The *Iḥyāʾ* of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar: Religious Values in the Restoration of Sacred Islamic Monuments

Aliasger Najam Madraswala

School of Architecture
Oxford Brookes University

For my *mother*

ABSTRACT

Motivated by religious belief, a small Muslim community known as the Dawoodi Bohras restored the 11th century Fatimid masjid of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar in Historic Cairo in 1980 to substantial criticism from the international conservation community. In a process which they termed *iḥyāʾ*, or to bring to life, the Bohras claimed to have returned the ruined masjid to its 'original' state by restoring its function as a site of living tradition. The 'Euro-American preservation community', however, insisted that the Bohras had instead created a 'new' building and in doing so, had killed the monument's spirit and sense of 'antiquity and authenticity'. The genesis of this research study lies in the tension between the Bohra restoration and the criticism levelled against it by proponents of modern conservation. Through an analysis of the Dawoodi Bohra community's restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, this study has situated a Muslim community's values towards the architectural conservation of a sacred place of worship within the larger context of Cairo's conservation history and contemporary heritage discourse, giving voice to a particularly underrepresented phenomenon in modern conservation scholarship.

The interpretivist, qualitative methodology employed in this study begins with a series of literature reviews followed by the historical analysis of classical and pre-modern sources which describe a range of conservation activity at al-Anwar over its 1000 year history. These preliminary discussions provide context for a detailed account of the al-Anwar restoration and a critical analysis of the commentary it received in English and Arabic sources. A wide array of data collection methods — including narrative interviews of restoration participants, semi-structured interviews of visitors and behavioral mapping — helped reconstruct the restoration account and analyze its enduring legacy. Themes identified in the aforementioned literature and data sources through a process of inductive thematic analysis are used as a template to analyze the Fatimid Tayyibi textual tradition in order to determine the religious values and concepts embedded within the restoration and its surrounding discourse.

Research findings show that the Bohra community's practice of architectural conservation is clearly informed by religious values. The analysis of the Fatimid Tayyibi textual tradition revealed that conceptions regarding beauty, light, renewal, completion, truth and originality were responsible for very specific decisions on site and coalesced to form a distinct aesthetic philosophy that dictated the restoration approach. The provision of bright interiors, for instance, was related to divine radiance, and the use of premium materials was associated with notions of sacrifice and devotion. Thematic analysis also revealed the multiple authenticities embedded within the philosophy of *iḥyāʾ* and demonstrated how four concepts in particular — respect,

purity, beauty and functionality — impacted the Bohra community's perception of the masjid and their approach to its restoration.

In its treatment of Islamic heritage, modern conservation practice must extend beyond merely accommodating religious agents in the dialogue surrounding the conservation of their heritage, and instead allow their beliefs and values to contribute to the parameters within which restorations operate and the criteria by which their success is measured. This will not occur until a process of acknowledging, identifying and accommodating Islamic values is undertaken. Aside from filling a major gap in the conservation scholarship of Historic Cairo, this study's demonstration of an explicit link between Bohra conservation practices as Muslim lived experience and Islamic values as found in the Fatimid textual tradition contributes to this process and sheds light on the diverse and meaningful ways in which Muslim communities conserve and protect their sacred heritage.

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TRANSLITERATION, TRANSLATION AND DATES

All Arabic vocabulary has been transliterated or translated using the guidelines provided by the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES). Accordingly, the names of proper nouns are spelled without the use of diacritics although some exceptions have been made for place names of masjids for the sake of clarity. Another general exception to the IJMES guidelines is made for the *tāʾ marbūṭa*, which has been rendered with '*ah*' and in certain places with '*at*' to better reflect how certain words are voiced within the Dawoodi Bohra community such as *khidmat* or *daʿwat*.

Translations of verses from the Quran generally follow Yusuf Ali (1997), although words or phrases have been replaced in order to accurately portray the Tayyibi Ismaili reading or interpretation of the verse where necessary.

Where Hijri dates are included, they precede Gregorian dates; any solitary time references are Gregorian and are mostly found when referring to events from the recent past to the present day.

GLOSSARY

Ahl al-Bayt	People of the House. Refers specifically to the Prophet Mohammed, his son-in-law Imam Ali b. Abi Talib, his consort Fatima and their sons the Imams Hasan and Husain. The nuances of the term differ between different denominations of Islam. Within the Bohra community, it is used to refer to other members of the Prophet's family and the Fatimid Imams as well.
barakat	Growth and blessing. Used to connote both intangible and tangible reward and benefit.
bayt al-ṣalāt	The house of prayer. Usually used to refer to the covered areas, dedicated to ritual prayer, of an extensive masjid with an open central courtyard. At al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, it refers to the Qiblah bay (See Appendix I, p. 204).
al-dāʿī al-mutlaq (pl. *duʿāt muṭlaqīn*, also *dāʿī*)	Missionary with absolute authority. Designation and title of the head of the Dawoodi Bohra community. Also known as Syedna.
daʿwat	Literally, a call. In Ismaʿili Tayyibi theology, the term has come to denote the divine mission of guiding humanity in every age led by an Imam descended from the Prophet Mohammed or the *dāʿī* during the Imam's seclusion.
degagement	A clearance of encroachment causing obstruction to a building.
Hadith	The sum corpus of the sayings and actions attributed to the Prophet Mohammed, or a singular saying from the Hadith.
imamate	As believed by the majority of the Shiʿa, the hereditary mantle of leadership of the Muslim ummah held first by Ali b. Abi Talib after the Prophet and subsequently by a single heir of his in every age.
jāmiʿ	A large masjid where Muslims gather for the Friday congregational prayers. Within Ismaʿilil jurisprudence and Bohra parlance, it is often reserved for those masjids either built by a Fatimid Imam, where a Fatimid Imam has led prayer or where the Friday sermon has been read in his name.
Kaʿba	A cube shaped stone building in Mecca at the centre of the Great Masjid towards which Muslims turn to in prayer.
khidmat	Service. It is the term most frequently used within the Dawoodi Bohra community for the various forms of voluntary and paid services rendered by its members towards religious and communal causes.
Lisān al-Daʿwat	Unique to members of the Bohra community, a language having the base structure of Gujarati but defined by a large amount of Arabic, Persian and Urdu vocabulary and written in the Arabic script.

majāz	The raised transept of a masjid roof which runs perpendicular to the qiblah wall (See Appendix I, p. 204).
maqsūrah	An ornamental structure embellished with precious metals and jewels placed around the tombs of saints and revered figures.
mishkāt	Lantern or lamp; name of the al-Anwar lamp which was designed by the Bohra community and installed at al-Anwar. The shape is based on the image of lamp in a relief on the façade of the Fatimid masjid, al-Aqmar.
sabil-kuttab	A charitable building built in the classical and medieval Islamic periods to provide drinking water, especially popular in Egypt. The upper stories usually had spaces dedicated to Quranic instruction.
salat	The term for the five daily ritual prayers mandatory on all adult Muslims.
sunnah	The sum actions of the Prophet usually followed by Muslims as part of the sharia.
Syedna (*Sayyidnā*)	Our leader: title of the head of the Dawoodi Bohra community, and also used for key religious figures in the Tayyibi daʿwat.
ziyāda	Open enclosures built around a masjid, or added at a later date, which serve as additional space for large events or serve as venues for secondary activity associated to masjids.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The 20th century restoration of the Cairene masjid of al-Hakim bi Amr Allah, also known as al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar (al-Anwar), is perhaps the most highly debated in the history of the conservation of Historic Cairo. A small Muslim community known as the Dawoodi Bohras who trace their religious heritage to the Fatimid Imams, the original builders of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, undertook its restoration in the late 1970s. Motivated by religious belief and devotion to the Fatimids, the Dawoodi Bohras sought approvals from the Egyptian Antiquities Organization (EAO) and the assistance of local architects and craftsmen in order to restore the ruined masjid to its 'original' state and function in a process they termed *iḥyāʾ*, literally meaning bringing back to life. Although carried out with Government consent and guidance, officially inaugurated by the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat (1918-1981) and generally praised in Egyptian press, the restoration was met with 'cries of dismay and outrage' and severe criticism from conservationists (Williams 2002:464). Seen as a 'failed' restoration (Myllylä 2008:228), over the years criticism of the al-Anwar restoration has become 'a part of the culture of conservation conversation in Cairo' (Sanders 2008:181). Where the Bohras claim they have revived and brought life to an ancient masjid, modern conservationists argue the Bohras have 'given us instead a new building' (Rodenbeck 1983a:25), which has killed 'its spirit' (Fowler 1995:14) and destroyed its 'sense of antiquity and authenticity' (Lewcock 1985:50). The predominantly Western criticism of the restoration of an Islamic place of worship at the hands of a Muslim community in the heart of the World Heritage Site of Historic Cairo raises intriguing questions regarding the practice of architectural conservation in the Islamic world, the values and principles that might inform such practice and the relevance and applicability of modern conservation guidelines to the restoration of Islamic places of worship.

1.1 Background: The Dawoodi Bohra community and al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar

1.1.1 Heirs to the Fatimids

The Dawoodi Bohras hail from the Shiʿa Ismaʿili Mustaʿli Tayyibi branch of Islam and adhere to the faith of the Fatimid Imam-caliphs who ruled over parts of North Africa and Egypt from the 10th to the 12th centuries (Blank 2001). As descendants of the Prophet Mohammed through his daughter Fatima, after whom they take their name, the Fatimid Imam-caliphs asserted themselves as the true caliphs of the Islamic ummah and oversaw a large network of missionaries whom called to their cause (Daftary 1992, Jiwa 2017). This network and the faith it called to was known as the *daʿwat* and the Imams guided it in tandem with their administration of their physical empire, i.e. the *dawlat* (Daftary 1999).

Like other Shiʿa communities, the belief that the Imam is divinely ordained to interpret the Quran and the Prophet's sunnah, is central to the Dawoodi Bohra community's faith (Abdulhussein 2001). The Bohras maintain that the 21st Fatimid Imam al-Tayyib went into seclusion and that he, through the auspices of the Imams' emissary, the Sulayhid queen Arwa bt. Ahmad (440/1048-532/1138), appointed the *al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq* (*dāʿī*) to look after the affairs of the *daʿwat* in the Imam's stead (Abdulhussein 2001). As the vicegerent of the secluded Imam, the *dāʿī* is entrusted with the Imam's interpretive authority and is believed to be heir to both the Fatimid Imams' spiritual and material legacies. During the period of seclusion, the *dāʿī*'s proclamations and guidance are considered integral for the perpetuity of the Fatimid faith.

In the cities they established across the region, but especially in Cairo, the Fatimids adopted an ambitious programme of construction which reflected their regnal aspirations and the socio-economic needs of their *dawlat* yet also embedded within this architecture their religious philosophy and allusions to their *daʿwat* (Anderson and Pruitt 2017). Much like the Fatimids' use of architecture, since the mid-twentieth century, the 51st *dāʿī* Syedna Taher Saifuddin (r. 1333/1915-1385/1965) and his successors have utilized the patronage of Fatimid monuments, pilgrimage towards them and the reproduction of Fatimid architectural elements in new buildings, to reinforce the community's association to the Fatimid Imams and to strengthen the community's ties to the Fatimid faith (Sanders 1999). The 52nd *dāʿī*, Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (1385/1965-1435/2014), during his tenure of fifty years made prolific use of architecture and construction in what has been termed a period of 'revival of Fatimi architecture' which began with the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar (Abdulhussein 2001:35). The modern history of the Dawoodi Bohra community is inherently linked to this masjid and it continues to feature regularly in the community's discourse and identity formation.

1.1.1.1 The Luminous Masjid: al-Anwar

The construction of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar was initiated by the Imam-Caliph al-ʿAziz bi Allah (r. 365/975-386/996) in Ramaḍān 380/December 990 and brought to completion by his son Imam-Caliph al-Hakim bi Amr Allah (r. 386/996-411/1021) nearly twenty years later in 403/1012 (Al-Maqrizi 1998:277). The masjid was initially constructed outside the city limits of Cairo adjacent to the original city walls. However, when the walls were reconstructed and the city limits expanded in 480/1087 the masjid was effectively brought into the city. Over a thousand years old, al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar is the fourth oldest masjid in Cairo, and the second masjid to be built by the Fatimids in the city after al-Jāmiʿ al-Azhar (b. 361/972). Besides being one of the largest and oldest masjids in Cairo, al-Anwar is an important architectural and religious monument because it is the only existing Fatimid masjid in Cairo which showcases original contributions made by the Fatimids to masjid architecture: a projecting, monumental portal, a tripartite dome

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configuration and raised transept often referred to as the *majāz*[1] (Bloom 2007). Al-Anwar stands distinct among Fatimid masjids due to its two unique minarets, which were constructed of intricately carved dressed stone and were unprecedented in their form, number and inscriptions (Bloom 1983, Flury 1912).

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Figure 1-1 An artistic rendering of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar which approximates the form of the masjid in 393/1003 and its location outside the original boundaries of Cairo when it was founded (© Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah).

A number of authors have suggested that the architectural features and ornamental and epigraphical programmes of al-Anwar and other Fatimid monuments were designed to reflect aspects of the Fatimid faith (Bierman 1998, Tabbaa 2001, Williams 1983). The Fatimid innovations of the raised central aisle and triple domes, for example, help emphasize the qiblah which symbolizes the Imam and his role as the focal point of worship (Petersen 1996, Velji 2016). According to Lezine (1961:286), the monumental projecting portal also alludes to the Imam who is '*le Sauveur du Monde*' — the saviour of the world. Fatimid architecture relates to Fatimid texts as evidenced in the two words used for minaret in historical and jurisprudential texts, *manāra* and

[1] Al-Azhar retains its raised transept and the dome above the mihrab, however, the additional domes were removed due to later alterations. Whether al-Azhar had had a monumental portal like al-Anwar is also difficult to determine due to additions to the front façade by subsequent rulers (Rabbat 1996).

miʾdhana, which offer insight into the distinct architecture of each of al-Anwar's minarets and their placement at opposites ends of the façade.[2]

Although al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar is of historical and architectural importance, it is the masjid's significance as a place of worship and the religious symbolism and meaning attached to its forms and features which ultimately lie at the core of the Dawoodi Bohra community's motivation behind its restoration. Since al-Anwar was constructed by the Fatimid Imams as a place of worship embodying elements of Fatimid belief, the community saw the very act of restoration as a religious act (AlSayyad 2011, Lyster 1988). Like other acts inspired or required by the Islamic faith, the restoration too was guided by an ontological and epistemological framework derived from the teachings and principles of Islam as interpreted by the community. Accordingly, the restoration's approach yielded results which contrasted with those of other restorations carried out in accordance with 'international' conservation guidelines. Before any discussion which attempts to understand this contrast or the values which guided the restoration of al-Anwar, it is important to provide context to this discussion by identifying the origins of modern conservation in European history and philosophy and their implications on contemporary heritage organizations, practitioners and discourse.

1.2 Context: The European origins of modern architectural conservation

That the practice of architectural conservation as prescribed today by international organizations such as UNESCO is a product of the debates of 19th century Europe — particularly the ideas of the founding members of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), John Ruskin (1819-1900) and William Morris (1834-1896) — is a well-documented phenomenon (Glendinning 2013, Jokilehto 1999, Orbaşli 2017). SPAB was formed in 1877 in response to 'stylistic restoration' championed by Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), predominantly in France, and in England by Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) (Stubbs 2009). Stylistic restoration, which entailed reconstruction, the removal of elements not original to the structure and the restoration of the structure to an ideal, often imaginary form, was condemned by Ruskin and Morris's 'conservation movement' (Jokilehto 1999:156). In contrast to ' 'Viollet' restoration ideology', ' 'Ruskin' conservationism', like its ideological heirs today, advocated little to no intervention, absolutely no reconstruction and respect for all historical changes to a building

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[2] The architecture and placement of the northern minaret along the caravan routes is consistent with its use as a *manāra*, i.e. a beacon of light or lighthouse (Behrens-Abouseif 1985). The western minaret closer to the city would have been used more exclusively for the call to prayer which too is supported by its architecture. A balcony along the internal stairwell which opens into the masjid below as well as an oratory at the roof level suggest that the call to prayer was restricted to the roof level in accordance with Fatimid jurisprudence (Behrens-Abouseif 1985, Muhammad 2014).

whether conceived as part of the original monument or not (Glendinning 2003:364). Despite the stark differences in their approaches to conservation, the protagonists and supporters of both the restoration and anti-restoration movements were influenced by interpretations of the dominant European philosophical trends of their time, including romanticism, historicism, Victorian medievalism, nationalism and positivism (Cheshire 2013, Glendinning 2013, Jokilehto 2007, Orbaşli 2017, Stubbs 2009). Both movements also claimed to be products of modernity and scientific reason and proponents of 'authenticity'. These claims would emerge as key characteristics of European colonial legacy and would often lead to conflict with the heritage values of indigenous people across the world (Jokilehto 1999, Weiler 2017a). Yet, despite having been 'first developed and applied almost exclusively in a small area of Western Europe', SPAB's ideas and principles regarding heritage were put in practice across the European colonies, and over the course of the 20th century, they came to dominate 'global agencies, notably UNESCO, where these ideas remained unchallenged until very recently' (Ashworth 2011:3–4).

1.2.1 Dominating heritage discourse

During the 20th century, with the impact of two World Wars and the intense change that occurred to visual landscapes across Europe, '[t]he Ruskinian and nationalist concept of the monument' became 'a *material* testimony to the continuity of the nation' (Glendinning 2003:374, emphasis in original). Due to the rising phenomenon of nationalism, a focused, structured and somewhat unified discourse regarding the conservation of architectural monuments coalesced based upon the principles outlined by SPAB and its sympathizers across Europe (Glendinning 2013, Jokilehto 1999, Silva 2015). This first manifested itself in the writings of individual historians and conservationists, and eventually took the form of international charters, one of the first being authored in Athens in 1931 and a latter, more comprehensive one in Venice in 1964 (Stubbs et al 2011). Due to its pan-European appeal, the Venice Charter quickly became the flag-bearer for what Jokilehto (1999:1) termed as the 'modern conservation movement'[3] and was later used as the key reference for criticism against the al-Anwar restoration. Although a half century later many of its articles are debated, the Venice Charter's influence on subsequent charters, national policies and conservation as practiced today is unquestionable (Goetcheus and Mitchell 2014, Petzet 2004).

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[3] Throughout the text, references to 'modern conservation' and 'heritage discourse' allude to this complex heritage movement with its origins in 19th century Europe. The usage of the descriptor 'Western' is with similar connotations, and is not to be understood as a monolithic understanding of all 'Western' conservation activity.

Over time, the modern conservation movement and affiliated fields of heritage study through international organizations such as UNESCO and ICOMOS4 instituted what Smith (2006:4) terms as an 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' (AHD) that worked 'to naturalize a range of assumptions about the nature and meaning of heritage' and primarily emphasized 'things'. The 'intertextuality of heritage conventions and charters creates a body of self-referential authoritative discourse on heritage management' marginalizing traditional values and heritage perceptions (Silva 2015:2). This discourse also pits expert, professional knowledge against local values and customs laying bare the elitism prevalent in heritage management (Smith 2006).

The discourse that dominates modern architectural conservation, like other heritage fields, is born out of Western thought and *Weltanschauung* (Wells et al 2018). Principles such as minimum intervention, the practice of reversibility and emphasis on material fabric are based upon Western conceptions of truth and authenticity (Jokilehto 2007, Silva 2015). Contemporary conservation discourse sees speculative reconstruction, change in original material fabric and permanent additions — conservation practices common to a number of non-Western communities (and some Western) — as falsifications (Jones and Leech 2015). A monument's authenticity is inherently linked in European perception with the originality of its material fabric and the outward, tangible signs of age which Alois Riegel (1858-1905) (1903) identified as age-value (Viñas 2005). According to Silva (2015:2), '[t]hree principal themes in current heritage doctrine – universality, significance, and material originality of heritage – clearly represent the occidental thought that primarily frames the contemporary conception of heritage'. Citing several authors, Silva (2015) suggests that the notion that a monument is universal to all mankind originates in Greco-Roman thought.

> Imposing a universal claim upon local heritage, particularly by an international body founded by Western powers and based upon Western values, disregards humanity's cultural differences, and thus has imperialist connotations (Silva 2015:4).

The claim that a monument's significance is intrinsic to itself and immutable is rooted in positivism while an emphasis on its material fabric to determine its authenticity disregards experiential aspects of non-Western cultures (Silva 2015).

1.2.2 Values-based approaches

Growing consensus within conservation scholarship from the 1980s onwards that conservation discourse fails to accommodate non-Western values and the long-standing axiom that the approach to each monument's conservation must be considered on an individual-basis has led to

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4 For more on the Eurocentric nature of UNESCO, specifically the World Heritge List, see Aygen Z (2013) *International Heritage and Historic Building Conservation*. Routledge.

the rise of values-based approaches (Orbaşli 2017, Poulios 2010). However, the integration of non-Western values into the processes of conservation remains problematic since the 'universal' criteria by which values are judged or applied remove these values from their own cultural contexts (De la Torre 2013). The overarching apparatus through which heritage sites, monuments and the values that are attached to them are assessed is still based upon European ideological foundations. The accommodation of religious values in particular remains problematic (Smith 2006). Despite the movement's genesis in the care and restoration of religious monuments (Glendinning 2013), modern conservation continues to disregard its historical origins and minimize religious values with its persistent 'appeal to science as the arbiter' between religion and secularization (Rico 2019:159).

Scholarly consensus on the European origins of modern conservation is well-established, and with this consensus, more and more conservationists are questioning the universal applicability and relevance of principles laid down for monuments in 'nineteenth century post-Enlightenment' Europe to mankind's global heritage 'in the twenty-first century' (Ferro 1985, Orbaşli 2017:158, Stovel 1985). Even within Europe, practices and approaches that have historically been criticized are finding greater acceptance within public discourse showing the continued disconnect between professional practice and popular perception. Viollet-le-duc's stylistic restoration of Notre Dame, for instance, is today the prime example being cited for more innovative restoration proposals for the recently-damaged cathedral (Ravenscroft 2019). Conservation continues to be a context-specific and highly individualized process where each site is unique. A leading figure in German conservation, Kiesow (in Weiler 2017b:293) confessed that he had 'no watertight principles' in matters of authenticity: '[f]or me every architectural monument is individual'. Despite generations of scholarly research into conservation, one might argue that there is less clarity today than ever before as to how monuments of value should be conserved or how its values should be determined. In the epilogue to his book, Glendinning (2013:450) rightly questions whether the conservation movement's 'highly defined, assertive character' is 'beginning to blur and fade back into the 'general'?' It is within the context of this complex history of conservation — with its origins in European history and philosophy, its colonial legacy and its ever-changing discourse — that the restoration of al-Anwar and its subsequent reception and criticism should be understood.

1.3 Current landscape of scholarship

As far back as 1981, Antoniou (1981:5) questioned the relevance and appropriateness of the 'Western approach employed by most architects and planners in Islamic countries… to the Islamic-city structure and to the existing cultural and social character of its inhabitants'. The

perceived peculiarities and 'problems of architectural conservation in Islamic countries' have long been heralded as a reason to view, analyze and address conservation efforts in these countries in a different way than its counterparts in the West (Lewcock 1980:1). Yet, despite this acknowledgement of difference, a review of literature shows that heritage discourse pertaining to the Islamic world, largely due to modern conservation's failure to embrace Islam as a living tradition and recognize that it has its own episteme and values, continues to remain problematic in four discernible ways:

1) Through generalizations and essentialist assumptions, Islam is treated as a monolith devoid of diversity.

2) The systems of appraisal and modes of governance of modern conservation continue to marginalize religious values, including those of Islam.

3) Despite regular conferences and documentation, international and regional organizations have yet to formulate policies which can critically engage, respect and sustain prevalent conservation practices influenced by Islamic values.

4) Scholarship which looks to Islam's textual tradition to identify Islamic values in architectural conservation is still in its infancy.

The following sections are organized according to these four problems and cite references to relevant works so as to help conceptualize the current landscape of research into Islamic values in architectural conservation.

1.3.1 The 'Islam' in Islamic heritage

The usage of the term 'Islamic' in conservation discourse betrays a 'monolithic characterization of Islam' which sees Islam as a generic, secular entity or a geographic area dominated by Muslim populations5 rather than a religious, spiritual tradition (Rico 2019:159). The Lahore Principles, a document specifically prepared to govern the conservation of Islamic architectural heritage, exemplifies this portrayal of Islam. The document coincides almost entirely with the Venice Charter since the Charter was 'found to be generally applicable to the Islamic world' (UNESCO 1983:6). The adaptation of the Venice Charter is based largely on the perceived homogeneity of social and political factors throughout all regions of the 'Islamic world'. In places where the Lahore Principles aim to demonstrate distinction from the Venice Charter, vague phrases such as 'in the Islamic context' are employed rather than citing specific elements from within the Islamic tradition that may explain this distinction (UNESCO 1983:14). The only references to religious values or traditions in a document produced specifically for the conservation of architectural

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5 The Lahore Principles has explained Islamic countries as 'countries having a substantial Muslim population' (UNESCO 1983:6).

heritage inspired by Islam are two unattributed quotes: the 'famous Islamic saying [*sic*] 'When the old things are there, learn from the old things' and 'God is beautiful and loves beauty'' (UNESCO 1983:21).

In line with the larger discipline of Islamic studies, discussions surrounding conservation of Islamic monuments are beset with generalizations which purport to create an essentialized version of Islam and concepts related to it (Berg 2012, Bowen 1992). Much like Abu-Lughod's (1987:160) criticism of early scholarly definitions of the 'Islamic city' which were abstracted from place-specific, often tentative observations, conceptions regarding the Islamic built environment within the 'Islamic city' are also often determined by similarly tenuous, over-simplified assertions. Generalizations are a component of the overall process of medievalization which perceives and attempts to conform Islamic heritage into an homogenous group of similarly looking buildings (AlSayyad et al 2005). The inaccuracy of such generalizations are laid bare in increasing scholarship regarding Islam's multi-ethnic, multicultural, global diversity (Ahmed 2016). Yet a similar realization has yet to occur within discussions regarding conservation of Islamic buildings, which explains Rico's (2019:153) emphasis on the role heritage studies have in considering 'the ethical representations and epistemological constructions of "Islam" as a thematic keyword in preservation practices'.

According to Aksoy (2017:68), due to the 'secular viewpoint' adopted in these fields, the 'disciplinary frameworks' of Islamic archaeology and Islamic architecture generally avoid questions about the origins and scope of Islam. Therefore, concepts and terms described as 'Islamic' in conservation discourse rarely have anything to do with religious values and more often than not merely indicate the described objects presence within Muslim majority countries. 'Islamic' is also used interchangeably with other adjectives such as 'Arab' or 'Mediterranean' implying the mutual inclusivity of these terms (Balbo 2012). Devoid of religious connotations which often lie at the heart of local practices, the secularization of 'Islamic' enables heritage experts to advertise the Islamicness of official guidelines such as the Lahore Principles without engaging religious praxis and principles in a substantial or meaningful manner.

1.3.1.1 Defining Islam

Since this study argues that the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar presents an opportunity to understand concepts and values related to architectural conservation in Islam, it is important to convey how Islam is being understood. The exercise of defining 'Islam' is one fraught with difficulties: is Islam strictly restricted to the canonical and legal traditions which are derived directly from the Quran and Sunna as many Islamists and modern academics argue, or is it the sum of all thoughts and practices of Muslims across the world? (Ahmed 2016) In trying to avoid

what Asad (2009:20) has referred to as either too essentialist or too nominalist, this study has adopted his description of Islam as 'a discursive tradition that includes and relates itself to the founding texts of the Qur'an and the Hadith'. Although Asad's proposition has been criticized for its textual emphasis, such an understanding is appropriate for this study which specifically endeavours to understand a Muslim community's conservation practices with reference to its textual tradition (Hirji 2010). However, in referencing the Quran and Hadith, this study is cognizant that Muslims see and interpret these sources in myriad ways and 'founding texts' differ between Sunni and Shiʿa schools. Thus, the conception of Islam and the use of the term Islamic here are to be understood as representing processes of '*meaning-making* or *hermeneutical engagement*' (emphasis in original, Andani 2017:114). References to Islamic values are therefore values which Muslims identify and determine through their interpretation of the discursive sources mentioned above. As Ismaʿilis, the Bohra community interprets Islam as a duality of exoteric and esoteric concepts, an interpretation which has been adopted for the purposes of this study as well, and one that also compliments the interpretive nature of the research design.

1.3.2 The present role of Islamic values in conservation

Cantacuzino (1990:24, emphasis not in original) bemoans that inability of states to enforce heritage policies citing the hypothetical example of 'a local mullah who decides to extend his mosque' and cannot be stopped or 'made to pull down the *offending* part'. The portrayal and perception of the 'local mullah' is indicative of how religious agents or those operating from within a religious ontological framework are dismissed as stakeholders in the processes of conservation. In recent times, however, there are a growing number of studies which encourage greater inclusion of disenfranchised values, which commonly have religious origins. Rowney (2004) highlights the inadequacy of Eurocentric charters in respecting local values across heritages sites in Syria and argues that the cultural identity of a society (in this case influenced by Islam), including its proclivity towards modifying heritage, must be respected and included in the heritage discourse and process. Defending practices like those of Cantacuzino's (1990:24) hypothetical 'local mullah', Khan (2011:23, 2015) suggests that the international heritage community should 'recognise the need for change and adaptive reuse of some structures' which are prompted by Islamic values that often prioritize function over historicity.

Rudolff (2003, 2006) has contributed significantly towards showing the failure of heritage discourse in recognizing and accommodating Islamic religious values. In her preliminary work, Rudolff (2003) questions the universality of notions of authenticity as defined in modern conservation, especially in the context of sacred Muslim spaces. In her attempt to offer a solution, she argues against framing heritage discussions in the tangible-intangible dichotomy and instead proposes topological analysis 'which negates all existing heritage and value typologies' (Rudolff

2006:232). Her detailed ethnographic work in Cairo and Damascus provides interesting and valuable insight into visitor perceptions and usage of places of worship and clearly demonstrates the role of religious values in Islamic heritage consumption. However, her mode of inquiry and the system of topological analysis which she proposes should replace current Western models of heritage valuation are also couched in the Western philosophical tradition[6].

Alternatively, Rico (2019:149, 160) advocates 'the study of Islam and heritage in its own terms' highlighting that the bulk of research into conservation in the Islamic world is 'either resistance or acquiescence to Western thought'. In recent years, Rico (2013, 2017a, b) has offered a comprehensive summary of current scholarship of architectural conservation in Muslim contexts and has demonstrated its complex origins in orientalism and colonialism and the resulting systemic bias of contemporary, secular heritage discourse against Islamic religious values. She also insists that academic debates[7] must move beyond their current fixation with 'destruction', iconoclasm and the representation of the Muslim world as a site of chronic conflict and explore constructive, ethical avenues to research Muslim conservation practices (Rico 2017a, 2019).

1.3.3 Policy formation

Over the years, in response to perceived threats against Islamic heritage and as a result of the policies and pressure brought forth through the World Heritage mechanism, multiple policy documents and declarations have been drafted and endorsed which aim to address 'the special problems and needs of the Muslim World' and provide appropriate conservation guidance (Golfomitsou and Rico 2014, Rodenbeck 1995:78). Foremost among them, as discussed above, is the addendum to the Venice Charter known as the Lahore Principles. According to Rodenbeck (1995:78), its philosophy is accepted as a universal basis for conservation 'not only among professional restorers…but among people whose interests are less specialized' as well. Despite such claims to universal acceptance, however, the Lahore Principles, and other declarations in subsequent years, seem to have had little impact on the practice of conservation in the Muslim world (Sedky 2009). Conferences and workshops are regularly conducted by organizations such as UNESCO, The Aga Khan Trust for Culture as well as national governments which culminate

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[6] Rudolff (2006) proposes a phenomenological and semiotic method inspired largely by German philosopher Martin Heidegger.

[7] Although most of this literature originates in Western scholarship, there are a few state-sponsored documents as well. See for example the Doha Statement (UNESCO 2005) and the Sharjah Statement (ICCROM-ATHAR 2014). Criticism of extremist interpretations which justify cultural destruction is also seen at the individual scholar level, particularly in those hailing from an Islamic background. Gharib (2017:4) asserts that it is the role of researchers and academics 'to confront these acts of destructions', as he claims to have done, with 'religious interpretations and proofs to support the concept of preservation of cultural heritage'.

with such declarations or official policies (Rudolff 2003). The Cairo Declaration of 2002, for instance, 'merely compiles some of the issues and principles from the international charters' (Sedky 2009:44), and does not seem to be 'easily applicable to sacred heritage' (Rudolff 2003:62). Recent years has also seen the establishment of professional networks and organizations dedicated to heritage conservation in the region such as ICCROM-ATHAR. In combination with national ministries of culture, these organizations have produced a wide array of English and Arabic material pertaining to heritage and preservation yet they are 'only partially useful for a critical engagement with heritage construction' and conservation discourse (Golfomitsou and Rico 2014, Rico 2017a).

1.3.4 Textual studies

Using references to the Quran and Sunna, a number of scholars such as Hodjat (1995), Touba (1997), Gharib (2017) and Mahdy (2019) have attempted to establish the Islamic tradition's emphasis on and promotion of heritage preservation. Yet studies which look to identify precise concepts regarding architectural conservation based upon the Quran and related Islamic sciences and philosophy are generally lacking. Since classical Islamic sources do not offer formalized architecture principles related to design, construction or conservation in the modern sense, principles regarding the conservation of Islamic built heritage must be derived from textual sources and historical examples. Ariffin (2005:xv) follows just such an historical model using amendments and alterations to the Prophet Mohammed's masjid in Medina combined with textual references to identify a 'basis for architectural conservation in Islam'. Ariffin (2005:11, 13) cites examples of modern conservation terminology in the Quran in order to provide '[t]he Islamic definition' for conservation (and related terms) and implies that modern conservation began 'almost simultaneously with the birth of Islamic civilization'. This process resembles what Rico (2019:152) describes as the alignment of 'heritage preservation principles' 'with classical Islamic history and thought'. Ariffin's primary basis for his Islamic theory of architectural conservation, however, are the historical changes to the masjid all of which he sees as legitimate components of this theory. Catering to such a wide gamut of activity spanning 14 centuries complicates his argument resulting in a lack of overall coherence. His overall strategy in combining textual and historical references, however, is similar to the methods adopted for this study.

Amīr Jaʿfar us Sadiq ʿImaduddin (also known as Saifuddin) relies heavily on textual sources in his discussions surrounding the architecture and restorations of al-Jāmiʿ al-Aqmar[8] and the Juyūshī Mash'had[9] by the Bohra community. Citing references to the Quran, Hadith as well as various Fatimid texts, Amīr ʿImaduddin argues that the ultimate purpose of both restorations which followed the al-Anwar example was functional authenticity: for the masjid to resume its function as a place 'of worship' and to be 'replete with worshippers' (Saifuddin 2000:91, 2002:130). In his discussions regarding al-Aqmar, through references to *iḥyāʾ*, he links the masjid restoration with a larger revival of Fatimid faith. With regards to al-Juyūshī, he argues that the restoration was carried out according to the original builder al-Sayyid Badr al-Jamali's (d. 487/1094) own 'instructions' pertaining to restoration which he derives from inscriptions at sites which Badr al-Jamali restored (Saifuddin 2002:129). Through his textual and historical references, Amīr ʿImaduddin argues the presence of a distinct philosophy of restoration of places of worship, especially within the Fatimid tradition, which he believes was adopted by the Bohra community. Sanders (in Saifuddin 2002:13) suggests that Amīr ʿImaduddin's 'careful documentation and discussion' offer researchers the 'rare opportunity' 'to hear directly the authoritative voice of a community member for whom Fatimid buildings are neither mere monuments nor tourist sites, but rather centres of a living tradition'.

1.4 Significance of this research

The study of the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar provides an opportunity to fill gaps in current conservation scholarship and approach research into Islamic values in a way that harmonizes with the subject. Firstly, despite the persistent criticism and commentary on the restoration of al-Anwar in Cairo in conservation literature, there is no detailed, published academic study on the matter. Secondly, the role of Islamic values in determining and influencing approaches to the architectural conservation of Muslim places of worship remains insufficiently explored. A final lacuna in current discussions are the specific implications of any such Islamic values on ruined or defunct

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[8] The Masjid of al-Aqmar was built under the instructions of the 20th Fatimid Imam-Caliph al-Amir bi Ahkam Allah (r. 495/1101-524/1130) in 519/1125. Although considerably smaller in size than al-Azhar and al-Anwar, al-Aqmar shares many of the features of the Fatimid masjids that came before yet also presents innovations in inscriptions and design, particularly in its street orientation and number of domes (Saifuddin 2000).

[9] The Juyūshī masjid, or Mash'had as it is also known, was built under the instructions of the 18th Fatimid Imam-Caliph al-Mustansir bi Allah (r. 427/1036-487/1094) by his vizier al-Sayyid Badr al-Jamali in 478/1085 on top of the Muqaṭṭam mountain (Saifuddin 2002). Al-Aqmar and al-Juyūshī were both restored by the Dawoodi Bohra community in the 1990s and received similar criticism to their restoration of al-Anwar (Simonowitz 2004).

places of worship which in the case of al-Anwar was a major factor in determining the restoration's approach.

1.4.1 <u>Detailed study of the al-Anwar Restoration</u>

Due to the relative paucity of Fatimid buildings in comparison to the hundreds of Mamluk and Ottoman structures in Cairo, conservationists at times have suggested prioritizing Fatimid momuments for conservation over those from other periods (Ouf 1995). When the restoration of a monument of such stature, historic importance and rarity is repeatedly condemned in architectural conservation scholarship for being historically unfounded and inauthentic, the absence of a comprehensive study of the process of this restoration seems striking. Rabbat (2000), Williams (2001, 2002) and Rodenbeck (1983b) are among those that have stated that the restoration work was carried out without sufficient technical understanding, research, documentation or care for historical authenticity. '[C]riticism of Bohra restoration methods and results has become a part of the culture of conservation conversation in Cairo', yet '[t]here has been no formal, sustained, and detailed critique of the Bohra project in writing' (Sanders 2008:124).

