known as the “Sunni revival”. Characteristic is the teaching of Sunni theology and jurisprudence through the establishment of autonomous madrasas with respect to the mosque. Architecturally, the complexity of the dome’s articulation is noteworthy, as is the plan with its four prevalent spaces-functions: the ‘four iwans’, two by two symmetrically opposed on intersecting axes, on the sides of a square courtyard. The main stylistic features are the emphasis of the frontal arch of the iwans (pishtaq), the muqarnas (honeycomb/stalactite elements) for the formation of domes and cantilever-overhangs, the rich wall decorative finishing geometrically designed (hazar bafand girih) and the graphically codified lettering calligraphy (naskh/thuluth) with a historical content in public buildings .^{*4} The architect of the entire complex is not recorded as such;

he should, however, be identified with “naqqash”, the author of the calligraphic work: Ahmad Shah al-Naqqash al-Tabrizi, exalted with the epithet Zarin Qalam (golden pencil). According to the Quran, in fact, Arabic script overrides all forms of visual art, occupying the physical and iconic space of sculpture and painting.

Specifically two of the four Sunni legal doctrines (madhhab): Hanafi and Shahafi were taught in the Mirjaniya madrasa, probably to comply with the Baghdad community’s practice, although the Jalairid rulers of Mirjan period are known to have adhered to the doctrine of Shi’ism,

Exhaustively recorded in a long inscription inside the prayer hall, Mirjan’s generous bequest (waqfiya) meant to ensure the operation of the madrasa, and therefore the teaching of the Sunni doctrine. It is the largest recorded one on a building and of the highest quality in the Islamic world *5. The income from the madrasa’s real estate and land holdings is of great historical and topographical significance: 13 oil mills, 103 shops, a paper factory, 7½ caravanserais (including the Khan Mirjan), 11 plots of land, 2 villages, and 7 orchards (bustan) are listed.

Ottoman-era interventions

In the period of Ottoman control over Mesopotamia, the major works on the madrasa were carried out after 1785 on the grounds that the building was in need of repair. Subsequently, the governor of Baghdad province, Suleiman Pasha the Great (1780-1802), renamed the madrasa Mirjaniyah as Jami’ Mirjan. This change had significant social and political implications: it effectively wiped away the academic institution’s autonomy and brought it under the all-encompassing mosque. The new definition entailed important architectural adjustments especially in the musalla. The intervention was due to the deterioration of the building.

The destiny of incomes and annuities of the famous waqfiya, in which it is specifically damned whoever goes against it remains unknown.

In order both to ensure direct communication with the burial chamber and to include the entire south-west side, large openings was created in the side walls that made it possible to greatly extend the area of the musalla. The new spaces was roofed by variously articulated vaults. With these same interventions the height of the façade's central door was reduced and side doors were opened. The niche of the mihrab, finished with majolica in the middle of the qibla wall, may have been created as well. Originally it was probably a simple flat panel. On the outer corresponding wall on the street, the mirhab was marked by an unusual applied element reminiscent of a minaret terminal. Another mirhab niche was created on the façade to the left of the central gate for prayer in the summer months. A raised platform for ritual ablutions was added in the eastern corner of the courtyard near the well in front of the iwan. Other functional elements were added inside the musalla: a masonry minbar finished with majolica to the right of the mirhab and a wooden balcony on the mezzanine of the counter façade, perhaps meant for more important worshippers at the Friday prayers. Finally, a wooden portico was placed against the façade, and much of the interior surfaces was covered with plaster, with only the panels for inscriptions reserved. According to al-Naqshbandi, in 1871, Midhat Pasha, on the occasion of the visit to Baghdad by Nasir Shah Qajar, ordered to replaster the musalla with painted floral motifs.

Contemporary era

With the Iraqi Hashemite monarchy, in 1928, new maintenance and consolidation works for the Jami' Mirjan were carried out by the Awqaf. In 1936 it part of the national heritage. was designated Restoration works were carried out to fill in lost parts of the main portal, and structural consolidation works were also carried out in the musalla, probably necessitated by disruptions caused by Suleiman Pasha's works on the load-bearing walls. Connecting steel ties were placed between the walls along the musalla's south-west side. A tie beam was used to link the three gates of the musalla façade, and the outdoor portico was rebuilt in masonry and I-beams. The masonry minbar was demolished and replaced with a wooden one.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1774-1778 NIEBUHR, C., *Reisbeschreibung nach Arabien und andern umliegenden Ländern*, Copenhagen, Hamburg, 1774–1778).
- 1827 BUCKINGHAM, J. S. *Travels in Mesopotamia*, London, 1827, 183;
- 1857 JONES, F., *Memoirs by Commander James Felix Jones*, Bombay, 1857, 314.
- 1912 MASSIGNON, L., *Mission en Mésopotamie 1907-1908*, Le Caire, 1912, 1-31, Pl. IV-XI).
- 1911-20 HERZFELD, E., SARRE, F., *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat- und Tigris-Gebiet*, II, Berlin, 1911-20, 181-196; III, Taff. IX, X, XII, XLVIII, LI).
- 1946 (Sd) CRESWELL, A., *The Mirjaniya madrasa*, in: SETON LLOYD, *Discovery in the Madrasat al-Mirjanita*, Sumer, I, 2, 1946, 11-12.
- 1946 SETON LLOYD, *Discovery in the Madrasat al-Mirjanita*, Sumer, I, 2, 1946, 10-12.
- 1946 AL-NAQSHABANDI, N., *The Mirjaniya madrasa* (in Arabic), Sumer, I, 2, 1946, 33-54.
- 1982 AL-JANABI, T. J., *Studies in medieval Iraqi architecture*, Baghdad, 1982, 111-146,
- 2004 BIANCO, P. (a cura di), *Iraq prima e dopo la guerra*, I siti archeologici, “L’ERMA” di Bretschneider, 2004.
- 2008 PARAPETTI, R., *The Contribution of the Centro Scavi di Torino to the Reconstruction of Iraqi Antiquities*, in: STONE P. G. & BAJJALI, J. F. (ed.), *The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq*, The Boydell Press, 2008).
- 2008 PARAPETTI, R. (ed), *Iraq Museum 2008*. Roma, 2008
- 2012 PARAPETTI, R., *The Iraq Museum in perspective: birth, decay, rebirth*, “Mesopotamia”, 2012, XLVII, 144-154.
- 2016 CRAST (ed.), *Gli Interventi Italiani per la Riqualificazione dell’Iraq Museum di Baghdad*, Un Patrimonio dell’Umanità, “apice libri”, Torino, 2016;