This study has compiled commentary and criticism from a wide range of English and Arabic sources to provide a comprehensive picture of the restoration's reception amongst its various stakeholders and supplemented this discussion with a detailed account of how the restoration was executed. A Muslim community's controversial, religiously-motivated restoration carried out amidst an environment in Cairo dominated by foreign teams motivated by 'universal value', merits attention solely for this contrast but more importantly since it provides the opportunity to study contemporary Muslim heritage conservation practices as 'a lived practical experience' (Rico 2019:151). Such studies are in short supply.

The reliance upon predominantly Shiʿa Ismaʿili references and authorities in this study suggests that what may be portrayed as an 'Islamic value' in the conservation of a Muslim place of worship may not be considered so by all Muslims, the majority of whom are Sunni. The purpose of the study is not to identify generalizable maxims which may apply to all Islamic sites across the world; such an intent would be a disservice to the larger field of Islamic heritage by perpetuating the notion of a single, unified Islam. However, what this study does maintain is that the values discussed here inasmuch as they are shown to represent interpretations of the Quran, Sunnah and related foundational texts from the Bohra perspective, are indeed 'Islamic' and contribute to better understanding the nexus between Muslim perception, the built environment and religious texts. There remains a tendency in Islamic scholarship 'to look at issues in the Islamic world from the majority Sunni perspective' (Takim 2009:141). This study confronts this issue of Sunni Islam as

'the normative tradition' and demonstrates that its primary objective is not to pass 'theological judgement', but to show 'local variation' (Bille 2010:178, Schubel 1993:ix). Adopting Merchant's (2016:100) argument for including minority religious understandings in school curricula, this study argues that 'liminal voices of minority communities of interpretation' are instrumental in portraying the complexity of Islam. More so than their generalizability, it is ultimately the *uniqueness and distinction* of the Islamic values presented in this study, which depict 'the diverse heritage approaches observed in the broader Muslim world' (Rico and Lababidi 2017:97). The restoration of al-Anwar and the Islamic values which motivated it highlight the need for contemporary heritage discourse to acknowledge and embrace the complexity of the Islamic tradition and adopt systems which encourage patrons of sacred sites to prioritize conservation approaches in accordance with the values they hold dear.

1.4.2 Islamic values in architectural conservation

Existing scholarship has not sufficiently discussed whether Islam — as it manifests itself in the actions and textual interpretations of Muslim communities over time and across the Muslim world — mandates a particular approach to the conservation of its sacred heritage[10]. Using the examples of the al-Anwar restoration and the Bohra community, this study shows that the philosophical and theological tenets of Islam engender certain values towards sacred built heritage. These Islamic heritage values determine Muslim perception of places of worship, and subsequently, influence the manner in which these places are built, maintained and restored. Critical of the 'fixed trajectory' of modern conservation whereby non-Western conservation practices are examined 'against the normativeness of Eurocentric ones', Rico (2019:60) suggests

> an alternative viewpoint where heritage preservation practices in Muslim contexts are not simply mobilizing aspects of Islam as a fixed value system or a reference point in space and time that provides a context in which heritage values fail or succeed. Instead, I propose an approach that constructs and prioritizes specific heritage values, drawing from context-specific research into heritage preservation practices in situ.

By identifying underpinning philosophical foundations, the study goes beyond common comparisons and looks to understand how theoretical concepts translate into physical practices. Thus, the significance of the research presented here lies not only in its identification of Islamic

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[10] The Islamic institute of waqf is not part of the current research scope, although it will be dealt with briefly in the context of Cairo in Chapter 4. For more on the waqf and its implications on the conservation of religious heritage see volume by Ghazaleh P (2011) *Held in Trust: Waqf in the Islamic World*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, and doctoral thesis by El-Habashi A (2001) *Athar to Monuments: The Intervention of the Comité de Conservation Des Monuments de L'art Arabe*. University of Pennsylvania.

values pertaining to architectural conservation, but also in the relationship it has shown to exist between these values and conservation practices, and the methodology employed to do so.

1.4.3 A place of worship no longer

Al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar was restored under a unique set of circumstances. When first built, and over centuries, it functioned as a masjid: 'a symbol of Islam and the most important building type in the Islamic world' (Hakim 2008:46). Over time, however, al-Anwar reached a complete state of dilapidation and ruin and ceased functioning as a masjid. In this state, it was adopted for ulterior uses and in some ways lost its identity as a masjid altogether. This paradoxical condition was the primary motivation behind the Bohra restoration and categorically distinguished al-Anwar from other conservation projects. Discussions into the conservation of places of worship as a distinct category of Islamic heritage are lacking and conversations regarding the implications for the restoration of a ruined, defunct masjid are missing altogether. These two unique qualities helped determine the parameters for this study and are addressed in a more comprehensive manner than has been to date.

Focusing specifically on the restoration of a masjid aligns with the objectives of this study in three additional ways. Masjids[11] are sites of living tradition making them ideal venues to explore religious values. As sacred sites of consistent importance, they are more often than not the foci of artistic and architectural innovation and subsequently subjected to international heritage interest and intervention. As the example of al-Anwar illustrates, they are ideal venues for the confrontation of Western and non-Western heritage assumptions and values. Finally, as pointed out above, modern conservation as a distinct movement originates in the restorations of religious places of worship in Western Europe. Therefore, the debates and discussions seem to crystalize more clearly in the context of places of worship.

1.5 Research questions and thesis structure

The genesis of this research study lies in the intrigue raised by the conflicting reception and portrayal of the al-Anwar restoration: near total condemnation by the international conservation community and inversely equal praise by the Bohras. How could one restoration elicit such opposing sentiment? This intrigue brought forth a series of more specific questions:

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[11] The diversity within the Islamic tradition is also manifest in the variety of spaces which accommodate Muslim worship and rituals (Mawani 2019). Although this study uses the phrase 'place of worship' as a reference to the masjid, it is cognizant of this variety and hopeful that the values discussed here may resonate across these different forms.

- what was the precise restoration approach the Bohras adopted and had it been influenced, as they claimed, by distinct Islamic values towards sacred built heritage,
- what exactly did the conservation community disapprove of in this approach and why, and
- did these Islamic values relate to larger Islamic philosophical and theological concepts?

1.5.1 Research aim

The research aim of this study is to detail the Dawoodi Bohra community's restoration of the 11th century Cairene masjid of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, identify the motives and principles which informed their decisions and restoration approach, and examine any underlying philosophical concepts derived from the Ismaʿili Tayyibi tradition of Islam in order to better situate and accommodate Islamic values and practices in modern conservation discourse.

1.5.2 Research objectives

The following research questions help identify the five objectives that support the study's overall research aim mentioned above:

1. Does Islam have a history of conservation of places of worship and if so to what extent do these conservation practices feature in modern conservation discourse and the treatment of Muslim heritage?

Objective One: To explore the history of masjid restoration in Cairo through the example of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar and the analysis of medieval Fatimid inscriptions and determine the relevance of historical Islamic conservation practices to pre-modern and modern architectural conservation of Cairene Islamic built heritage.

2. How was the al-Anwar restoration carried out?

Objective Two: To provide an accurate account of the al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar restoration based upon primary sources so as to identify the decisions that were made and the factors that influenced them.

3. How were the restoration and its results perceived?

Objective Three: To examine the perception and impact of the restoration on various stakeholders including Egyptian government agencies, the media, the Dawoodi Bohra community, international conservationists and present-day visitors.

4. Why was the masjid restored and how did these motives impact the approach to the restoration?

Objective Four: To determine the motivation behind the restoration and the principles that guided it.

5. Which concepts within the Islamic tradition influence Muslim perception of sacred places of worship and how do they determine how these places are conserved?

Objective Five: To identify the underlying Islamic philosophical and theological concepts which inform values towards Muslim places of worship through an analysis of the al-Anwar restoration and consider the implications of these values and concepts on modern architectural conservation as practiced today.

1.5.3 Thesis structure

After this introductory chapter which outlines the study and lists its aims and objectives, a discussion and rationale for the study's interpretive methodology will follow in Chapter 2. The overall thesis structure moves from the general to the specific, focusing on physical, historical acts in the earlier chapters and then transitioning after the account of the al-Anwar restoration in Chapter 5 to more theoretical, abstract concepts in the final chapters. Although the objectives feature in the thesis sequentially, they are often spread across multiple chapters since they are connected to multiple time periods which have been dealt with in separate chapters. Table 1-1 illustrates how the different objectives of the research are addressed throughout the ten chapters.

		Objectives				
		1 Medieval masjid restoration & modern conservation in Cairo	2 Account of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar restoration	3 Impact of the restoration on stakeholders	4 Restoration motives & guiding principles	5 Philosophical & theological moorings of Islamic heritage values
Chapters	1- Introduction	*				
	2 – Methodology					
	3 – *ʿImārah* & masjid restoration in medieval Egypt	*			*	*
	4 – Conservation of Islamic heritage in pre-modern Egypt	*				
	5 – Perception of restoration in modern scholarship	*	*	*		
	6 – Motives, principles & account restoration		*	*	*	*
	7 – Legacy of restoration	*		*		

8 – Values and philosophies behind restoration					*
9 – Discussions					*
10 – Conclusion					

Table 1-1 Categorization of research objectives according to thesis chapters.

In order to provide context to the restoration of al-Anwar, Chapters 3 and 4 look to the medieval, pre-modern and modern history of conservation in Egypt and showcase historical practices of masjid conservation and their eventual decline with the advent of European conservation to Egypt. The concept of ʿimārah as practiced and philosophized in medieval Cairo is reviewed in Chapter 3 with the help of an analysis of Fatimid inscriptions from the 5th/11th century and an overview of past restorations and physical interventions carried out at al-Anwar since its completion in 403/1012 to the turn of 13th/19th century. Together, Chapter 3 highlights continuity at al-Anwar, both in terms of physical restoration activity as well as a distinct set of Islamic values towards the conservation of sacred heritage understood as ʿimārah. Marked by Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1213/1798, Chapter 4 explores the impact of the introduction of European concepts of conservation on Cairo's Islamic heritage, specifically at al-Anwar which underwent radical physical and conceptual transformation during this pre-modern period.

The compilation and analysis of commentary and criticism regarding the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar in Chapter 5 carries on developing themes introduced in earlier chapters which showcase the variation in the perception of al-Anwar. Chapter 6 analyses the motives and principles of the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar followed by a detailed account of the restoration with the help of interviews and original documents presented both as a chronological narrative as well as a thematic analysis. In Chapter 7, the legacy of the restoration in the Bohra community is explored along with its perception by present-day site visitors as well as its impact on the conservation of Cairo's Islamic places of worship. Together, Chapters 6 and 7 link conservation approach to user perception and enable the transition to more theoretical discussions which follow in the final two chapters.

Using references to Islamic concepts found in the Fatimid textual tradition, Chapter 8 explores the philosophical basis behind the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar in order to determine *how* the Bohras' perceived the masjid and *why* the results of the restoration looked the way they did. Chapter 9 summarizes and relates the findings presented in earlier chapters with the objectives outlined in Chapter 1 and explores the notion of multiple authenticities within the context of the al-Anwar restoration in the study's penultimate discussion. Chapter 10 brings the study to a conclusion, summarizing its key contributions and listing its limitations as well as potential future research possibilities. The conclusion provides a conceptualization of the different notions of

authenticity revealed by the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar and reasserts the presence of distinct Islamic values which inform the practice of architectural conservation. The study concludes with a call towards a three-step process for the wider recognition of Islamic values in modern conservation discourse.

In a growing climate of political uncertainty and sectarian discord where deliberate destruction and desecration of heritage is rife across regions where there is a preponderance of Islamic built heritage, an academic discussion, no matter the philosophy or form it takes, that advocates for the preservation of heritage is surely welcome. Moreover, as conflict ceases and opportunities to rebuild and restore arise, Islamic perspectives towards architectural conservation and restoration may have a role to play for the future. Guidelines and charters for conservation continue to grow, adapt and expand to meet the requirements of a more inclusive understanding of built heritage and a more enlightened view of how this heritage is protected across the world. As Said (1978) explains regarding his contributions surrounding Orientalism, the criticism and dismissal of existing norms in any academic discipline without the proposal for an alternative is still a service worth carrying out. Similarly, this study argues that contemporary international norms and guidelines used for the architectural conservation of Islamic places of worship do not satisfyingly address the theological requirements mandated by certain interpretations of Islam or the lived, practical needs of its Muslim patrons. It does this without necessarily providing a conclusive alternative that does. The purpose of the research presented here is not to determine the correct way of conserving Islamic heritage, but to establish that there can be more than one way to responsibly and effectively conserve sacred heritage. It argues that at the very least, Islamic values should be considered in the conservation of Muslim places of worship which cannot be done until an exercise in identifying these values is undertaken. The research presented here hopes to contribute to this process.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

Research into the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar has been approached from an interpretivist-qualitative research paradigm as it was ideally suited to the subject matter for four primary reasons. The portrayal of the al-Anwar restoration in current literature is provided almost exclusively by historians and conservation scholars and lacks the voice of actors involved in the restoration. Since "reality" within the interpretivist paradigm is socially constructed and context-specific it is ideally suited for recounting the al-Anwar restoration narrative and exploring the processes by which the various stakeholders attribute meaning and value to it (Willis et al 2007:95). Secondly, the wide array of qualitative data collection and analysis methods common to the interpretivist paradigm are ideal for exploring the subjective nature of the restoration. Thirdly, interpretivism focuses on specificity and not generalization (Willis et al 2007). The current study is concerned with a single case-study evaluated through the analytical lenses provided by a specific interpretation of Islam. Hence, it is concerned less with the extraction of universals and more with better understanding a particular instance: in this case the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar and the Islamic values and philosophies operative therein. A final reason to approach this study from the interpretivist paradigm is the paradigm's synonymy and overlap with hermeneutics (Willis et al 2007). Hermeneutical analysis and the derivation of multiple layers of meaning from a single text is common to the Fatimid Tayyibi tradition (Karim 2015, Nasr 2013a).

Because of its 'specific congruency' with the field of architecture and its ability to better satisfy the expectations of architectural research than 'positivist institutional scholarship' which currently dominates the field, Trefry and Watson (2013:4) claim that the use of qualitative research in architectural research is growing. They advocate for greater qualitative research in architecture because it also provides access for social sciences-based researchers, such as the researcher of this study, to contribute to discussions regarding the built environment. Qualitative research methods such as observation, interviews and surveys, are also becoming more and more common in what was largely a field dominated by quantitative research (Boradkar 2011). Material regarding the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar is found mostly in either written or spoken word which also lends itself well to qualitative inquiry. As a branch of the larger architecture discipline, research in architectural conservation has historically also tended to lean towards the positivist paradigm and would benefit from a stronger qualitative voice as this study attempts to provide (Khirfan 2014, Wells and Baldwin 2012). In this manner, a qualitative approach compliments both the subject of the research inquiry and the background of the researcher.
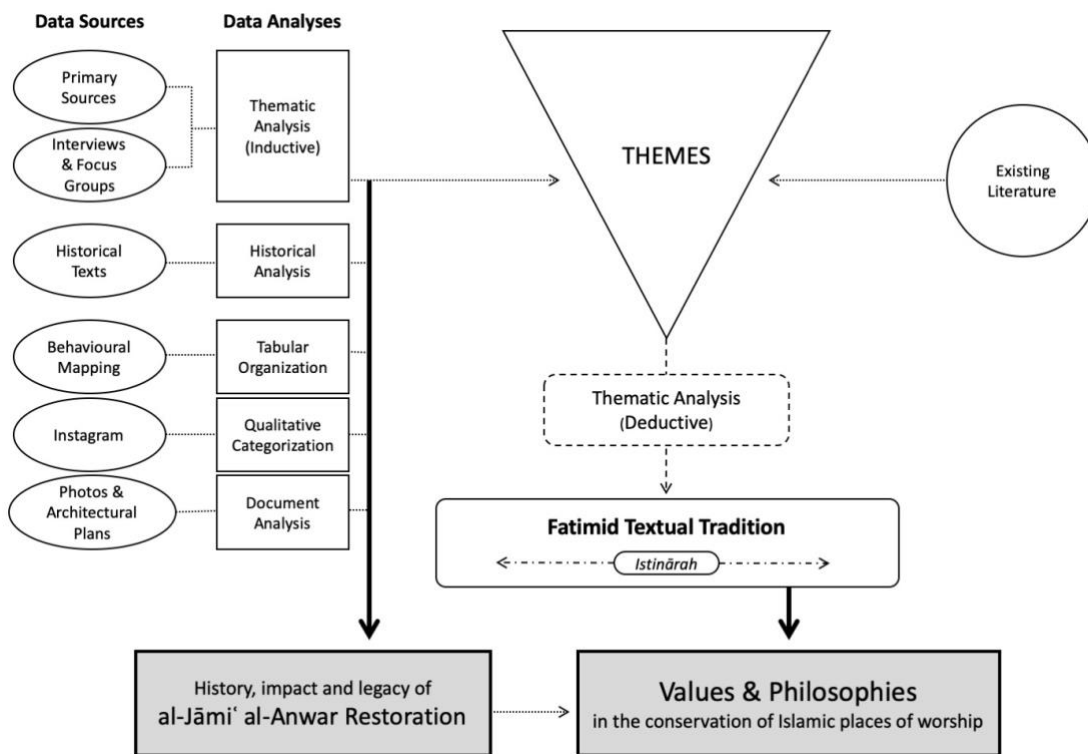
Figure 2-1 Research methodology diagram (Author).

2.1.1 Research design summary

The research design is built upon a series of literature reviews which are spread across multiple chapters. In introductory Chapter 1, the development of modern conservation is reviewed along with a snapshot of the current state of research in Islamic heritage studies. A review of secondary sources regarding conservation in Egypt in the 19th century in Chapter 4 is followed by a detailed summary of literature commenting on the al-Anwar restoration in Chapter 5. These literature reviews combined with an historical analysis of classical sources which catalogue past al-Anwar restorations and an exploration of the concept of ʿimārah in Chapter 3, provide the context for a detailed account of the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar in Chapter 6. The recounting of the narrative is achieved through the thematic analysis of primary sources — periodicals, leadership sermons, restoration participants' interview transcripts, community commemoratory pamphlets and archival documents. Together, the themes identified in primary sources and the key concepts from the literature reviews form the template for the deductive thematic analysis of Fatimid texts. It is the thematic analysis of the Fatimid textual tradition in Chapters 7, 8 & 9, combined with a form of intertextual analysis developed for this study named *istinārah*, which ultimately shed light on the primary aim of this research: determining the philosophical moorings of the Islamic heritage values identified in the al-Anwar restoration. Figure 2-1 above illustrates the way in which different data sources and analyses of this study converge with concepts derived from the

literature review to form a template for the analysis of the Fatimid textual tradition. Similarly, Table 2-1 below shows how the methodology aligns with the research objectives of this study.

	Objectives	Methodology		
		Data collection/source		Data analysis
1	Medieval masjid restoration & modern conservation in Cairo	Literature review		
		Historical chronicles		Historical analysis
		Foundational inscriptions		Thematic analysis
2	Account of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar restoration	Narrative interviews		Thematic analysis
		Focus groups		
		Reports and publications		
		Architectural drawings and sites photos & videos		Thematic analysis · Document analysis
3	Impact of the restoration on stakeholders	Literature review		
		REAPs	Behavioural mapping	Tabulation · Composite maps
			Instagram	Qualitative categorization
			Semi-structured interviews	Thematic analysis
			Elite interviews	
			Periodicals	
			Sermons	
			Publications	
4	Restoration motives & guiding principles	Sermons		Thematic analysis
		Publications		
		Fatimid texts		Thematic analysis · *Istinārah*
5	Philosophical & theological moorings of Islamic heritage values	Fatimid texts		Thematic analysis · *Istinārah*

Table 2-1 Research methods categorized according to objectives.

2.2 Data collection methods

The data sources upon which this study relies can be arranged into three broad, inter-related categories: people, place and text (Figure 2-2). Multiple formats of interviews provide access to people's involvement in the restoration and perception of the masjid afterwards. These individuals influence the perception of the places they visit and portray these impressions in the documents they create. Data collection methods drawn from other social science fields help in understanding al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar as a social site while religious texts explain the masjid's symbolic meaning and theological significance. Finally, the single largest data component is the analysis of documents and texts which provide the thematic fodder for philosophical and theoretical discourse. The texts are interconnected with both the place and its patrons since they dictate Muslim perception of sacred places and mandate of those who visit them a certain behaviour.
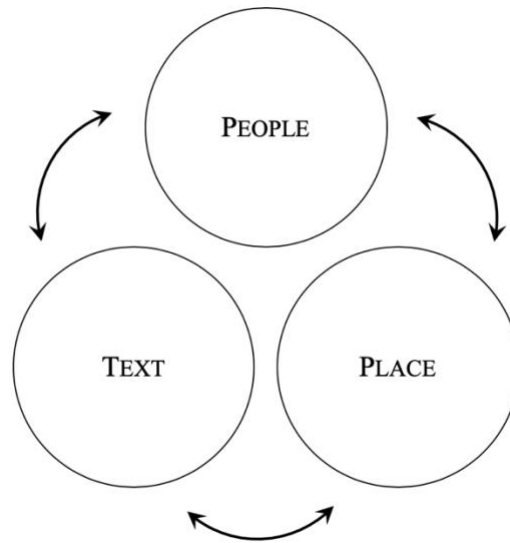
Figure 2-2 The three primary data sources of this research study are inter-related. (Author).

The following methodology chapter is organized to highlight the flow of the research design from data collection to data analysis and emphasizes the relevance of these methods with the objectives of the study and the overall interpretive paradigm. After a brief discussion regarding the literature review, the major data sources and primary methods of data collection are listed followed by the primary methods of analysis. A section also focuses on the need for indigenous research methods and this study's reliance on methods inspired by the Islamic scholarly tradition.

2.2.1 Literature review

A literature review of published academic and policy documents is the first data collection method utilized in this study and identifies gaps in current scholarship regarding the conservation of Islamic places of worship while also providing context for the al-Anwar restoration. The literature review also provides 'support of the research design, method, and instruments' used in the study (Rocco and Plakhotnik 2009:123). For instance, the review of scholarship regarding Islamic heritage preservation highlights the absence of the Islamic textual tradition in this discourse supporting this study's method of textual analysis of Islamic texts.

2.2.2 Narrative interviews

The inclusion of human participation in the research methodology was deemed necessary in order to achieve a greater understanding of the restoration of al-Jāmi' al-Anwar and its subsequent impact on various stakeholders. After required ethics approvals, qualitative narrative interviews were carried out with participants in the restoration in order to gain insight into the process of restoration and the way it was perceived by those involved. Although interviews with this group were initially planned to be semi-structured, pilot studies revealed that interviewees tended to

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branch from one topic to another as they recalled additional details. In order to avoid interrupting the interviewee's thought process, the investigator decided instead to adopt the unstructured, narrative interview format which would facilitate a more interviewee-driven conversation (Tracy 2013). Narrative interviews, similar to oral histories, are often used for reconstructing histories based off of eyewitness accounts (Tracy 2013:141). They also focus on the experiences and perceptions of the marginalized (Parker 2004). Interviewees were asked to discuss their roles and responsibilities in the restoration and what they considered were major milestones. They were also requested to recall discussions surrounding key decisions made by management and their implications for the restoration. Archival documents, images and videos were shared with certain interviewees as elicitation for comments or explanations (Harper 2002).

Participants interviewed for the study contacted the primary investigator via information sheets left at the al-Anwar site office. Through snowball sampling, the investigator requested initial interviewees to speak to other individuals involved in the restoration and enquire as to whether they would like to participate in the research study. As indicated by Zulfikar (2014:376), the voluntary participation of the recruitment process prevents bias and the anonymous process of recruitment avoided any obligation on behalf of potential interviewees who may have been known to the investigator. Most individuals involved in the restoration effort resided either in Cairo or India where the interviews took place in person and, where not possible, via video conferencing.

2.2.3 Focus groups

Two focus groups of five to six restoration participants were also organized. Aside from the benefits of group interaction — such as the encouragement of participation from those who might be less inclined in personal interviews (Kitzinger 1995), the possibility for the facilitator to explore differences in opinion and perception (Kitzinger 1994) and its 'cascading effect' which helps stimulate conversation (Tracy 2013:167) — focus groups are also instrumental in recapturing past events (P Liamputtong 2011). The method not only helped with reconstructing the restoration narrative, but in understanding participant perception and dynamics of the team at the time of the restoration.

2.2.4 REAPs-inspired methods for site use and restoration perception amongst visitors

Visitor perception of the restored masjid speaks to the results, validity and applicability of the al-Anwar restoration. Low (2002) utilized Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedures (REAPs) to assess the type and extent of public use of cultural heritage sites to allow for better planning of their conservation. REAPs comprise multiple qualitative research methods and are carried out by a team of researchers in a systems perspective and iterative process (Low 2002). For the purposes

of this research (which was carried out by a single investigator), qualitative methods similar to those found in REAPs have been retained while Low's (2002) process itself has been altered. Instead of analyzing public perception of existing sites to determine the most appropriate course of a *future* conservation project, public perception of a restored site is analyzed post-restoration in order to determine the cultural and social impact of a *past* restoration.

2.2.4.1 Mapping visitor behaviour at al-Anwar

Common to REAPs, behavioural mapping is used to study 'people's relationship to the environment' (Low et al 2009, Sommer and Sommer 2002:63). Although mapping is used most commonly in environmental psychology, it has found its way into architectural studies as well (Altman and Christensen 1990, Cosco et al 2010) and is used to explore the qualities and characteristics of a particular place (Golicnik and Marusic 2012). Al-Anwar's large size, open layout and simple plan make it particularly well-suited for such a research method. At nearly 1000 m2, a typical mapping exercise of the masjid took from 20 to 40 minutes depending on the number of people present. Place-centred behavioural maps focus on the site as a whole whereas individual-centred maps trace the behaviour of a particular person or group throughout the space disregarding others (Sommer and Sommer 2002).

The behavioural mapping procedure utilized here followed closely one outlined by Ng (2016). Initially, through nonparticipant observation, a list of specific instances of activities that occur in the masjid was created and then grouped together into more general observational categories.12 A single-sided A4 sheet was designed with a scale map of the site and a key of symbols representing the categories determined earlier (Appendix III, p. 211). Mapping took place at al-Anwar on selected days at different times over a period of two weeks in August and September 2016 during which a total of 8 maps were prepared. Although more maps were initially planned, the commencement of conservation works on site in early 2017 blocked off major portions of the masjid and subsequent maps would not have reflected the same site dynamics. After preliminary analysis existing data was deemed sufficient.

2.2.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

As Sommer and Sommer (2002:66) suggest, behavioural mapping preceded more 'reactive' research methods such as interviews which are also common to REAPs. Semi-structured interviews of site visitors conducted by the investigator in Arabic offered a more direct

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12 Although the primary format for behavioural mapping in this study was place-centred, movement patterns of individuals and groups, a feature common to individual-centred mapping, were also recorded.

opportunity to explore perception regarding the masjid, its restoration and its contemporary usage. The principal investigator estimated that anywhere between 300 to 1000 individuals visit the site on a daily basis depending on the time of the year. During the Islamic month of Ramadan, this number can exceed 2000. Since the study is qualitative in nature, the concept of 'theoretical saturation' in determining the appropriate sample size was adhered to (Bryman 2012:426). Initially, anywhere between 25 to 45 individuals were estimated to be interviewed. However, with the introduction of a third research method augmenting both behavioural mapping and semi-structured interviews, the sample size[13] was reduced and ultimately 22 interviews of site visitors were conducted.

The interview schedule was designed to understand the interviewee's relationship with the masjid and explore their perception of its social, religious, historical and architectural value. Interviews were also used to determine the extent of visitors' knowledge of the restoration considering the confusion and misconception that surrounds it. Certain questions referenced comments made regarding the al-Anwar restoration, particularly its resulting loss of authenticity, its transformation into a 'new' building and its becoming a 'dead' monument (Appendix IV p. 212). Images of the masjid before and during the restoration were shared with some interviewees as 'photo elicitation' which enables individuals to connect to experiences beyond the sphere of their personal lives (Harper 2002:13). Due to the lack of heterogeneity in the participant population, an effort was made to approach individuals of varied backgrounds, including but not limited to, college students, Dawoodi Bohra community members, worshippers and local residents[14].

2.2.4.3 Elite Interviews

Alongside visitors to the masjid, three elite interviews in semi-structured format were conducted with professionals currently involved in conservation in Cairo. Elite interviewing is particularly useful for corroborating data acquired from other sources which in this case were preliminary results and observations from the site (Tansey 2007). Elite does not necessarily refer to social status but is employed instead as recognition of an individual's standing within a certain organization, occupation or field of enquiry (Tansey 2007). As the nature of the study moved towards a more philosophical discussion, the number of elite interviews was reduced. These

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[13] The sample size of the participants was limited because, as Lee, Woo and Mackenzie (2002) suggest, fewer participants are required in studies that use more than one research method. Elsewhere, Bertaux (1981) has commented that generally, a qualitative study should have a sample size of no less than fifteen (adapted from Mason 2010).

[14] The criteria for exclusion is based chiefly on difficulty in communication or mobility and age, and no respondents under the age of 18 nor above the age of 80 have been approached. In order to further diversify the results, fieldwork in Cairo was attempted over three separate visits and different times of the year.

interviews combined with the review of conservation literature regarding Cairo and the thematic analysis of documents from the restoration helped clarify both the historical and contemporary impact of the restoration on government officials involved in Cairo's heritage preservation.

<u>2.2.4.4 Instagram</u>

Although not conceived as part of the original research design, the overwhelming presence of mobile photography at al-Anwar revealed through behavioural mapping led the primary researcher to believe that an analysis of images taken by visitors might offer additional insight into the perception and usage of al-Anwar. Mobile phones were the prevalent means by which visitors took photos, and considering the association of digital camera-phone photography with social media (House and Davis 2005), Instagram was identified as an ideal data source. The popular platform is particularly geared towards showcasing 'everyday activity' and its use in architectural studies is a growing phenomenon (Manikonda et al 2014:5). Images geotagged to the al-Anwar location or hashtagged with relevant tags that identified the image as having been taken at al-Anwar were subject to both qualitative and quantitative forms of data analysis.

2.3 Documentary sources

The major data sources for this study of the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar are of a documentary nature. In addition to the review of academic literature, the bulk of the study comprises of a multi-faceted analysis of primary sources in the forms of different documents and texts. These primary sources include archival reports of the restoration; architectural plans, elevations and technical drawings; archival images and film; periodicals published at the time of the restoration; commemorative issues released by the Bohra community; sermons and official publications by community leadership and organs of their administration; foundational Fatimid inscriptions; and classical Islamic texts. Documentation here is seen as 'any symbolic representation that can be recorded and retrieved for description and analysis' (Altheide et al 2010:127). The following paragraphs describe the variety of documentary sources researched and their relevance to the current study.

2.3.1 Archival documents: reports, drawings, images and videos

The majority of archival data related to the restoration was located at the al-Anwar Site Office[15] while photographs and images were accessed from Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah's media library. The archives at the Site Office are not publicly accessible and the investigator was given access solely for the purposes of this research study. Among the documents retrieved at the Site Office was a report published by the Project shortly after the inauguration which covers the entirety of the restoration. In Arabic, the *Project Report's* introduction implies that it was submitted to the Egyptian authorities along with plans, photographs and other studies of the masjid so that the condition of the masjid may be known 'at the start of the work and after the completion of the restoration' (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981:2). Egyptian government documents held at the Antiquities' Islamic Monuments' Library (Maktabah Markaz Tasjīl al-Āthār al-Islāmīyah bi al-Qilʿa) were also consulted. Unfortunately, the majority of the file dedicated to Monument No. 15, the Masjid of al-Hakim bi Amr Allah, is merely hand written notes copied from Comité bulletins. In the nearly 100 page file, there are two small entries related to the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar and are merely summaries of the Project's work (Wazārat al-Āthār 1980).

Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, the Dawoodi Bohra community's seminary and research institute (Blank 2001), maintains a media library which contains images and videos of the community's major undertakings, including the restoration of al-Anwar. Photographs and videos of al-Anwar during the restoration serve as a means of triangulation, essential to qualitative studies such as this which focus on the study of a single phenomenon (Bowen 2009), and help corroborate community publications as well as interviewee accounts regarding the restoration. Over 2000 photos of the restoration were reviewed as well as approximately three hours of video footage. As an administrator of the Academy, the investigator was granted access to the private library, and was able to review a large number of photographs and video clips taken during the restoration, some of which have been reproduced here with the Academy's permission. The issue of access and phenomenon of insider research is discussed below (p. 36).

Although limited in number, some original architectural drawings[16] and elevations were accessed at the archives of the Site Office and assisted in gaining a better understanding of the restoration

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[15] The Site Office is managed by the Bohra community and contributes to the maintenance of the masjid. Managerial and cleaning staff from the Ministry of Awqaf are also on site and coordinate their efforts with the Bohra team. The current dynamics point to the possibilities of collaboration between private religious communities and governmental organisations in heritage protection and historic site management.

[16] A few drawings were also provided by an architect who, during the course of the interview shared that he had retained some copies of the originals from the time of the restoration.

approach and the manner by which decisions were taken and altered on site. Select plans and drawings have been reproduced here with the permission of the Site Office.

2.3.2 Sermons and publications

Discourse surrounding the restoration officially sponsored by the community is not only relevant for its content, but more importantly for the assumptions, motives and values the analysis of it reveals. Sermons delivered by the community leaders, the 52nd *dāʿī* Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin and his successor, the 53rd *dāʿī* Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, are of particular significance in investigating the community's motivation behind the restoration, the manner in which the community restored the masjid, the impact the restoration had on the community and the philosophical implications of the restoration. As leaders of the community, their statements are perceived to hold great meaning and have considerable bearing on the collective mindset of the community (Blank 2001). Within conservation discourse, for several decades now there has been a growing acknowledgement of the significance of religious leadership's contribution to heritage debates, particularly their value-attribution to places of worship and conceptions of authenticity. For instance, in a meeting criticizing Egyptian authorities' restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Azhar, UNESCO (1997:15) recognized the role of religious authorities and recommended 'that a meeting be organized for the persons responsible for the religious monuments of the region to provide information on the notion of authenticity.'

In 2016, Syedna Saifuddin published a *risālah ramaḍānīyah*[17] in memory of his father that narrated the entire restoration of al-Anwar and also included a detailed history of the masjid from the Fatimid times, reproducing excerpts from numerous classical sources. The epistle is perhaps the most comprehensive document till date on not just the restoration, but the Masjid of al-Hakim bi Amr Allah in general. However, its circulation and readership is limited to the Dawoodi Bohra community, and that too to those familiar with Arabic. The *risālah* incorporates most aspects of the *Project Report*, but also benefits from Syedna Saifuddin's first-hand observations and recollections since he had been deputized by his father to oversee the restoration.

Books and texts published by Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah are also significant as they convey the community's official narrative regarding the restoration. A recent publication named *Al-Jāmiʿ al-*

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[17] The *Rasaʾil ramaḍānīyah* (sing. *risālah ramaḍānīyah*, lit. treatise composed in the month of Ramadan), are treatises which compile excerpts from Ismaʿili texts combined with the author's own poetic and historical compositions. Past Tayyibi Duʿāt began this tradition, but it was institutionalized by the 51st *al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq*, Syedna Taher Saifuddin who published a total of 49 treatises (three of them were published posthumously). The 52nd *al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq* Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin continued this tradition (Traboulsi 2016), and currently, the 53rd *al-dāʿī al-muṭlaq* Syedna Saifuddin too publishes an annual treatise which he begins in the month of Ramaḍān.

Anwar: The Luminous Masjid is particularly important. It is an English publication which narrates the events of the entire restoration based upon the treatise composed by Syedna Saifuddin (2016). Missives and informative pamphlets published by the Syedna's office are similarly significant. Alongside such 'official', centrally-sanctioned publications, local community centres throughout the world prepared commemorative issues after the restoration celebrating the community's achievement. These publications contain personal memoires and anecdotes which provide an alternative and nuanced perspective to the official narrative pushed by the community's central administration. Collectively, the published sermons and texts will be coded and thematically analyzed.

2.3.3 <u>Texts and context</u>

Classical texts are a key data source for this study, particularly the Fatimid textual tradition: foundational inscriptions from Fatimid sacred sites and classical texts composed by Ismaʿili authors. The analysis of key words and terms found in foundational inscriptions helped reveal the significance and meaning attributed by the Fatimids to the processes by which sacred architecture is maintained, respected and renewed. Similarly, themes regarding materiality, beauty and age, which were identified in other data sources were explored in the context of historical phenomena as well as philosophical discussions reported in Fatimid texts. Besides Fatimid texts, a series of Mamluk, Ottoman and European chronicles of Cairo spanning from the 12th century to the 18th were historically analyzed to explore previous restoration accounts of al-Anwar and draw parallels between past interventions and modern.

This study maintains that Fatimid architecture, when read in conjunction with Fatimid texts, offers insight not only into how and why the Fatimids built their places of worship, but how and why they conserved and restored them. Unlike medieval Europe, concepts regarding beauty, ratio and other intangible notions associated to architecture in the Islamic world were embedded in metaphysical discussions and not in texts dedicated to architecture (Akkach 2005, Necipoğlu and Al-Asad 1995). Thus, to gain a better understanding of Islamic concepts related to the built environment one must rely on works from other genres such as philosophy, history and literature. For instance, in the *Rasaʾil Ikhwān al*-Safāʾ (henceforth, *Rasaʾil*18), architectural concepts such as the 'noble proportions of the human body, strikingly similar to Vitruvius' discussion of

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18 *Rasaʾil Ikhwān al-Safāʾ*, or *The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*, are an encyclopaedic compendium of Ismaʿili origin said to have been authored by the 9th Ismaʿili Imam, Imam Ahmad b. ʿAbd Allah (d. 225/839-840), although modern scholars have contested this attribution (Cortese 2000). The *Rasaʾil* have influenced a number of Ismaʿili works, are of a paramount importance in Tayyibi theology and have left their impact on a number of famous Muslim scholars over the centuries (de Callatay 2012, El-Bizri 2008).

proportions', are embedded in non-architectural discourse (Akkach 2005:xxi). With reference to Isma'ili communities specifically, both Simonowitz (2004) and Karim (2015) discuss the manifestation of esoteric and mystical aspects of textual tradition in community architecture suggesting the indispensability of such texts in researching the approach adopted by the Bohra community in the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar.

Islam is not a monolithic entity and there are scores of interpretations and schools of thought within this vast tradition, yet the scope of reference for Islamic texts here is limited to the Fatimid tradition. The Fatimid tradition was selected as this limited body of referential material for two primary reasons. Firstly, al-Anwar's Fatimid provenance and the association of Fatimid buildings with Fatimid texts makes the latter the ideal frame of reference for any analysis of the former. Secondly, the Bohras associate themselves to the Fatimids, drawing exclusively from the Fatimid textual tradition for the framework of their religious beliefs and worldview (Blank 2001). Accordingly, they see the restoration of al-Anwar as representative of the Fatimid tradition: 'an edifice housing the philosophy of Fatimi restoration' (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016:168). An analysis limited to Fatimid texts enabled a deeper understanding of the principles and philosophies that informed and guided the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar.

2.4 Data analysis

Due to the number of different participants and the multiple data sources, the research design for this study includes several data analyses methods acquired from various social sciences (Hesse-Biber et al 2015). The research design is centred upon the thematic analysis of the multi-format interview data as well as restoration reports, leadership sermons, and Bohra community publications in order to identify the primary themes of the restoration shedding light on its motives, principles and philosophy. The analysis also helped with recounting the restoration and describing its impact on stakeholders. Thematic analysis was supplemented with document analysis of visual data — photos, videos and architectural plans — as well as the quantitative analysis of Instagram and behavioural mapping data through tabular organization. A brief historical analysis of past al-Anwar restorations in Chapter 3 preludes the Bohra restoration discussion. Finally, thematic analysis combined with a method inspired by Islamic hermeneutics enabled the identification and exploration of Islamic values in the Fatimid textual tradition that inform principles and practices of restoration and Muslim perception towards places of worship.

2.4.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is known for its flexibility and is particularly geared towards 'focusing on meaning *across* a data set' (Braun and Clarke 2012:57, emphasis not in original). As a method

that can be used to examine 'the "factors" that influence, underpin, or contextualize particular processes or phenomena', thematic analysis was well-suited to understand the phenomenon that is the restoration of al-Anwar (Braun et al 2019:850). For this study, Braun et al's (2019:848) reflexive thematic analysis approach was adopted where 'data collection and analysis techniques' are 'underpinned by a qualitative philosophy or paradigm'. Reflexive thematic analysis supports multiple data sources, is qualitative in nature and aligns with the primary researcher's insider positionality and intent to interpret data. According to Braun et al (2019:848–49), in reflexive thematic analysis the

> researcher is a storyteller, actively engaged in interpreting data through the lens of their own cultural membership and social positionings, their theoretical assumptions and ideological commitments, as well as their scholarly knowledge.

Both inductive and deductive forms of thematic analysis are utilized in an approach similar to that adopted by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), although neither analyses are exclusively one or the other since any 'analysis often uses a combination of both approaches' (Braun and Clarke 2012:58). Concepts which emerged from the literature review and themes that result from the *inductive* analysis of interviews and textual sources regarding the restoration are used as a template for the *deductive* thematic analysis of the Fatimid textual tradition thus relating participant perceptions with their theoretical foundations. The resultant themes are further analyzed with the Islamic hermeneutical process described below in order to identify the Islamic values which underpin the approach to architectural conservation as practiced at al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar (See p. 34). The primary researcher followed Braun and Clarke's (2012) six-step process for thematic analysis, coding the various data sources and thereafter defining themes in a somewhat recursive process. Both semantic and latent meanings were derived from the analysis; semantic, or more surface level and explicit understandings helped piece together the restoration process while latent understandings, which shed light on 'the assumptions and ideas that lie behind what is explicitly stated', illuminated participant motives, perception and sentiment and are dealt with separately (Braun and Clarke 2012:58).

2.4.2 <u>Document analysis</u>

Visual data including restoration architectural plans, elevations and drawings along with images and videos of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar during and prior to the restoration efforts that began in 1978 from the Bohra community archives were subject to document analysis. Since the research is primarily qualitative in nature and is concerned more with the philosophy than technical aspects of the restoration, the drawings were studied through document and content analysis focusing on themes that reveal the philosophy of the restoration and the approach of those involved. Technical drawings often 'provide internal evidence for the organizational and cultural contexts of their own

creation and use' (Brown 1999, Sillitoe 2014:127). These visual sources were read 'as if text' allowing for the thematic and textual analysis to span the entire data set (McLeod et al. 2016:21).

2.4.3 Mixed methods data analysis

Although there is a qualitative, descriptive aspect of analysis of the data collected from both behavioural mapping and Instagram images, tabular organization of the numerical data allowed for the possibility of basic quantitative analysis as well. Since place-centred behavioural maps normally consists simply of describing statistics (Ng 2016), masjid activity, captured in the counts of different specific acts, was tabulated. Maps generated from each mapping exercise were combined into a single composite map to show the varied usage over the period of time (Ng 2016, Sommer and Sommer 2002). The directional arrows from individual maps were also collated to reveal movement patterns throughout the space.

Publicly shared images[19] were analyzed through 'qualitative categorization' in a manner similar to that adopted by Hu et al (2014:2) where images are coded according to activities they feature. The frequencies of the various codes were tabulated and presented graphically. Captions and hashtags accompanying the images were converted to word clouds to further explore user sentiment and intent. Word clouds have significant limitations in their ability to help understand the context of the terms they highlight when used for the analysis of prose (Ignatow and Mihalcea 2016:84). However, since hashtags are specifically designed and used to emphasise singular words or phrases and their impact is measured by the number of times a particular tag features across social media platforms, the usage of word clouds here is optimal (Page 2012).

2.4.4 Istinārah: Islamic Hermeneutics

Themes generated in earlier exercises of thematic analysis formed a template that was utilized for the deductive thematic analysis of Fatimid texts in order to identify overarching themes regarding Islamic values in the conservation of sacred heritage. This thematic analysis is punctuated and bolstered with instances of *istinārah*, an intertextual analysis method that will help expand the semantic horizons of key terms thereby providing a deeper, more complex understanding of the values that inform Bohra perception of sacred heritage.

Istinārah is influenced by both classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship. Islam has a strong tradition of textual analysis, from the hundreds of volumes in the *tafsīr* (exegesis) of the Quran to

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[19] The sample set comprised of approximately 80 to 100 images from each of the following months of 2017: January, May, June, September and December. Selecting images from different months accommodated any variations in the usage of the masjid that may occur during different times of the year. In total, 365 images were analyzed.

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the development of a complete science specifically for the analysis of jurisprudent texts commonly known as *usūl al-fiqh* (Karcic 2006). Given this strong tradition, this researcher believes that the interpretation of Fatimid texts should be borne out of historically established methods 'indigenous to Muslim culture', an approach supported by a growing number of researchers studying Islam (Ahmed 2014, Manzoor 1991:41). The use of *istinārah* in this research also supports the contemporary movement that advocates a larger space for indigenous research methods in modern scholarship (Ahmed 2014, Saini 2012, Smith 1999). Ultimately, adopting an 'Islamic' method for the textual analysis of primary sources compliments the general theme of this study which argues for the need for greater recognition of Muslim values in the epistemological and ontological frameworks that govern modern conservation of Islamic places of worship.

Koliji (2016) posits that in order to derive meaning and understanding from theological, spiritual texts, an interpretive lens such as that provided by hermeneutics is required. Koliji adopts an approach for his analysis similar to one proposed by Akkach (2005) in his analysis of mystical Sufi texts drawings. Akkach (2005:17) argues the necessity of his 'mythico-spriritual' approach because 'a merely historical approach based on evidential sources does not lead to an in-depth understanding of traditional values' (Koliji 2016:xxxi). Both authors views resonate with this study which relies on a small set of Fatimid spiritual texts to interpret values embedded in one community's traditional approach towards restoration.

A hermeneutical analysis compliments this research on two fronts: it is especially relevant to Fatimid texts and is an interpretive tool also used in architectural conservation. The Fatimids were known for their emphasis on esoteric aspects of religion brought forth through a process of interpretation known as *taʾwīl*[20]. Karim (2015:21) refers to this important Fatimid tradition of interpretation as 'Ismaʿili hermeneutics'. Hermeneutics also relates directly to architectural conservation theory. Al-Ibrashy (2002) argues that like hermeneutics, architectural conservation is a process of understanding a building and interpreting its meanings. Given the importance of hermeneutics within Islam and its procedural synonymy with architectural conservation theory, a

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[20] In the Fatimid or Ismaʿili tradition, *taʾwīl* spreads across all the praxis and discourse of Islam, and often provides multiple meanings for a single exoteric aspect of faith, statement or act. *Taʾwīl* meanings were provided only by the Imam, or at his behest, by his highest-ranking officials.

hermeneutical approach, which comprises interpretive strategies commonly utilized in Fatimid discourse, has been adopted for the analysis of Fatimid texts[21].

The two-step process begins first with the etymological analysis of operative terminology from within the text, such as *iḥyāʾ* (give life) or *jadīd* (new), and summarizing their semantic breadth and depth. The divergent meanings are then located in other texts offering the opportunity to interpret the original words in the context of the newly associated texts and meanings in an exercise of intertextuality. The interconnected nature of Fatimid texts allows for greater intertextuality and a more potent and robust resulting interpretation and analysis.

The term *istinārah*, which means 'to seek enlightenment', was chosen as a name for this method for three reasons. Firstly, the name reflects the method's intent to shed light on values that underpin the conservation of Islamic place of worship. Secondly, the term itself features in Fatimid texts where it means to seek the light of understanding[22] and has been adopted for these purposes in academic parlance within the Bohra community (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 1987). Finally, it is derived from the same Arabic verb as the primary subject of the research: al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, the 'Luminous' masjid.

2.5 Insider research and reflexivity

Since the primary researcher is a member of the Dawoodi Bohra community, research of the al-Anwar restoration raises the issue of insider-outsider research. Arguments have been made regarding the relative importance of either the insider or the outsider over the other in a research setting since the nineteenth century (Kusow 2003). Although the dichotomy of insider-outsider is more and more eschewed in favour of a more subjective, less delineated, division (Chavez 2008), the primary researcher generally bears the characteristics of an 'insider'. In this capacity, he has access to material regarding the Bohra community and individuals involved in the restoration that would otherwise prove difficult to access (Imtiaz 2002) further enhancing the investigator's 'insider' positionality (Costley et al 2010). The investigator was also able access archival material from Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah. Cognizant of his positionality with respect to the research and aware of his background and 'epistemological values', the investigator has employed

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[21] A brief survey of the works of the prolific Fatimid author and *dāʿī* al-Qadi al-Nuʿman b. Mohammed (d. 363/974) and a more recent interpretive work of al-Qadi al-Nuʿman's *Daʿāʾim al-Islām* by a Tayyibi scholar Shaikh Ibrahim al-Saifi from the 18th century known as *Kitab al-Najah*, helped in identifying the combined use of semantic and intertextual analysis as a key interpretive strategy in the Fatimid Tayyibi tradition.

[22] *Istinārah* and derivative words feature regularly in the works of the Fatimid *dāʿī*, al-Muʾayyad al-Shirazi (d. 470/1078), where light is used as a metaphor for knowledge.

reflexivity as a means to continually observe 'himself in the act of observing', questioning interpretations and auditing the process of knowledge production (Hamdan 2009:379). The potential challenges of 'insider' research, such as overcoming biasness and managing 'the influence of being researcher and researched' (Chavez 2008:478), are outweighed by the potential benefits of this study including a nuanced insight regarding the 'underrepresented', the possibility of bridging a large gap in the understanding of the al-Anwar restoration and contribution to the larger discussion pertaining to the architectural conservation of sacred Islamic sites (Chavez 2008:476). Despite the pervasive criticism of the al-Anwar restoration, Sanders (2008) states that no study, either by the community or other researchers, has attempted to present the Bohra's perspective of the restoration or its response, if any, to the criticism levelled against it. This 'insider' study is the first to do so.

2.5.1 <u>Orientalism and architectural conservation</u>

The discussion surrounding 'insider' research for this study is inherently linked to the overall study of Islam in contemporary scholarship. As Said (1978) first highlighted the same year the Bohras began work at al-Anwar, for more than a century the academic discourse regarding Islam had been dominated by a Western sense of authority and superiority over 'the Orient' (Kennedy 2013). Said's (1978) argument spurred a spectrum of responses to his position and provided a launchpad for a more varied study of Islam including greater involvement from Muslim researchers. In her article regarding de-orientalising normative research methodologies, Imtoual (2009:176) encourages 'researchers to be mindful of the long history and influence of orientalist representations of Muslims and Islam'. She also stipulates that any research methodology proposed for the study of Muslims or Islam should reject the perpetuation of stereotypes and the homogenization of Islam and its adherents, a standpoint that has been adopted for this study. Said's (1978) arguments in *Orientalism* bear significance for this research in another respect as well. The very genesis of art and architecture conservation in Cairo in the modern sense came about by virtue of European 'concern' for 'Arab art' and romantic, orientalist perceptions of Islamic monuments (Reid 1992). The interpretive, and partially indigenous research methodology adopted for this study seeks to avoid generalizations and orientalist tropes in favour of a more nuanced, post-positivist and subjective analysis of data. Combining the active recognition of orientalism in architectural conservation discourse with an insider research methodology would doubly help shed light on the concepts and values that inform and influence the conservation of Muslim places of worship.

Chapter 3: Masjid ʿimārah in medieval Cairo

3.1 Introduction

ʿImārah is a comprehensive term and philosophy related to masjid construction, maintenance and conservation. This chapter is dedicated to documenting how ʿimārah was understood within the Fatimid tradition as a philosophy and expressed at al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar during the medieval period[23] as a pan-Islamic practice carried out by multiple dynasties who ruled over Egypt. Al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, as a monumental, historic, physical site in Islamic Cairo and a significant phenomenon in the development of Fatimid architectural philosophy, serves as a nexus of understandings and conceptions regarding the practice of medieval architectural conservation within the Islamic tradition. As a fixed location in Islamic Cairo, al-Anwar has been a venue of change since construction began on the masjid in 380/990, and has continued to accept change at the hands of various actors throughout the medieval period. On the philosophical plane as a dynamic node in Fatimid architectural expression, the masjid enshrined concepts of Fatimid architecture that preceded it, and through its epigraphy, form and design, it influenced Fatimid architecture that followed.

This chapter begins by exploring the Quranic term of ʿimārah within the Fatimid tradition, both as a concept and as a historical practice and is followed by an explication of ʿimārah as it manifested itself at al-Anwar in subsequent Islamic periods. Together, the discussions will help contextualize the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar which too was seen by the community as an expression of ʿimārah. Having followed Mahdy's (1992) bifurcation of the development of conservation in Egypt between pre and post-Napoleon Egypt, medieval conservation activity prior to the 19th century features in this chapter while the next chapter will deal with the conservation of Islamic places of worship in Cairo starting from the pre-modern period with the arrival of Europeans in Egypt.

3.2 ʿImārah as restoration in Fatimid philosophy

Verse 9:18 of the Quran links masjid conservation with the most significant acts of the Islamic faith: prayer, alms-giving and the very belief in Allah and the Last Day.

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[23] For the purposes of this study, the medieval period will refer to the period beginning with the founding of Cairo by the Fatimids in 358/969 up until the French invasion of Egypt in 1213/1798.

> He only will carry out the *'imārah* of the masjids of Allah who believes in Allah and the Last Day, establishes regular prayers, and practises regular charity, and fears none (at all) except Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance.

Masjid visitation and maintenance as expressed in this verse is best understood as *'imārah*. The notion of *'imārah* illustrates that Muslim interaction with places of worship, including their efforts towards their conservation, is predicated in their very belief in Allah and the core tenets of Islam. In an epigraphical context, *'imārah* is associated most commonly with construction and building. This explains why verse 9:18 is the most cited verse in historical Islamic inscriptions of new masjid constructions and 'became the favourite text to decorate congregational mosques, ranging from the Umayyad Mosque of the Prophet in Medina to the seventeenth-century Ḥīra Masjid in India' (Blair and Bloom 2006:170).

According to El Habashi (2001:238), *'imārah* has a wide array of meanings including

> maintenance, repair, construction, modification, architecture. In a preservation context, the term *'imārah* is the closest in meaning to the term "preservation", as it represents an umbrella term that covers all other preservation activities.

Etymologically, the root of *'imārah* stems from *'a ma ra* or *'a mi ra*, which is to live or to continue in life. More precisely, *'amarahu* and *'ammarahu*, is for a place to flourish with the presence of people, as in the term *'amara Allah bi-ka manzilaka* — 'May God make thy place of abode to become peopled', or well-peopled (Lane-Poole 1874:2154). In this context, the *'imārah* of a masjid is to sustain its 'life' through visitation and human activity or acts that enable such visitation, i.e. the construction of new masjids and the maintenance and restoration of existing ones. From the various meanings of *'imārah*, it is clear that although it was a broad term, its purpose was singular: the vitalization of a place of worship through its continued and persistent use.

Before crossing the Nile and officially claiming Egypt in the name of the Fatimids in 358/969, the general al-Qaʿid Jawhar al-Siqilli (d. 381/991) conveyed to the people of Egypt the Fatimids' intent to repair and beautify their masjids with carpets and lighting (Al-Husaini 2007). Aside from their own original contributions to Egypt's architecture, the Fatimids tended to existing Egyptian places of worship, most notably the earliest masjid in Egypt, al-Jāmiʿ al-ʿAtīq, also known as the the Masjid of ʿAmr b. al-ʿAs (21/641), and the largest masjid, Jāmiʿ Ibn Ṭulūn (265/878-79) (Sanders 1994, Swelim 2015). The Caliphs also contributed to the upkeep and renovation of monuments built by their predecessors as evidenced in the series of works carried out at al-Jāmiʿ al-Azhar (Creswell 1978). *Imārah*, both as construction as well as restoration and renovation, was well-established in Fatimid Egypt. This section briefly introduces the philosophies that guided Fatimid construction and restoration activity as evidenced in inscriptions at al-Anwar and those attributed to the Armenian general al-Sayyid Badr al-Jamali (Appendix II, p. 205). The arguments presented here suggest that the emphasis on *'imārah* as a Fatimid dynastic message

began with al-Anwar and was further developed by Badr al-Jamali, eventually coalescing into a philosophy of ‘imārah that entailed both construction and restoration, and subsequently, informed and inspired the Bohra approach to the restoration of al-Anwar.

3.2.1 A dynastic message of ‘imārah

The Imam-Caliph al-Hakim is known to have 'preserved an active interest' in the support and construction of masjids throughout most of his reign (Walker 2009:151). Assaad (1974) goes as far as saying that the he constructed more places of worship than any other Muslim caliph. Yet, none of the Quranic verses[24] initially inscribed at al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar in the year 393/1003, the year of the official foundational inscription, are related to masjids or even prayer and worship; they are instead allusions to Fatimid doctrine and assertions of prophetic lineage (Shakir 2002). The first Quranic verse directly related to masjids to be inscribed in al-Anwar, or on a Fatimid monument in Cairo for that matter, dates to an inscription from 394/1003-04, a year later, on the western minaret where the Imam-Caliph al-Hakim's name appears as the builder alongside the ‘imārah verse, verse 9:18 (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016). Later in 401/1010, when the Imam-Caliph builds his iconic salients (Figure 3-5) around the original minarets covering their inscriptions, five additional verses[25] are inscribed in elegant Kufic script on marble slabs and fixed to the external walls of the salient. All the new Quranic inscriptions, including verse 9:18 which makes a second appearance, are related to masjids and prayer. The decision to build the salients, which are often credited for protecting the original minarets, and inscribe upon them verses which convey the significance of masjids in contrast to the semantic content of the initial inscriptions, may speak to a deliberate appeal by the Imam-Caliph towards the ‘imārah and protection of masjids. Assaad (1974:40–41, emphasis not in original) suggests that Imam Hakim's policies and behaviour

> indicate that he was deeply religious and this is apparent in his determination to observe Muslim law, *in his enthusiasm to build mosques* and in *his encouragement to his subjects to practice the duties of Islam*, added to many reports about his personal behaviour concerning his duties as a Muslim.

3.2.2 The restorer: Abu al-Najam Badr al-Jamali al-Mustansiri

With his arrival to Cairo in 465/1073 after a period of turmoil and upheaval, the Fatimid Vizier and *dāʿī*, Amīr al-Jūyūsh, i.e. Commander of the Armies, Abu al-Najam Badr al-Jamali al-

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24 1) 28:5 "And We desired to show favour unto those who were oppressed in the earth, and to make them examples and to make them the inheritors,"; 2) 9:128 "There hath come unto you a messenger, (one) of yourselves, unto whom aught that ye are overburdened is grievous, full of concern for you, for the believers full of pity, merciful."; and 3) 11:73 "…The mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, O people of the house! Lo! He is Owner of Praise, Owner of Glory!" (Syedna Saifuddin 2016)

25 Verses 9:18, 9:108, 24:36-38, 62:9 & 33:56

Mustansiri (d. 487/1094) restored order to the kingdom and embarked upon an ambitious construction and restoration campaign (Al-Husaini 2007, Walker 2002). Badr al-Jamali's vigorous campaign to build and restore has left posterity with nearly 30 extant inscriptions bearing his name. These particular inscriptions are significant for the current research study because they have been identified within Bohra community literature as having influenced the restoration of al-Anwar (Saifuddin 2002, Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

Nearly seventy years after Imam-Caliph al-Hakim's inclusion of verse 9:18 into al-Anwar's epigraphical program, Badr al-Jamali chose to include verse 9:18 in nearly all of his inscriptions (Appendix II, p. 205). The consistency suggests deliberate usage and an allusion to something beyond the obvious understanding of the verse. After the turmoil and devastation that destroyed much of the city prior to his arrival, the inscriptions of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar were one of the few if not only Fatimid masjid inscriptions left for Badr to study or from which to be inspired. The Amīr al-Jūyūsh would be acutely familiar with al-Anwar since he had the masjid's northern minaret encased in his new city fortifications (Creswell 1978). His continued use of verse 9:18 in new construction, but more importantly in restorations, builds upon Imam-Caliph al-Hakim's use of verse 9:18 and message of ʿimārah. In Badr's inscription at Jāmiʿ Ibn Ṭulūn, the first known inscription bearing his name in Cairo, we are immediately introduced with his intent to *renew* the damaged portions of the masjid (Appendix II, p. 205). By starting the inscription with verse 9:18 and then describing his work there as an act of *tajdīd*, or renewal, Badr al-Jamali is linking verse 9:18 with the act of restoration including it within the notion of ʿimārah. The renewal of a ruined or damaged place of worship is likely to result in the resumption of visitation and human activity, hence the combination of ʿimārah with *tajdīd* in Badr al-Jamali's inscriptions.

In the year 477/1084, 'upon witnessing' the Masjid of Aṭṭārīn (Perfumers) in Alexandria 'ruined', Badr al-Jamali sees, 'as dictated by his better faith and beliefs', to its renovation or *tajdīd* (Syedna Saifuddin 2016:447). Once again, verse 9:18 takes a prominent position at the beginning of the inscription and is linked to *tajdīd*. According to the inscription commemorating his restoration of this masjid, witnessing the masjid's ruins or *kharāb*, a term often used as an opposing force of ʿimārah, stirred Badr al-Jamali's faith and motivated him towards the masjid's restoration. Thus, the perception, experience and beholding of a ruined place of worship are an integral element of the Islamic process of restoration as described by Badr al-Jamali and relate to similar experiences felt by Muslim rulers and conveyed by historians as described in the next section. As Syedna Saifuddin (2016) and Amīr ʿImaduddin (2002) both point out, witnessing the *kharāb* of al-Anwar was the primary motivator behind the Bohra restoration of the masjid which they too, like Badr al-Jamali, expressed in their own inscription commemorating the restoration. The inscription declares that when the 51st *dāʿī* visited al-Anwar in 1356/1937, having witnessed the *kharāb* the

masjid had turned to, and the loss it had suffered, he declared his wish and intent to restore it (Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

3.2.2.1 A medieval architectural conservation charter inscribed in wood

The philosophies and processes conveyed in the inscriptions at Ibn Ṭulūn (470/1077) and Alexandria (477/1084) culminate in Asqalan (Ashkelon) in one of Badr al-Jamali's final inscriptions (484/1091-92) prior to his death in 487/1094 which summarizes his concepts regarding the preservation and restoration of religious heritage. As Badr al-Jamali went about restoring the ruined places of worship in the Fatimid dominion, he expanded the meanings of ʿimārah, generally associated to new constructions, to include *tajdīd*, renovation and renewal, as well. Beginning with Ibn Ṭulūn, Badr al-Jamali advocates the 'renewal' of ruined buildings and with the Alexandria inscription, he explains that such renewal is mandated by one's better faith and belief. At Asqalan, Badr al-Jamali enshrines his philosophy towards restoration and conservation, and coming full circle, in his explanation of verse 9:18, proposes a comprehensive approach to ʿimārah that addresses both new and old buildings alike.

Unlike previous inscriptions which were inscribed on marble and affixed to the buildings they represented, Syed Badr al-Jamali chose to inscribe this lengthy inscription, nearly five times lengthier than the next longest, on the wooden components of an 'astonishing' minbar (Figures 3-1 & 3-2) he had commissioned for the Mash'had[26] of Raʾs al-Husain in Asqalan in 484/1091-92 (Reiter 2017, Sharon 2013, Tabbaa 2014:192).

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[26] The Mash'had was later demolished by Salah al-Din when he transferred the minbar to its present day location in the al-Haram al-Ibrahimi (Cave of Patriarchs) in Hebron (Daniella J. Talmon-Heller 2007). Today, the site of the Mash'had is marked by a memorial constructed by Syedna Burhanuddin in 2000. Through collaboration with the Barzilai Medical Center in the premises of which the site now lies, the memorial remains a pilgrimage site for Bohras and other Shiʿa and Sunni Muslims in the region (Reiter 2017).

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Figures 3-1 & 3-2 Al-Sayyid Badr al-Jamali's minbar in Hebron. The inscription runs along the front façade and sides of the minbar (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

In his two-part inscription dedicated to the minbar and shrine, Badr al-Jamali (in Sharon 2013:33) describes the miraculous revelation of the sacred head despite the ill intent of 'tyrants' and states that he built the *mash'had*

> from its foundation to its top, and he acquired for it properties, the income of which he consecrated inalienably as an endowment for its maintenance, for its custodians and for its guards, for the present time and for the future…

He goes onto declare that he did this for the sake of his Imam and in order to spread the banners of Allah's words, i.e. verse 9:18 (Syedna T. Saifuddin 1937:278). Towards the end of his inscription, he provides what Amīr ʿImaduddin (2002:129) terms 'instructions' regarding the ʿimārah of masjids where he states (in Syedna T. Saifuddin 1937:278, translated from Arabic):

> We urge 'those who believe in Allah and the Last Day' (reference to verse 9:18) to:
> 1) respect and honour the shrine, 2) look into its affairs, 3) tend to its ʿimārah according to its requirements and the needs of the time, and 4) purify it.

These four principles embody Badr al-Jamali's notion of ʿimārah.

1. To respect and honour the sacred sites clearly places the conservation and maintenance of religious buildings within the sphere of religious activity.

2. To look into the shrine's affairs suggests a continuous process of appraisal and maintenance.

3. ʿImārah as a distinct principle of the larger philosophy is likely a reference to the more specific meaning of ʿimārah pertaining to construction or intervention. In what is a very forward looking principle, Badr's highlighting the temporal component indicates that his

philosophy allowed or perhaps even encouraged altering the shrine to suit prevailing realities and developments.

4. Purification includes both physical cleaning as well as prohibiting and preventing all activities that would sully the shrine's honour.

Badr al-Jamali's inscription provides one of the earliest articulations of the principles of *ʿimārah* and embodies values that were shared by subsequent Muslim rulers in their approach to the conservation of places of worship. The inherent respect for religious buildings more often than not was the primary motivation behind any conservation or maintenance activity. Waqfs, like the one Badr al-Jamali established for this shrine and mentioned in its inscriptions, were instrumental in maintaining masjids. Interventions and changes to the form and fabric of places of worship were a regular feature of medieval restoration and purification was commonly sought in various ways. The universality of Badr's four principles can be seen in the acts of restorations and interventions carried out al-Anwar by the various rulers who were entrusted with the masjid's care after the Fatimid period which have been detailed and analyzed in the following section.

3.3 Past restorations of al-Anwar

Over its almost 1000 year history, al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar has been subject to a variety of restorations and alterations. As the third largest masjid in the city, it remained a centre of activity centuries after it was first established. After founding the Ayyubid dynasty, Salah al-Din (r. 532-598/1174-1993) discontinued prayer at al-Azhar, presumably in compliance with Shafiʿite jurisprudence which only allowed a single Friday prayer, but more likely out of disdain for the religious heritage of his predecessors so closely associated to al-Azhar (Rabbat 1996). This left al-Anwar the only officially patronized congregational masjid in the city of Cairo for over a century. During the Mamluk period as well, rulers and high ranking officials regularly made contributions in support of al-Anwar's repairs. Substantial restorations also took place during this period suggesting interim periods of disuse possibly brought about by the seismic activity which frequented the region. In this way al-Anwar remained, for the greater part of its existence, a building in flux between ruination and renewal. Throughout the five centuries since its construction, the masjid was restored and altered at the hands of multiple individuals hailing from varied political and religious backgrounds. Yet historical chronicles show that the impetus behind change was nearly always to restore functionality or enhance it. It is within the context of this complex historical narrative, that the discussions surrounding the contemporary restoration activities of al-Anwar must be placed and understood.

3.3.1 Function over fabric: Al-Anwar in Fatimid and post-Fatimid times

Even throughout the Fatimid period and its initial phase of construction, changes were made to al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar. The Imam-Caliph al-Hakim's own contribution to the masjid — the dressed stone minarets, monumental portal and the outer salient — in some ways are considered a 'renovation' of his father's masjid (Pruitt 2020:73). The establishment of a waqf for al-Anwar by the Imam-Caliph al-Hakim and its elaborate use for Friday prayers and ceremonial purposes[27] during and after his reign indicate that al-Anwar was regularly maintained and refurbished throughout the Fatimid period (Walker 2002). Al-Hakim's son, the Imam-Caliph al-Zahir li-iʾzaz Din Allah (r. 411-427/1021-1036), added a *ziyāda* along the southwestern wall[28] and during the reign of the Imam-Caliph al-Mustansir bi Allah (r. 427-487/1036-1094), Badr al-Jamali made amendments to portions of the northern minaret when he rebuilt the walls of the city in 480/1087 (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016, Creswell 1978). From its very inception and throughout the Fatimid period, al-Anwar was continuously evolving in form yet its function as a place of worship and religious ceremony remained constant.

Figure 3-3 The portal and western minaret of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar at night. The portal along with the dressed stone minarets, which today are concealed by later Fatimid and Mamluk additions, were completed by the Imam-Caliph al-Hakim between 393-394/1003-1004. In 401/1010, he added salients to both the northern and western minarets which effectively covered the lower portions of the originals minarets (Author 2012).

Little is known about restoration works at al-Anwar during the Ayyubid rule over Cairo (565-648/1171-1250) apart from the consolidation of the masjid's *ziyāda* during al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub's reign (637-647/1240-1249). Stables built by Salah al-Din and traces from the

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[27] The Fatimids were renowned for their elaborate religious ceremonies and festivals. Al-Anwar was one of the six venues for the celebrations which occurred on the nights known as *layālī al-waqūd*, or nights of light (Sanders 1994).

[28] Sources say that the *ziyāda* remained incomplete until the Ayyubid period (O'Kane 1999).

imprisonment of Frankish soldiers from 565/1171 were removed and a boundary wall was erected to define the area (Syedna Saifuddin 2016).[29] An Ayyubid vizier Ali b. Shukr (d. 622/1225) built a fountain in al-Anwar's courtyard, the first recorded instance in a series of water related construction activities to follow in subsequent years. Although Fandi (2016) suggests that the masjid was not particularly well looked after during the century of Ayyubid rule, most likely due to Ayyubid animosity for the Fatimids, al-Anwar clearly retained its function as a place of worship and would have been sustained through minor repairs and maintenance.

The Mamluk period (648-923/1250-1517), on the contrary, is remarkable for a number of major restorations, the most prominent being that of Baybars al-Jashankir (d. 709/1310), a high ranking official in the court of Mamluk sultan al-Nasir Muhammad (r. intermittently 693-742/1293-1341). Brought about by an earthquake[30] that struck Cairo in 702/1302, Baybars' restoration resulted in the greatest visual change to occur to al-Anwar since its construction, and perhaps in its entire history. As al-Suyuti (d. 911/1505) and other classical chroniclers have indicated, the destruction to al-Anwar in the aftermath of the earthquake was quite significant. Most of the masjid's walls and piers collapsed as did large portions of the roof. Baybars is said to have visited al-Anwar to take stock of the destruction immediately after the earthquake. In al-Maqrizi's (d. 845/1442) report, Baybars vows to restore the masjid as an act of faith and to seek the Lord's happiness in restoring a place of worship (Al-Maqrizi 1987). He gave orders to demolish 'that which deserves to be demolished' choosing to reconstruct anew both weakened and fallen piers and portions of the roof, and 'to whitewash the masjid until it becomes new again' (Al-Maqrizi 1987:278, translated from Arabic). Changes in material and style of the stucco inscriptions in the *bayt al-ṣalāt* suggest that Baybars (and perhaps other later restorers as well) replaced missing portions of the running Kufic band remaining faithful to the original Quranic verses (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016, Flury 1912).

The earthquake delivered the greatest damage to al-Anwar's two intricate stone minarets toppling their upper portions. Since the bulk of the masjid was simple brick construction, it was rebuilt as it had been originally, yet the minarets did not share the same fate. Instead, Baybars added a

[29] Many contemporary publications have erroneously noted that al-Anwar, and not its *ziyāda*, was the location where 'Crusader prisoners were held' even remarking that it 'housed a Christian chapel' and was not suitable for worship (Dobrowolski 2001:12, Williams 2008). However, this contradicts the Ayyubid use of al-Anwar as the city's primary congregational masjid after the close of al-Azhar (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). When speaking of the imprisonment of Frankish soldiers, medieval Arabic chroniclers such as Ibn ʿAbd al-Zahir (620-692/1223–1293) are referring to the *ziyāda* and not the masjid. It seems that this nuance was lost when picked up by European chroniclers.

[30] Due to Cairo's proximity to the Hellenic Arc, a tectonic feature in the Mediterranean Sea only 500 km away, it is frequented by seismic activity. Al-Anwar's construction took place during a particularly earthquake-prone time and Ambraseys (2009) has recorded 59 earthquakes that have been felt in Cairo since after al-Anwar was built to the present day.

second square salient above the original Fatimid salient and filled the gap between them with rubble, thereby surrounding what remained of the original stone minarets concealing them indefinitely. [31] To complete the form, Baybars added a finial of brick and stucco in the typical Mamluk style on top of the original Fatimid stone minarets. With this addition, the iconic, three-tier shape of al-Anwar's minaret as we see it today was achieved (Figure 3-5). Why Baybars adopted this method of reconstruction is unclear, but it may have been due to the substantial costs associated to reconstruction in stone or to establish the presence of a distinct Mamluk visual language across the masjid. Describing additions to al-Azhar carried out later in the Mamluk period, Rabbat (1996:58) suggests that

> Mamluk sultans favoured minarets over any other addition; they either built them directly or through some amir, probably acting as their agent. Minarets were the ultimate symbol of power and dominion and the most effective proclamation of the buildings and their patrons in Cairo's cityscape.

Mamluk styling took place elsewhere in the masjid as well, often 'repairing' aspects of the masjid that did not require it. In the main prayer hall transept, a series of blind windows inscribed with Fatimid arabesque patterns, were covered by Baybars with new stucco grilles (Flury 1912). Although Baybars ensured that the masjid's functionality was restored, he used the restoration to establish a distinct Mamluk style in a masjid which now bore an inscription with his name.

Figure 3-4 Baybars' inscription commemorating his restoration and bearing his name and the year 703 (1304) can still be found in its original location above the masjid's main entrance (Author 2007).

[31] Portions of the rubble infill were later removed during excavations carried out in the 19th century revealing the surface of the original minaret after centuries (Creswell 1978). During later excavations by the Bohras, it was noticed that the rubble seemed to have been placed against the original minarets so as not to damage original inscriptions (N14).

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Figure 3-5 The tripartite configuration of al-Anwar's minaret as seen today with the original minarets concealed inside (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016:259).
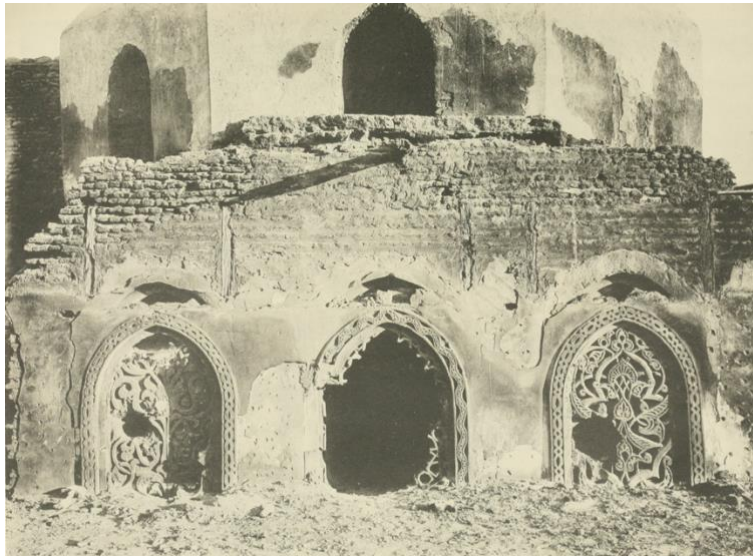
Figure 3-6 Flury discovered that Mamluk stucco grilles from Baybar's restoration had been placed on top of original Fatimid stucco ornamentation. In this image taken by Flury (1912:Table VI), the left Mamluk grille has been lost showing the original Fatimid blind niche underneath. The centre window shows only traces of the Mamluk grille. The window to the right contains a near complete Mamluk grille yet Flury explains that the Fatimid ornamentation can be seen behind it.