Additional notes

1

The madrasas (madaris)

Its designation as Jami' Mirjan rather than Madrasa al-Mirjaniya dates to the 18th century, when, under Ottoman rule, the madrasa lost its autonomy and was subsumed into a mosque.

The first madrasa independent from a mosque was founded in the 11th century, at the beginning of the Seljuk supremacy within the Abbasid caliphate, by the influential vizier Nizam al-Mulk, in support of Sunni theology as a counter-action to the growing Shi'ite/Ismaili influence within the caliphate. Numerous madaris in the major urban centres of the time are known as Nizamiya after him.

The Nizamiya was the highest academic institution in the Islamic world, not only for dogma, and as such was also recognized in the Christian world. It is said that the establishment of the coeval Salerno School of Medicine was due to the work of four scholars, including, significantly, the Arab Adela.

Thinkers and artists who are still remembered today were active in the Nizamiya of Baghdad. The Iranian philosopher al-Ghazali taught and the poet Sa'di al-Shirazi studied there. Unfortunately, no tangible record of it is preserved.

The Mustansiriya madrasa, however, is still preserved. Founded by al-Mustansir bi-'llāh, the penultimate of the Abbasid caliphs (1226-1242). Through this madrasa, the Islamic education system was substantially extended by adding to the local sciences the teaching of pre-Islamic sciences, especially the medical ones. Arab coeval sources about the Mustansiriya, a true college, provide

detailed information from which we know that it was administered by a director (nazīr), supported by a supervisor (mušrif) and a clerk (kātib). Furthermore, among its employees there were also architects (mi'māriyya), assistants (farrāš), doormen, attendants to the bath (hammam), kitchen workers (matbaq), and various servants.

The nature of teaching and the number of teachers were specified in the foundation statute. This stated that there were four sections of 62 students for each of the four Sunni doctrines of jurisprudence (fiqh) taught there: Maliki, Hanafi, Shafi'i, Hanbali. Each school was assigned a professor (mudarris) and four assistants. In addition, a teacher and an assistant would teach the Quran to additional thirty young students; a teacher would transmit the knowledge of hadīt (the traditions of the Prophet) to ten more students, and finally the head of the medical service, the tabīb, would teach the science of medicine (tibb) to ten students. Thus The total number of students was 298. In addition, grammar and mathematics were taught to all of them by specific teachers. The library, heart of the madrasa, had a manager, a superintendent, and a librarian assistant. Each law school had its imam, its reciter of the Quran readings, and a preacher; in the prayer hall, the musalla, there was also a muezzin for the daily call to the prayer, as indicated by a special clock.

The Mustansiriya constituted an example for many other madaris of the Arab world while maintaining its function until 1779 when, under the Ottoman government of Baghdad, the building was converted into a caravanserai, then into a hospital, a police station and finally into a customs office. In 1936, it passed under the administration of the DGA. The large building, measuring approximately 100 x 50 m, is still standing on the east bank of the Tigris south of the al-Shuadah bridge.

2

Khan Mirjan

Less than fifty meters away from Mirjaniya madrasa there is the Khan Mirjan, a warehouse also founded by Mirjan, of an equal historical and architectural significance.

As stated in the only inscription on the north-west entrance portal, the building is dated 760/1359, two years after the completion of the madrasa. The inscription, as in the madrasa, mentions the names of the eponymous founder Mirjan and of the calligrapher (and architect) Ahmed Shah al Naqqash al-Tabrizi. It also mentions part of waqfya, and the destination of the building, as a function of maintenance and operation of the madrasa but also of the Dar al-Shafa' (a hospital) at Bab al-Ghurba (the area of the nearby left bank of the Tigris) with the revenues derived therefrom.

The building covers a rectangular area of about 1200 square meters. On the ground floor, there is a large double-height hall roofed by a magnificent segmented vault surrounded by rooms for lodging of foreign traders and storage of goods. A mezzanine gallery along the inner perimeter of the hall gave access to more rooms on the upper floor, which were reachable via stairways on either side of the entrance space. The covering of the large hall, an evolution of a more ancient traditional Sassanid vaulting solution (Iwan i-Karkha), resumed in the Ilkhanid period, consists of seven large four-centered arches on which two levels of vaulted structures with windows were set across. Since 1936, its warehouse function, which had been preserved over the centuries, ends with the passing of the building to DGA management. Until the opening of the Iraq Museum in 1966, with a new entrance on

the side opposite to the old one, the building was intended for exhibition of the Islamic art collections. In the 1980s, it was converted into a restaurant with live traditional music. The building, originally some three metres below the current street level, already subject to infiltrations due to the rising water table, was restored again in 1980s.

The inscription

The following is the reading according to al-Naqshabandi in the English translation of T. J. al-Janab ; it contains nine lines of naskh writing against a plain background.

1. In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
2. The construction of this blessed taim ['khan' in Khorasan dialect?] and the shops was ordered by the client, the employer, the prince, the greatest
3. and the most just companion, king of kings of the commanders in the world, the one with abundant justice, Supporter of the Sulta nate and the Imara, Container of the ranks of the Imara and the Wizara
4. pride of the [shahda?] of the time, the one particularly cared for by God, Amin al-Din Mirjan Aqa al-Uljaiti, and he endowed it for the Madrasa al-Mirjaniya and the Dar al-Shafa' at Bab al-Ghurba, also the district of 'Aqarquf,
5. half of the Qai'miya, Tell Dihim, a farm at Sarat, orchards in the village of al-Turk, al-Radman and Khurramabd
6. and the ribat of Jalawla'known as Qizil Ribat, Razin Juwi (golden river), half Duri orchards in Ba'quba, Buhriz and Bandanijin, a khan and shops
7. at Hulba, four khans and shops at al-Jawhariyin, a khan at the western side and a paper 'shop at al-Harim, as it is
8. defined and explained in the waqfiya as a true legal waqf. May the Exalted God accept from him his obedience in this world and the next and let him reach the climax of desire [paradise]. The completion was in 760. Thanks be to God alone.
9. May God's blessing and peace be upon our Master, Muhammad, the Prophet, the illiterate, the 'Arabi, the honest, and upon his good and pure family and companions. Written by the one who is in need of his God's mercy, Ahmad Shah al-Naqqash known as Zarin Qalam. May God forgive his sins. ' -

3

Modern Baghdad

Along the same lines as the urban redevelopment plans of European capitals in the second half of 1800, also in Baghdad decisive urban works were made (in: YASSER ELSHESHTAWY, Planning middle eastern cities: an urban kaleidoscope, Routledge, London, 2004). The introduction of major reforms of Ottoman modernization, Tanzimat, had already led Midhat Pasha (governor of Baghdad between 1869 and 1872) to plan the demolition of crumbling urban walls of an-Nazir (Caliph between 1180 and 1225). More important restoration works became necessary after the First World War. These include the regularization of the road network in the eastern sector of the central area (al-Rusafa) between the two gates near to the left bank of the Tigris. In 1917, from Bab al-Mu'adham, to the north, up to the markets of Bab al-Agha, around the Jami' al-Mirjan, and in 1919, from there to Bab al-Sharqi to the east, a new modern arterial road, the Shara' al-Jedid (New Street, today Rashid Street) took shape, lined with colonnaded porticos, suitable for pedestrian and vehicular motorized traffic. Then, on the open space in front of the Mirjaniya, 'Exchange Square', the most important banks of modern Iraq (Central Bank and Rafidain Bank) arose. Beyond the gates, demolished not before 1925, the first modern residential districts on the Western model were planned: Waziriyah and Saadoon. The first one on the 'garden city model' characterized by architecturally eclectic types, and the second one on a new housing model of single-family terraced house, still traditional but with exterior views (shanashil). To Arshad Pasha al-Omari, the Baghdad mayor from 1936 to 1944, are probably due the most significant applications of modernization of that period, then pursued with significant contributions of Western

architects in the 1950s (Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Gio Ponti, F. L. Wright) in collaboration with local architects (Mohamed Makiya, Hisham Munir, Rifat Chadirji), which accompanied the introduction of modern Town Plannings (Doxiadis 1955 and Polservice 1965).

4

Hazar baf and girih

Hazar baf (in Persian, a thousand laces) generally defines the finishing technique of the wall surfaces characterized by a strong 'luministic' effect through the protrusion-recess of individual bricks. The elaborations of the first Abbasid era in the Ukhaidir palace and in the Baghdad Gate in Raqqa are already a prototype. The evolution of this technique is defined by the term girih (knot, in Persian), the graphic art developed in Seljuk era of the sophisticated combination of regular polygons for the formation of figures, mostly star-shaped with 5-12 points. These expand indefinitely on the plane, the same way as 'wallpaper', as in the Mirjaniya, made from cut out brick inlay with carving insertion of stylized vegetal motifs. The style is attributable to the refined Baghdadi author of calligraphic texts and bindings of Koranic texts, Ibn Bawwab, active around the year 1000, disciple of Ibn Muqla al Shirazi, codifier of the naskh/thuluth calligraphic style, still in use.

The epigraphic context of Mirjaniya madrasa is indeed unique, not only locally, for the topographical informations contained in the detailed drafting of the rich charitable bequest (waqf) of Mirjan in favour of the continuity in the madrasa life.

The whole inscription is in crowded naskh of high quality. They are all executed in brick on a floral background composed of diminutive 4-petalled rosettes linked together to give a net-like impression. The inscriptions of al-Mirjaniya have been read partially or fully by several native and western scholars. The first fairly complete account of these inscriptions was published by Massignon in 1912. The last publication was by N. Naqshabandi shortly before the demolition of the madrasa in 1946. Its English translation is, in 1982, by T. J. al-Janabi.