Baybars' involvement with al-Anwar did not cease with the physical act of restoration. In order to restore its functionality, Baybars established a theological school in the premises of al-Anwar and appointed scholars to teach various subjects. He endowed the masjid with multiple waqfs and

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also provided it with a library for which he had the scribe of the masjid of al-Hakim, Ibn al-Wahid (d. 711/1311), prepare a Quran manuscript which was considered 'one of the earliest and finest examples of Mamluk book art' (James 1984:147, Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Baybars, and other medieval restorers as shall be discussed below, sought to ensure that their efforts in the restoration of places of worship were sustained and often made special arrangements to showcase these efforts.

A second comprehensive restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar takes place more than a century later in 844/1441 at the hands of Dawlat Bayh al-Dawadar, who was a high-ranking official during the reign of Mamluk sultan al-Zahir Sayf al-Din Jaqmaq (842-857/1438-1453) and had been entrusted with the affairs of al-Jāmiʿ al-Hakimi (Syedna Saifuddin 2016:198). Aside from renovating the severely dilapidated physical state of the masjid, reconstructing the water installations and refurbishing the masjid's carpets and lamps, chroniclers remarked that al-Dawadar restored the sanctity of the masjid and ensured its continued functionality. He denied entry to those who sought the masjid for any purposes other than worship and consolidated all the waqfs of the masjid and added his own (Al-Maqrizi 1997). The final references in medieval Arabic sources of sermons and prayers taking place at al-Anwar are in the years between 850-856/1446-1452, suggesting the success of al-Dawadar's restorative efforts. In the time between Baybars' and al-Dawadar's restorations of al-Anwar, various minor restorations and additions to the masjid were carried out by private individuals and state representatives (Table 3-1). Although the masjid oscillates between use and neglect, restoration and deterioration, al-Anwar's capacity to cater to the function of worship persisted for nearly five centuries. Natural calamities and manmade neglect resulted in periods of disuse, yet in an almost organic process, this decay begot rejuvenation suggesting that such destruction was a precursor for restoration.

Since Egypt was relegated to an administrative division during the Ottoman period (1517-1867), Cairo lost its capital status. The centre of the city also shifted west and historic Fatimid Cairo and the Islamic monuments of this area such as al-Anwar lost their importance in the eyes of the ruling Ottomans (Mahdy 1992). Specific references to al-Anwar's use as a masjid, let alone restoration activity, are nearly non-existent in Arabic sources. This might also be explained by the lack of chroniclers for this period in Egypt's history (AlSayyad 2011). Ultimately, it is difficult to ascertain the status of al-Anwar in the nearly 400 years between al-Dawadar's restoration and the next recorded restoration by the nobleman ʿUmar Makram (d. 1822) in 1222/1808. Mahdy (1992, 2017) argues that the Imam-Caliph al-Hakim's negative portrayal by medieval historians may have led to al-Anwar's neglect while O'Kane (1999) suggests that rumours of hidden treasure concealed by the Imam in the piers of the masjid may have led to its devastation. Ever since its construction, historical records show that the masjid more or less retained its function as a place

of worship, with periodic spells of disuse. It is only with the arrival of Europeans to Egypt that a distinct new chapter in al-Anwar's history of destruction and restoration begins which will be discussed in the next chapter.

3.3.2 'Until it became new again'

Restorations of al-Anwar as presented by medieval chroniclers, especially those carried out in the Mamluk period, suggest a distinct approach towards the conservation of religious heritage. Table 3-1 is a compilation of such references, the majority taken from the works of Taqi al-Din Ahmad b. ʿAli al-Maqrizi (d. 845/1442), the famous Mamluk historian who traced his genealogy to the Fatimids and had a seminal role in cataloguing their history (Jiwa 2008). The terminology and phrasing utilized by al-Maqrizi and the other chroniclers not only helps identify common characteristics between these medieval restorations but also depict how the restorations are perceived by Muslim historians and perhaps the larger contemporary Islamic society. Table 3-1 highlights the specific Arabic terms employed in the description of the restorations carried out al-Anwar and is similar to a list compiled by Mahdy (1992:42). However, this compilation is distinct in that it provides greater detail, limits entries to masjid restoration activity, emphasises different terms from the original source texts and includes references which Mahdy has missed or excluded.

An analysis of the terminology in the context of the historical descriptions of the restorations reveals five characteristics of medieval al-Anwar restorations:

1. Various Arabic terms found in the aforementioned sources reflect the themes of **construction and addition** including ʿammara (the root verb for the word ʿimārah), anshaʾa (to create), banā (to build) and zāda (to add). Nearly each of the restorations in Table 3-1 introduces a new element to the masjid which had not previously existed.

2. **Renewal** (jaddada) through demolition and reconstruction was common. In more than one instance, elements of the masjid due to either weakened conditions or aesthetic purposes, are demolished (hadama) so that they can be remade. The ablution fountain was reconstructed on multiple occasions as was the minaret near the qiblah.

3. Bayyaḍa, literally 'to make white', is a reference to **limewashing** or **whitewashing**. Walls and features of the masjid were regularly limewashed as part of the renewal process giving them a 'new' appearance.

4. The **provision for water** also seems to be a constant. Again, with the masjid identified primarily as a place of worship and the importance of water in ritual purity and prayer in Islam, the provision for water is deemed an essential part of any restoration. This speaks to the restorers' ultimate goal which was to renew the masjid so it may function as a place of worship.

5. Medieval restorers are keen on ensuring the **continuity** of their efforts and most often accompany their construction work with the dedication of waqf to sustain the continued use of the masjid.

	Period	Historian/s	Date of intervention	Attributed to	Intervention	Key Arabic terms and conservation themes
1	Ayyubid	Ibn ʿAbd al-Zahir (d. 692/1292)	622/1225-26 (*terminus ante quem*)	ʿAbd Allah b. ʿAli ibn Shukr (d. 622)	Addition of a *fasqīya* (fountain) to al-Anwar's courtyard. It was later removed in 660/1261-62 by Taj al-Din ibn Shukr.	*banā, hadama* construction, demolition
2	Mamluk	Al-Maqrizi (d. 845/1442), Abu Muhammad Badr al-Din al-ʿAyni (d. 855/1453)	703/1303-04	Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Jashankir (d. 709/1310)	Complete *ʿimārah* and restoration of al-Anwar. Demolition of compromised elements of the masjid, Reconstruction of fallen piers, walls and roofing; addition of minaret finials and bastions, stucco decorative elements and calligraphic script to prayer halls, ablution fountain to the courtyard and a *ziyāda*. Painted the walls (*tabyīḍ*: whitening). He established new waqfs for the upkeep and spent a total of 40,000 dinar.	*juddida, ramm, iʿādat, bayyaḍa, ʿāda jadīdan, hadm, ʿammara, zāda* construction, reconstruction, renewal, whitening
3	Mamluk	Al-Maqrizi	760/1358-59	Qutb al-Din Muhammad al-Hirmas (d. c. 770/1368)	Renovation (*juddida*) and reflooring. Establishment of additional waqf.	*juddida, jamīʿahū, ʿimārah* renewal
4	Mamluk	Al-Maqrizi	c. 780/1378-79	Ibn Karsun al-Marahili	Addition of a fountain; whitening of minarets	*ʿammara, bayyaḍa* construction, renewal, whitening
*	Mamluk	Al-Maqrizi	822/1419	Sadr al-Din b. al-ʿAjami	Purification of the masjid from inappropriate acts	*taṭahhara, ṣāna* purity, restoring sanctity
5	Mamluk	Al-Maqrizi	827/1424	Unnamed merchant	Reconstruction of a minaret (presuppose its prior existence although not mentioned in sources) near the qiblah entrance, construction of a entrance platform to the roof for the call to prayer.	*istajadda* reconstruction and construction
6	Mamluk	Al-Maqrizi	844/1441	Dawlat Bayh al-Dawadar	Various policies enacted to ensure sanctity of the masjid. Demolished the broken ablution pools and reconstructed them anew. Pavement and roofing redone. Reorganization and fortification of all previous waqf.	*ʿimārah, aṣlaḥa, hadama, anshaʾa, jadīd* reconstruction and construction
7	Ottoman	ʿAli Mubarak	1222/1807-08	ʿUmar Makram (1750-1822)	Renovation of a portion of the *bayt al-ṣalāt*. Construction of a new qiblah clad in marble, minbar and ablution pool.	*jaddada* reconstruction, renewal and construction

* Although not technically a physical act of restoration, i was included since it aimed to purify the masjid and *restore* its sanctity. Table 3-1List of major interventions to al-Anwar found in classical soures.

Beyond the physical acts of restoration, the narrative, too, helps us better understand how the restoration of al-Anwar and other places of worship was approached. In both accounts of the restorative works that took place at the hands of al-Dawadar and Sadr al-Din, the historians convey to us the restorers' dismay upon beholding the state of the masjid. This dismay carries over to the historians themselves, specifically when writing about the state of the masjid in their own times. Mubarak (1981) bemoans the state of the masjid in the 13th/19th century claiming that its honour has been violated. Nearly four centuries earlier, al-Maqrizi, too, who held the position of imam and chief administrator of al-Anwar, remarked that the masjid is now ruined; bit by bit, pieces of the roof continue to fall never to be returned (Al-Maqrizi 1987:280). However, after Dawlat Bayh's restoration, al-Maqrizi (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:199) in a later publication describes[32] al-Anwar as having been salvaged from its ruined state by Allah at the hands of this emir.

The accounts of past al-Anwar restorations shed light on the perception of newness in Medieval Cairo. Describing Baybars' restoration of al-Anwar, al-Maqrizi's (1987:278) says that he reconstructed the masjid's roof and whitewashed it until it became new once again. The functionality regained with the roof's reconstruction and the aesthetics achieved with the whitewashing help define the understanding of renewal as a two-part process. With words derived from the Arabic root *jaddada* appearing in five out the seven references, it is clear that the objective of restoration in medieval Cairo was perceived as a renewal of the masjid. The demolition, the additions and reconstruction, the whitewashing, the provision for water and the purification from inappropriate acts were all meant to return the masjid to a *new* state. At some levels this newness is seen as novelty which justifies the introduction of additions and elements not part of the original. But al-Maqrizi's (1987:278; emphasis not in original) words, 'until it became new *once again*' (translated from Arabic original), suggests that the restorer's primary objective is to return the masjid's functionality and its aesthetics to the state they were in when they were *first* new. Overall, the medieval restorations of al-Anwar as presented in these historical texts represent a certain fluidity with regard to materiality uncommon to modern architectural conservation. With European involvement in the conservation of Islamic heritage from the 19th century, however, the perception of Muslim places of worship changed in the eyes of the restorers', as did the intent and manner in which their restorations were carried out. These issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[32] Al-Maqrizi mentions the ruined state of al-Anwar in *al-Mawaʿiz wa al-Iʿtibar fi Dhikr al-Khitat wa al-Athar*, also known as *Khitat Maqriziya*, which was composed between 818/1415 and 827/1424. Al-Dawadar's restoration takes place in 844/1441, a year prior to al-Maqrizi's death, which he happens to chronicle in his other work, *al-Suluk li Maʿrifa Duwal al-Muluk* (Mujani and Yaakub 2013).

3.4 Conclusion

Comparing the Bohra community's restoration of al-Anwar to those of Baybars' or al-Dawadar's on the same site centuries before, or the principles of *ʿimārah* outlined by Badr al-Jamali, raises some interesting questions. If the test of authenticity in contemporary conservation is the historical constant of material fabric, what role do historical constants in the treatment of the masjid and the function it caters to have in determining this authenticity if any? Moreover, is a departure from the historical practices prevalent at a specific site over multiple centuries or its philosophical traditions of greater consequence in determining a site's authenticity or the departure from international practices which do not necessarily share the same values as the culture responsible for the site or the living tradition that exists there today? Chapter 9 explores some of these questions regarding authenticity and the different forms it takes within the context of the al-Anwar restoration. Past imperial restorers operated according to a set of values determined by their understanding of Islam as well as their socio-political ambitions. As the discussions in the following chapters will show, the Bohras also seem to have approached their restoration of al-Anwar according to a similar set of values and achieved similar results. The argument here is not necessarily that one technique or another should prevail or that additions and demolition to Islamic religious monuments should take place haphazardly; it is that the history and traditions of conservation of a specific religious tradition, and in this case, even a specific sacred site, should not be divorced from its contemporary conservation.

Chapter 4: Masjid or museum: Conservation in pre-modern Egypt

4.1 Introduction

The modern movement of architectural conservation of Islamic monuments in Egypt traces its origins to the arrival of Europeans in Cairo and the establishment of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe (Comité). Through its associations to key philosophies and protagonists of the architectural conservation movement in Europe, the Comité was directly responsible for importing European concepts of conservation to the Islamic and Coptic sites of Cairo. From the onset of European involvement in the governance of Egypt, specifically with the establishment of the Comité, a singular message resonated in the discussions surrounding architectural conservation: Egypt was ill-equipped — not only technically and methodologically, but philosophically — to handle the protection and conservation of its priceless heritage. This message, a by-product of imperialism and Orientalism, would have a lasting impact on the conservation of Islamic monuments, particularly places of worship. Symptomatic of its overall Eurocentric, secular approach towards Cairo's religious monuments, in one of its first acts after its establishment, the Comité converted al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar into a museum for Arab art in a move that would have lasting implications for al-Anwar and its capacity to function as a place of worship. The Comité's operations continue to remain relevant to discussions surrounding Cairo's Islamic heritage and a better understanding of the Comité's modus operandi along with overall European involvement in Egypt is vital to understanding the reception of the Bohra restoration by modern conservationists.

4.2 The origins of the Comité: 'Orientalism, imperialism and historic preservation'

European interest in the conservation of Egypt's heritage was inherently linked to Europe's imperial aspirations and its perception of the 'Orient'. A significant part of the Orientalist discourse surrounding conservation in Cairo in the late 19th century was the belief that Arab-Islamic societies did nothing to protect their buildings. French journalist Gabriel Charmes (d. 1886) (1881, in Reid 2002:213, emphasis not in original), claimed that:

> No race has the genius for stonework to as high a degree as the Arab race; its rage to build is matched only by *its lack of concern for keeping up what has been built*… As soon as a mosque, as soon as a palace is finished, they let it fall apart…

Egyptologist Amelia Edwards (d. 1892) (1882, in Reid 2002:216) described Egypt as a place 'where nothing is ever done to arrest the progress of decay'. The Frenchman Arthur Rhoné (d.

1910) (1881, in Sanders 2008:21) described Cairo's buildings as quietly falling into ruin suggesting that that was 'the eternal way of the Orient'. From the very beginning of the discourse surrounding architectural conservation in Egypt, a consensus was established by those who dominated the discussion that 'Oriental' societies did not, or could not, conserve what they built (Rico 2019).

'For Charmes,' according to Reid (2002:214), 'Orientalism, imperialism, and historic preservation all marched hand in hand'. The colonization of Egypt was justified because of its inhabitants' alleged inability to protect its own heritage. Referring to Cairo's historic masjids he asserted that the 'day when they are restored… it will be impossible to deny the right to independence to a country capable of understanding and conserving such works' (Charmes 1881, in Reid 1992:60). With Egypt unable to safeguard its heritage, the responsibility fell to a superior culture and civilization (Reid 2002). European involvement and criticism of architectural conservation in Egypt was a form of cultural dominance (Mahdy 1992). The architectural conservation movement was a mechanism, one of many, that worked towards Europe's imperial aspirations and domination over Egypt and according to Mahdy (1992:60), '[t]he establishment of the Comité was the last nail in the coffin of Egyptian cultural independence'.

4.2.1 Europe in Egypt; Egypt in Europe

The Comité is a product of the unique conditions prevalent between Europe and Egypt at the turn of the 18th century. With Napoleon's (d. 1821) expedition to Egypt in 1798 and the subsequent production and publication of the voluminous *Description de l'Égypte* in the early 19th century, Egypt saw an influx of European travellers to the "Orient" searching for 'adventure, employment, and the thrill of fantasy associated with those mysterious lands' (Pilbeam 2013, Rabbat 2018:390). Alongside passion for Egyptology and pharaonic monuments, these travels also generated interest in 'Arab' art giving rise to some of the 'first students of Islamic architecture' (Rabbat 2018:390). Volait (2000) suggests that it was these amateur travellers'[33] interest in Cairo that led to the Comité's formation. With European interest in Islamic art and architecture came concern for its conservation and the debates that accompanied conservation.

Aside from European interest in Egypt, a second major factor which contributed to the establishment of the Comité was Egyptian interest in Europe. With the ascension of the Western-educated Ismail Pasha as Khedive (r. 1863-1879), the modernization scheme undertaken by his

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[33] European travellers were also responsible for some of the damage which occurred to historic sites across Egypt. In their wish to carry the Orient back with them, travellers often took elements such as ivory inlays or lamps (Reid 2002) irreplaceably damaging the monuments they had come to admire.

grandfather Muhammad Ali Pasha (r. 1805-1848) was intensified. Increased autonomy from the central Ottoman administration enabled Ismail to act upon his fascination with Europe leading him to adopt European models of governance, economics and urban planning and development (Tadros 2013). In his Haussmannization[34] of Cairo, Ismail laid Parisian boulevards across the city demolishing several historic monuments and altering the 'romantic' character of several quarters that were an attraction to many European travellers. Ismail's intent to transform Cairo into Paris was not well-received by influential French and British diplomats and Orientalists. Ultimately, wary of his creditors and further wishing to emulate the Europeans in their governmental policies, Ismail's son, Khedive Tewfik Pasha (r. 1879-1892) capitulated to incessant appeals from European advocates to protect Cairo's Islamic and Coptic heritage and by royal decree established the Comité in 1881 (El-Habashi 2001, Leturcq 2014, Mahdy 1992).

Its genesis lying in European pressure upon the Muhammad Ali dynasty, the Comité was dominated by Europeans (Reid 2002). Its structure was fashioned after the Commission française des monuments historiques, even taking a similar name (Reid 1992, Volait 2000). Comité meetings were conducted in French, and subsequent bulletins were published in the language[35] as well. The dominance of French inevitably led to the appropriation of its terminology with new meanings being 'assigned to several Arabic terms related to preservation to adapt them to their French equivalent' (El-Habashi 2001:31). Most historians agree that the Comité has on more than one occasion practiced 'stylistic restoration' and prioritized selective layers of a monument's history[36] as championed by Viollet-le-Duc (who had even been invited by Khedive Ismail to restore the Sultan Hasan masjid) (Mahdy 1992, Sanders 2008). The French model was adopted because at the time of the establishment of the Comité, the British response to stylistic restoration led by Moris and Ruskin in England had still not formalized (Reid 2002). However, because of the high costs associated to work of a more restorative nature and the Comité's limited budget, if not in theory, the Comité's work in practice focused more on consolidation than intervention (Sanders 2008).

[34] Baron Georges Haussmann (d. 1891) was a French city planner who was responsible for drastic changes to the layout and infrastructure of Paris. His changes in Paris, and those modelled after them elsewhere, were labelled, often derogatively, as Haussmannization: 'urban renewal by demolition' (Jordan 2004:88).

[35] Comité bulletins were later translated into Arabic.

[36] The Comité had little regard for Ottoman additions and amendments to Cairo's many monuments. This is evident in the Comité's destruction of an Ottoman minaret on the Masjid of al-Salih Talaʿi and the removal of a water tank from the courtyard of Masjid of ʿAmr (El-Habashi 2001, Ormos 2013).

4.2.2 Form without function: disregarding religious values

A constant in the Comité's approach to the conservation of Cairo's Islamic heritage was its disregard for the religious nature of the sites under its care. In one of its first major acts, and perhaps the most far-reaching, the Comité compiled a list of important monuments in Cairo deserving of preservation and protection (Rodenbeck 1983). Working off of concepts such as the *monument historique* developed in France and influenced by post-enlightenment Europe's separation of church and state (Mahdy 1992), the Comité 'monumentalized' select buildings as antiquities — a notion that was foreign to the inhabitants and patrons of these monuments (Reid 2002:227). This phenomenon was common throughout the Middle East during the 19th century where colonial powers side-lined 'the social and spiritual contexts' of heritage (Rico 2019:156). In practical terms for the conservation of Cairo's Islamic monuments, this meant that the Comité discarded religious associations from the objects and processes of conservation. The criteria by which the Comité determined whether a building was important and hence worthy of preservation comprised values steeped in European ideology and Western notions of artistic merit and age-value. For example, in 1918, under European influence, the Egyptian government passed a law which ascribed an 'inherent' importance to Pharaonic monuments, all other monuments receiving protected status only if they are of 'artistic, archaeological or historical interest' (Rodenbeck 1983b:18).

For the local populace who frequented these monuments, although cognizant of their age and historical value through a separate ontological frame of reference, the monuments' primary importance lay in their religious associations and religious function. Muhammad ʿAbdu (1849-1905), an influential Muslim thinker who had a pivotal role in Egypt's scholarly community's embracing of modernity, acknowledged the importance of the Comité's work in Cairo but questioned their ultimate goal. He believed that without reinstating the function of these places of worship, they were only good for tourists, and not the locals who were in need of 'well-functioning mosques' (El-Habashi 2001:147). The British and French also distanced themselves from religion because of its affiliation to their rivals, the Ottoman Empire, which through its claim to a pan-Islamic caliphate saw itself as the protector of Islamic heritage throughout the world (El-Habashi 2001). By divorcing Cairo's Islamic architecture from Islam, this heritage was pulled outside of the Ottoman sphere of influence.

4.2.3 The weakening of the waqf

Waqfs refer to pious endowments established to generate income to help sustain an institution or building, usually one of a religious nature or providing some sort of social benefit (Ghazaleh 2011). The waqf was a religious instrument, the regulations and prescriptions of which had been

laid down and elaborated in Islamic jurisprudence. In Egypt and elsewhere throughout the Islamic world, waqfs were responsible for the preservation and maintenance of centuries-old historic places of worship and social institutions (Ghazaleh 2011). In many ways, the Islamic system of waqf was a community-led stewardship that guided conservation practices of Islamic places of worship and embodied heritage values: a precursor to modern architectural conservation (Bakhoum 2011, El-Habashi 2001, Sabri 2019).

Two factors led to the gradual dissolution of Cairo's waqf system: Ottoman unification of waqf funds and European deprecation of its conservation practices. With the introduction of Western systems of governance in Egypt and pressure from financial consultants brought in to handle the nation's finances due to mounting debt from the construction of the Suez Canal, in 1896 Ismail unified all waqfs into a central fund that wrested control from individual trustees and handed it to the state, and subsequently European scrutiny (El-Habashi 2001, Reid 2002, Sabri 2019). Centralization of waqfs under Ottoman rule 'signalled the beginning of the loosening of community stewardship' over heritage properties (Rico 2017a, Sabri 2019:137), and ultimately the weakening of a system that had sustained much of Cairo's Islamic heritage for centuries. Although part of the Ministry of Waqfs, the Comité had little understanding of the waqf system nor did they seem particularly inclined to understanding it (Sanders 2008). Elsewhere in the Muslim world, the British had shown their contempt for waqf seeing them as 'backward' Islamic institutions that required 'modernisation' (Sabri 2019:138). In Egypt, the Comité attempted to combine European architectural conservation with the Islamic concept of waqf, but this was a strategic partnership, borne out of necessity, not ideology (Leturcq 2014). Over time, Europeans involved in Egypt's antiquities determined that the system of waqf was broken and no longer sustainable.

Local conservation practices born out of traditional systems of preservation of monuments were also dismissed. Over the years, the waqf system had introduced practices of maintenance and management which reflected the aesthetic and cultural values of the trustees who managed these sites and the patrons who visited them. However, these acts did not fit the understanding and definition of European conservation. Charmes (1883:127) criticized Egyptian authorities who, in celebration of the Suez Canal inauguration, had

> ordered this abominable whitewashing process to be passed over the principal monuments of Arabian art. God forgive them; they knew not what they did!

British Orientalist Stanely Lane-Poole (d. 1931) (1898:56) expresses a similar disdain towards the practice of whitewashing in a general description of the masjids of Cairo.

> The walls, again, are probably the least cared-for parts of the mosque; a coat of whitewash answers most purposes, except those of art, and with whitewash the worshippers are content.

The political and economic conditions of Egypt during the 19th century combined with the loss of waqf funds at the turn of the 20th century would suggest that overall masjid conditions in Egypt during this period had deteriorated significantly (as was the case with al-Anwar), and the few historical, inexpensive options worshippers were content with, Europeans were not.

4.3 Al-Anwar and the Comité

The history shared between the Comité and the Masjid of al-Hakim bi Amr Allah not only provides insight into its overall modus operandi throughout Cairo but also offers intriguing parallels and contrasts to be considered in the discussions surrounding Bohra conservation activities which followed a century later. Although one of many of its interventions at the Masjid of al-Hakim bi Amr Allah, the Comité's establishment of the Museum of Arab Art within the masjid in the early 1880s best encapsulates its perception of the masjid and the values that would define its approach to its conservation over the next 70 years. An imperial tool that often went hand in hand with heritage conservation, the museum is a secular shrine inspired by Europe's Enlightenment (Duncan 1995). Like similar phenomenon elsewhere in Muslim lands, the conversion of al-Anwar into a museum indicated the replacement of 'religion in favour of art and the material world' and encouraged 'an aesthetic appreciation of Islamic arts' devoid of sacrality (Shaw 2002:144).

The French occupation and fortification of al-Anwar prior to the onset of the 19th century had completely desolated the masjid. Makram's partial restoration of 1807 was the only area in the entire masjid which was suitable for worship. Towards the end of the 19th century, the Comité, cleared al-Anwar's courtyard of debris and restored the 'central part of the sanctuary', i.e. Makram's small worship enclave carved out of the *bayt al-ṣalat*. Here, the Comité set up a museum for 'Arabian art' (see Figure 4-1) which according to Chesnel (1888:136) was the only reason to visit the 'empty shell', i.e. the ruined masjid of al-Anwar. In 1883, the collection was removed from the sanctuary of the masjid to a purpose-built structure in the courtyard, which also served as a depot for large architectural remnants from other historic sites of Cairo (Max Herz 1896, Leturcq 2014). '[L]ong ceased to be used for prayer', Lane-Poole (1898:48) suggests that there is no more 'suitable' place for the museum 'than this earliest mosque of Kâhira':

> The *only honourable use* it has been turned to is that of a Museum of Arab Art, which for the past twenty years has occupied part of the arcades of the east end, where the noble arches and Kufic inscriptions still preserve something of their ancient grandeur, and formed a fit shrine for many beautiful and curious works of Saracenic art (Lane-Poole 1906:138, emphasis not in original).

Although the museum collection would eventually be relocated from al-Anwar (the building remained), the Comité continued to perceive the masjid only as a site of historic, academic, architectural and artistic value with little consideration of its value as a place of worship.

Figure 4-1 has been removed from this version
of the thesis due to copyright restrictions

Figure 4-1 Bronze lamp displayed in the makeshift museum which had been set up in al-Anwar's sanctuary area. ʿUmar Makram's mihrab can be seen in the background (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London).

4.3.1 The masjid as an architectural and artistic exemplar

That al-Anwar was of the 'highest interest' to the Comité as an architectural monument is evident in the pattern that emerges from the various interventions carried out on site (Barois et al 1902:81). Although minor repairs took place throughout the masjid, major conservation efforts were focused on three areas of particular architectural significance: the north-western façade, the stone minarets and the *bayt al-ṣalāt* (see Figure 4-2). The façade of the masjid, with its monumental portal at the centre and minarets at each ends, was the subject to a prolonged exercise of *degagement* spanning nearly four decades. The Comité endeavoured to reveal the minarets' stone inscriptions after a long series of excavation removing debris and infill from the Mamluk era. By 1952, when Creswell (1978) prepared his plan of the masjid, the Comité had succeeded in returning the *bayt al-ṣalāt* to its original configuration: the original mihrab depression had been revealed, the *majāz* had been raised to its original height, all three domes had been secured or partially reconstructed and modern constructions, including ʿUmar Makram's changes, had been removed. For the first time in centuries, the masjid's eastern half would have resembled its original form from the Fatimid times.

In order to retrieve al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar's lost architectural form, the Comité often demolished original elements, replicated designs, removed older accretions and relocated elements from later periods. On more than one occasion, the Comité demolished structurally compromised piers and

reconstructed them anew (Simaïka et al 1936). On one such occasion, the Comité's new brickwork even led to the loss of an 'interesting piece of archaeological evidence' according to Creswell (1978:75). An aggressive policy of *degagement* was used in clearing buildings and accretions from the north-western wall, the exterior walls of the northern and southern minaret salients and the north-eastern Fatimid city wall which shared a common wall with al-Anwar. In 1943, the Comité requested the removal of the remains of a mausoleum obstructing a lesser door north of the main portal on the north-western façade wall (Riad 1951). The Bohras' restoration of al-Anwar would parallel many aspects of the Comité's interventions.

4.3.2 Academic interest

Conservation work at al-Anwar was guided by the academic interests of many Western scholars such as Max Van Berchem (d. 1921), an honorary member of the Comité, and Gaston Wiet (d. 1971) and K. A. C. Creswell (d. 1974), whom both were listed as members in Comité notes. It was Creswell's insistence on removing the centuries-worth of accretions and buildings abutting the north-western façade which led to the discovery of original Fatimid inscriptions on the monumental portal. Also at his request, the Comité engaged in purely scholarly interventions as well (Creswell 1978). For instance, original stonework from the lower salient of the northern minaret was stripped in order to confirm Creswell's hypothesis regarding its construction. Correspondence with Van Berchem and his interest in epigraphy led to the excavation and removal of Mamluk era helicoidal stairs and debris infill in both the northern and western minarets. After many decades of work on the minarets, in a letter to Max Herz (d. 1919) reproduced in its entirety in a Comité report, Van Berchem (in Miska Herz et al 1916:93–94) praised the Comité's work and suggested that freeing the minarets from Baybar's rubble infill 'would be one of the most important tasks of the Comité, to which we owe so much useful and generous work'.

1932: Relocation of ʿUmar Makram mihrab revealing original mihrab concavity beneath.

1941-43: Sanctuary works: Removal of ʿUmar Makram wall partitions and gates added to the sanctuary to restore original Fatimid layout. Excavation of soil to reach original ground level.

c. 1920-1932: Reconstruction of main prayer hall piers, south.

c. 1902-1911: Removal of Baybars' helicoidal stone stairwell and debris infill revealing portions of the original western minaret.

1932: Reconstruction and raising of transept roof to original height.

1942-48: Reconstruction of main prayer hall piers, north.

1940: Consolidation and repair of gap between masjid wall and northern Fatimid city wall.

1902-1907: Removal of Baybars' helicoidal stone stairwell and debris infill revealing portions of the original northern minaret.

c. 1940: Reconstruction of missing merlons (*shurrafāt*) on the north-western wall.

c. 1941: Reconstruction of collapsed wall between portal and northern minaret.

1907-1943: Removal of accretions along north-western façade wall, north-eastern Fatimid wall and western minaret exterior.

1907: Portal inscriptions revealed after clearing of accretions. Inscriptions conserved.

1948: Original inscriptions revealed on northern side of portal replicated on southern side.

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Sources: Syedna Saifuddin (2016), Creswell (1978), Comité bulletins (https://www.persee.fr/collection/ccmaa),

Figure 4-2 Major interventions by the Comité at al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar (Author).

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4.3.3 **A return to the original state**

In its conservation of al-Anwar, the Comité's general objective was to return al-Anwar to its original Fatimid state: '*état originel à l'époque fatimite*' (Riad 1951:161). It had also declared on multiple occasions its intent to restore the masjid in its entirety. After a new museum was completed in 1902 in the Bāb al-Khalq area, the old museum building in the courtyard was occupied by a nearby school as per a request from the Ministry of Public Instruction (Casanova et al 1907). When in 1925, the Ministry of Public Instruction sought permission from the Comité to build additional buildings within al-Anwar's courtyard to tend to the needs of the growing school, the Comité members acquiesced so long as the ministry agreed to vacate and demolish said structures when the overall masjid's restoration took place (Sayyed et al 1933). In a meeting in 1943, the President of the Comité, Mohammad Riad, asked the remaining members what steps were being taken towards the gradual rehabilitation of the masjid with a view of returning it to its original state (Riad 1951). The request to remove the Silahdar School from the masjid courtyard was once more conveyed to the Ministry of Public Information. Unfortunately, with the school established and growing (see Figure 4-3), its removal and relocation never materialized during the Comité's tenure. It is ironic that the structure the Comité had erected to preserve and protect Arab art and architecture, by virtue of its conversion to a school, would become the very obstruction impeding al-Anwar's full-scale restoration.

Figure 4-3 has been removed from this version
of the thesis due to copyright restrictions

Figure 4-3 Multiple structures of the Silahdar School occupied the 'ruined' Masjid of al-Hakim bi Amr Allah c. 1936 and were only removed after the Bohra restoration commenced in 1978 (Maṣlaḥat Al-Misāḥah 1936) (Rare Books and Special Collections Library; the American University in Cairo).

4.3.4 The 'prayer' niche

What primarily defines the difference between restorations at al-Anwar carried out by Muslim rulers in the pre-Napoleon era and the restoration work done by the Comité is intent. Although Bakhoum (2016) has questioned the validity of generalizing the work of the Comité whose different members of varying backgrounds operated for nearly 70 years, the Comité's interventions at al-Anwar reveal a consistency in approach unified in their disregard for the religious values associated to the site. Restoration impetus in the past has always been based on usage and function. The collapse of the masjid's piers and minarets impeded worship and prayer and without worshippers the purpose of the masjid was lost — cue the restorer.

The fortification of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar by the French at the turn of the 19th century may have resulted in the greatest loss of the original building since the earthquake of 702 (See Figure 4-4 & Figure 4-5) (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). This devastation spurred ʿUmar Makram's restoration of 1222/1807 in which he renovated parts of the *bayt al-ṣalāt*, decorated the original mihrab with polychromic marble, provided a minbar and built dressed stone entrances (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016, Mubarak 1981). Having lost its purpose as a place of prayer, from the alterations he made, it seems that the masjid's original form and architectural features were less of a priority to Makram than the need to restore the masjid's function. Verses of a dedicatory poem inscribed in marble above Makram's mihrab praise his restoration and suggest that even Imam Hakim would be pleased with the results. Describing his restoration as *iḥyāʾ*, the anonymous poet (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:564) addresses Makram stating (translation of Arabic original)

> Glad tidings to you; you brought a house of dhikr (remembrance) back to life and reinstated its sacred rituals of worship after they had fallen into oblivion.

Like the medieval restorers of al-Anwar before him, Makram's intent was to facilitate prayer and worship and restore the masjid's status and role for society and it seems he was successful in doing so. The colophon of a manuscript[37] dating to 1224/1809, two years after his restoration, indicates that its scribe completed its inscription while in the masjid of al-Anwar (Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

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[37] Syedna Saifuddin (2016) notes that the manuscript in question, a copy of Ibn al-Jawzi's (d. 598/1201) *Diryaq al-Dhunub wa Tiryaq al-Qulub* (*The Antidotes for Sins and the Remedy for Hearts*), is in the Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah's manuscript library.
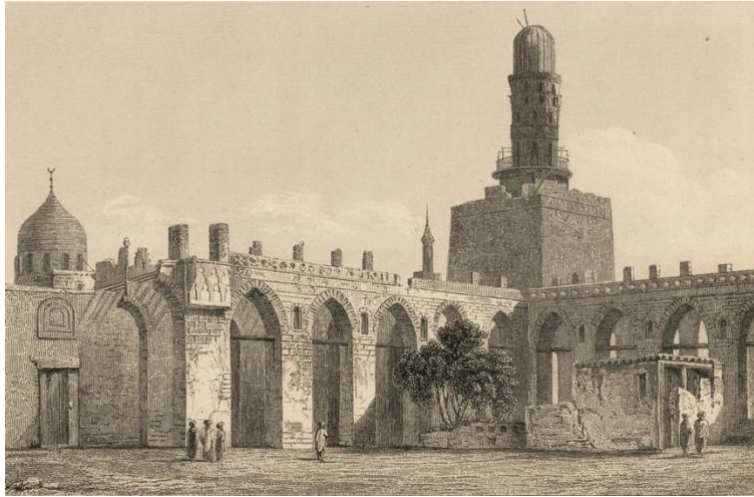
Figure 4-4 A comparison between this engraving from before the French fortification of al-Anwar and a photograph (Figure 4-5) taken half a century later show the extent of damage to the areas around the northern minaret which the French had converted into a fort and named Fort Vaille (Lemaître 1821) (Institut Cartogràfic i Geològic de Catalunya (ICGC)).

Figure 4-5 Minaret oriental de la Mosquée du Khalif Hakem, au Kaire. Piers and arches surrounding the northern minaret, which the French had loopholed for muskets, were completely destroyed by the mid 19th century (Du Camp 1849).

Figure 4-6 A view of ʿUmar Makram's mihrab and minbar from the north (Flury 1912:Table I).

The Comité's numerous efforts at al-Anwar — much like those of the medieval Muslim restorers before it — saw the gradual improvement of the physical condition of the site yet its intent was not to restore a place of worship but only to preserve a historic monument. Although Bacharach (in Roy 2003:31) claims the Comité 'cleaned up the interiors, made some structural changes and made it a functioning mosque for the community', evidence suggests otherwise. The Comité took the only suitable location for prayer, ʿUmar Makram's restored area of the al-Anwar sanctuary, and converted it to a museum and warehouse. Later, in order to restore what it considered the architectural harmony of the *majāz*, the Comité removed the ornate marble mihrab built by Makram exposing a simple brick depression (Pauty et al 1936). Here the integrity of an original architectural form was valued over the functional capacity of a later marble mihrab and its ability to provide a dignified location to lead prayer (Pereira 2004). The perception of al-Anwar as a secular building devoid of religious connotations would be a lasting legacy of the Comité.