The inscriptions are here numbered according to this last autor.

1. THE TEXT ABOVE THE MAIN ENTRANCE

1. In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate (Sura XXXV, v. 28).
2. This blessed madrasa was constructed from the excess of the alms of... [eroded, probably the name of the sultan' mother?] the happy, may God illuminate her proof
3. during the reign of her son, the greatest Nuyan, the happy Shaikh Hasan, may God illuminate his proof.
4. It was completed during the reign of his son, the greatest Nuyun, the spreader of justice throughout the world, the Sultan of Sultans, the aid of the world and the faith, the aider of

5. Islam and the Muslims, Shaikh Uwais Nuyun ... [may] God [eternize] his reign, by their client, the greatest companion, the refuge and the recourse of the nations.
6. The nurturer of kings, the supporter of Sultans, the care of the weak, the singled out by the care of God, Amin al-Din Mirjan.
7. May God endow him abundantly with His ample prosperity. He is the Glorious One, the Generous One. The construction
8. of this place (makan) began on the ninth of Jumada ...[eroded, 756?] may God bless our master and our lord
9. the Prophet of mercy, the intercessor for his nation, and the remover of grief Muhammad, and his family and his good and pure companions
10. and those who follow them properly, to the Day of Judgement. Written by the poor slave who is in need of the mercy of
11. God, may He be exalted, Ahmad Shah al-Naqqash known as Zarin Qalam al-Tabrizi.

2. THE TEXT ON THE INTERIOR FACADE OF ENTRANCE

“ Sura XXIV, v. 614”.

3. THE TEXT ON THE UPPER PART OF EXTERIOR FACADE OF THE MUSALLA

“ Sura XXIV, vs. 36-7”. This was constructed by him who needs His forgiveness, the generous King Mirjan ibn Abdallah ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Sultani al-Uljaiti, .

4. THE TEXT ABOVE THE DOORWAY OF THE STAIRCASE

(to the façade right) “ Sura IX, v. 72”.

5. THE TEXT ABOVE THE DOORWAY OF THE STAIRCASE

(to the façade left) “Sura VIII, vs. 2-3”.

6.A TEXT PROBABLY RELATED TO THE IWAN

This text is the integration made by N. Naqshabandi of the fragmentary text on the rear wall of the iwan with the fragments discovered in 1946 inside the well which existed in front of the iwan.

1. In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate... The giver of waqf, Mirjan, says: whoever changes the conditions my endowment or whoever disposes of it in a way other than I have laid down,

, he [will] be cursed in this world and the next (Sura, XVIII, v. 104).

2. (Sura, XVIII, vs. 105-6): I have stipulated that it should not be let to those who are powerful or to soldiers

3. or to those whose evil-doing is feared, and that it be not let for more than one year, and that no further contracts be entered into before the completion of the first contract, and that nothing be set aside from the endowment by order of some mercenaries as has been mentioned, for they are cruel [in the sight] of God.

4. May the blessing and peace of God be upon our Master the illiterate Prophet, Muhammad, and his good and pure family and his companions, and this was written in the months of the year 758 by the weakest worshipper of the Exalted God, Ahmad Shah al-Naqqash al-Tabrizi, may God give him prosperity in this world and the next

7.THE TEXT ON THE MIDDLE DOME BAND OF THE MUSALLA

“Sura, III, vs. 190-4”.

8.TEXT IN A RECTANGULAR PANEL OVER THE MIHRAB

part of “Sura, IV, v. 103”.

9. THE TEXT OVER THE MIHRAB

1. In the name of God, the Merciful, the the Compassionate.

2. Thanks be to God who gives success to the obedient [ones] in the construction of the houses of worship, and inspires the sincere [ones] to construct the columns of the houses of obedience. And He has enhanced the renown

3. of governors in making them establish the buildings due to their generous deeds and He guided those possessing majesty along the paths of goodness and He grants to good persons nobility: “good deeds annul ill deeds” (Sura, XI, v. 114), and He engulfs with His treasure those men and women who give alms.

4. May His blessing be on the Apostle of mercy, Muhammad al-Mustafa, best of all men, and his companions, the lamps of the darkness, and the full moons of the night. As follows: the one who is in need of forgiveness, the generous King Mirjan ibn ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman, may God replace

his evil deeds with good ones, said: I travelled.

5. throughout the earth for a time and I struggled for some years in its length and width, to be the left and to right, embroiled in fearsome places by land and by sea, arriving successively in mortal places of cold and heat, until ever-growing enthusiasm brought me [to do this] and further success advanced me. Consequently I learned that this world is the temporary house, and the next is the permanent house, and I realized that the best way

6. of spending wealth and the best thing to which the ambition of men should be directed is that which is a means toward the doors of His mercy, destiny of any departure, and repository for the Day of accounting and the Questioning. The Prophet (praise and peace be upon him) said: When man dies (all) his works are finished except for three things: continuing almsgiving, and knowledge by which others may benefit, and a good son who will pray for him. And the “continuing almsgiving”

7. is the waqf, so I prepared to work with truthful and pure resolution and with an abundant mind for good. And I began to build this madrasa known as al-Mirjaniya and its attendant buildings which are attached to one another, during the time of the greatest Employer the one who rises to the neighbourhood of God and His Paradises, the one who rests in the highest rooms of His Paradises, Shaikh Hasan Nuyun, may God illuminate his proof. It was completed during the days of the reign.

10. THE TEXT ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE MIHRAB

1. of the light of his pupil and light of his garden, the greatest and the most just Employer, the Raiser of the banners of the Sultanate to the orbits [sky], Placer of the aims of the Kingdom to

2. the north. Puller of the hems of mercy over the Arabs and the Turks, Renewer of the ceremonies of the emblem of the state of Chingiz Khan, Shaikh Shah Uwais

3. may God eternalise his sovereignty, and it was endowed for the jurists and the students of knowledge and exegesis and tradition and fiqh following the two madhhabs of the greater Imam Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i al-Muttalibi

4. and the senior Imam Abi Hanifa Nu'man ibn Thabit al-Kufi, may God be pleased with them, there is endowed for its upkeep as has been explained in the endowment signed by the Judges

5. of Islam and beautified by the witnessing of the greatest princes and ministers: In al-Rayhaniyn forty-four shops and twelve oil-presses in the New Market which is adjacent to

11. THE TEXT OPPOSITE TO THE TEXT 10

1. the school and [the market of] the goldsmiths and twenty-nine other shops and three and a half khans one of which was built by the endower and sites in al-Badriya and sites in al-Badriya fend in al-Amshatiyn
2. three shops find in al-Mashra'a fourteen shops and a new khan built by the endower, may God accept good deeds from him, and in al-Hulba thirteen shops, an oil-press, a khan
3. in which are 52 ground-floor compartments (and in the western part in the quarter of the Palace a house, a mill and a khan known as al-Jawari and in al-Khulailat Khan al-Zawiya, and a mill which is now a part of the right of
4. the aforementioned khan and in al-Harim a paper shop and/in the canal of 'Isa the area of 'Aqarquf, and half of al-Qa'imiya, and Tell Dihim and orchards in al-Mukharramiya, and orchards in the village of al-Turk, ai-Juba and in the Qarah of al-Jamus
5. and in al-Sarat a farm and in al-Qatun the area of Radaman and in Jalawla' half of Khanabad, and orchards in Ba'quba and Buhriz, Khanaqin, Duri and half of Razin Juwi (golden river)

12. THE TEXT OPPOSITE THE MIHRAB

1. and water mills and Ni'matabad and Dawalatabad
2. and orchards in al-Bandanijin and a new orchard in Buhris constructed by the endower, and a canal in Khurra-mabad and all its surrounding lands and farms
3. which are called Hazar Nishta and this is between Hamrin mountain and Khanaqin, as a true, legal, eternal, perpetual and sacred waqf by all (means by which) God makes sacred Mecca and the Bait al-Haram and the pillar (of the Ka'ba) and the Maqam (or Abraham) this will continue
4. as it is until God inherits the earth and whatever is upon it for He is the best of the inheritances. It will not be effacted by the passing of evil events nor obli terated by the changing of dynasties. It will not be rented by powerful, mighty soldiers, and those whose evildoing is feared, but rather it is to be rented by a Muslim whose position over this waqf is guaranteed by the wall.

5. The wall may cause him to be judged by the judges and qadis of Islam. The Muslim must be able to repay what has come to him from the rent of the waqf. As for the wali who does what has been mentioned, his contract is false and his behaviour is totally prohibited. My will is addressed to the judges of every time, to the Judge of the Judges in Baghdad that he must help the wali
6. in respect to this waqf and in the collecting of the rights are due from the waqf to this madrasa and they should look upon them with mercy and compassion, for indeed the just governor is to his subjects as a merciful father to his son. Whoever institute a good rule will receive its bounty and the bounty of whoever follows it until the Day of Judgement, and whoever institutes an evil rule will receive its recompense
7. and the recompense of whoever follows it until the Day of Judgement, and then should not impede the trustee of this waqf and its financial collection and its supervisor from presenting the account, or from furnishing and maintenance, nor interfere with them in these matters by raising any suspicions nor convene a diwan in this madrasa for settling religious cases according to Islamic and Mongol law; for this site (i.e. the madrasa) is the home-land for men of knowledge and a house for good men. Blessedness and blessedness to whoever

13. THE TEXT ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE MIHRAB

1. brings mercy upon himself, woe and woe to whoever is accompanied by curses in his grave, as you treat (people) in your life so will you be dealt with in your judgement after your death.
2. Because recompense is natural, you are judged as you sow, so must you reap, because the world is perfidious and a tempter, for although its duration seems long, it is not long, and although the man of the world acquire (much) he acquires nothing.
3. Whoever changes the conditions of this endowment or disposes of it in a manner contrary to what has been laid down in the waqfiya will be a wrongdoer in the eyes of God, and upon him be the curse of Allah
- 4-5. and the angels and of men combined (Sura, VII, v. 42 and Sura, II, v. 161), Sura, III, v. 162 and Sura, XVIII, vs. 104

6 .The endower has laid down, may God accept from his good deeds and may He not judge him by what his hand grasps of evil actions, that absolutely nothing is rented from the lands of the endowments,

14. THE TEXT OPPOSITE TO THE TEXT 13

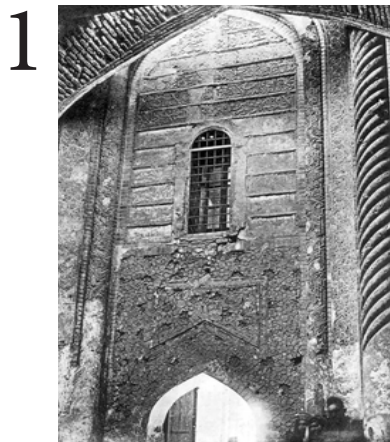
1. consisting of the districts and the orchards and the lands at al-Qarar al-Shamsi. And the same is true of the covered buildings of shops, khans and mills will never be given on the basis of a long lease. Whoever does this his action is illegal