4.4 Heirs to the Comité

With Egypt's independence in 1953, the Comité was disbanded. Anti-European sentiment was rife throughout the nation and authorities deliberately distanced government organs from European associations renaming the Comité to the Permanent Commission for Preservation of

Islamic and Coptic Monuments38. According to the antiquities website, after a century of being led by 'French scholars', the departure of the last British troops marked the moment the Antiquities Service 'truly became an Egyptian-run organization' ('History' 2011:4). However, despite the obvious declarations of independence from all things European in name, according to Mahdy (1992), a similar independence did not occur at a practical and philosophical level. The Comité's approach to conservation persisted in Cairo and so too did the values by which monuments were prioritized, conserved and readied for public consumption. Mahdy (1992:77) argues that those running the newly independent Antiquities department were not familiar with the 'European cultural attitudes to conservation' nor were they knowledgeable of the 'Islamic-Egyptian attitudes to conservation (as a result of the long period of European cultural colonisation of Egypt)'. Conservation in Cairo was thus a continuation of the status quo. The current state of affairs in the field of architectural conservation in Egypt then is a direct product of the Comité and colonial involvement in Egyptian heritage (Mahdy 1992, Reid 2002, Sanders 2008).

After a brief period of inactivity due to on-going political and military threats to the stability of the country and a general wariness of foreigners whom had been the principal purveyors of modern conservation in Egypt, the 1970s and 1980s saw a significant resumption of foreign-led architectural conservation activity in Cairo (Sanders 2008, Speiser 1995). French, German and Danish foreign 'missions' began working on different parts of Islamic Cairo followed shortly by Polish, American and Italian organizations (al-Minabbawy 1995:17). Increased threats to Cairo's rich Islamic heritage after a period of relative stability attributed to the Comité's efforts, were partly responsible for the renewed international concern (SPARE 1979, Williams 1985a). Exponential population growth, increased industrialization of historic quarters, inadequate waste disposal and rising ground water were identified by conservationists as some of the key causes for the deterioration of Cairo's heritage (Antoniou et al 1985, Hampikian 2004, Meinecke 1980, Williams 1985a). To this list, Williams (1985a:241) added what she terms 'unsupervised restoration'. Citing the masjids of ʿAmr and al-Hakim bi Amr Allah as examples, Williams (1985a:240) believed that 'misguided, although well-intentioned, preservation efforts' were contributing to the degradation of Cairo's heritage.

In response to these threats, various international groups worked with the Egyptian government towards drawing attention to Cairo's endangered heritage ultimately resulting in the nomination of Islamic Cairo to the World Heritage List in 1979. With the nomination and support from UNESCO, ICOMOS and other organizations, international planning and consultation from a

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38 In 1971, the name was changed to Egyptian Antiquities Organization (EAO), once more in 1994 to Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) and finally, in 2011, to the Ministry of State for Antiquities (MSA) after becoming an independent ministry (Taha and El-Asmar 2019, Wendrich 2010).

'team of experts', and more importantly, international funding, were made more readily available to Egypt's conservation efforts (Rodenbeck 1983b:21). But with international involvement so too increased the emphasis on charters and guidelines of conservation developed almost exclusively for Europe (Araoz 2013). Accordingly, in the first International Conference on the Preservation of Islamic Cairo (ICPIC) in 1980 it was resolved that conservation efforts in Egypt would follow the 'Venice Charter of 1962 [*sic*] and the Lahore revisions of 1980' (Williams 1985a:242). The operation of multiple Western entities combined with tourism from the Global North helped perpetuate European notions of conservation in Cairo (Reid 2015). Over the years, heritage scholarship has highlighted the World Heritage List's eurocentrism, and despite UNESCO's attempt to address this bias, the evaluation of 'universal' heritage is still an asymmetrical process unduly privileging Western values and concepts (De Cesari 2010, Gfeller 2015).

An analysis of the World Heritage conservation community's approaches to conservation in Cairo reveal multiple parallels between it and the Comité: an elitist attitude in the implementation of Eurocentric principles of conservation and perception of foreign organizations, the exclusion of religious values from conservation discourse and the quixotic pursuit of a 'medieval' Cairo are three characteristics which both have in common. The similarities between the two predominantly Western entities arise out of shared values which are remnants of a common ideological background that originates in, among other things, Orientalism, secularism, rationalism and romanticism (Orbaşli 2017, Rabbat 2018, Sanders 2003).

4.4.1 **Elitism in conservation**

Heritage conservation has long been associated to elitism, especially in its colonial manifestation in the pre-modern period (Arabindoo 2010, Jameson 2019). In heritage discourse, European conservation — and the subsequent international charters it produced — are considered 'implicitly superior to indigenous practices' (Menon 2017:88). The Comité's approach to the conservation of Cairo's Islamic heritage was nearly ubiquitously praised, and to this day contemporary historians and conservationists portray the Comité in a positive light, often being hailed as saviours of the city's heritage (Anon 2012, Mahdy 2017, Tegtmeyer 2018). Despite having acknowledged the discrepancies in the Comité's approach to conservation and their possible Orientalist motives and perception, Dobrowolski (2001:50) insists

> the fact remains: the Comité saved the monuments of Cairo. Without their work, the buildings we now admire would have been lost forever…

It is no wonder then that most introductions to contemporary foreign conservation work in Cairo invariably begin with a reference to the 'admirable' Comité (SPARE 1979:1). Such references may seek legitimacy for contemporary foreign organizations and suggest their continuation of the Comité's work. In an article titled 'Saving some of Cairo's treasures', Martiny's (1980:3)

description of conservation efforts is mostly related to international activity: the inscription of Islamic Cairo to the World Heritage List, the 'great enthusiasm for restoration' shown by 'foreign research institutes', the establishment of a 'non-Egyptian' society dedicated to the preservation of Cairo's heritage and a 'six-man team from UNESCO' committed to developing a master plan of the entire city's restoration. Expert consultation from the World Heritage conservation community is regarded as a prerequisite for any conservation project. Rodenbeck (1983b:21) speaks of 'four outstanding men' who were chosen to guide conservation efforts in Cairo after its nomination to the World Heritage List. In the 1990s, after learning of what it considered inappropriate restorations, UNESCO (1996:27, emphasis not in original) informed Egyptian representatives that it is 'always willing to provide, whenever necessary, *international expert* advice prior to any restoration work'.

The impact of foreign work can also be interpreted as being slightly embellished as well. Jessen (1996:10) described the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' restoration of al-Madrasa al-Gawhariya between 1975 and 1979 as having protected 'irreplaceable evidence of the peak of Islamic culture' from being 'irretrievably lost'. Notes of the restoration were 'presented as a book to the Egyptian people so that they can use it to safeguard Islamic culture' (Jessen 1996:10). Remarks such as these may overstate foreign contribution to heritage conservation in Cairo and propound a simplistic portrayal of Islamic culture which emphasizes its material manifestations often disregarding the complexity and diversity of its spiritual traditions.

Similar to the period in which the Comité operated, positive developments in Cairo's Islamic heritage conservation are often attributed to Western organizations [39] while delays and deterioration are ascribed to local issues such as 'bureaucratic difficulties', 'the presence of deep-rooted squatters', 'shoddy' contractors and government financial mismanagement (SPARE 1979:2). Contemporary Cairene heritage discourse is quick to point out the perceived failings of the EAO, although writers often refrain from naming the governmental organization directly, and instead focus on 'construction companies' (Williams 2002:460). Technical shortcomings in restoration, such as reconstructions in concrete, the installation of anachronistic design elements, or the use of modern materials, are chalked up to ignorance of conservation norms or incompetency. However, there has been no recorded attempt at analyzing these acts from the perspective that perhaps they are manifestations of a culture of conservation which prioritizes

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[39] Rodenbeck (1995:85), for example, described the German Archaeological Institute's Bayn al-Qasrayn project as 'good work' and the Italian Foreign Ministry's conservation efforts as 'wonderful'. He praised the French for their 'generous and civilized support of research' of Cairo's heritage (Rodenbeck 1995:87).

different values evidenced in the history and architecture of the very buildings under consideration.

4.4.2 Universal heritage versus local values

Like elsewhere in the Muslim world, because of the continued dominance of secular ideals over the 'global heritage preservation ethos', religious values pertaining to Cairene Islamic places of worship remain detached from discussions pertaining to their conservation (Rico 2019:153). Although foreign organizations have become more inclusive of local inhabitants in the processes of restoration, values towards religious heritage inspired by the teachings of Islam are rarely discussed or considered when determining conservation approaches in contemporary projects. Heritage projects adopting normative international conservation policies often stress materiality over functionality in line with conservation's positivist tendencies, especially in religious settings. As an example, Mahdy (2017:83) references local communities in contemporary Cairo who practice 'informal conservation' where the preservation of function and meaning of monuments is prioritized over their material form and fabric. Historic *sabīl-kuttābs*, as Mahdy (2017) suggests, are often neglected as monuments, yet their function, to provide water, is conserved by local inhabitants with modern installations that provide cooled drinking water to passers-by.

World Heritage policy creation and implementation help sustain the disconnect between religion and conservation in Cairo. In an attempt to represent sites from 'other eras', in 2007 the Egyptian government applied for a change in World Heritage List inscription, requesting 'Islamic Cairo' be changed to 'Historic Cairo' (UNESCO 2007:1). Although presented as an issue of period representation, Vahitkari (2016:87) suggests that the name change was intended to distance the historic area from religion. Claims to universality of Islamic places of worship as an instrument of authorized heritage discourse further obstruct religious values from featuring in conservation. The discursive placement of living heritage sites within 'transcendent categories' which claim to represent the cultural heritage of all mankind often exclude religious practitioners from the very sites they hold sacred (Bowdler 1988:521). Rico (2019:159) associates such categorization to Orientalist perceptions arguing that the employment of terms like 'universal stewardship' to describe the ownership of heritage sites is not unlike the physical removal of cultural artefacts from the Muslim world to 'Western repositories'.

4.4.3 The medievalization of Cairo

Multiple scholars have discussed the Comité's role in perpetuating a medieval perception of the historic centre of Cairo and actively working towards medievalizing it where it did not fit this perception (AlSayyad 2011, Bierman 2005, Sanders 2008). The fixation with conserving the 'medieval' character of Cairo's Islamic heritage was born out of European notions of authenticity,

which in the colonial context, saw preservation 'as a spectacle that marked the colonized as outside the modern' (Rajagopalan 2016:312). It is the buildings' romantic, ruined state that is the object of conservation since they 'were more lovely in the pathos of their gradual dissolution than they could have been ever in their prime' (see Figure 4-7) (Edwards 1882, in Reid 2002:216). Photographs and paintings created by Europeans during this period further perpetuated the notion of a medieval, romantic city. Imagery of al-Anwar's past condition to this day is evidenced both by critics and supporters of the 1980s' restoration to illustrate the contrast between its current condition and its depiction throughout the 19th century.

Figure 4-7 Europeans often romanticized the monuments of Cairo as Prosper Marilhat had in his depiction of the 'immensely romantic and sublime' ruins of al-Anwar in this capriccio painting from c. 1844 (© Musée du Louvre) (Yeomans 2006:62).

Modern heritage discourse reveals a similar 'medieval' perception and portrayal of Cairo's Islamic historic centre (Sanders 2008). While arguing the importance of the conservation of Islamic Cairo, Williams (1985a:233) suggests that the medieval city described by the likes of Ibn Batuta (d. 779/1377) and Ibn Khaldun (d. 808/1406) was essentially the same city 'that so astonished and delighted the European visitor in the middle of the 19th century'. According to Rodenbeck (1995:80), '[o]ne of the reasons for preserving medieval Cairo, of course, is precisely because it resembles what a medieval London or Paris must have been like, but of which we can no longer have any first-hand experience.' Cairo offered the modern tourist from the metropolises of the Global North, much like the 19th century 'colonial tourist' who yearned for Oriental splendour, a rare glimpse into the exotic medieval world (Sharma 2010:136).

4.5 Conclusion

El Habashi (2001) suggests that the Comité was responsible for safeguarding Cairo's Islamic heritage at a time when it was perhaps most vulnerable. Their actions at al-Anwar reflect this

possibility. The Comité's three quarters of a century worth of interventions at al-Anwar were responsible for restoring a majority of the masjid; the closest al-Anwar had been to its original form in centuries. Paradoxically, however, it was also the Comité's interventions at al-Anwar that prevented the masjid from being used as a place of worship. The conversion of the of the *bayt al-ṣalāt* to an arts depot, the use of the courtyard as an exhibition space for Cairo's relics, and most importantly, the construction of the Museum of Arab Art in the courtyard, later becoming the Silahdar school, altered the identity of the masjid. It is likely that over time, even the local area inhabitants ceased to perceive al-Anwar as a masjid, which could explain the dire condition it had reached prior to the Bohra restoration.

Before the advent of European involvement in Cairo's Islamic heritage, Islamic institutions such as waqf and the 'quotidian interventions' it inspired, focused on ensuring that sites remained active places of a living tradition for the inhabitants of the city (El-Habashi 2001:190). The very fact the so much of Cairo's religious built heritage has survived for so long speaks to the profound role of waqfs in masjid preservation. As Makram's repairs to al-Anwar indicate, historically masjid restoration prioritized function over fabric, whereas the Comité was concerned with fabric and form at the expense of function. A building's 'historic or artistic values' were the main criteria for the Comité's interest (El-Habashi 2001:184). The Comité's perception of Cairo's places of worship as historic monuments rather than sacred sites and its approach to conservation would endure into the next century with the arrival of a new generation of individuals interested in the preservation of Cairo's Islamic heritage shaped by the same European conceptions of conservation. In the late 1970s, however, this near homogenic perception would be challenged by the Bohra restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar. The Euro-American conservation community's reaction to this latest restoration of al-Anwar, one in a long series of interventions dating back to the very construction of the masjid, is the topic of the next chapter of this study.

Chapter 5: The portrayal and reception of the al-Anwar restoration in Cairene conservation literature

5.1 Introduction

As the previous chapter has illustrated, European presence in Cairo and the establishment of the Comité during the colonial and pre-modern period altered the physical states of Islamic monuments and influenced the manner by which these monuments were conserved. This Eurocentric approach to conservation persisted into post-independence Egypt and was further endorsed and entrenched by the individuals and organizations which became involved in the conservation of Cairo's Islamic heritage in the latter half of the 20th century. In 1978, when the Dawoodi Bohras began their work at al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, there were multiple conservation projects led by foreign entities at various stages of planning and execution throughout the city (Martiny 1980). Although the EAO was involved in all these endeavours, technical expertise and funding were provided mostly by their international partners (al-Minabbawy 1995, Brinton 1981, Sanders 2008). The Bohras arrived in Cairo and began their restoration efforts at al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar in an environment dominated by a varied but essentially homogenous group of Western conservationists, motivated by similar philosophies and principles. Due to the size and age of al-Anwar and the extent of its dilapidation, the Bohra restoration was one of the largest and 'most ambitious restoration projects in Islamic Cairo' and hence did not go unnoticed (Anon 1980:4). The Bohras had 'a restoration philosophy oriented along very different lines than' that of their predominantly Western counterparts and their work 'generated fierce criticism and debate' as 'the most famous example of bad restoration in recent years' (Lyster 1988:79).

This chapter will survey the commentary and perception of the restoration in conservation scholarship as well as in print media and will be organized according to the general areas of criticism and the socio-political factors which impacted the perception. Where relevant, responses by the Bohra community, by individuals involved in the restoration and by commentators in defence against particular criticisms will also be included. The criticisms and responses together highlight the areas of conflict between these seemingly opposing philosophies and will help identify themes for deductive thematic analysis in later chapters. The discussions presented in this chapter will help towards Objective 3 of this research study and will contextualize the philosophy, motives and values embedded in the restoration — topics that are covered in Chapters 6 through 9.

5.2 'Deplorable conservation techniques'

In its January 1981, newsletter, the Society for the Preservation of the Architectural Resources of Egypt (SPARE) informs its readers that a 'team of internationally-known experts' have filed a report 'deploring the conservation techniques' utilized by the Bohra community at al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar. The al-Anwar restoration had been criticized from the very beginning for its perceived negligence of international conservation guidelines and practices as well as its technical failures. Critics argue that the restoration was carried out without any research, documentation or suitable conservation expertise (Rabbat 2000, Roy 2013, Williams 2006). Much of this criticism may be attributed to the fact that there are very little published accounts of the restoration, which this study hopes to address to some extent. The restoration was also criticized for its technical shortcomings, not unlike other government-led projects of the time (Williams 2002). The failure to address rising groundwater, a chronic problem which still plagues nearly all monuments in Historic Cairo (Gharib 2010, Sutton and Fahmi 2002), and the problem of water penetration into the ceiling and the side walls[40] was noted (King 1984). The use of Portland cement was also widely condemned (King 1984, Williams 2002).

5.2.1 Do you like your buildings old or new?

However troubled by the technical processes of the restoration, it was the perceptible results of the restoration that truly bothered 'experienced conservationists' (SPARE 1981:3). Six months prior to the inauguration, SPARE (1980:5) described the restoration of al-Anwar as 'beginning to assume an authentic look'. Yet, in its next newsletter it deplored the restoration which had resulted in a 'gleaming white monument' (SPARE 1981:3). The building had lost its 'age-value', perhaps the single most important value that shapes modern conservation (Wells and Baldwin 2012). Determined by the physical appearance of a building and 'based on emotion rather than intellect', age-value is perceived through the patina of years of usage and the 'the signs of decay and disintegration' (Lamprakos 2014:423, Riegl 1982:73). In introducing his criticism of the al-Anwar restoration, Fowler (1995:14) asks a very simple, yet value-laden, question: 'Do you like your buildings old or new?' The jarring newness of al-Anwar's fresh, white layers of stucco and bright marble flooring disturbed modern conservation's portrayal of what historic, 1000-year-old buildings are meant to look like. The single most common criticism of the al-Anwar restoration was that the restoration has 'given us instead a new building' (Rodenbeck 1983a:25).

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[40] These issues continue to plague the site. Since 2017, the Bohra community has undertaken restoration work part of which attempts to address water damage in the piers and walls.

The aversion for what is new stems from the wish to sustain the 'medieval' nature of Fatimid Cairo which was carefully crafted by the Comité a century ago (p. 71). According to Antoniou (1998:23;42), al-Anwar had been a 'romantic ruins for centuries' before it was 'rebuilt in gleaming white marble and gold trim by the Bohra [*sic*], a Shiʿi sect based in India.' The 'new' masjid contrasted greatly with the perceived medieval character of the old city, as highlighted by SPARE (1981:3):

> Certainly, this gleaming white monument now seems closer in spirit to the Taj Mahal than to the muddy streets and rubbish-filled ruins that surround it. It is precisely this contrast, however, that disturbs experienced conservationists.

Yet, the very same contrast that concerned 'experienced conservationists' seemed to please the local Egyptians. The author of the *Egyptian Gazette's* (Anon 1980:4) article, 'A monumental feat of restoration' described the 'brilliant white marble courtyard' and 'freshly plastered and painted arches' as 'dazzling', appreciating its sharp contrast 'with the drab dilapidated buildings all around'. Bacharach (in Roy 2013:31) admits that although he was 'very critical' of the restoration, 'the Egyptians loved it as it was white and shiny'. These differences in opinion point to conflicting local and international values regarding the objectives of restoration and reflect perhaps the elitist nature of conservation discourse discussed above (p. 69).

5.2.2 Inauthentic

The 'new' state of al-Anwar, according to commentators, resulted in the loss of the masjid's authenticity, another major failure of the restoration. '[T]he Euro-American conservation tradition demands that the older fabric of a building be retained as much as possible' because it is predicated on the belief that 'historical events from the past' are somehow 'imprinted into the fabric itself' (Wells 2010:3). '[K]eeping the quality of patina and sign of age as a part of the authentic feeling of a monument' needed to be prioritized over 'complete renewal', according to Flemming (2005:5) who cited al-Anwar as a specific 'discouraging' example of where that was not the case. Lewcock (1985:50) characterized the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar as going 'too far', resulting in the destruction of the masjid's 'sense of antiquity and authenticity which had previously been its chief quality'. That al-Anwar's antiquity was its 'chief quality' and source of authenticity implies that its artistic, architectural and most importantly religious qualities are secondary if not irrelevant. Accusation of inauthenticity are 'an effective way to disenfranchise processes of heritage construction that do not align with a dominant Western heritage perception', as the statements here suggest (Rico 2016:25).

In defense of the Bohra restorations in an article published around the time of Flemming's report cited above, Abdallah El-Attar (in El-Aref 2001:14, emphasis not in original), head of the Coptic and Islamic Antiquities Department, said that since the project was under the SCA's supervision, the Bohras "could not add or remove any of the mosques' *authentic* elements". Authenticity is

clearly being interpreted differently by different agencies involved in the restoration of Cairo's Islamic heritage. According to Sanders (2004:132), 'the Euro-American preservation community' and the Bohras have their own 'competing notions of authenticity' and therefore perceived the al-Anwar restoration differently.

The loss of authenticity to al-Anwar was also argued on grounds of anachronism and irrelevance to the Fatimid period. Williams (2002:464, emphasis not in original), who Simonowitz (2004:395) finds 'particularly critical' of the Bohras' work at al-Anwar and elsewhere in Cairo among Western scholars, enumerates a number of unauthentic elements of the restoration:

> White marble was used to pave the courtyard and to cover the sanctuary wall. The ablutions fountain in the courtyard was shaped like a lingam. Anachronistic ornamentation was placed over the mihrab and gilded. A large cut glass chandelier illuminated the central aisle. *None of this was authentic for the Fatimid period*.

Both Williams and the Bohras look to the Fatimid period to derive authenticity; whereas Williams' understanding of authenticity is bound to the material availability of the Fatimid period, the Bohras' understanding is derived from the philosophies, personages and concepts that originated and developed at that time.

The belief in the Imams impacts the Bohra understanding of history and time. The Fatimid period is seen by the Bohras as a cohesive whole. Although distinct, and each Imam celebrated in his own right, the imamate is seen as a collective institution and the achievements and distinctions of individuals Imams are often attributed to all of them together (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). The phrase 'All of us are Mahdi, all of us are Qaʾim' reinforces this understanding and refers to the notion that each Fatimid Imam is seen to embody the messianic traits of Imam Mahdi (d. 322/934) and Imam Qaʾim (d. 334/946) who were responsible for establishing the Fatimid kingdom (Daftary 2010, Syedna Imaduddin 1976). In his criticism of the Project's anachronistic ornamentation, Lyster (1988:80) describes the 'disregard of historical accuracy' as 'comparable to decorating the White House in an Art Deco style on the grounds that both are "American"' laying bare the vast difference in the perception of history between the Bohras and their critics. For the Bohras, the history of all the Imams is a singular whole, and the object's suitability to al-Anwar is derived not from its temporal proximity, but its origins in a common creed and religious philosophy.

As previous chapters have illustrated, al-Anwar throughout both the medieval, pre-modern and pre-independence period, first at the hands of Muslim restorers and later through Comité interventions, has been a site of constant change. To the modern critic, however, it was the Bohra restoration which ultimately resulted in an inauthentic building. So great is the perceived loss of authenticity at al-Anwar, that Williams (1992:228) criticized Behrens-Abouseif (1992) for failing to explain the extent of the Bohras' 'rebuilding' of al-Anwar in her publication on Cairene Islamic

architecture. Readers and visitors to the masjid must be made aware that the current state of al-Anwar provided by the Bohra restoration is not a true, authentic representation of the masjid. In her own guide to Cairo's Islamic monuments, now in its 7th edition, Williams' (2018a:243) informs her readers that al-Anwar's 'gleaming marble and shining gilt of the mihrab, while impressive, have little to do with the mosque's original facings or decorations'. In an interesting comparison, Williams' (2018a) description of the masjid of Salih Talaʿi, on the other hand, makes no reference to the near complete reconstruction carried out by the Comité at the start of the 20th century. As Sanders (2008) has argued, to the modern conservation community like the Comité before them, Cairo retained a homogenic, medieval Mamluk character and so long that restorations adhered to this perception and portrayal, they did not compromise the authenticity of the restored buildings.

5.2.3 The Qurqumas Controversy

Figure 5-1 has been removed from this version
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Figure 5-1 A photograph of the Qurqumas tomb at the onset of the restoration. From this vantage point, the projecting portal is practically hidden (© Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah).

A significant criticism of the restoration was the removal of the Mausoleum of Qurqumas which abutted al-Anwar's monumental portal. The removal was seen as a violation of the Venice charter and Egyptian conservation statutes (Behrens-Abouseif 1982a). Although a listed building, Sanders (2008) suggests that the 'undistinguished construction of 1511', which was erroneously referred to as the tomb of Badr al-Jamali for many years, was never of any particular scholarly or architectural interest only becoming a subject of discussion after its removal (Creswell 1978,

Freeman-Grenville 1981:49). Although the Comité deliberated removing it in 1943 in line with its aggressive demolition program along the northwestern façade of the masjid, it was never agreed upon (Adam 1980a). However, considering the comprehensive nature of the current restoration program, the EAO's highest governing authority, the *Lajna Dāʾima* or Permanent Committee, approved the transfer of the mausoleum in August 1980, and only weeks prior to the scheduled inauguration it was dismantled and later reassembled in Cairo's Northern cemetery (Adam 1980b).

The projecting portal, a Fatimid contribution to masjid architecture, was designed to call attention to the entrance of the masjid. Having been beset with accretions, al-Anwar's portal and adjacent façade had been the focus of Comité conservation efforts for decades. The Comité discovered inscriptions on the northern side of the portal in 1907 which they replicated on the southern side in 1948 (Anon 1961, Max Herz 1908). The inscriptions in the dressed stone of the portal (and the contemporaneous minarets) are the first preserved example of Fatimid stonework in Egypt (Allen 2012). As it was 'one of the most important features of [Masjid] al-Hakim, [and] the first monumental entrance way in Cairo', the Bohras and the EAO agreed that the mausoleum should be transferred[41] elsewhere (Adam 1980b, Lyster 1988:80). The Bohras reference an unknown 'Smithsonian' report which states that the 'transfer of this mausoleum will reveal the striking dignity and grandeur of the façade which has no equal in any other mosque' justifying their removal (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981:54). Despite their objection, even SPARE acknowledged that removing the tomb 'has certainly restored an architectural purity that had not been visible for 450 years'.

Aside from the violation of charters, Lewcock (1985:50) argues that the removal of the Qurqumas Mausoleum had detracted from 'the richness of the street scene outside'. This scene had previously sat well with the medieval, Mamluk typological framework which had been advocated and developed by the Comité in the 19th century and perpetuated by the 'Euro-American' conservation community. According to Sanders (2004:148), 'the dismantling of the tomb signalled that the familiar landscape of Medieval Cairo was being challenged, and that a very different context for the mosque of al-Hakim was being constructed'. Critics invoke the mausoleum's transfer to illustrate the Bohras' disregard for non-Fatimid layers of the masjid, yet the Qurqumas removal seems to be an exception, not the norm. The ʿUmar Makram mihrab was not only preserved, but damaged portions of its polychromic marble were restored (Syedna

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41 There is a history of transferring and demolishing listed monuments to clear encumbrances surrounding older monuments in Cairo. For example, the Sabil of Salim Agha (b. 1166/1753) abutting Bab al-Naṣr was demolished in the 1940s and the Zawiya of Faraq ibn Barquq (b. 811/1408) immediately opposite Bab Zuwayla was moved and altered in 1924 to accommodate the widening of the road (Warner 2005).

Saifuddin 2016). Perhaps the single most prominent, non-Fatimid feature, the minaret finials were also left untouched and despite their Mamluk origins, were embraced as part of the masjid's identity (see Figure 5-2). The removal of the Mamluk mausoleum on one hand, and the preservation of the Mamluk minarets and Makram mihrab on the other, suggest that the Bohras' removal of non-Fatimid elements depended on the possibility of revealing existing, original Fatimid architectural features or inscriptions.

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Figure 5-2 The form of the al-Anwar minaret, which as seen here dates back to changes from the Mamluk period, was chosen as the logo for the inauguration of the masjid. A similar logo featuring the minaret was later adopted as the logo for the Bohra administration's public works and construction department (© Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah).

5.3 Socio-political factors

Beyond technical shortcomings and alleged violation of conservation of norms, there were a number other factors that impacted the restoration's perception in the eyes of the various stakeholders — which included the local population, national press and the government.

5.3.1 Shiʿas and Indians

The Bohra community's Shʿia background had a significant role in influencing the perception of the restoration, especially as depicted in Arabic periodicals (Behrens-Abouseif 1982b, a, Jamil 1980a). Anti-Shiʿa sentiment was on the rise during the 80s due to conspiracy theories regarding Iran, and the Bohras and their restoration of al-Anwar have accordingly attracted some negative,

often dramatic, press (AlSayyad 2011, Simonowitz 2004). Jamil (1980a:40, b:20, translated from Arabic) describes the *alarm* and *severe anxiety* that overcame him upon learning of the gathering of 10,000 Bohras in the city and in a subsequent article warns his Egyptian readers to be "Beware of the Bohras". He, like others, maintains a persistent narrative[42] regarding the questionable motives of the Bohras and their un-Islamic practices which eventually influenced the discourse surrounding the restoration of al-Anwar. Although admitting not to be an expert in conservation or Islamic architecture, Jamil (1980c) lists a series of unusual criticisms against the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar in multiple articles, one of which he names: "They are destroying our Islamic monuments".

Even in more academic forums, most references to the restoration of al-Anwar are prefaced with statements regarding the Bohras' Shiʿa background, which on some occasions has been identified as the reason behind the restoration's particular controversial style. The Bohra's restoration approach and zeal are seen as 'unusual in Sunni countries' while Lyster (1988:79) suggests that the restoration is motivated by the Shiʿa concept of 'sanctity of place' which does not resonate with Sunni Islam (SPARE 1981:2). Sedky (in Nkrumah 2009:n.p.), an urban conservationist, describes the Bohras as an 'overzealous group of outsiders…without much consideration for local residents' who 'deface monumental buildings' and have not 'taken local Sunni sensibilities into account'. It is clear that aside from the restoration's shortcomings and technical faults, the Bohra community's faith and beliefs had a role in determining the perception of the restoration in public spheres.

5.3.2 'Hindu mythology'

Perceived deficiencies of the restoration were also attributed to the Bohras' South Asian background and ethnicity. Aside from her more technical criticism regarding the violation of international conservation norms, Behrens-Abouseif (1982b) claims that the al-Anwar restoration has resulted in a new creation — one that resembles 'Indian' masjids. She (1982b:para. 7, translated from Arabic original) states that those restoring al-Anwar 'are Indians; they do not know *our* history nor *our* monuments'. Many of the visual changes were also seen to represent South Asian culture or Hindu traditions and beliefs. Lyster (1988:79) criticizes the use of white marble describing it as 'Indian-style' while Williams (1985b, 1992) repeatedly describes the domed structure over the well in al-Anwar's courtyard as a lingam, which Simonowitz (2004:395) points out is not a technical observation but a comment that reflects her 'personal taste'. King

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[42] Over time, these discussions have morphed into modern Egyptian urban legends and fabrications such as the alleged presence of a hidden weapons cache in the courtyard's well, or how the Bohras believe Imam-Caliph al-Hakim will reappear from within the masjid (Al-Daydamuni 2014, Gharīb 2015).

(1984:335) describes what he considers an exaggerated comment made by a Bohra regarding the number of trucks required to excavate the debris from the masjid as 'the kind of exaggeration that is all too common in Hindu mythology'. Resorting to such associations can be understood in the context of Wang's (2018:4) explanation of "Neo-Orientalism": he suggests that 'exotic cultures and philosophies are taken as a convenient and quick solution or explanation for the contradictions of questionable concepts in Western culture'. With regards to the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar, commentators attribute many of the peculiar, or unclear aspects of the restoration, to the Bohras' exotic Indian background without providing an explicit correlation.

5.3.3 The portrayal of Imam Hakim

The general perception of Fatimid monuments, particularly al-Anwar, has also impacted how the restoration was received. Medieval Mamluk chroniclers, who were not necessarily motivated by 'historical veracity', have generally portrayed the Imam-Caliph al-Hakim bi Amr Allah in a negative or exaggerative manner which has ultimately influenced his perception in modern Egyptian lore and popular culture (Haider 2008:130). Mahdy (2017) attributes the neglect towards al-Anwar over the years to this negative portrayal and it is possible that the restoration too may have been disregarded or met with disdain for similar reasons. Conversely, the Bohras argue the opposite is the case, suggesting that the restoration and the discovery of an inscription (see p. 145) in which the Imam is described as 'God's servant' have reversed[43] the negative associations to the Imam, particularly allegations of claims of divinity (Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

5.3.4 Portrayal in the press

Local and national politics also impacted the way the masjid was portrayed and perceived in the press. Most of the negative articles that directly criticized the EAO President Dr Adam Shehata and organs of the Egyptian government featured in *Rose al-Yusuf*, a popular weekly magazine[44] which had a history of criticising Anwar Sadat who was president at the time, especially after the 1977 food riots (Goldschmidt Jr. and Johnston 2003). The three newspapers affiliated to the government and seen to be semi-official spokespersons for the state were *al-Ahram*, *al-Akhbar* and *al-Jumhurriya*. These periodicals, which to this day there are considered the most influential dailies in Egypt (Lahlali 2011), all portrayed the restoration in a positive light. The Egyptian

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[43] Two articles are cited in particular: "Do not treat unjustly this just man", by the award-winning Egyptian author Jamal al-Ghitani (1978) and "Al-Hakim bi Amr Allah: We have treated him unjustly and the masjid that bears his name" by Ahmad Abu Kaff (1980).

[44] The magazine is named after its founder, the Egyptian actress Rose al-Yusuf. It had about a circulation of 35,000 in 2000 (Goldschmidt Jr. and Johnston 2003:342).

Gazette, also a semi-official government paper, carried a story generally praising the restoration the day after the inauguration in an article titled 'A monumental feat of restoration' (Anon 1980).

5.3.5 Misconceptions and misinformation

Over time, the narrative of the al-Anwar restoration through its consistent yet often ill-informed representation in media and conservation literature, picked up a number of discrepancies. Various aspects of the restoration were exaggerated or misrepresented altogether. The extent of the restoration's autonomy and lack of EAO supervision, the extent of the reconstruction of the masjid, the lack of research or documentation and the inventive ornamentation are some of the issues that have been highlighted by critics.

The assertion that Bohras were responsible for the majority of the reconstruction helps bolster criticisms against the restoration for going 'too far' and supports the accusation that the restored masjid is an entirely 'new creation' (Behrens-Abouseif 1982b, Lewcock 1985:50, Williams 2001:600). Warner (2005:89) describes the Bohras' restoration of al-Anwar as having 'rebuilt all the arcades except for those on the qiblah side' and according to Sanders (1999:160), al-Anwar 'bears only a general resemblance to the original, having been reconstructed in its entirety by the Bohras'. Yet historical references, photographs and site drawings indicate that more than two-thirds of the masjid's piers had already been constructed when the al-Anwar restoration commenced in 1978 (see Figure 6-9) (Creswell 1978, Riter 1981).

Descriptions of the restoration reinforce assumptions regarding the lack of research and technical understanding and attempt to delegitimize the agency and involvement of various actors. Despite being well-documented in the press, Williams (1985a:214) describes the Project as having 'reputedly' consulted with the famed Egyptian architect Dr Hassan Fathy (d. 1989) (see Figure 6-7). Even if Fathy's involvement is accepted, his role is minimized. Rodenbeck (1983a:25) argued that Fathy's 'aesthetics are charming, but have no basis in history'. Despite articles by the EAO's president which describe the government's role and defend the project (Adam 1980a), individuals cast doubt on the 'the *apparent* approval of the Egyptian authorities' (Rabbat 2000:49, emphasis not in original). Rodenback (1995) and Bacharach (in Roy 2013:31) accuse the Bohras of having 'paid to get permission … to do the restoration'. '[I]t made no difference' what the Bohras did 'as long as it (the EAO) didn't bear the cost' (Ahmad 1999, Nour 2012:125). Warner (2005:72) claims that the demolition of the Qurqumas tomb 'was unexpectedly commenced by the Shi'a Bohra sect' only to be salvaged by 'an intervention by the Antiquities Service' which contradicts the EAO's President's own account (Adam 1980b). Elements that did provide legitimacy to the restoration were not mentioned. That the restored masjid was inaugurated by then President of Egypt Anwar Sadat, a substantial gesture considering the prominence of

Pharaonic monuments over Islamic in Cairo, is seldom mentioned (Asdar ʿAli and Rieker 2010). At multiple levels of the restoration — technical, social and political — critics maintain a narrative of unauthorized work.

Ornamentation carried out during the restoration is in particular seen as problematic and often misrepresented. Antoniou (1998:46, emphasis not in original) contends that al-Anwar 'was *inventively* restored by the Bohras, who even added new windows and inscriptions'. Rodenbeck (1995:85) claims that the Bohras replaced non-Fatimid 'traditional elements' 'with neo-Fatimid inventions, imitations, or designs taken from books'. Al-Harithy (2005:12), many years later, states that the Bohras replaced fine carved stucco with white, imported Italian marble'. In both cases, no examples are given. Bacharach (in Roy 2013:31) describes inscriptions in the sanctuary area as 'pseudo kufic [*sic*] gold writing which may or may not have been there in the original'[45].

Having been entrenched in Cairene conservation discourse, the al-Anwar restoration has taken on an almost mythical status. Casual remarks made by career academics have severely questioned the credibility of those aspects of the restoration that perhaps do not merit the criticisms levelled against them. Scholars and researchers referencing the restoration, unconsciously or unwittingly, are prone to describing it in a certain way perpetuating a narrative that in many cases is based more on misinformation and opinion than fact. One explanation for this situation is the lack of accessible, published documentation regarding the restoration or research. The current study contextualizes decades worth of criticism and observations by providing an account of the restoration of al-Anwar and a description of the decision making process based on primary sources. In order to have a meaningful conversation about the values and philosophies which informed the restoration of al-Anwar by the Bohra community, it is imperative to first accurately determine as far possible the actual events, decisions and steps which took place.

5.4 Hassan Fathy interview

Shortly after the restoration, Dr Hassan Fathy, the chief architect of the restoration, gave a detailed interview[46] in which he covered topics regarding al-Anwar's architecture and restoration.

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[45] Pseudo-kufic, or kufesque, refers to 'imitations of Arabic in European art' (Mack 2002:51).

[46] A transcript of the interview was retrieved from the Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah archives in Mumbai. Although the primary focus is the al-Anwar restoration, Fathy manages to cover a variety of other topics as well including his views on modern skyscrapers and vertical architecture, his thoughts on domestic Islamic architecture and its introverted nature, larger plans for the conservation of Islamic Cairo and the importance of creating culture awareness through proper education for the long-term preservation of heritage. The interviewer is unknown but most likely someone involved in the restoration. The structure of the sentences and certain word usage would suggest that the interview was originally in Arabic and then translated into English.