2. and his contract is void. The disposing of this [waqf] in such a suspicious [manner] is prohibited and illegal, who ever does this is a sinner and [deserving] blame from The Greater and the created [people] “And changeth (the will) after he hath heard it the sin thereof is only upon those

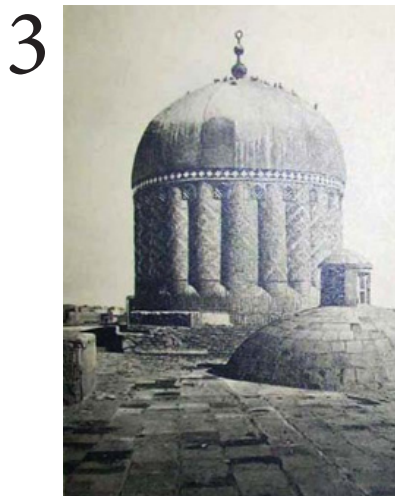
3. who change it. Lo Allah is Hearer, Knower” (Sura II, v. 181). It was written in the months of the year 758. Thanks be to God alone and prayer and peace be upon the Prophet of mercy

4. the inter cessor for His nation and the remover of grief, the illiterate, the ‘Arabi, the Hashimi, the Quraishi, the Meccan, the Medinan, the Master of the Messengers, Messenger of the Lord

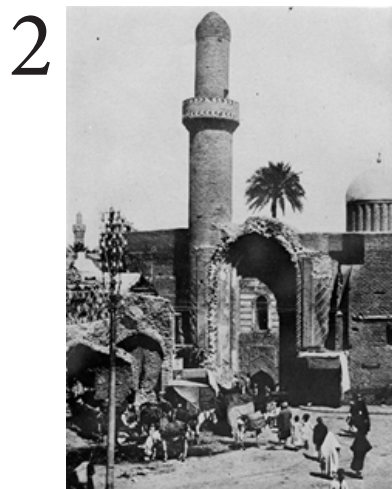
5. of the worlds, the seal of the Prophets, Muhammad the Prophet, and his family and his good, pure, glorious, selected and good companions and many greetings [to them all].



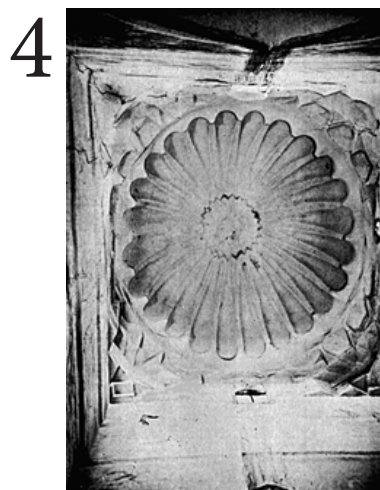
Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the portal behind the al-Ghazalsuq arcade, before
WW1



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the extrados of the grave chamber dome of the
founder Mirjan's madrasa, before 1946



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the facade freed from the suq arcade, after WW1



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the intrados of Mirjan's dome, before 1946

5



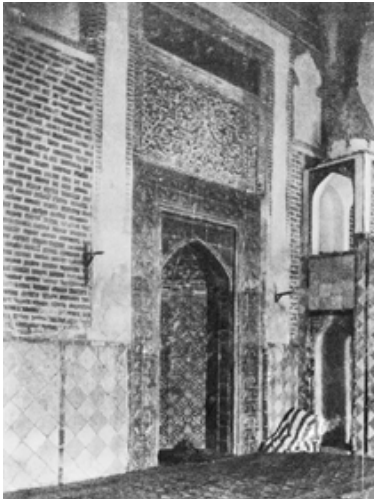
Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the madrasa/Jami Mirjan restored in 928

6



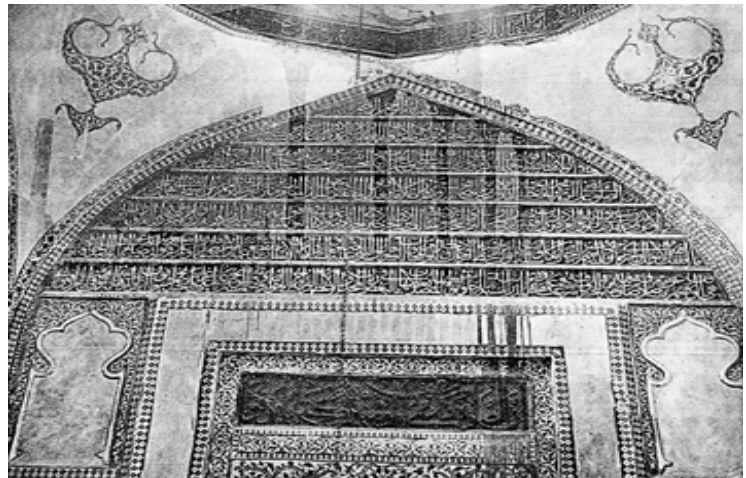
Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the Mirjaniya madrasa (left) on the so called Exchange Square, in 1930s

7



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the qibla wall with mihrab and minbar

8



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
detail of the qibla wall (photo by L. Massignon 1907-8)

9



Baghdad, Bab al-Mu'adham on March 11th, 1917 (WW1), entry of the British army, from the south

10



Baghdad, Bab al-Mu'adham on March 11th, city life on the New Street (later Rashid Street), after 1917

11



Baghdad, Bab al-Mu'adham on March 11th, Bab al-Sharqy, before the demolition in 1925

12



Baghdad, Bab al-Mu'adham on March 11th, the Ottoman seray, from the south, before 1917

13



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the courtyard, from the musalla's portico (foto-
by Herzfeld 1911)

14



Baghdad, Bab al-Mu'adham on March 11th, the
courtyard east corner with the portico of the
musalla

15



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the courtyard north-east side, after 1928

16



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the courtyard north-west side

17



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the courtyard south-east side

18



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the courtyard south-west side

19



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the domes of the musalla, from the north-west

20



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the south-east outer facade on Rashid Street, in
1930s

21



Baghdad, Bab al-Mu'adham on March 11th,
the musalla, after 1928

22



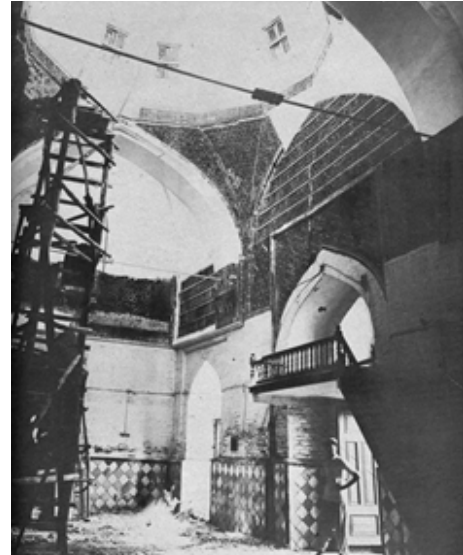
Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
detail of the inscribed panel above the left staircase
door in the facade after the plaster removal in 1945.

23



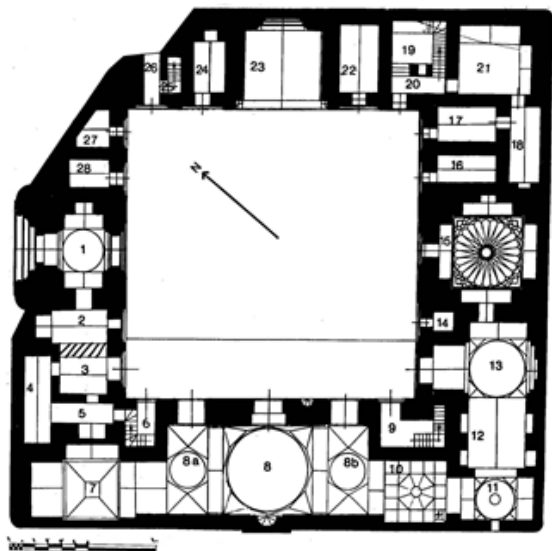
Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the musalla's qibla wall in 1945, discoveries after
the plaster removal

24



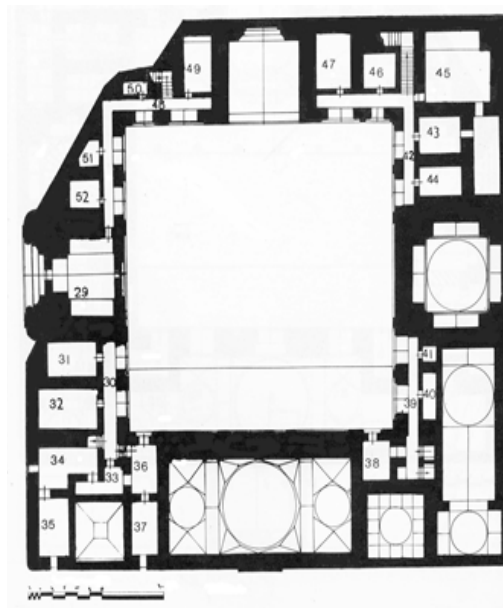
Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the musalla's counterfacade after the plaster
removal in 1945

25



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
plan of the ground floor, in 1945

26



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
plan of the first floor

27



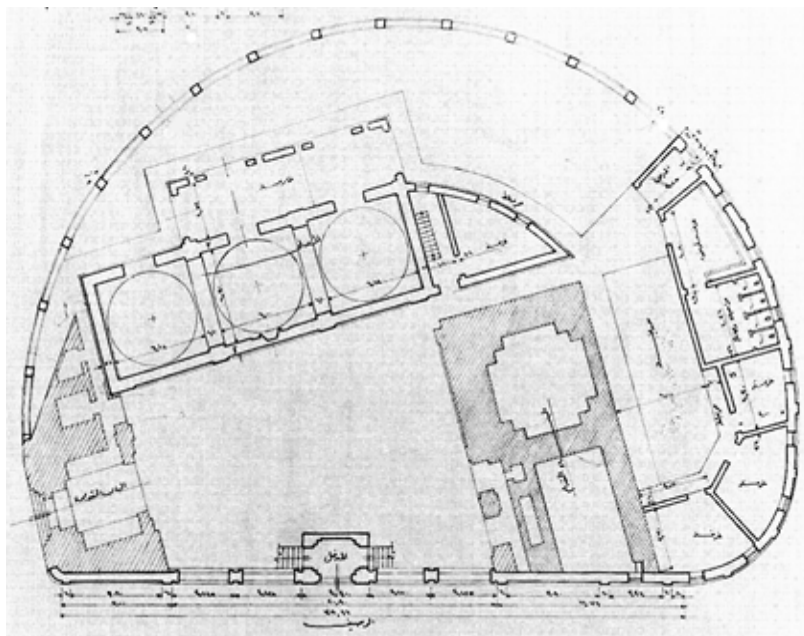
Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
demolition work in 1946, from
the north