Although the questions are often leading, tending to be defensive or apologetic, Fathy's responses help confirm that the project was aware of the criticisms against it and more importantly, it sheds light on the reasoning and understanding behind the various controversial decisions that were made.

One of Fathy's most impassioned discussions was regarding the removal of the Qurqumas tomb. Fathy (in Anon 1981:10) suggested that the installation of the mausoleum next to "the most important element in the mosque", where one passes from the profaneness of the outside to the sacrality of the masjid, was "vandalism". Fathy (in Anon 1981:2–3) is critical of his contemporaries' failure to analyse or criticize acts of the past, such as ʿUmar Makram's replacement of the original mihrab and the erection of the mausoleum adjacent to the portal which he compares to "putting a mausoleum against Notre Dame…or the mosque of Sultan Hasan". His arguments reflect many of those made by Viollet-le-Duc and pro-stylistic restoration proponents and suggest a universal system of appraisal that is not limited to a certain period of time. How does one determine whether an addition to an historic structure should be considered integral to it, or an affront and intrusion to its architecture and history? When dealing with a place of worship, Fathy's arguments are predicated on the belief that sacred architecture should be guided by distinct considerations in comparison to other historical monuments, particularly when assessing an addition or encroachment which if were constructed today, would not be acceptable.

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Figure 5-3 In the courtyard of al-Anwar, Dr Hassan Fathy (right) presenting an elevation drawing to Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (left) and Dr Yusuf Najmuddin (middle), Syedna's brother and a key adviser of the restoration (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016:94).

Authenticity for Fathy is dependent on respect for the 'character' of the masjid's architecture which seems to rely more on form than fabric. When asked how he filled the gaps in knowledge, i.e. determined the original character of the masjid, he responded with an example of the arches. The original arches, which could be distinguished from the later restored "wrong" ones because of their red bricks, had a specific curvature which was replicated elsewhere (Anon 1981:8). Thus, throughout the masjid, what "was original and what was new" was clear (in Anon 1981:8). The fabric was significant only in that it helped determine the original forms of the masjid which were seen as the true source of authenticity. Fathy justifies the use of marble as well similarly predicated on the significance of form over fabric. With the simple white marble cladding, Fathy (in Anon 1981:8) was able to "respect the character" of the brick mihrab, as he was the architecture of the courtyard through marble flooring. The uncomplicated layout of the masjid and the lack of major alterations allowed for a faithful reconstruction in accordance with its original design and form. King (1984:334) similarly remarks that the restored building allowed modern visitors to 'grasp something of what the structure was like in its greatest days' which was not possible prior to the restoration. Ultimately, Fathy surmises that not much was possible in terms of alteration to the original design, responding perhaps to those who claim the building became a new creation. The scale, layout and form of the masjid are nearly exactly as they were at the time of initial construction. But the impact of the 'new' material was so overwhelming to most critics, that its spatial consistency with the original remained unnoticed and sparsely mentioned.

Throughout the interview, the discussion oscillates between Fathy's employment of modern understandings of architecture and norms of conservation to justify the decisions made at al-Anwar and the exceptions to these norms on the grounds of the religious nature of the building and the intent to restore its religious function. For instance, Fathy (in Anon 1981:2) alludes to the principle of reversibility in his justification of the addition of the ablution pools, which could be removed like traditional "temporary" water pots without impacting the original layout. Elsewhere, however, he questions modern conservation's disapproval of concrete:

> Here they criticized us for using concrete. But when you have a pillar which is falling down, where the bricks have rotted away, we have to use cement mortar… Some fellow even dared to say that we have used concrete for the drainage of water from the roof. I do not know how they would have done it — with baklava, with cakes? You have to put it on the roof to drain the water. The criticism was very unfair...
> (Anon 1981:3–4)

When asked how the project should be completed, Fathy clarifies his position stating that it should be restored not as an historic monument, but a masjid which is to be used. Fathy's argument seems to be not only that the restoration of al-Anwar should not be faulted for its departure from normative architectural conservation since the results have provided a functioning masjid, but

more precisely, that for a masjid to function, its restoration must depart from the principles of normative conservation.

Rabbat (2010:28) seems to echo Fathy's sentiment in later observations[47] regarding the Bohra restorations, which resulted in 'places of worship for use in the modern age', unlike restorations 'akin to plastic surgery whereby the monuments acquired an ornate finish but their structural deterioration was left untreated'. Since Bohras 'are genuinely concerned for the long-term, permanent durability of these edifices', their restoration techniques deviate from conservation norms according to Simonowitz (2004:396). Fathy's interview suggests that authenticity was a priority for the restoration of al-Anwar, but it was an authenticity based on form and function rather than fabric with the understanding that ancient masjids which cater to worship in modern times require more permanent and substantial interventions.

5.5 Students of art and students of religion

King (1984:330), in the only academic article dedicated solely to the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar, summarizes the overall response to the restoration in a succinct if perhaps slightly simplistic manner: the restoration 'has aroused great interest in many segments of the Cairo community, students of religion tending toward positive assessments, students of Islamic art being uniformly negative and hostile'. A possible postscript to King's (1984:330) observation is that criticism from 'students of Islamic art' was influenced by principles of international conservation suggesting once more the inability of the structures of modern heritage to accommodate religious or Islamic values in the processes and principles it outlines for architectural conservation.

The response to the al-Anwar restoration suggests that critics operated on a separate system of values and philosophies than the restorers of al-Anwar. To modern conservationists, the return of religious functionality to al-Anwar, which had in medieval times been the primary objective of restorations, seems to have little relevance to the deliberations of the Bohra restoration's merits and demerits. To critics like Williams (2006:290), the restoration, one which focused on restoring al-Anwar as a masjid and not a monument (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981), was seen as 'culturally self serving'. Such statements rely upon the implied *universality* of modern conservation values such as historic and material authenticity. With regards to the al-Anwar

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[47] Earlier Rabbat (2000) was highly critical of the al-Anwar restoration suggesting it was one of the worst examples of restoration in Cairo's history. It is not exactly clear if he has changed his perspective on the actual restoration, but ten years on he does seem to recognize the fact that the masjid is a functioning place of worship once again.

restoration, SPARE (1981a:3) insists that the technical objections of 'experienced conservationists' 'should be understood to stand quite separate from the political or religious disquietudes' of others, suggesting that their objections are neutral and unbiased. This statement shows a failure to understand that the 'technical' and scientific principles of international conservation are embedded within their own value system. Although critics acknowledged that the Bohra restoration was carried out as 'an act of faith' with 'sincerity, patience and dedication', they failed to consider the distinct values or philosophies which may have informed their approach, attributing it to ignorance of modern charters or lack of research and understanding (Lyster 1988:79, SPARE 1980:2). Thus, to modern critics, it was the *absence* of a universal set of values, and not the *presence* of a separate ontological framework, that was responsible for the questionable results of the restoration.

Revisiting King's (1984:330) categories, for 'religious students' the values embedded in the al-Anwar restoration were clear: the return of function to a place of worship. In his article defending the restoration, Adam (1980a) laments the masjid's dishonour prior to the restoration and praises the Bohras' intent to restore al-Anwar as a house among the houses of Allah so it may resume the function for which it was intended. Many Egyptians shared this sentiment and believed the religious nature and intent of the Bohra restoration should be lauded, not derided (N03) [48]. And this religiosity had a duality to it in that not only was the restoration brought about by religious belief and values, it led to the resumption of worship where it had been stifled for centuries.

5.6 Conclusion: An opportunity for revaluation

This chapter has attempted to summarize the reception and perception of the al-Anwar restoration in both academic scholarship as well as popular press and concludes that there are four separate yet connected factors which contribute to how the restoration is perceived by its various stakeholders: the concrete (literally) technicalities of the site, modern heritage discourse with its Eurocentric origins, the Bohras' Shiʿa faith and South Asian background and the restored functionality of al-Anwar as a Muslim place of worship. The points of conflict discussed in this chapter will contribute to the overall template for the *deductive* thematic analysis of Fatimid texts that are discussed in Chapter 8.

The criticism surrounding the al-Anwar restoration encourages a revaluation of principles that guide modern conservation in the context of Muslim places of worship. King (1983:332)

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[48] References to narrative interviewees (see p. 24) will be made with anonymized codes which begin with the letter 'N'. Similarly, semi-structured interviews of site visitors (see p. 26) will be referenced with codes beginning with 'SS', focus groups discussions (see p. 25) with 'G' and elite interviews (see p. 27) with 'E'.

concludes his article by suggesting 'it is possible to advance a philosophy of restoration that is less rigid than that espoused by the Venice Charter'. From his mantle of leadership in the EAO, Adam (1980a:25, translated from Arabic), too, advocates for greater flexibility and diversity in sacred heritage conservation:

> [The work] that has been completed at the Masjid of al-Hakim bi Amr Allah is a huge accomplishment worthy of praise. It is an act that I hope will become an example for the restoration and repair of our other masjids… Finally, opinions differ in the manner by which restorations should take place; there are different schools of thought. Our differences in opinion do not mean that we should not value the perspective of anyone who takes up a cause in this field; rather, it means that we are all on the same righteous path which ultimately leads to the revival of what is ruined, the repair of what is broken of our collective human heritage, a heritage of the spirit and soul.

The purpose of this chapter has been to present the criticisms of modern conservationists regarding the results of the al-Anwar restoration and the responses in defence by the Bohra community and restoration apologists in order to highlight their different understandings of heritage and authenticity. The discussions above clarify misconceptions regarding the restoration and identify issues that may have distorted the restoration's presentation in press and scholarship. It might be prudent to register here, once again, that although the narratives of modern conservation methods and the choices made in the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar might appear irreconcilable, this is not necessarily the case. Insufficient documentation of the restoration process and an incomplete understanding of Fatimid construction objectives and values have accentuated the notion of both narratives being complete opposites. In reality, both stands have commonalities and the chapter that follows compliments these discussions in that it explores the Bohra community's motives and principles in the restoration and provides a detailed account as to how these motives and principles guided the restoration.

Chapter 6: The *Iḥyāʾ* of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar

6.1 Introduction

The restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar features repeatedly in the scholarship of Cairo's Islamic heritage as an example of how conservation should *not* be done (Fowler 1995, Rodenbeck 1983b, SPARE 1980). Yet for a project which receives such constant attention, an academic account based on primary sources which details the restoration is still unavailable. Dawoodi Bohra publications largely remain available only to the community and approach the narrative from a religious perspective and internal frame of reference. For a meaningful discussion into the al-Anwar restoration and any subsequent inferences for the wider architectural conservation field — especially in understanding Islamic values which may influence the conservation of places of worship — a comprehensive account of the al-Anwar restoration, the motives which inspired it and the principles that guided it is necessary.

This chapter is organized into three sections (see Figure 6-1). The first section focuses on declared and inferred motives behind the restoration, gleaned primarily from Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin's written and spoken statements. As initiator of the Project, Syedna Burhanuddin's descriptions of the project's origins and reflections on its perceived success after completion will shed light on why and with what intent the Bohras carried out this project. The socio-religious motives behind the restoration inform the principles and policies that governed the restoration work. The second section deals with the architectural conservation principles the Project relied upon in the execution of the restoration. Contrary to popular belief (see p. 75), the restoration abided by a declared set of principles which largely drew upon modern norms distinguishing itself primarily in its insistence on restoring al-Anwar as a masjid and not a monument. Key similarities and differences between the Bohra principles and contemporary practices will be highlighted in this discussion providing the opportunity to review the community's indirect criticisms of modern conservation, a largely unexplored area (Sanders 2008). The third and final section will examine how the motives and principles manifested themselves on site with a detailed account of the restoration from its conception to inauguration in November 1980. In order to understand the dynamics of the restoration, a chronological account which summarizes the major milestones, achievements and setbacks for the restoration will preface a thematic analysis which focuses on participant perception and sentiment. A chronological narrative is best-suited to understand the scale of the restoration and also the relatively swift pace in which it was executed.
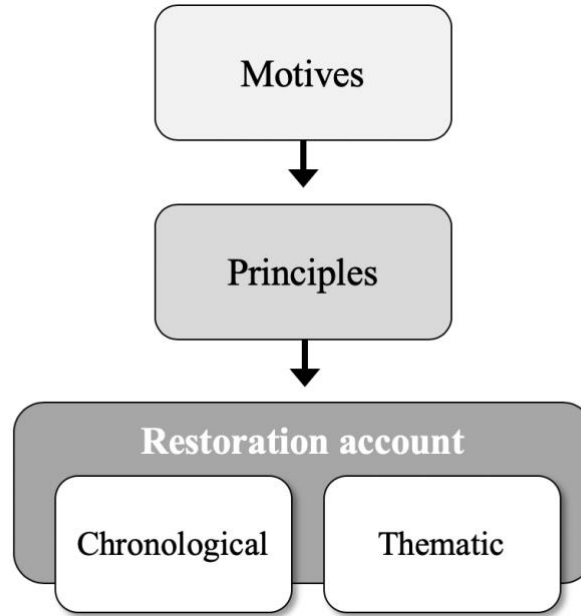
Figure 6-1 Organization of Chapter 6 (Author).

6.1.1 A brief note on the data sources

The al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar restoration project was officially known as the Mashrūʿ ʾIḥyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar: The al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar Iḥyaʾ and Restoration Project (henceforth, the Project). The account of the Project provided in this chapter is based upon multiple sources including community publications, semi-structured interviews of individuals involved in the restoration, video and image archives and architectural plans and drawings from the site office. The works of Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, his successor Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin's epistle dedicated to the al-Anwar restoration (see p. 30), a report produced by project management named *Taqrīr min al-Aʿmāl allatī tammat fī al-Marḥala al-ʾŪlā* (lit. *Report on the Works Completed in the First Phase*, henceforth *Project Report*) as well as other secondary publications circulated within the community will form the primary documentary sources.

Sermons delivered by Syedna Burhanuddin and interviewee testimonies regarding his instructions are of particular importance considering his dual role as restoration patron as well as the Bohra community leader. The epistle by Syedna Saifuddin, who at the time of the restoration was his father's deputy on site, is valuable in that it provides both a first-hand account of a highly involved, decision-making individual in the restoration and the authoritative voice and interpretations of the community's current leader 40 years after the restoration's completion. The analysis of secondary publications issued by Bohra centres as commemorative issues demonstrated the breadth of the official narrative yet also provided nuances through personal anecdotes unavailable in official discourse. Through inductive thematic analysis, this chapter will help identify themes that will form the template for the deductive thematic analysis of Fatimid

texts in the later chapters of this study, thus more explicitly linking Bohra discourse surrounding the restoration to its philosophical origins and Islamic values regarding sacred built heritage.

Eye witness testimonies obtained through narrative interviews and focus groups of participants in the restoration supplement and corroborate the above documentary sources. The interviews help reveal subtleties of the restoration which are often overlooked in official publications. Since nearly 40 years have passed since the restoration, the interview questions were designed to get a general feel for the restoration and how decisions were made; not necessarily to determine specific details which were better understood through documents. The thematic analysis of interview data revealed participant mindset and perception of the restoration allowing themes to connect with visitor perception of the masjid in present times (Chapter 7) as well as larger discussions regarding Islamic values (Chapter 8) and notions of authenticity (Chapter 9). In addition to interviews and textual research, visual data such as photographs, video and architectural plans, were analyzed and 'read as text' to complete the process of triangulation to support the account of the al-Anwar restoration provided here (McLeod et al 2016:21).

Thirteen narrative interviews were conducted with individuals involved in the restoration in varying capacities and durations. Two focus groups with restoration participants were held as well; one with six Cairo residents and another with ten individuals, mostly senior management. This study estimates that a core team of approximately 15-20 people worked on the restoration from conception to completion, which matches Martiny's (1980b:11) observation of a 'team of 15 Indians belonging to the Bahariyya [sic] sect' on site. Another 25-40 people were intimately involved for smaller durations, perhaps joining at a later date. As the project progressed and intensified in later stages, particularly from the start of 1980, more individuals became involved. In addition to these core members, the several weeks (October/November 1980) leading up to the inauguration saw an influx of volunteers; it is estimated that anywhere from 500 to 2000 people were on the site not including skilled local craftsmen and labourers (G01). Based upon data collected during interviews and focus groups and descriptions of the decision-making process and roles, a basic hierarchy of operations can be estimated without disclosing individual identities (Figure 6-2).
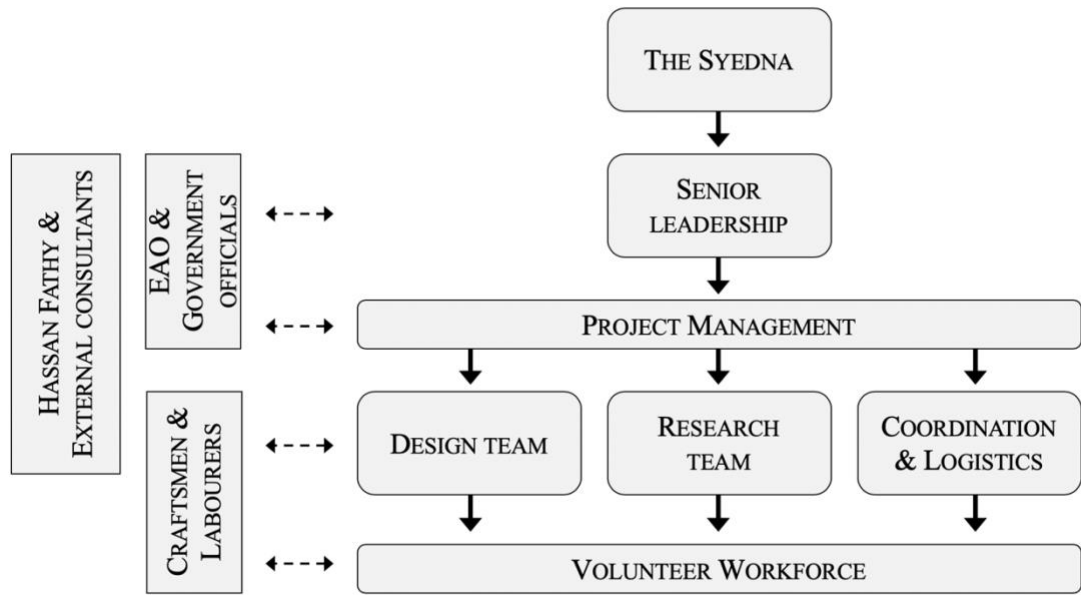
Figure 6-2 Project working hierarchy and nexus of coordination with external parties and stakeholders (Author).

The account of the restoration provided here relied almost exclusively upon sources from Project archives and Bohra community publications due to the paucity of information regarding the restoration in government or other private collections. An attempt has been made to verify details and where there is ambiguity, an acknowledgement of the Project's perspective or interpretation of the event is forthcoming. Ultimately, the objective of this chapter is two-fold: to provide factual information regarding the key events, milestones and operations of the restoration, yet equally important, to understand these developments as the Project and the Bohra community perceived and portrayed them.

6.2 The motives behind the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar

Scholarly assumptions regarding the motives behind the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar range from the Bohra community wanting to re-establish an 'imaginary golden period' from the Fatimid era (Rabbat 2000:51) to creating a common dynastic style and architectural language among the Cairene Fatimid relics to create an easily replicable, global identity (Sanders 2008, Williams 2001). Simonowitz (2004) suggests the restoration was part of a celebration of the spirituality of a sacred space while El Sandouby (2008) sees it as an expression of love and devotion for the Prophet's family, the Fatimid Imams. These observations rely mostly on select secondary sources limited to the English language.

An analysis of primary sources shows that the Dawoodi Bohra community's motives behind the restoration are slightly more complex and fall into two broad categories. The first category of motives are inspired by the masjid's inherent importance within the Islamic tradition and as such the restoration in itself is seen as the objective. The second category differs slightly in that the restoration, beyond its immediate transformation of the masjid from a ruin to a functioning place of worship, was seen as a means for the revival of Fatimid heritage and subsequently Fatimid faith, culture and tradition as well. Both these categories are discussed in the following sections with relevance to the notion of *iḥyāʾ*.

6.2.1 Restoration as an expression of faith

6.2.1.1 Joy and anguish

The restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar was seen by the Bohra community as a religious obligation the fulfilment of which was necessitated by the masjid's severely dilapidated condition — its *kharāb*. A statement made by Imam Ali b. Ali Talib (d. 40/661) lies at the foundation of this understanding and is quoted by Syedna Burhanuddin (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:282) in a sermon in which he explains the genesis of the restoration (translated from Arabic):

> A masjid complains of its *kharāb* to its Lord. And it rejoices at the presence of one of its visitors (*ʿummār*, pl. of *ʿāmir* which shares the same Arabic root as *ʿimārah*) when he returns [to the masjid] after a long period of absence as one of you would rejoice at the return of a lost loved one.

Kharāb here refers primarily to desolation brought about by the absence of patrons but also implies a physical state of *kharāb* or ruination. Syedna Burhanuddin compares his father Syedna Taher Saifuddin's arrival to Cairo in 1937 to the return of a masjid's patron after a long absence. Al-Anwar had complained of its *kharāb* and the return of its patron, the Fatimid Imam's representative, brought it joy. The *dāʿī* is compared to the *ʿāmir*, who ensures a masjid remains functional and populated (see p. 38), which according to verse 9:18, is only done by 'those who believe in Allah and the Last Day'. Thus, the Bohra leadership saw the restoration of al-Anwar required by their belief in God and their understanding of the term *ʿimāra*.

Witnessing the *kharāb* also incites a feeling of anguish in the believer's heart, motivating him or her to action. Badr al-Jamali states that his motivation in restoring the Perfumer's Masjid was having witnessed the state of *kharāb* to which had succumbed to (see p. 205). Similarly, according to the inscription installed by the Bohra community after the completion of the al-Anwar restoration, when Syedna Taher Saifuddin witnessed the *kharāb*' of al-Anwar during his first visit, he too resolved to restore and return it to its original function (Syedna Saifuddin 2016:828). In community discourse, this moment was the point of inception for the al-Anwar restoration. The

masjid's state of desolation and *kharāb* was an important motivator behind the Community's efforts towards the restoration.

Figure 6-3 has been removed from this version
of the thesis due to copyright restrictions

Figure 6-3 A view of the courtyard facing the *bayt al-ṣalāt* c. 1937 when Syedna Taher Saifuddin first visited al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar (© Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah).

6.2.1.2 Righting a wrong

The masjid's state of *kharāb* was closely linked to the *ẓulm* perpetrated against it. *Kharāb* suggests neglect and negligence, whereas the word *ẓulm*, which means injustice and oppression, suggests active desecration and degradation of the masjid. Certain parts of al-Anwar were actively desecrated and used for purposes 'other than the purpose for which Imam had built the masjid' (Syedna Saifuddin 2016:213, translated from Arabic). Within community discourse, almost all discussions of the scale of devastation at al-Anwar are prefaced with a list of perceived acts of injustice which took place at the masjid. Like Imam Ali's statement which attributes human actions and feelings to the masjid, *ẓulm* too suggests anthropomorphic attribution and elicits from sympathizers action to free it from a perilous condition. Upon witnessing signs of vandalism on some of the masjid's marble piers at the onset of the restoration, Syedna Burhanuddin instructed the Project to ensure that all marks of *ẓulm* against the masjid were erased (N01). What might be referred to as patina in some contexts, is seen here as an affront to the masjid. Accordingly, a publication by the local Bohra community of Dar es Salam, refers to the Syedna as the 'saviour of the Masjidul Anwar' (Morbiwalla 1981:20).

6.2.1.3 Next to Godliness

Multiple interviewees (N03, N05, N11) and sources suggest that the use of the masjid as latrines and a dump was seen as the greatest *ẓulm* and was a key motivator behind mobilization for the

restoration (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah-Surat 1981). In his discussion of the importance of cleaning and its role in relieving the masjid of *ẓulm*, Syedna Burhanuddin references a specific historical incident from the Prophet Mohammed's time. The Prophet once saw phlegm expectorated onto the Qiblah wall of a masjid and cursed the man who was responsible. Upon learning of the Prophet's discontent with her husband, the man's wife quickly came to the masjid, cleaned the affected spot and fragranced it with saffron for which the Prophet accorded her a prayer of *baraka*. Syedna Burhanuddin associated this narrative — one which establishes cleaning a masjid as a religious and meritorious deed — with his son Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin's clearing of a cesspit above the mihrab (p. 110). Syedna Burhanuddin (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:381) stated that it was from that day that the marks of *ẓulm* upon al-Anwar began to fade. Purification of masjids was also one of the four principles of *ʿimārah* outlined by Badr al-Jamali whom the community claimed to emulate in their restoration, and was also an act carried out by other medieval Islamic restorers (Saifuddin 2002). Thus the cleaning of al-Anwar — because of the dire condition it had reached, the blessings the Bohra community believed cleaning entailed and the perception of cleaning as a devotional act — was not seen solely as a step towards the overall restoration but an objective in itself and a key motive behind the Bohra's mobilization.

6.2.1.4 *Iḥyāʾ*: A place for worship once more

The Project's use of two Arabic words, *tarmīm* and *iḥyāʾ*, for the restoration might suggest an inherent duality in its intent — physical restoration as well as spiritual. *Tarmīm* is the modern term commonly used for 'restoration' in conservation technical parlance, but *iḥyāʾ* is unique[49] (El-Habashi 2001). The *Project Report* stated that the word *iḥyāʾ* was included in the official name because al-Anwar was to be restored not solely as a monument *but as a masjid* (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981:7, translated from Arabic, emphasis not in original). Clearly *iḥyāʾ* has religious connotations in that the term is used only to describe the restoration of places of worship – not monuments. Why does bringing back to life relate specifically with the restoration of a masjid? The usage of the term in Fatimid texts might help explain this relation.

In its most literal manifestation, *iḥyāʾ al-mawtā* refers to bringing the dead back to life and the concept features prominently in the Quran. For instance, in verse 2:260 Abraham asks Allah to show him how to bring the dead back to life (Nasr et al 2015). Miracles of reanimation and resurrection of dead animals and people are also attributed to the prophets and imams (Loebenstein 2003, Robinson 1991). If *iḥyāʾ al-mawtā* refers to restoring function to a dead body,

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[49] In Mahdy's (1992:133) evaluation of Van Berchem's 545 inscriptions of historic Islamic buildings, the term *iḥyāʾ* features only once.

the *iḥyā'* of a masjid would equate restoring function to a dead building. Unlike historical monuments, then, which may or may not be made functional, a ruined masjid should be made functional once more and this process is known as *iḥyā'*. The *tarmīm* of al-Anwar could speak to the physical restoration of the masjid, while its *iḥyā'* suggests the resumption of the functions for which is was originally built. During the inauguration ceremony which President Sadat presided at, Syedna Burhanuddin (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:1088, translated from Arabic) stated that 'our extraordinary happiness and great joy at the *iḥyā'* of this important monument amongst the Fatimid monuments of Egypt is matched only by our happiness and joy at the resumption of religious activity within it'. Syedna Burhanuddin thus links the physical act of restoration with the resumption of worship within the masjid indicating the ultimate purpose of al-Anwar's restoration and his conception of *iḥyā'*.

6.2.1.5 *Who* is the masjid?

Within the Isma'ili Tayyibi tradition, the masjid is more than a building: it represents various individuals within the community's spiritual hierarchy (Muhammad 2006). Exoteric aspects of religion are containers and vehicles for the expression and belief in esoteric truths. The masjid embodies esoteric meanings, and more importantly, represents individuals whose deference and recognition form an integral part of the faith. The various sayings which attribute masjids with human qualities (p. 95) allude to this semantic parallel as do quite a number of verses[50] in Tayyibi literature. Thus, the community's efforts in the *iḥyā'* and restoration of al-Anwar can be seen as an expression of deference and devotion to the various positions the masjid alludes to including the *dāʿī* himself. Simonowitz (2004:319) has recognized this relationship between the institution of the masjid and *dāʿī* in his research. His interviews of community architects who designed places of worship in the West suggest 'that the link between the communal leader and the communal space is quite powerful'. Esoteric understandings of the masjid suggest that a leading motive behind the restoration was an expression of devotion to the Fatimid Imam and *dāʿī*.

6.2.2 **Architectural restoration and Islamic revival**

The *iḥyā'* of al-Anwar was an objective in itself, but it was also a part of larger revival movement within the community. In this context, *iḥyā'* takes on the meaning of *iḥyā' al-amr*, or bringing life to the 'cause', i.e. the Fatimid *daʿwat*. This term traces back to a statement made by Imam Jaʿfar al-Sadiq (d. 148/765) (in Muhammad 2014) to a group of his disciples as reported by the famed Fatimid jurist and *dāʿī* al-Qadi al-Nuʿman (d. 363/974) (translated from Arabic):

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[50] An analogy of the *dāʿī* as a masjid is described in a Lisān al-Daʿwat verse by a prolific Dawoodi Bohra poet Shaikh Sadiq Ali (d. 1233/1818) (1979).

> "May God have mercy on the one who brings life to our cause (*amr*)." "How does one bring life to your cause", he was asked. Imam said, "By discussing it amongst people of knowledge, religion and understanding".

Bringing life to the 'cause' was akin to sustaining the Fatimid *daʿwat* through propagation: a common objective of the disciples and missionaries of the Imams throughout Fatimid history. It was sharing the intricacies and virtues of the cause where it might find acceptance and favourable reception. As a physical legacy of the Fatimid period and a building built by the Imams, Syedna Burhanuddin saw the *iḥyāʾ* of al-Anwar as contributing to the *iḥyāʾ* of the Fatimid cause. A building that had been derelict and forgotten for centuries was being restored and its patron-builders, the Fatimid Imams, were once more being remembered for their contributions to Cairo and Islamic architecture. For Syedna, the restoration was a *khidmat* or act of service to the Imam, one which he believed strengthened the Fatimid cause upon which the Dawoodi Bohra cause is predicated (Boivin 1998).

Syedna envisioned for the *iḥyāʾ* of al-Anwar to have a role in the revival of the Fatimid faith as practiced and lived by the Dawoodi Bohra community and saw an opportunity to strengthen the community's ties to Cairo, their ancestral home and the land from whence their faith and culture originate. Using the al-Anwar restoration as a platform, Syedna called the community to greater conformity with the principles of Islam as interpreted and represented in the Fatimid Tayyibi tradition. This added emphasis was part of an on-going movement initiated in 1978, after restoration work at al-Anwar had commenced, with an international gathering in Surat, India, known as al-Multaqā al-Fāṭimi al-ʿIlmī (henceforth Multaqā) where the Syedna had 'charted a programme to re-orient the community towards its Islamic roots in all aspects of life and re-assert its Islamic identity in the new Islamic century' (Abdulhussein 2001:104).

Islamic revival, also represented in the term *iḥyāʾ*, intensifies at the dawn of each new century and as the 15th century hijri approached, Muslims across the world were reassessing their positionality vis-à-vis modernity (Mansurnoor 2009, Mustafa 2011, Sinanović 2012). In a similar vein, the restoration too had been associated to the turn of the century, and was perceived as a call to Islamic principles (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). The two acts of *iḥyāʾ* — religious revival through the Multaqā and religious architectural restoration through al-Anwar — took place in tandem. The Multaqā endowed the Bohras with 'a sense of cultural worth' and contributed to the development of a 'particular community ethos' which was further galvanized by mass participation in the al-Anwar restoration and inauguration (Mustafa 2011:88). According to Syedna Saifuddin (2016:365), the commencement of al-Anwar restoration work in 1978 coinciding with the Multaqā conference in Surat was no coincidence; it was in accordance with Divine Providence in order to usher in the new Islamic century.

6.2.3 Islamic and universal heritage

Alongside the *iḥyāʾ* of al-Anwar, Syedna Burhanuddin intended to contribute to a wider *iḥyāʾ* of religious heritage in Cairo. The Sultan[51], according to an interview published by the *al-Ahrām* weekly magazine in August 1980, sought Allah's happiness and the affection of Egypt and her people through this act of *iḥyāʾ* and to contribute to the *iḥyāʾ* of Egyptian civilization's religious heritage (Syedna Saifuddin 2016:1102). In another interview, Syedna expands the impact of the restoration, suggesting that it will contribute to the return and *iḥyāʾ* of global human civilization (Syedna Saifuddin 2016:1111). It is obvious from his statements that the Syedna perceives that the reanimation of al-Anwar will go beyond the pale of the masjid itself, influencing the various categories within which it exists, including Islamic architecture and global human heritage.

6.3 The principles and operational guidelines of the al-Anwar restoration

The resumption of worship within the precincts of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, the primary motive of the restoration as discussed above, forms the essence of the principles which were established to guide the process of *iḥyāʾ*. These working principles and guidelines, as declared in the *Project Report*, gleaned from participant interviews and identified in the results of the restoration, can be seen as a nexus between the community's motives described above and the philosophies and values of the Fatimid Islamic tradition. As such, the concepts introduced here connect and overlap with many of the issues to be explored in greater detail in Chapters 8 and 9. An investigation of the principles and guidelines laid out by the Project will help better understand the decisions and steps taken during the restoration which are to be discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

Syedna Burhanuddin had given instructions as to how the Project should approach the restoration which formed the official *uslūb ʿilmī*, or conceptual approach, that was later published in the *Project Report* (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). The *uslūb ʿilmī* called for:

> (1) The *iḥtifāẓ* (preservation, safeguarding) of everything that has archaeological or historical importance.

> (2) The *ʾihyāʾ* of the masjid, not only as an ancient monument, but its *ʾihyāʾ* as a *jāmiʿ* (masjid) that has its own distinct sanctity (*ʿaẓamat*), [religious] status (*makānat*), majesty (*jalāl*) and beauty (*jamāl*). Ultimately, it should be returned to its original glory. It is for this reason that the Sultan chose the words ' *ʾihyāʾ* and *tarmīm* for this project.

> (3) A comprehensive study of all aspects [of the masjid] prior to commencement of restoration work.

> (4) Prioritizing older and more ancient elements of the structure while emphasizing a return to the original.

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[51] The Syedna is often referred to as Sulṭān al-Bohra in Arabic speaking countries (Saifuddin 2000).

(5) Adhering to the spirit of the [Fatimid] period in the selection of architectural, artistic, ornamental and Kufic elements and designs. Such usage should only be resorted to when sources are inadequate to determine the [structure's] original [condition] thereby preventing the restoration from going astray (i.e. becoming inauthentic).

(6) Ensuring that precaution, precision and soundness are the defining characteristics of the project throughout all stages. These principles will secure the project's integrity (authenticity) and guarantee correct execution (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981:7, translated from Arabic).

Although unnumbered in the original Arabic, for the purposes of this study each distinct component of the conceptual approach will be treated as a separate article, using a term borrowed from modern conservation.

6.3.1 An informed decision

At the onset of this discussion, it is important to note that the principles as described here reveal the Project's awareness of contemporary conservation practices and parlance. The call for the preservation of aspects of the building that are of archaeological and historical significance (Article 1) is an attempt to respect all layers of its history. In a sermon in which Syedna Burhanuddin (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:454) explains this conceptual approach, he gives the specific example of the ʿUmar Makram mihrab to illustrate his instructions that anything of 'historic importance' should be preserved, whether from the Fatimid period or not. Additionally, the call for accurate and research-based interventions (Articles 5 & 6) acknowledges architectural conservation as a scientific discipline and the importance of authenticity as key element of this discipline.

There are, however, three primary distinctions between the principles listed here and normative conservation guidelines. First, the obvious recognition of the monument as a religious building and the stance that the restoration will differ, and *should* differ, from restorations of 'historical monuments'. Although major charters[52] acknowledge the role of religious values in conservation efforts, they are part of a set of multiple values that all must be given due consideration, and no single value-set is necessarily given preference over the others. The Project, however, saw the restoration in itself as a *religious* act and hence the masjid's sacrality as a place of worship outweighed any other values it may retain as a historic or architectural monument. The second distinction of the Project's approach was an emphasis, or what may seem an over-emphasis, on the 'original' state and function of the building. Although the Project calls for the preservation of

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[52] Although the Venice Charter makes reference to religious values, a more concentrated recognition of their role in safeguarding heritage came much later, particularly with UNESCO's Kyvi Statement of 2010 (Tamma and Sartori 2017).

all historic layers (Article 1), this can only be the case when it does not obstruct returning the masjid to its 'original glory'. The Project has clearly prioritized its 'original' and oldest state during the Fatimid period over other periods of its history which is in contrast to modern guidelines which suggest all historic layers of a building should be equally respected. Finally, the authorization to add Fatimid artistic and architectural elements not original to the masjid when original ornamentation and design are not determinable, suggests a prioritization of aesthetics over notions of authenticity as understood and perceived in modern conservation. What normative conservation would see as an avoidable intervention is seen by the Project as a necessary element of the restoration process. The authorization also suggests that the locus of authenticity for *iḥyāʾ* lies within a religious and aesthetic domain rather than notions of history and materiality as will be discussed in Chapter 9.

6.3.2 An organizational framework: sanctity, status, majesty and beauty

The Project listed four qualities that distinguish a masjid from other types of historical monuments: a masjid has its own sanctity, status, majesty and beauty (Article 2). The four terms singled out as the key characteristics of the masjid offer an organizational framework from which the operational guidelines for the al-Anwar restoration can be categorized and understood. 'Sanctity' and 'status' allude to the masjid's spiritual importance and socio-religious role within Islamic society, while 'majesty' and 'beauty' make the argument for a building whose physical characteristics — form, scale, spatial layout, materials and decorative devices — create a profound impact upon its visitors (Figure 6-4). The *iḥyāʾ* of the masjid was contingent upon these four qualities. To truly bring the masjid back to life means to elicit the same respect, admiration and awe of the building as when it was first created or, more aptly, born.
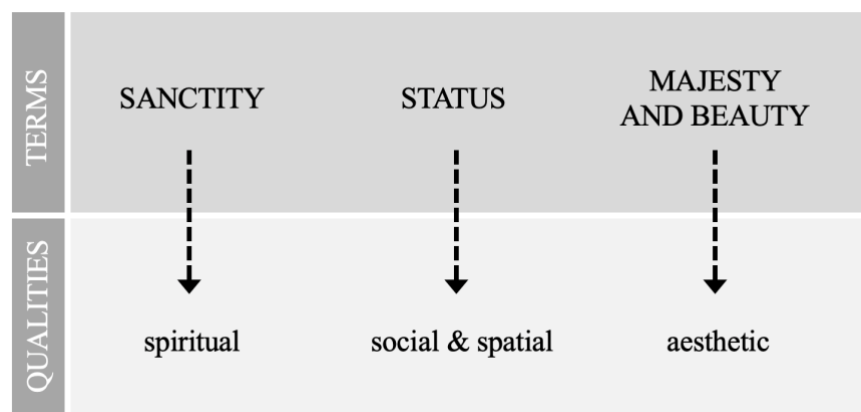
Figure 6-4 The four terms represent different qualities of al-Anwar (Author).

6.3.2.1 Sanctity

To declare that al-Anwar has a specific 'sanctity' is to pronounce its religious origins, and exact from those participating in the restoration as well as those examining it to see the masjid as a religious site and its restoration as an act embedded in faith. Multiple interviewees (GO1 & N07) describe their participation in the restoration as a pious deed which merits reward. They also mention receiving instructions to recite the Quran and other religious supplications as a means of contributing to the restoration efforts. In the early stages, participants sat in rundown areas of the courtyard or literally perched themselves atop the colonnades to recite the Quran where previously others had desecrated the sanctity of the masjid by relieving themselves and defecating. To local inhabitants, due to years of dilapidation and the conversion of the site first to a museum and relics depot, and later to a school, al-Anwar had not been perceived as a masjid for over a century; it was a school within ancient ruins (N03). The *Project Report* (1981) mentions efforts to create awareness about the true nature of the masjid by playing Quran verses over loudspeakers and reinstating congregational prayers. Asserting the sanctity of the masjid made way for novel restoration acts such as prayer and recitation while also transforming normative practices related to construction and conservation into ʿimārah thereby taking up a spiritual, religious quality.

The sanctity is also responsible for ensuring the restorers' accuracy and commitment to authenticity. The masjid is sacred not only as the house of God but as a place of worship built by the Fatimid Imam. As the Imam's masjid, according to Syedna Burhanuddin (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:454, translated from Lisān al-Daʿwat), any efforts towards rebuilding al-Anwar should be in line with the Imam's own practices 'to the greatest of our abilities'. These instructions obligated the research team to ensure any and all interventions were either substantiated by historical or archaeological sources, and if not available, acquired from other Fatimid monuments. The sanctity and status also justify the project's expedited progress. Seemingly cognizant that its use in conservation was discouraged, one interviewee (N14) mentioned that reinforced concrete was used not only for added strength, but because it allowed for quicker construction allowing the masjid to regain its honour in a shorter amount of time. For the Project and the community, every day the masjid remained unfinished was a day in which the masjid's sanctity and status remained compromised. Hence, an expedited restoration, one which saw the masjid most quickly restored to its original sanctity and status was preferred despite what others may have seen as compromises to normative procedures of conservation or more authentic modes of reconstruction.

6.3.2.2 Status

The Project's use of the word *makānat*, which translates to status or standing but also shares a common root with the word *makān* which means place, highlights the masjid's role and function within Islamic society and the spatial qualities it requires to fulfill them. A masjid is a place that caters to a variety of socio-religious activities and is designed to provide an arena for key functions of Muslim society such as adjudication, dissemination of knowledge and of course worship in its various forms (Abd al-Fattah 2010, Kahera 2002). *ʿAẓamat* or sanctity reinforce recognition of the masjid's spiritual identity while its *makānat* suggests a more temporal role the masjid fulfils as a 'place' for social, cultural and religious exchange. For the restoration, such an attribute would require reinstating and, in some places, introducing to the building all those elements that would facilitate this role and functionality.

Apart from the obvious additions of a sound system, lighting and electric circuitry, the masjid also required facilities for ritual purification which resulted in the more controversial additions of the ablution pools in the northern and western corners of the courtyard (which in Chapter 7 are demonstrated to be key social nodes as well) (Anon 1981, Jivanjee 1982). Thus, although arguably inauthentic and not original to the masjid, the ablution pools were added to restore the masjid's original function but also to recognize its *makānat* in society. Although the marble flooring may not have existed in the Fatimid period, a dirt floor as King (1984:333) opines would have been impractical 'considering the very heavy use that is contemplated for the complex'. By highlighting the masjid's distinct status and incommensurability with other historical monuments, the project is associating the masjid's authenticity with its functionality and status as a key *location and place* in Muslim society, and not with its material fabric.

6.3.2.3 Majesty and beauty

The Project asserted that as a masjid, al-Anwar had an inherent majesty and beauty that the restoration was obliged to honour and accentuate. Although there is a movement for aesthetic values to see greater recognition in contemporary conservation discourse, they generally are seen as highly subjective and their place, influence and role in modern conservation remains unclear (King 2000). The Project's insistence on embracing these two qualities as key parameters of restoration indicates the importance of the visual character of the masjid and its intended impact on worshippers. *Jalāl* and *jamāl* commonly feature together in Sufi traditions as attributes of God and are also found in descriptions and discussions of architecture and music. According to Mumtaz (2018:296),

> [W]hile mathematical rigor governs rhythms and symmetries and provides the basis
> for the Jalāli aspect, or Majesty, balance, harmony, and proportions govern the

lyrical arabesques and traceries of surface decorations and reflect the Jamāli aspect, Beauty.

The Bohras alleged preference for 'symmetry over asymmetry' — as seen in their interventions at the mihrab, the portal and courtyard — can be seen as an appreciation for the masjid's majesty (Sanders 1999:161). The gilding, utilization of motifs from other Fatimid monuments and use of marble might suggest that their purpose in ornamentation is to enhance and restore the masjid's beauty. A community publication describes the large expansive courtyard paved in marble as a majestic space that captivates most people who enter it (Jivanjee 1982:4). Another describes 'the mehrab [*sic*], made from marble with kufic [*sic*] writing in gold leaf', as 'breathtakingly splendid' (Abdulahussein 1981:33). Many of the more controversial interventions — the bright plaster, the removal of the tomb, or the use of gilding and installation of chandeliers — can be seen as deliberate attempt at restoring and acknowledging the masjid's *jalāl* and *jamāl*. A community member who attended the inauguration stated that the 'grandeur of the masjid… was beyond any of our imagination' (Khambalia 1981:30). For the Project, the sanctity and status of the Imam's masjid mandated an equivalent majesty and beauty.

Jalāl and *jamāl* are also related to various expressions of divinity within the Islamic tradition. Derivatives of *jalāl* are commonly used as honorific descriptors that follow Allah's name such as *dhū al-jalāl wa al-ikrām*, 'full of majesty and nobility', or *ʿazza wa jallā*, '[He] is mighty and powerful' (Heiss and Hovden 2016:391, Ullah 2017:138). Al-Jamīl, the Beautiful, is one of Allah's names and the Prophet is said to have stated that Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty (Vílchez 2017). In a description of the name of God and tetragram 'Allah', also known as *Ism al-Jalāla*, the 'Name of Majesty', Ruzbihan Baqli (d. 606/1209) (in Murata 2017:68) has described the two *l*'s in the middle as representing *jamāl* and *jalāl*, God's 'two attributes'. The 99 names of God are also sometimes classified into Names of Majesty (*jalāl*) and Names of Beauty (*jamāl*) (Nasr 2013b:568). The Project's choice of these two terms with their associations to the divine suggest the desire for the restoration to highlight visual qualities of the masjid that remind visitors of the Lord's Majesty and Beauty and that al-Anwar, like all masjids, is ultimately 'for Allah'[53].

6.3.3 Limitations of modern conservation

Syedna Burhanuddin (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:454) captured the Project's perception of modern conservation when he stated that al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar was restored '*not* only as a monument'. The statement suggests that such an approach, one where the object of restoration is treated solely as a monument, does not take into account the masjid's 'sanctity, majesty or beauty' nor intends to

[53] Verse 72:18 'And [He revealed] that the masjids are for Allah, so do not invoke with Allah anyone.'

return the masjid to its 'original glory' (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981:7, Syedna Saifuddin 2016). In describing the distinct approach taken in the restoration of al-Anwar, Abdulhusein (2001:35) also argues against a purely academic objective to restoration, which he believes 'reduces the restored monument to a museum piece'. Defining the al-Anwar restoration in terms of *what it should not be* clearly indicated that the Project did not believe modern conservation's approach to 'ancient monuments' would suit a sacred masjid.

References within community literature and discourse also seem to highlight modern conservation's failure and inability to protect al-Anwar or relieve it from its dire condition. In his introduction to a brief synopsis of the history and development of architectural conservation in Europe, Syedna Saifuddin (2016:455, translated from Arabic) declares that 'the principles of *iḥyāʾ* founded upon divine, blessed Fatimid philosophy, cannot be surpassed or compared to any other principles, philosophies or perspectives of conservation (*ʿamal al-tarmīm*)'. After describing the restoration and anti-restoration movements as founded in France and England respectively, Syedna Saifuddin lists the major restoration projects that were active in Cairo when the restoration of al-Anwar commenced and the major milestones achieved in the late 80s in heritage conservation of Islamic Cairo. He mentions the nomination of Islamic Cairo to the World Heritage List and the multiple international conferences that took place at the time. The underlying argument discernible here is that despite the many protagonists active in the field of heritage conservation heralding from Western countries with significant financial clout and political influence, and despite the increased recognition of the importance of Islamic monuments in Cairo, a full-fledged restoration of al-Anwar was not achieved until Syedna Burhanuddin and the Bohra community's involvement. Despite his extensive criticism, Lyster [54] (1988:78) accepts that 'whether we approve of the Bohras' methods or end results, they nonetheless must be thanked for saving al-Hakim'. Even the Comité, despite their many interventions at al-Anwar, was unsuccessful in their own intent to return al-Anwar to its original state (see p. 64). Syedna Saifuddin (2016:470) acknowledges the Comité's work at al-Anwar yet states that it was ultimately piecemeal and incomplete, having failed to achieve a comprehensive restoration because they only saw the masjid as a historic monument. Where conservationists and experienced experts saw the Bohra restoration as a failure, the Bohras saw the inability of numerous foreign conservation entities to deliver al-Anwar from its wretched state — a failure of modern conservation.

[54] He does not, however, share the same sentiment for the later Bohra restoration of al-Aqmar.

6.4 Stages of the al-Anwar Restoration

Generally, Bohra narratives of the al-Anwar restoration project[55] tend to eschew a chronological narrative in favour of one that focuses on 'nine miracles'. 'Nine miracles', or *tisʿah āyāt*, is a Quranic phrase which refers to the miracles God bestowed upon Moses (17:101). The nine miracles in the context of al-Anwar refer to nine challenging or serendipitous events of the restoration. The *Project Report*, however, having been prepared as an official record of the restoration for government records, avoids any references to miracles and presents the progress and execution of the restoration in seven distinct stages (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981:7):

1) *al-tanẓīf* (cleaning)
2) *al-rafʿ ʿalā al-ṭabīʿah* (site condition survey)
3) *al-dirāsāt al-ʿilmīyah* (research)
4) *al-dirāsāt al-handasīyah wa ʿidād al-rusūm al-lāzima* (architectural study and preparation of drawings)
5) *istīrād mawād al-bināʾ wa tawrīd al-khāmāt* (material sourcing and importing)
6) *al-Bināʾ wa al-takmīl* (construction and execution)
7) *al-Tazyīn* (ornamentation)

Since the above stages were developed more as planning steps, a summary of the restoration based upon them is not suitable for this study. Instead, the account presented here is divided into four stages based upon an analysis of key dates found in textual sources and the emphasis given by interviewees on certain activities throughout the course of the restoration. The four stages are: 1) cleaning, 2) planning, 3) excavation and roofing and 4) demolition and reconstruction. Officially, the restoration took place over 27 lunar months, a period which began after receiving written government approval in Shawwāl 1398/September 1978 and culminated with the inauguration at the hands of President Sadat in Muḥarram 1400/November 1980. The current four-stage division considered for this study, however, spans approximately 34 months and has adopted Gregorian dates for the ease of understanding. The extended time frame was adopted for this study because minor activity on site had commenced prior to the agreement and by including this in the narrative, the relative paucity of physical work on site at the start in comparison to the intensity prior to the inauguration is better contrasted. The four stages are named according to the activity that characterized them most, although the activities are not exclusive to any one stage.

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[55] Considering the scale of the restoration, the Project was divided into two phases, with the first focusing on returning al-Anwar to a functioning place of worship. The second phase, which was carried out after the inauguration, mostly comprised of roofing the remaining bays of the masjid. References to the restoration and Project are references to the first phase unless stated otherwise.
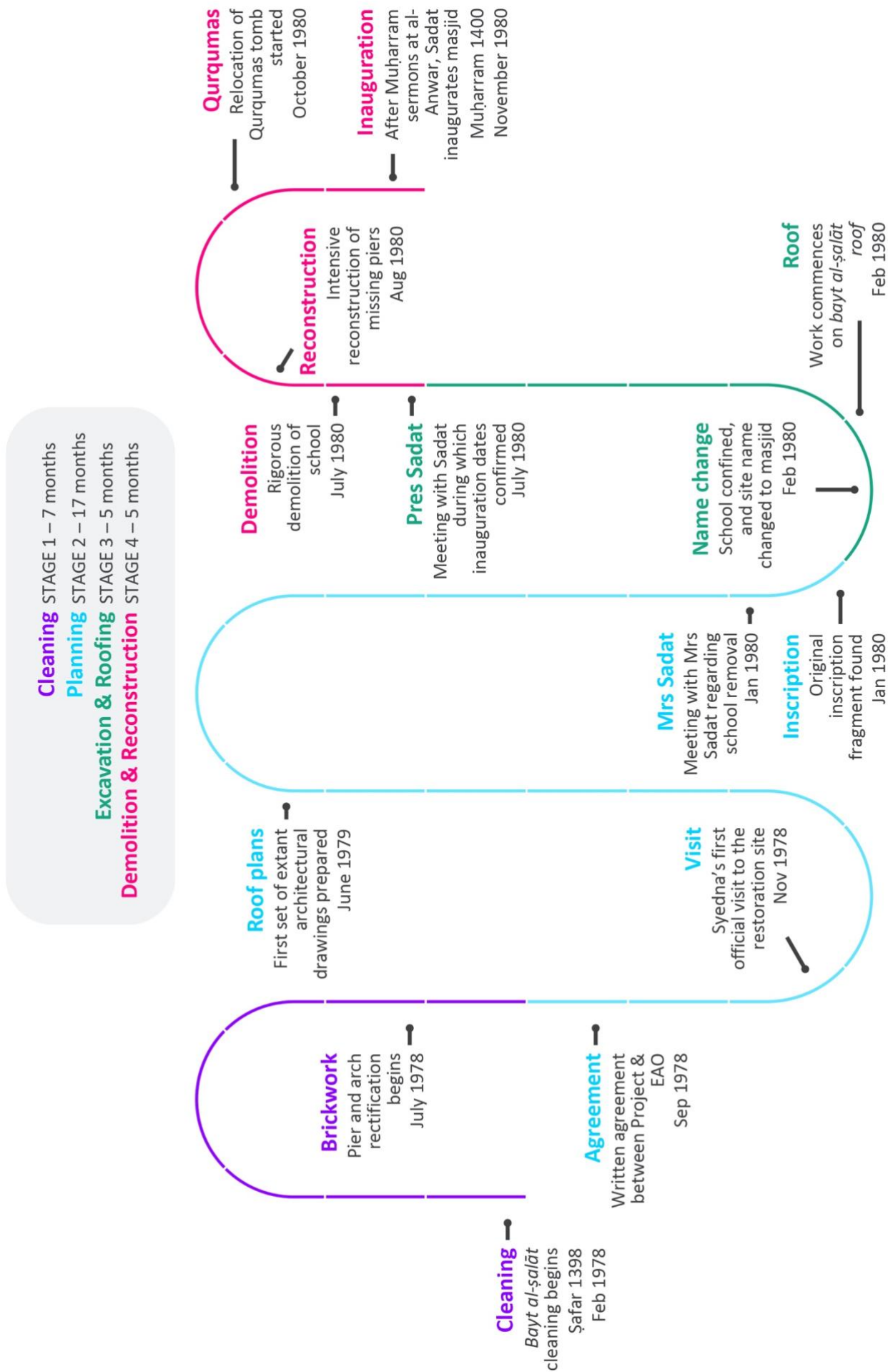
Figure 6-5 Timeline of al-Anwar restoration indicating major milestones spread across four stages (Author).

Cleaning STAGE 1 – 7 months
Planning STAGE 2 – 17 months
Excavation & Roofing STAGE 3 – 5 months
Demolition & Reconstruction STAGE 4 – 5 months

Cleaning
Bayt al-ṣalāt cleaning begins Ṣafar 1398 Feb 1978

Brickwork
Pier and arch rectification begins July 1978

Agreement
Written agreement between Project & EAO Sep 1978

Roof plans
First set of extant architectural drawings prepared June 1979

Visit
Syedna's first official visit to the restoration site Nov 1978

Mrs Sadat
Meeting with Mrs Sadat regarding school removal Jan 1980

Inscription
Original inscription fragment found Jan 1980

Name change
School confined, and site name changed to masjid Feb 1980

Roof
Work commences on *bayt al-ṣalāt roof* Feb 1980

Demolition
Rigorous demolition of school July 1980

Pres Sadat
Meeting with Sadat during which inauguration dates confirmed July 1980

Reconstruction
Intensive reconstruction of missing piers Aug 1980

Qurqumas
Relocation of Qurqumas tomb started October 1980

Inauguration
After Muḥarram sermons at al-Anwar, Sadat inaugurates masjid Muḥarram 1400 November 1980

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6.4.1 Stage 1 – Cleaning

<u>6.4.1.1 Sadat's approval</u>

In the years leading up to the commencement of the restoration of al-Anwar in 1978, Syedna Burhanuddin and the Bohra community established themselves in the city they considered their ancestral home. The various sepulchers built by the community and dedicated at the shrines of Ahl al-Bayt in Cairo, which remain popular sites of visitation and pilgrimage to this day, resulted in a strong relationship with the Egyptian government and some quarters of the Egyptian population (Hoffman-ladd 1992, El Sandouby 2008). Syedna Burhanuddin was presented with a Doctorate of Islamic theology, *honoris causa*, by Al Azhar University in 1966, and the Order of the Nile, Grand Cordon, by Anwar Sadat in 1978 (Abdulhussein 2001). Over the span of two decades, the Bohra leadership had cemented its ties with the Egyptian government and established a presence and identity in Cairo which would ultimately pave the way for their involvement in the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar.

At the beginning of 1978, Syedna Burhanuddin and a large contingent of the Dawoodi Bohra community were in Cairo for the inauguration of the Sayyida Zainab *maqsūra* which Syedna had gifted to the shrine. The late Syedna approached President Sadat, who had presided over the dedication ceremony of the new *maqsūra*, and sought a preliminary approval to begin work on the restoration of al-Anwar to which Sadat agreed (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Upon Syedna's departure from Cairo, his son Syedna Saifuddin, stayed back in Cairo to commence this work. On February 17th, 1978, shortly after returning to Mumbai, Syedna Burhanuddin (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:406–08) spoke at length about his visit to Cairo, and made the first public announcement regarding his intent to restore al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar (translated from Lisān al-Daʿwat):

> I would like to announce some good news. The masjid of Imam Hakim in which we used to offer prayers [during this recent trip], al-Anwar… we made a request regarding the masjid, that if we were to be permitted, we might clean the masjid and rebuild it. Because you have all witnessed its condition; it is in a dire state. It was quite heart-wrenching that Imam's masjid, *jāmiʿ*, its walls have collapsed, it has no roof — it was quite upsetting indeed. Therefore, I made my intent [to restore it] known and presented this intent [to the authorities] and they expressed their happiness with my intent. 'Yes, if you wish to rebuild the masjid then there is no issue with that.' My beloved son Mufaddal Saifuddin is currently in Cairo and he, on a daily basis, heads to the masjid and is occupied with cleaning it… and the request that we had submitted has been approved (reference to governmental nod to proceed with the restoration work) and he (Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin) has reiterated that if His Holiness' wishes, we should carry out the restoration.
>
> On this day of Friday, I the servant of the Progeny of Mohammed (Fatimid Imams), make my intent known that this masjid of the Imam's is in dire condition, I will restore it and if possible, I will include you all in this work…

At this time, Syedna made his first monetary contribution, an amount of $27,000, and marked the unofficial start of the Project. In a second announcement four days later, Syedna Burhanuddin mentions sending a written request to Anwar Sadat during his trip to Cairo seeking permission to begin work on the masjid. He prays that restoration plans are quickly prepared and that work on the masjid starts soon (Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

Although approval from Sadat had been secured, no formal, written agreement had been obtained from the EAO, so the restoration began simply as an intensive cleaning program. A group of Bohra community members residing in Cairo, mostly students, visited al-Anwar every day and began clearing the masjid of debris and waste, particularly the sanctuary area near the mihrab. The cleaning was brought about by necessities of both practicality and of faith. No construction work could commence until centuries of dirt and debris were removed from the site. Similarly, for a masjid to be physically restored its sanctity must be restored as well. As multiple interviewees (N03, N05 & N11) suggested, the most immediate threat and affront to its sanctity was the presence of rubbish, debris and human waste within its precincts (see p. 95). So long as this existed, the masjid was violated. Thus, the first phase of the restoration project was simply cleaning the masjid.

6.4.1.2 Something tangible

The process of sweeping the masjid, lifting large debris by hand and removing it from the premises with small baskets and wheelbarrows was not objected to by the authorities and provided participants in the nascent project a sense of accomplishment (N03 & N05). Of the 13 individual interviews and two focus group discussions conducted, when asked how the restoration project commenced and how their involvement in the Project started, nearly all respondents stated that it was with the cleaning activity[56] that took place in February 1978. It seems quite clear that the project started off at a very personal and intimate level, with a small group of volunteers. At the time, there was no clear direction and the volunteers had no real understanding of the extent to which this meager act of cleaning would ultimately reach, i.e. the complete restoration of the masjid. One respondent (N11) said that he was completely caught off guard when asked to come 'clean' the masjid. At that moment in time, he said, it was impossible to fathom how any sort of cleaning would be effective in what was essentially a ruin. Unsure as to how the restoration would unfold and without the necessary approvals and permissions in place, cleaning the masjid seems to be the leadership's way of starting something 'tangible' on site. It was the momentum

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[56] Cleaning was a regular Bohra activity at al-Anwar prior to the restoration but was restricted to a small portion of the *bayt al-ṣalāt*, just enough for a small group to offer prayers.

and critical mass built in these early days of cleaning that would eventually push the Project forward.

6.4.1.3 A turning point

A significant event during the cleaning stage was the discovery of a cesspit above the original mihrab. Due to housing shortages throughout the city and the EAO's inability to protect the city's hundreds of monuments, homeless often took up shelter in the city's numerous monuments (Williams 1985). The Wikāla Qaytbay[57] (No. 9, 885/1480) an abandoned caravansary abutting the southeastern wall of al-Anwar (Figure 6-9), was one such monument. Over 40 families had taken up residence in the derelict building that had no proper sanitation or garbage disposal facilities (N03, N05 & N11). Instead, residents dropped their waste and refuge in a small gap between the Wikāla and the masjid's northeastern wall above the mihrab which over time became a large cesspit that gave off a putrid smell in the main prayer hall of al-Anwar. No one knew, however, where the odour came from. The discovery and subsequent cleaning of the aforementioned cesspit is an important event in the Bohra narrative of the restoration. Nearly all the interviewees, when narrating the early stages of the project, recall the cleaning of this cesspit and credit the discovery and its removal to Syedna Saifuddin. The removal of the waste, the decomposition of which deteriorates stone and brick, not only ensured the masjid's physical preservation but also aided the reinstatement of its spiritual sanctity.

According to Syedna Saifuddin (2016), it took two weeks from the first days of cleaning in February 1978 to clear the sanctuary area of debris and empty the cesspit. Sources are silent on any other developments until May 1978 when cleaning of the other sections of the masjid began, such as the northeastern bay and parts of the courtyard where access was not hindered by the presence of the Silahdar school buildings. The initial months of cleaning were difficult and did not show substantial results since the masjid's main entrance was obstructed, meaning only hand carts and wheelbarrows could be used to remove debris (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Further, the presence of the school, its children and their activities meant that work took place at quite a slow pace. In July 1978, the Project was able to secure some preliminary permissions to carry out work on existing structures (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Previously restored brick arches which had been built incorrectly were rectified and damaged portions of piers were repaired with new bricks. For

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[57] The caravansary was built by the Mamluk Sultan Qaytbay in the late 15th century. It was nearly torn down in 1906 but survived. In 1937-8 the Comité carried out some restoration work in the interior and eastern façade (Warner 2005). Since then, however, the building has remained derelict. As of 2018, the Wikāla was under restoration.

the most part, however, January to September 1978 was mainly characterized by the small-scale cleaning activities.

This period is also marked by efforts to change the perception of the masjid in the eyes of nearby inhabitants (see p. 102). The continuous presence of a group of non-Egyptian Muslims at the al-Anwar site going about cleaning the masjid, reciting Quran and offering prayers, especially at a site which saw thousands of students from nearby areas on a daily basis, drew attention to the restoration and challenged the masjid's existing perception. To this effect, the Project sought the intervention of Cairo's governor, Saʿad Mamun, to help remove garbage dumps placed alongside the exterior northwestern wall of the masjid along its façade. In response to this written petition, the Governor visited al-Anwar on the 18th of August, 1978 and three days later gave orders to remove and relocate all of the garbage collection points along al-Anwar's façade (Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

Since the project had not technically started, heavy machinery and necessary utilities had yet to be brought to the site. Sensing the need for water to help clean certain areas of the masjid, an interviewee (N03) described how Syedna Saifuddin instructed him to speak to the nearby fire brigade for their help. The station brought a tanker to al-Anwar and helped clean many of the masjid's walls which had been sullied with waste from above. Parts of the sanctuary area and particularly the northern minaret were plagued by a severe bat infestation which had resulted in layers of bat guano, a known detriment to stone and a chronic issue for many architectural heritage sites (Abd El Hafez and Bakr 2012, Hales 2014). The fire company's water hoses were used to clean these surfaces as well, and a small fire was lit to smoke out the bats from the minaret. Here, too, the infestation was not seen merely as a source of degradation of the masjid's physical fabric, but also an ominous presence that desecrated its sanctity and was a sign of negligence (G02).

6.4.2 Stage 2 – Planning

It was only in September 1978, nearly eight months after volunteers began cleaning work at the site, when a written agreement between the Project and the EAO was finalized and issued. Although the Dawoodi Bohra community leadership had resolved to undertake the restoration many years prior to this official agreement, sources — particularly drawings from the site office — show that detailed planning and research for the restoration did not commence until after this agreement. The 17-month period between September 1978 to approximately February 1980, the project's progress was characterized mostly by planning which entailed discussions with architects, contractors and governmental officials. According to the *Project Report* (1981),

planning entailed site surveys, historical research, architectural study and the preparation of initial plans and drawings. The presence of the Silahdar school ruled out the possibility of beginning with major works or reconstructing missing colonnades which forced the Project to spend this time post-approvals to prepare a more detailed plan of action. Heavy machinery, however, was allowed to enter the site and excavation began in unoccupied areas. Work on dismantling the dilapidated transept roof commenced as well. Minor brick repair of existing piers and arches continued as well. An analysis of the key milestones of this planning stage will shed light on the dynamics of decision making on the site, the role of Project management and leadership and the Project's approach to research. Ultimately, the very obvious and tangible results of the restoration seen today at al-Anwar resulting in decades of commentary and criticism trace back to the planning and decisions taken during this key stage which have received little attention in current scholarship.

6.4.2.1 Syedna's site visits

Written and oral accounts put great emphasis on the visits made by Syedna Burhanuddin to the site during the restoration period. It is clear from these accounts that the Project's site management regularly sought guidance and direction from Syedna Burhanuddin, and his son Syedna Saifuddin who took up semi-permanent residence in Cairo during the duration of the restoration (G01). Visits of Syedna Burhanudin were seen as key milestones for the Project for they often resulted in the finalizing of important details. During the course of the restoration, Syedna Burhanuddin visited Cairo on four separate occasions, half of which took place during this planning stage. Questions put to many of the interviewees as to when a certain event took place or when they accomplished a task given to them were answered relative to before, after or during a visit by Syedna. Syedna's first visit in November 1978 on the occasion of Eid al-Adha was two months after the official agreement with the EAO. In an image most likely dating to this visit, Syedna is seen writing the bismillah on a piece of a paper bearing the Project's logo as an obvious symbolic start of the project (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016). Although the official agreement had already been issued, Syedna's inscription of the bismillah is indicative of his centrality to the project.

The decision to install a replica of al-Azhar's Fatimid mihrab recreated in marble is an example of a key intervention that can be traced back to this stage of the restoration during Syedna's visit in November 1978. Referencing notes from the occasion, an interviewee (N03) described in substantial detail a special meeting which took place during this visit in which Syedna met with Project management and Hassan Fathy, who had been appointed chief architect by this time, to discuss various open items including the matter of the mihrab. The interviewee recalled Fathy's original reluctance to the use of marble which may suggest concerns regarding authenticity and original material. However, by the end of the meeting, after having listened to the Bohra

community's proposal, and concepts regarding the significance of the mihrab, particularly the arguments[58] presented by Syedna's brother, Dr Najmuddin, he agreed that a replica in marble would be appropriate. The meeting's debate suggests an awareness of conservation norms and an internal process of deliberation, something most modern restoration projects undergo, which calls into questions criticisms that presume al-Anwar was restored arbitrarily.

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Figure 6-6 Dr Najmuddin (left) discussing the mihrab with Syedna Burhanuddin (centre) and Hassan Fathy (right) (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016:92-93).

6.4.2.2 Importance of Project architectural drawings

The first extant architectural drawings of the Project date back to the planning stage and offer insight into the design process and team. The language and layout of the drawings reveal the complex nature of the design team which comprised of local architects and consultants from Cairo including Fathy's firm, Egyptian consultants, Bohra architects from South Asia and the West and scholars and calligraphists from Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah. A mixture of technical terms in English — such as frieze, elevations and sections, and Arabic terms relevant to Islamic art and architecture — such as '*majaz*', '*hoadh*'[59], '*Shajaratul Hayat*'[60] (JA.101.A, JA.13.AS & JA.8.C), allude to the different backgrounds of the design team. Some consultant drawings, which workmen perhaps referred to directly, were completely in Arabic, such as the electrical drawings (unnumbered, Salim 1980). As is common practice, an interviewee (N14) recalled that the chief architect Fathy

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[58] One argument presented by the Bohras is based off a reading of a Comité inscription which was installed when Makram's marble covering was removed from the original mihrab location. The inscription indicates that portions of the marble used by Makram to construct his mihrab were remnants from the original Fatimid mihrab implying that the Fatimid mihrab was also constructed of marble (Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

[59] *Hoadh* (*ḥawḍ*) is a reference to the ablution pool.

[60] The *shajarat al-ḥayāt*, lit. tree of life, is a reference to the intricate arabesque pattern in the upper niche of the al-Azhar mihrab which was replicated at al-Anwar.

signed off on drawings before they were submitted to the EAO. This description is supported by extant drawings (see Figure 6-7), with a few exceptions, and corroborated by other informants (N05 & N07) whom had the responsibility of taking documents to the EAO offices for approval. EAO approvals bore the organization's official seal and a signature, although from the extant signatures, it seems multiple individuals[61] had approval rights. Drawings relating to artistic aspects of the project, such as the mihrab elevation or the Kufic script for the well dome, include a field labelled 'Designed by' which bears the name of the Project's main calligraphist and expert in Fatimid art and Kufic script (JA.13.A.s). In a few instances, the drawings[62] also bear the signature of Syedna Saifuddin, the overseer of the Project.

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Figure 6-7 A Project architectural drawing which bears Fathy's signature and EAO approvals (JA.14.A, © Al-Anwar Site Archives).

[61] Apart from the name 'Kamal' which features once in the drawings, the only signature that is legible was identified by a interviewee (N13) as belonging to an EAO official responsible for the al-Anwar project at the time.

[62] The drawings are not consistent in their signatories. Of the 18 surviving drawings, 8 drawings bear the complete approval process signatures and the remaining drawings are missing various elements, more often than not the EAO signatures. This is normally the case in the later drawings closer to the inauguration and those pertaining to small details of the Project, such as the wooden doors of the masjid, the brass lamp design, and a proposed gate in the plaza outside the main door (never constructed). It is possible that final drawings were submitted to the authorities, although no traces were found in any of the Egyptian archives visited.

The condition and annotations of extant drawings offer insight into their usage during the restoration. Some drawings are original, bearing original signatures, whereas the majority are copies. Due to Egypt's fairly moderate climate, drawings have survived without much degradation however at some point a rodent infestation at the location they were stored has led to several large lacunae in certain documents. The archives were only recently reviewed only to find that many drawings had been damaged and many were missing altogether. It seems some of the drawings were displaced after the initial restoration period and some were taken by project participants for safekeeping yet were ultimately lost and/or damaged (N14). Strikethroughs, annotations in pencil, and additions in different colour inks denoting later entries as well as rough calculations and remarks on the drawings imply they were regularly consulted by Project management.

The earliest extant drawing dates back to June 1979, during the stage currently under discussion. Drawings from this stage focus primarily on the sanctuary area. This is likely because the presence of the Silahdar school meant that work could not commence in any other section of the masjid. If drawings were numbered as they were prepared, it would seem that drawings for the new roof construction were the first drawings to be prepared for the al-Anwar restoration (JA.1.C & JA.2.C). Both roof drawings, which explicitly reference the use of concrete, were approved by the EAO in August 1979. A few drawings from this period detail the mihrab (JA.8.C, JA.10.C & JA.12.A), which together with the roof work, seem to have been the Project's focus at this time. An elevation (JA.11.C) also dates back to this period which illustrates the two arch types common throughout al-Anwar: pointed and horseshoe.

6.4.2.3 Materials

The scale of the project meant that large quantities of material needed to be sourced and procured. Responses by participants (N02, N04 & N14) involved in material procurement suggest that the majority of material was finalized or acquired during this 17-month planning period. With bricks for the piers readily available in Cairo, the major concern was material for flooring and roofing. For the vast quantities of flooring required for the masjid, Egyptian perlato marble was selected since it was readily available and relatively inexpensive (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016, N14). However, the marble for the mihrab and the capitals and bases of the columns was Carrara marble from Italy (N02, JA.10.C).

Al-Anwar's roof rested on wooden tie beams between the colonnades. Considering the spans between the colonnades of al-Anwar, sometimes reaching up to 4 meters, the quality, density and length of the wood required was not found in Egypt and needed to be imported. A lengthy search for the right wood led researchers, one of whom narrated this account first hand to the primary

researcher, from the southern coasts of India in search of teak to Singapore. There they learnt of a Malaysian hard wood named chengal (*Neobalanocarpus heimii*) which fit the requirements of the masjid (N02). Multiple other interviewees (N04, N14, N08 & N12) mentioned the chengal wood which seems to have been heralded as a great achievement for the project because of its unique qualities and special permission granted by the Malaysian government for its export (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981). Aside from its anti-fungal properties, individuals were keen to point out the strength and density of the wood, explaining that a single joist had to be carried by upwards of 10 men and that ordinary screws would not penetrate the wood so special screws had to be ordered (G02). The first shipments of this special timber arrived from Singapore in December 1979, nearly six months after the wood was identified and ordered.

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Figure 6-8 Stockpile of construction material in the courtyard including the chengal joists from Malaysia (© Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah).

6.4.2.4 Research

Research features prominently in the Project's description of the restoration and is a dedicated stage in the Project's own seven stage categorization. Interviewees N01, N03 & N09 were involved in project research and took instructions from the Project's primary researcher who is now deceased. Researchers visited the archives at the Museum of Islamic Art, which coincidentally used to be housed in al-Anwar under the name of Museum of Arab Art, and the Egyptian National Library (N01). One researcher (N09) mentioned receiving instructions to visit libraries in London and Paris for more information on the historical conditions of the masjid. He also mentioned an old 'painting' which he was told to locate in Paris[63] in order to determine whether the recessed niches adjacent to the main sanctuary area's entrance were original to the masjid. Although those involved in research naturally

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[63] A prominent al-Anwar painting by Prosper Marilhat named *Ruines de la mosque du Calife Hakem* is at the Louvre although it does not provided the suggested vistas.

had some trouble recalling details of their research, it is clear that the Project sought to locate and review as many historical sources regarding the masjid as possible. This is confirmed by the *Project Report's* bibliography which lists a number of resources in English, French and Arabic. Research regarding the epigraphical program of the masjid was especially important during this stage because of the discovery of a piece of the masjid's original foundational inscription near the main gate in January 1980 (Shakir 2002, Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Having found once piece, a consolidated research effort was made towards locating and identifying other existing pieces of the inscription, many of which were retrieved from the Islamic Museum of Art, and ultimately led to the reinstallation of the inscription (N01). The restoration of al-Anwar's original inscription is seen by the Project as one of its biggest achievements.

6.4.2.5 School or masjid

A major impediment to the restoration was the existence of the Silahdar School for Boys within the courtyard and northwestern and southwestern bays of al-Anwar. For any complete restoration of the masjid, the school had to be removed from the premises and its continued presence hindered on-going work. At this stage, while the Project concluded its research, drew together a plan for the restoration and began commissioning architectural drawings, Project management engaged with various governmental departments and officials in order to secure the school's removal from the masjid's premises. The Project argued that historically the school was always meant to be a temporary setup and the Comité had repeatedly insisted that the school be removed (Casanova et al 1907, Syedna Saifuddin 2016). As the most recent entity to grapple with the restoration of al-Anwar, the Project appears to have been similarly perplexed by the removal of the school. Project management spoke to the governor of Cairo and the Ministries of Waqfs, Āthār and Public Instruction in order to secure instructions for the school to be removed, but the lack of a suitable place or building for relocation hindered any such attempts. To help move things along, the Project team met with the First Lady of Egypt, Mrs Jehan Sadat[64] in January 1980 to discuss the issue of the school. During this meeting, Syedna Saifuddin informed Mrs Sadat that his father Syedna Burhanuddin wished to build a new building for the school if the government was able to provide the land to do so. Instructions were sent from her office to arrange a meeting with the governor of Cairo and although the Project team was optimistic, months passed and no suitable location could be identified (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Interviewees N03 & N14 and focus group G02 all speak of their frustration at this stage since work

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[64] A well-known patron of architectural conservation, Mrs Sadat was instrumental in securing Islamic Cairo's nomination to the World Heritage List the same year as al-Anwar's inauguration. She also chaired the Egyptian Association of Amateurs of Antiquity which was formed in July 1979 (Martiny 1980).

on site had nearly come to a standstill with the presence of the school building and children proving to be an insurmountable problem.