28



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
demolition work in 1946, the
musalla room

29



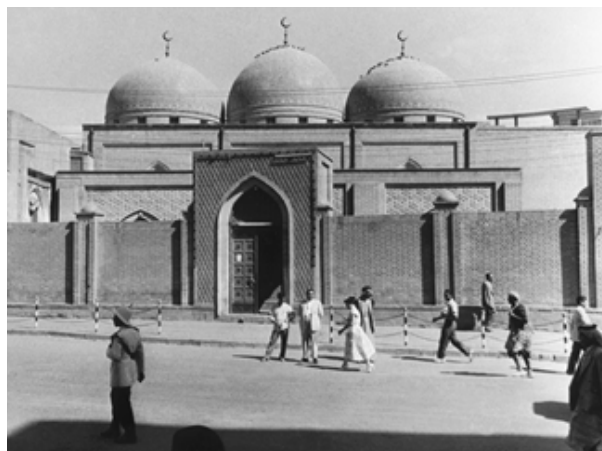
Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the Jami' Mirjan new complex,
provisional plan of the reconstruction
project in 1945

30



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the Jami' Mirjan complex actual
reconstruction in 1960s in the Shorja market

31



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the Jami' Mirjan entered from Rashid Street, in
1960s

32



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the reconstructed Jami' Mirjan, interior of
the mirhabwall, as seen in 2014

33



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the reconstructed Jami' Mirjan, interior of the
musalla room

34



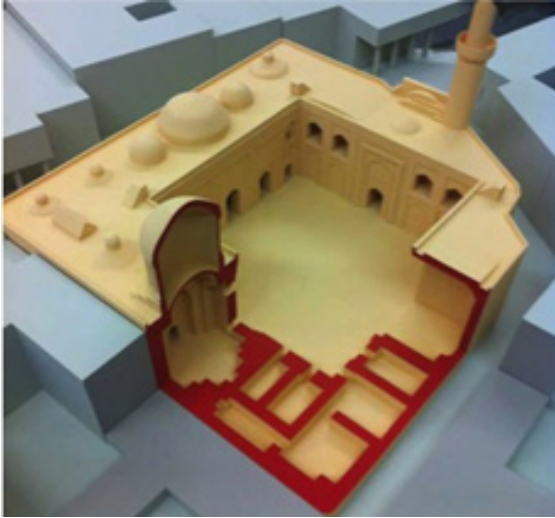
Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the central dome of Jami' Mirjan reshaped
in 1970s, from the east

35



Baghdad, Mirjaniya Madrasa,
the Jami Mirjan (right) in the crowd of
Rashid Street in 1970s

36



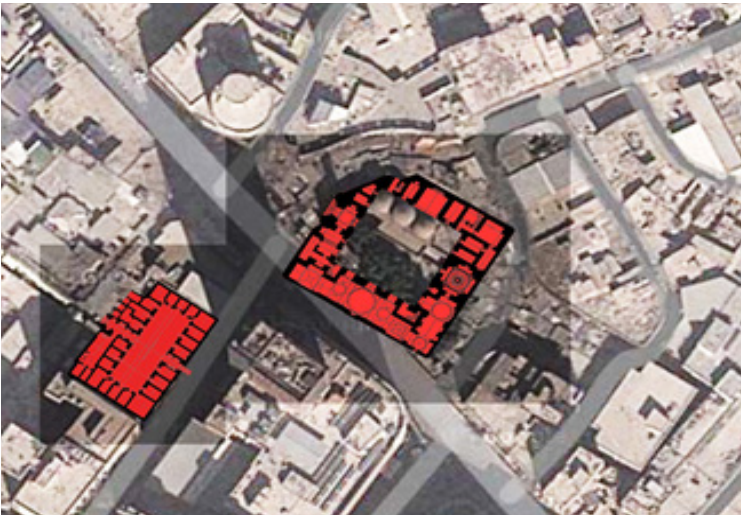
Iraq Museum, scale model of the Mirjaniya madrasa as it was before the demolition in 1945

37



Khan Mirjanin 1936 converted in the Islamic Art Museum

38



Khan Mirjan and Mirjaniya madrasa highlighted and overlapped on a 2000s satellite image

39



40



Iraq Museum, exhibition of reassembled decoration brickwork fragments from Mirjaniya madrasa in 1966

41



42



Iraq Museum store, additional brickwork fragments recovered

43



Iraq Museum

foundation of the new musalla of the Mirjaniya madrasa in the courtyard adjacent to the Islamic gallery

44



Iraq Museum

the new musalla's metal structure

45



Iraq Museum

repositioning of one of the central dome pendentives

46



Iraq Museum

the new portico between the Islamic gallery and the musalla

47



Iraq Museum
repositioning of a brickwork panel on the
musalla's counter-facade

48



Iraq Museum
last restoration adjustment on the musalla facade
panel

49



Iraq Museum
detail of the girih style brickwork decoration

50



Iraq Museum
one of the waqfiya panels in the Jami' Mirjan in Shorja