The presence of over 5000 school children on a site with heavy materials and equipment posed a threat to the safety of both students and workers. Since the courtyard functioned as a makeshift sports field, students would often wonder off into the masjid's bays where excavation and other works were taking place. Areas of the courtyard were also used to store timber shipments and other materials. A tragic yet decisive moment in the school and masjid's entanglement took place in February 1980, when a small child lost his life playing in the stockpiles of timber stored in the masjid's courtyard. An uproar ensued, with many inhabitants and school administrators blaming the Project for the child's death. Participants of the focus group (G01) claim that on multiple occasions, Project officials had warned students and faculty of the dangers present on the restoration site. A police investigation took place and the Project was absolved of any wrong-doing (N03 & N10). However, it was clear to the government and Project stakeholders that a functioning school and on-going restoration project could not continue in tandem without some form of major intervention (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). After deliberation and exchanges between different ministries and the Project, the school was cordoned off with a fence from the rest of the masjid and the remaining portions of the courtyard were handed over to the Project. In what the Project saw as a watershed moment, on the 15th of February, 1980, a sign above the main portal bearing the name of the Silahdar School was replaced with a sign with name of 'al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, the masjid of al-Hakim bi Amr Allah' (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). The separation of the school and the resurgence in restoration efforts marks the onset of the third stage of the restoration.

6.4.3 Stage 3 – Excavation and Roofing

Stage 3 of the restoration is characterized by intense work in two areas: the sanctuary roof and the courtyard. With the school cordoned off from the rest of the restoration site, Project management embarked upon a more ambitious excavation program for the courtyard, especially areas which were previously used as the school playground. The very day after access to the Project site was restricted, work on the roof commenced and large trucks were brought into deliver the remaining timber (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Both the excavation and the roof work required the presence of heavy machinery on the site, which until now was sparingly used because of the school children and a concern voiced by the EAO for the integrity of the old structures on site. Commencing in mid-February 1980, this stage of the restoration would continue up until the end of July, a duration of approximately five months, when yet another transition in the nature of the work occurred on site heralding the fourth and final stage of the restoration.

Drawings from this stage reflect developments on site. The first version of perhaps the single most important drawing of the restoration, the overall 'Masjid Layout' plan JA.12.C (0Appendix V: 'Masjid Layout' Plan JA.12.C), was prepared shortly after the school was separated from the rest of the masjid. The preparation of the drawing suggests that the Project seems to have regained momentum and was now looking to expand its scale of operations. The drawing details the progress of the Project till date and its expectations and reservations at the time the plans were drawn, with phrases such as 'new columns shown are *approximate'* and 'drawing indicates *possible* phases of construction *depending on the availability* of buildable area presently occupied by madrassah' (JA.12.C, emphasis not in original). The drawing also indicates that initially, the only colonnade planned for construction in phase one of the restoration in time for the presidential inauguration was the single colonnade facing the courtyard. Additional drawings detailing the transept window arrangement and the crenellations which feature above the masjid's roof line also date back to this period.

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Figure 6-9 The Project drawing titled 'Site conditions on commencement of restoration work' illustrates the buildings located in the masjid; the presence of toilets is especially marked (no number, © Al-Anwar Site Archives).

A defining characteristic of the work that took place during this stage was the roofing of the 4,340 m2 of the sanctuary area (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016). The earliest available drawings from June 1979, JA.1.C. and JA.2.C, are related to the roof construction, but it seems waiting for the arrival of material and the inability to bring heavy machinery onto the site, delayed the roof construction by almost eight months. The dates of these drawings would suggest that the work on the roof was one of the earliest considerations of Project management, which makes sense considering the piers and colonnades of the sanctuary were all present, restored by the Comité over the course of the first half of the 20th century (Creswell 1978). With the construction of the roof, the sanctuary area would be structurally complete requiring only flooring, finishing and furnishing.

The roof work is quite significant for it is one of the major interventions carried out by the Project and involved the controversial use of concrete. At the time of the commencement of the project, apart from makeshift coverings in small portions of the sanctuary area, the only existing roof in the masjid was over the transept installed by the Comité in 1932 (Pauty et al 1936). Having suffered significant damage over the years and with no intrinsic historic value of its own, the Project decided to replace the Comité roof with a new one as early as September 1978, during the cleaning phase of the restoration. Archival images of the Comité roof, indicate that the Project pursued a roof installation very similar to the Comité's and one that was also found in other historic hypostyle masjids of Cairo such as Ibn Ṭulūn, Jāmiʿ ʿAmr bin al-ʿAs and al-Jāmiʿ al-Azhar. Project images show that work commenced from the southern dome making its way towards the transept and then continuing onwards to the eastern dome.

Drawings and an individual involved in the roof fabrication (N04) indicate that a reinforced concrete T-beam was installed at the top of the ancient colonnades. The T-beam provided an anchoring point for the timber joists that spanned the colonnades which would eventually hold the wooden planks and the upper surface of the roof. A second and perhaps more significant purpose in the T-beam installation, as suggested by a participant in one of the group discussions (G02) as well as Fathy (in Anon 1981:22) himself, was to consolidate the ancient structure and bind it together 'from above'. Fathy is keen to point out that the concrete was essential in structurally consolidating the building and safeguarding it against seismic activity[65]. The T-beams reinforced the ancient walls and colonnades, many of which were severely leaning, some up to an entire meter off of their base. Timber joists, which were installed at intervals of half a meter,

[65] It is worth nothing that after the 1992 earthquake, al-Anwar suffered minimal damage (N13).

had to be individually measured and trimmed according to the altering spans (Figure 6-10) (JA.2.C, N04). Perhaps conscious of the use of concrete, one interviewee suggested that the concrete slab on the roof was not added until the following year when heavy rainfall penetrated the stone tiled surface leaking into the prayer area below. However, the 1979 drawings indicate that concrete layer[66] had always been planned above the wooden planks and waterproofing membrane. For the inauguration, only the sanctuary area of the masjid was roofed, with the roofing of all remaining bays taking place between 1981 and 1985 in phase two of the restoration.

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Figure 6-10 Drawing JA.2.C details the roof fabrication plan for the *bayt al-ṣalāt* (© Al-Anwar Site Archives).

6.4.3.2 Original ground level

The second major task the Project engaged in during this period was returning the masjid, its courtyard and the outside plaza to its original ground level. Over the course of nearly 1000 years, the ground level of the masjid had risen significantly, in places by up to two meters. Bulldozers were operated both between the piers of the masjid in the sanctuary and northeastern bay as well as the courtyard. With the school confined, heavy machinery operated with greater freedom and worked nearly around the clock. Lorries arrived at night and were loaded with the excavated soil and debris. Throughout the course of the restoration period, approximately 3000 truckloads of earth were removed from al-Anwar, nearly 29,000 m2 (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016:58).

[66] The Comité installed a concrete slab atop the roof of Ibn Ṭulūn as well. During recent restoration work in the 2000s, the concrete roof was retained and its cracks were repaired (Swelim 2015).

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Excavations in the courtyard yielded interesting finds for the Project. A key discovery during this stage was a well which multiple interviewees (N02, N05, N06 & N12) and all textual sources mention (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). While an excavator was shifting earth slightly north of the central axis between the main entrance and the transept a metal object was uncovered which happened to be the lid to the well. An interviewee (N02) who descended into the well also described a small alcove constructed of brick as part of the well's structure, glimpses of which can be seen in archival footage. Initially, the well was used to serve the increasing water requirements of the construction on site as the Project had suffered shortages until then. After its construction purposes were fulfilled, the well was retained, however, according to instructions received from the Syedna and after approvals from the EAO.

The Bohras justify the retention of the well and the construction of a structure above it referencing classical sources which mention the presence of various water installations within the courtyard of al-Anwar over the centuries (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Water installations in the courtyards of other Cairene masjids, including one added by the Fatimids to Jāmiʿ ʿAmr bin al-ʿAs in 378/989, are also cited (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981). The presence of a large circle in drawing JA.10.C in the location of the well, later concealed with correction fluid, suggests that at one point a large water installation, perhaps along the lines of the installation at Ibn Ṭulūn or ʿAmr bin al-ʿAs was envisioned for al-Anwar. However, ultimately a smaller structure off the central axis was decided upon. N01 explained this choice by suggesting that the Fatimids would never have built a structure which would have obstructed the central axis along which ceremonial processions moved from the monumental entrance towards the *majāz*. Aside from its importance as a social node in contemporary times, which is to be discussed below, the well also helps with the masjid maintenance. A site manager (E01) indicated that the well meets all the masjid water requirements and also helps mitigate against water seepage into the piers and walls since water drawn from the well, according to his own estimation, helps lower the underlying water table.

The presence of heavy machinery had posed some difficulties for the restoration. The extraction of large amounts of water from the earth beneath the courtyard after the discovery of the well had led to the resettlement of the soil. In addition, the courtyard excavation revealed a series of subterranean tunnels, which were common during the Fatimid period (Cortese and Calderini 2006). The combination of the weakened substrate of soil and the presence of unused and unmaintained tunnels meant that heavy machinery was a challenge to operate and maneuver. A few weeks after the discovery of the well, while excavating an area in the courtyard close to the main entrance, a bulldozer collapsed into a pocket of weak earth. An interviewee (N03) suggested that such incidents and holdbacks brought undue attention from the EAO who had cautioned the Project on the usage of heavy machinery. Interviewee N03 had mentioned that some pockets

within the Ministry of Waqfs were not keen on the project succeeding due to the community's Shiʿa associations and incidents such as these were used to cast doubt on the Project's capability. The Project, however, persisted in its use of heavy machinery without a viable alternative. With the inauguration date set, the remaining work needed to be completed as quickly as possible.

With two of the most significant aspects of the restoration, excavation and roofing, now fully commenced, Project management was better able to determine an accurate timeline for the completion of the Project. Thus, during a visit to Cairo in July 1980, Dr Burhanuddin met with President Anwar Sadat in Alexandria where he confirmed with the President the tentative dates for the inauguration: the start of the new Islamic year of 1401 which saw the completion of 14 centuries of the Islamic calendar (Saifuddin 2016). The meeting with the President confirmed what was up until then tentative. With approximately four months to the inauguration, pressure on the Project team greatly intensified.

In addition to the confirmation of the inauguration dates, Mr Hasan Touhami — the Deputy Prime Minister, Sadat's close advisor and well-wisher of the Bohra community — remarked during Syedna's visit to Alexandria, that if the President is to come for the inauguration, a restoration of only the southwestern sanctuary area would not suffice (Syedna Saifuddin 2016, G02). The entire masjid, a great portion of which was still occupied by the Silahdar school, should be restored. Earlier that year in May, the Governor had provided land[67] for the new school building and handed over portions of the old school located along the northwestern wall of the masjid for demolition, but progress had been slow. From the commencement of the Project, interviews reveal that participants (N03, N05 & N11) were never very clear as to the extent of the restoration. It seems that there remained a certain ambiguity up until this point when it was finally made clear that the entire masjid was to be restored. It also is plausible that government officials, having considered the presence of the school and the difficulty of its removal, held the belief that despite Bohra intent for a complete restoration, restoring anything beyond the sanctuary area would not be possible.

6.4.4 Stage 4 – Demolition, Construction and Ornamentation

Although parts of the school in the northwestern bay, north of the portal had been demolished, the majority of the school remained since the Project was instructed by the Governor's office to demolish equivalent to what was built on the new site (G02). However, with the school unoccupied due to the summer vacation and the fast-approaching start of the new Islamic year now approximately four months away, Project leadership took it upon themselves to begin a more

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[67] The existing school grounds of Madrasa Bakrīyya were chosen as the site for the new building.

aggressive campaign of demolition (G01, N12 & N13). One group discussant (G01) explained that the instructions to proceed with the demolition were received at night and volunteers were told to proceed immediately to al-Anwar and begin work which carried on until morning. Soldiers from the Egyptian army were also enlisted during this period to help with demolition, and although archival images confirm their presence, how the army became involved in a masjid restoration project is not clear.[68] The period from the end of July 1980 to the inauguration in November, a little over three months, is characterized first by the rapid demolition of the remaining school structures and then by an intense bout of construction.

As mentioned earlier, JA.12.C (Appendix V: 'Masjid Layout' Plan JA.12.C), the overall 'Masjid Layout', was an important drawing in understanding the work the Project carried out during this stage. Judging from the annotations and pencil markings on the drawing, it seems that JA.12.C was the site's working drawing from February until the completion of the Project and was amended as developments were made on site. When the drawing was first prepared in February 1980, columns in the northwest and southwest bays, which had yet to be constructed, were labeled as 'New columns on existing foundations (to be uncovered)'. In the drawing's notes found in the upper right-hand corner, a series of additions were made in red ink indicating new construction. Between May and June 1980, arches in the northeastern bay were constructed on the existing piers built by the EAO in the 1970s (Figure 6-9). Nearly simultaneously, columns north of the main entrance in the northwest bay were constructed from May 1980 up until July. These were the first piers of the al-Anwar masjid to be reconstructed on land previously occupied by the school.

In the last week of July 1980, when the decision was taken to remove all of the school buildings, demolition began with the buildings occupying the southwestern bay and areas where piers needed to be erected (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). An annotation marked number 11 on JA.12.C indicates that construction of all the columns in the southwestern bay began in the month of August 1980 — only three months prior to the restoration. Trees in the courtyard were also removed during this time. The only piers which were constructed yet remain unaccounted for in JA.12.C are those south of the main entrance in the northwestern bay. Photographs and video footage show these piers were the last to be erected and perhaps did were not updated on the old drawing since the architect by this time had begun work on the revised JA.12.C version which is dated to October 1980. With only one month left to the start of the new Islamic year, video footage shows that all of the piers in the southwest and northwest bays were still under construction.

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[68] Considering his support for the restoration, one possibility is that the army assistance was arranged by Touhami, although this is nowhere indicated in the sources.

Analysis of the plans combined with interviewee testimonies and archival footage indicate that the three months prior to the inauguration were the most intense periods of activity and construction of the restoration.

6.4.4.1 Ornamentation

Aside from the reconstruction of missing piers, drawings from this period indicate that the Project design team began focusing more on smaller details and ornamentation of the masjid such as the small domed structure over the well (JA.13.A), the ablution pools (JA.13.A.s), the wooden doors (JA.19.A) and landscaping of the plaza outside the main portal (JA.16.C.s). This activity matches the *Project Report's* name for the final stage: *tazyīn*, or ornamentation. A number of Kufic inscriptions, which ran along the top of the colonnades just underneath the roof in the sanctuary area, were completed. During Phase 1 of the restoration prior to November 1980, the Project focused on completing damaged inscriptions above the mihrab, in the transept, as well as under the domes in the two corners of the masjid. Gilding of marble inscriptions which had been replicated from other Fatimid monuments also took place at this time, as did the installation of the new gypsum grilles in the *majāz* and along the openings of the masjid walls.

The mihrab itself, which had been clad in white Italian marble and endowed with a replica of the al-Azhar mihrab saw its completion during this stage and can be considered a significant element of the ornamentation. It becomes apparent from site photographs and interviews that ornamentation was prioritized over other aspects of the restoration. For instance, many of the piers constructed during the last month were left hollow, the internal brickwork being completed after the inauguration. The priority was for the masjid to take its original form for the inauguration, and then be enhanced with ornamentation which the Bohras saw as integral to the finished form. The visual aesthetics for the inauguration were important, and pending structural work could be carried out during phase two of the restoration.

6.4.4.2 Removal of the Qurqumas tomb

Although the approval to dismantle the Qurqumas tomb came through in August 1980, the Project decided to hold off on dismantling until October, only a month before the scheduled inauguration. The controversy in removing the tomb was not lost on Project leadership which is why the removal was delayed until as late as possible (N13). Closer to the date of the inauguration and with more work completed, momentum would be on the Project's side and hence any issues with the Qurqumas tomb would be less likely to throw a spanner in the works (G02). The Project had also hired Ministry of Āthār-recommended contractors for the dismantling and reconstruction. Yet, a senior manager in one of the group discussions revealed that the company had dismantled

the structure very poorly and had failed to carry out the reconstruction as it had been charged (G02). The Project ultimately took responsibility and coordinated the tomb's reconstruction in its new location.

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Figure 6-11 Relics placed by the Comité from the 19th century in the courtyard were dismantled and relocated during this stage (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016:283).

6.4.4.3 A final flurry

Video footage and interviewee testimonies (G01, N14 & N12) indicate that the final weeks of the project were characterized by a flurry of activity and construction. While piers were still coming up out of the ground, others immediately adjacent were being plastered. Images shows that while marble flooring had started in the eastern corner of the courtyard, portions of the school building were still being demolished at the opposite western corner. The last few weeks prior to the inauguration, which was the most intense period of activity, saw the arrival of thousands of visitors from the Dawoodi Bohra community who volunteered their labour and services at the site, including the entire student body and faculty of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah (N03 & N07). A focus group participant quite passionately explained that since he had become occupied with arranging logistics for guests arriving at the airport, he visited the site after 10 days and was unable to recognize it due to the drastic visual changes that had taken place (G01). Hundreds of additional volunteers on site with days left before the new Hijri year helped with the substantial task of clearing and cleaning the masjid (N01, N03 & N07). Managers in the focus group also speak of the large number of Egyptian day labourers enlisted prior to the inauguration (G02). Volunteers can be seen cleaning, passing bricks or marble slabs or assisting with various pending technical tasks, such as lighting installation. Syedna Burhanuddin, who had arrived in Cairo three weeks prior to the new year, visited the site regularly and also took part personally in the remaining works. The large size of the masjid was able to accommodate a huge volunteer force which ultimately was responsible for bringing the restoration to completion in time for the agreed date.

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Figure 6-12 Condition of al-Anwar circa October 1980. Pier construction is still on-going in southwestern bay while flooring of courtyard has begun (© Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah).

6.4.4.4 Inauguration/s

Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin carried out a soft opening of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar on the first day of the new Hijri year of 1401, November 8, 1980. Interview data reveals that although the Project and the community had endeavoured to ensure the restored masjid was inaugurated by President Sadat, an underlying purpose in completing the restoration prior to the start of the new year was so that the Muḥarram[69] commemorations could take place in the newly restored Fatimid masjid (G01). After a traditional celebratory *majlis*, or gathering, on the 1st day of Muḥarram, Syedna Burhanuddin conducted a series of sermons from the 2nd to the 10th of Muḥarram before an audience of approximately 10,000 Bohra community members. Such a gathering was unprecedented for the Bohra community in Cairo and to this day remains the community's largest congregation to have taken place at al-Anwar (N03). In his sermons, Syedna Burhanuddin (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:1068) emphasized to his audience that adherents to the Fatimid faith had returned to Cairo after 900 years and were gathering in the very same '*mubarak*' spaces as had their fellow brethren in faith with luminaries such as the Fatimid *dāʿī* al-Muʾayyad al-Shirazi (d. 470/1078)[70]. Interviewees explained that Syedna Burhanuddin's sermons in the masjid, the dissemination of knowledge and the conducting of congregational prayers for a gathering of thousands truly saw the *iḥyāʾ* of al-Anwar and was the highlight of their involvement in the

[69] Muslim communities, mostly Shiʿa, honour the matrydom of the Prophet Mohammed grandson Imam Husain who was slain along with his family members and companions in Karbala in 61/680 on the Day of ʿĀshūraʾ, the 10th of Muḥarram (Hyder 2006). This commemoration is particularly important within the Dawoodi Bohra community and is marked with gatherings in the mornings and evenings.

[70] Al-Muʾayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi was a scholar and statesman of Persian origin who spent the majority of his life in the service of the Fatimid Imam-Caliph al-Mustansir bi Allah. His scholarly work, prose and poetry, but especially his 800 *majālis al-ḥikmah* (sessions of wisdom) have an integral role in the Bohra Tayyibi scholarly tradition (Klemm 2003).

restoration; a surreal experience the likes of which they have not experienced again (N01, N05 & G02).

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Figure 6-13 Thousands of Dawoodi Bohras at al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar at the onset of the new hijri year (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016:305).

President Sadat was originally due to visit on the 15th November, but the date was delayed to the 24th due to his being unwell. Thousands of community members were present for the inauguration as were a number of government officials, scholars and clerics from Al Azhar University and members of the press. The President was received by Syedna, and after a brief tour of the site, prayers, Quranic recitation and a short ceremony in which Syedna Burhanuddin spoke of the restoration and thanked the government for the opportunity to revive the historic masjid for worship, the President departed. Interviewees describe the President as being overwhelmed by the welcome he received from the large number of community members and the interviewees are highly praiseworthy of the success of the event. The inauguration made headlines in Egyptian press and also internationally where there were significant Bohra populations, such as in India and Pakistan.

6.4.4.5 Later restorations and upkeep

Following the inauguration, the remaining bays of the masjid were roofed over a period of four years. A major development for the masjid post-official inauguration was the restoration of the masjid's monumental portal. As archival images and interview data show (N13), this took place in three stages over several years. The first intervention at the portal involved replicating the original niche inscriptions from the northern side to the western front façade, in the same manner as the Comité had to the southern side (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016). When carrying out these restorative measures, additional original carvings were revealed from within the stone wall which

were incorporated into the new, recarved elements. The second intervention involved the installation of a medallion above the masjid's main entrance. Pieces of a large medallion, an almost exact copy of a medallion on the northern minaret, were unearthed near the portal. Missing segments were carved in stone anew and affixed with the original five pieces to complete the medallion. After the niches had been restored, the final stage in the portal development was the completion of Quranic inscriptions along the entire perimeter of the portal which had originally only survived on the northern side (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016).

Since the restoration, the Dawoodi Bohra community has continued to look after the maintenance, upkeep and periodic restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar. It is rare in the conservation of Islamic heritage in Cairo for foreign organizations to continue with their financial support and technical assistance after the completion of a restoration project, let alone for nearly four decades after. The Bohra's continued involvement can be seen as a sign of their continued reverence of the masjid as a religious and socio-cultural hub. During an interview, an Āthār official (E03) stated that if the Bohras were to stop maintaining the masjid, it would fall into ruins alluding to the chronic issues of under-funding and neglect that plague Cairo's Islamic heritage. The financial and managerial resources required for Cairo's unusually high number of medieval Islamic monuments have consistently stretched the budget of organizations since the establishment of the Comité. In his concluding remarks, El-Habashi (2001:197) recommends that Cairo's current problems, and systemic and financial shortcomings, might be resolved with a return to waqf-like systems where financial autonomy ensured local involvement and the integration of a site 'within its proper social dimension'. This recommendation and the fact that the Bohras' remained actively involved in the care of all of the Fatimid sites they restored in Cairo indicates the real *value* in giving due recognition to religious *values* in the heritage process.

Over the last forty years, large and small works have continued to be carried out at al-Anwar. The 1992 earthquake led to a reassessment of the structural integrity of the masjid, which save a few surface cracks seen in archival images, was left largely intact (E01). The marble courtyard has since been replaced and the drainage renewed. The ablution pools and well structure have also been reconstructed anew (E01). Masjid furnishings are regularly replaced, and large curtains were installed at one point in each of the arches according to historical descriptions of furnishings from the Fatimid times. Archaeological work was carried out in the minarets in 2004 and led to the discovery of new inscriptions at the western minaret. Inscriptions damaged by water capillary action were restored and treated in the northern minaret as well (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2106). A major part of the continuing works at al-Anwar is the completion of the Kufic inscriptions in the *bayt al-ṣalāt* which is nearing completion (E01). Since 2017, a comprehensive restoration of the piers and walls of the entire masjid is in progress in order to address growing water damage. The

current restoration works also include replastering walls, polishing the marble courtyard, treating the wooden roof and electrical and audio systems rewiring (S23).

Figure 6-14 The Bohra community in collaboration with Āthār has been overseeing the restoration of damaged piers and walls at al-Anwar since 2017 (Author 2017, 2018).

Figure 6-15 Restoration work on the Kufic inscriptions of the *bayt al-ṣalāt* (Author 2019)

6.5 Thematic analysis

The chronological narrative in the previous section was pivotal in understanding the technical and physical dynamics of the site, the Project's prioritization of different aspects of the restoration

and how it negotiated the interests and concerns of the various stakeholders. The account also helps contextualize many of the observations made about the restoration in secondary sources over the years and disrupts the generally simplistic portrayal. Yet beyond the facts and figures, beyond the dates and quantities, there was an integral human component to the restoration, largely due to the communal aspect of the restoration and the number of volunteers involved. Individuals from each level of the Project hierarchy (apart from the Syedna) (Figure 6-2) were interviewed for this study. The following sections looks to highlight, through thematic analysis and coding of interview transcripts, more subtle undercurrents in the restoration account.

6.5.1 Religious nature of project

The single theme that dominates the data is the devotional and religious nature of the restoration and the perception of the restoration as a religious act of worship by those involved. One interviewee (N03) composed an Arabic laudatory poem on the occasion of a major milestone in the Project felicitating the Syedna. According to a testimony provided by a group discussant (G01), Dr Najmuddin would often gather members of the Project team and remind them of the religious significance of the project and the impact that it would have on the Dawoodi Bohra community and inhabitants of Cairo for generations. The religious sentiment fostered by restoration participants seems to coalesce around four primary themes which are discussed below.

6.5.1.1 Purity

The perception of the masjid as sacred and the restoration as a sacred duty was most apparent in interviewee discussions surrounding the masjid's purity. The example most cited when referencing the violation of the masjid's sanctity has been the presence of bathrooms used by students and faculty of the school in the northwestern and southwestern bays of the masjid. Unlike the cesspit above the mihrab which was cleared, the bathrooms in the masjid remained in use long after the Project had begun work on site. Similar concern about the sanctity of the masjid arose from the presence of bats, the playground in the courtyard and a music classroom in one of the school buildings.

6.5.1.2 Miraculous

Ever since the commencement of work at al-Anwar and throughout the course of the restoration, participants and volunteers (N03, N06 & N13) involved in the restoration have perceived the relative ease by which difficult or impossible tasks were accomplished, the discovery of historical artefacts on site and the time in which the restoration was completed as miraculous. The perceived miraculous nature of the restoration was affirmed when Syedna Burhanuddin adopted a description of the restoration as a series of nine miracles as the official narrative for the restoration

(Syedna Saifuddin 2016). It was hard to ascertain, however, whether this perception was experienced by interviewees during the actual restoration or was a result of the narrative that was adopted by the community after the completion of the restoration. Like the Prophet Moses' *tisʿah āyāt*, which according to Fatimid texts were given to him as evidence of his righteousness (Syedna Saifuddin 2016), the milestones of al-Anwar were described as *tisʿah āyāt* because the community believed them to be evidence of the restoration's righteousness and divine support. Eschewing a description of the works carried out at al-Anwar based on the chronology of key events or the major interventions of the masjid, Syedna chose the nine miracles narrative which borrows from Quranic terminology thus aligning the narrative and legacy of the restoration with its overall religious origins and agenda.

In Tayyibi discourse, miracles are often explained as the process of *qalb al-aʾyān* – or the complete transformation of an entity (Syedna Burhanuddin 1990). The word *iḥyāʾ* in itself embodies this notion. The Bohras reserve *iḥyāʾ* for the restoration of masjids that are no longer living, i.e. in ruined or desolate conditions in which they cannot cater to the function for which they were created. Taking the analogy to its natural conclusion, a masjid returned to its original state through the process of *iḥyāʾ* is tantamount to the dead being reanimated, and as such is considered miraculous. Descriptions of the masjid's miraculous transformation by participants involved in the restoration reflect this understanding. The transformation was so radical, that even those outside the community remarked, albeit critically, that the restoration 'might well persuade the innocent that a kind of miracle had taken place' (SPARE 1981:3).

6.5.1.3 Centrality of the Syedna

Another important theme that comes across in the data is the centrality of Syedna Burhanuddin to the restoration. Aside from his obvious leadership of the community, and subsequently the project, his theological importance as the representative of the Imam in the Bohra faith meant that participants in the restoration saw his instructions to be obligatory and sacred. As the heir of the Fatimid Imam, Syedna was considered by those involved in the Project as the custodian of the masjid. The practical implications of such belief were that there was a clear hierarchy and top-down model of instruction.

Syedna Burhanuddin's personal involvement, and that of his successor Syedna Saifuddin, were seen as a source of inspiration for those involved in the Project. In multiple interviews, respondents (G01, G02, N02, N03, N04, N05, N07 & N13) conveyed that their ability to carry out their responsibilities or the difficult tasks entrusted to them was by virtue of Syedna Burhanuddin and his prayers. Since interviews with project participants took place after the passing of Syedna Burhanuddin in 2014 at which point Syedna Saifuddin acceded to the

community's leadership, interviewees tended to highlight his role during the restoration suggesting his pre-eminence even though at the time his father Syedna Burhanuddin had not yet disclosed his successorship. One interviewee (N13) commented that the restoration and construction of al-Anwar was in many ways analogous to Syedna Burhanuddin's construction and formation of his successor, Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin. Almost all the interviewees relayed personal interactions with the Syednas with great pride, which in the larger scheme of the restoration were perhaps trivial yet remain their key memories from the time they spent in Cairo. For Project participants interviewed for this research, their belief and faith in the Syedna led them to believe that major milestones or accomplishments in the al-Anwar restoration, and the restoration as a whole, were only possible because of the leadership of Syedna Burhanuddin and Syedna Saifuddin.

6.5.1.4 Fortuity or fate

Because the restoration was led by Syedna, and because participants embraced it as a righteous, religious cause, they perceived fortunate discoveries as a manifestation of fate and not mere fortuity. The sourcing of chengal wood which was the 'perfect' wood for the project (N02 & N14), for instance, or the uncovering of the well in the courtyard which provided water for construction at a crucial stage (N03). Participant descriptions of these 'discoveries', as well as some publications, suggest the community saw them as predestined events meant to highlight the auspiciousness and *barakat* of the masjid (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016). Similar beliefs surround the discovery of two fragments of the original foundational inscriptions unearthed during excavation near the main portal (N01). The auspicious aura of al-Anwar has only increased in time and this has had an effect on participant recollections. One individual (G02) suggested that an ancient Fatimid grille in the *majāz*, which was concealed behind a Mamluk grille, was discovered during the course of the restoration specifically remarking that no researcher had known about it. Yet the *Project Report*, in its description of how the Fatimid grille was restored and the Mamluk grille removed and preserved in a museum, had noted that original grille had been identified and photographed by Flury at the start of the 20th century. The belief in the destiny of the restoration was so strong that one participant (N12) explained that he often felt as if his involvement in the restoration had been pre-ordained.

6.5.2 Volunteers

Perhaps the most pronounced difference between the al-Anwar restoration and other masjid restoration projects in Cairo was the sheer number of volunteers who participated in the Project. Volunteers comprised of students, businessmen, and various other professionals who not only donated their time and effort towards the restoration, but also provided finances as well. During

one group discussion (G01), members of one family recalled gathering around Syedna Saifuddin in al-Anwar when the restoration had just begun and pledging their donation. The family spoke of that moment with much gratitude and emotion, with one person claiming that it was a changing point in their lives. Although other restoration projects at the time had been funded by parties other than the EAO and the Egyptian government, they were generally foreign governments, not religious communities. The Bohra restoration received voluntary contributions in terms of finance, professional experience, time as well as labour from members of the Bohra community in a manner that was unprecedented for Cairo restoration projects. In describing the volunteer work force, the *Project Report* is quick to point out, however, that all work on site was carried out under the technical supervision of experts.

Commonalities between the interviews suggest that due to the devotional aspect of the restoration and the sentiment it aroused, recruiting volunteers was not necessarily a difficult task. Most senior level managers, those with personal relations with Project leadership such as with Syedna Saifuddin and Dr Najmuddin, were simply asked to move to Cairo (G02). A respondent (N14) was studying in London, and explained with great emphasis the serendipitous coincidence that he had just completed a paper on Hassan Fathy and was asked to join a design team working on the restoration of al-Anwar which was led by him. An architect and civil engineer recalled a similar brief conversation where they were told to join the restoration efforts at al-Anwar (G02). A businessman had had a routine audience with Syedna Burhanuddin where he met Syedna Saifuddin who unexpectedly entrusted him with procuring wood for al-Anwar's roof (N02). What the interviewees seem to be attempting to convey is, firstly, that the simplicity with which the opportunity to contribute to the al-Anwar restoration arose was antithetical to the profound impact the involvement would have on the rest of their lives. Secondly, that their involvement was somehow destined to happen. One informant relayed (N07) how Dr Najmuddin had once suggested to him that it had been the pious acts of their forefathers that had resulted in the opportunity to contribute at al-Anwar.

6.5.3 Nostalgia

Nearly all interviewees displayed a sense of pride in their involvement in the restoration and were often visibly moved when describing various incidents they had witnessed or accomplishments in which they were involved. Beyond its perception as a religious act, the restoration was seen as highly significant for the Bohras from a cultural and developmental standpoint. With the interviews taking place almost forty years after the fact, and with the constant emphasis given by Syedna to the restoration's centrality and role in the community's prosperity since its completion (see p. 140), volunteers seem to appreciate the significance of their participation in one of the community's most defining events. In recent years, after the passing of Syedna Burhanuddin and

with the release of Syedna Saifuddin's treatise dedicated to his predecessor's restoration of al-Anwar, the emphasis on the restoration and its impact on the community has been renewed. In Bohra community discourse, even those who simply attended the inauguration let alone those involved in the actual restoration, are seen as being predestined for this honour. This belief is not lost on the interviewees (N02, N04 & N07) who besides an element of pride in their involvement, often interject phrases such as '*al-ḥamd li Allah*' (Praise to God) and '*maulā nī duʿā*' (possible by virtue of Syedna's prayers) expressing gratitude and thanks. Interestingly, this sentiment was noted by King (1984:330) even shortly after the restoration when he remarked that:

> all the people to whom I talked, "this event", this rebuilding of the mosque of Al-Hakim, was truly an occasion with cosmic and timeless overtones, the culmination of years of hope, an experience that transformed individual lives.

6.5.4 Time and time again

Temporal aspects of the Project came up regularly in conversations with participants suggesting a keen cognizance of time in relation to the Project's various objectives. Volunteers (N02, N03, N09 & N11) often expressed their bewilderment as to how certain things were achieved in such short time periods. This relates ultimately with the overall duration of the project itself, which the *Project Report* (1981) stresses took only twenty-seven months. The brevity of the overall duration is interestingly juxtaposed by participants with the lengthy durations volunteers spent on the site and in pursuit of their various responsibilities. The paradox presented was often that at an individual level, tasks were time-intensive, yet when looked at collectively, major achievements were accomplished in relatively short periods of time. Both observations regarding time reinforce the perceived miraculous nature of the restoration: the works accomplished should have required much more time, and that the time volunteers gave to the project was outside their human capacity. One interviewee (N03) quoted[71] a high-ranking official, who at the very onset of the Project climbed the minaret to take stock of the overall site and said that the restoration could not be achieved in even fifty years, let alone in a little over two. Among the tasks that are particularly highlighted for their shorter than expected time for completion was the demolition of the Silahdar school structures in the courtyard which took place so quickly that the Project was accused of using dynamite[72] and the construction of the new Silhadar school in 110 days (G01 & G02).

The perception of time and permanence also impacted the manner in which participants viewed and acknowledged their roles in the restoration. As Glendinning (2013:450) points out, 'in some

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[71] The interviewee quoted his words exactly (as he remembered them) repeating them in the original Egyptian colloquial for added effect.

[72] Apparently the idea of using dynamite had been floated but was struck down by the Āthar because of the proximity of the ancient minarets (N02).

non-Western cultures, the sense of irreversible, driving Time and History, that powered the story of conservation, is lacking, and more fluid, cyclical concepts of time are prevalent'. As such, restoration participants, perhaps reflective of the Project's overall attitude, did not seem perturbed by either the permanence or impermanence of the interventions they carried out on site. While concrete and chengal were appreciated for the longevity and permanence they provided the masjid, the immutability and fixity of certain aspects of the masjid's material and structure, when seen to hinder the objectives of the restoration efforts, were relinquished.

A final temporal element that came across in the interviews was the Project's urgency. Despite large swathes of inactivity, participants maintained that the Project and its leadership moved quickly. As mentioned earlier, the Project had an interest in expediting the restoration in order to rescue the masjid from indignation, but also to coincide with the dawn of the new year and new century. Political motivations may also explain the Bohras' need to complete the restoration within a given period. As suggested by more than one interviewee (N03, N05 & N13), elements from within the Ministries of Āthār and Waqfs, as well as certain segments of the press, were against the restoration. Having secured a date from President Sadat, any delays might jeopardize Sadat's visit and the Bohras would risk losing the prominence of a presidential inauguration.

6.5.5 Resourcefulness or inexperience

Interviewee responses revealed a level of inexperience and uncertainty with regards to the responsibilities they were given, yet simultaneously suggested a spirit of resourcefulness that seemed to prevail amongst the volunteers. The individual made responsible for the wood procurement admitted that he had no prior knowledge regarding wood, and that after being assigned this task, one of the first things he did was to find a book that could help him better understand the task (N02). One seminary graduate was made responsible of releasing materials from the Alexandria port with no background in trade (N04), while another was placed in charge of overseeing the construction of the new Silahdar school (N03). Devotees and disciples of the Imam taking on responsibilities of an unfamiliar nature is common throughout the history of the Fatimid *da'wat* and was seen as a sign of dedication and faith in the Imam's ability to provide divine assistance (Muhammad 2013).

At times, the Project according to interviewee descriptions, seemed to be plagued by the unavailability and inadequacy of resources. For instance, after the discovery of the well and after several smaller pumps had failed to have any impact, a submersible pump — the only one of its kind in Cairo according to the interviewee (N02) — was borrowed from the Arab Contractors. When the pump was turned on, the well collapsed and the Project was unsure as to how to proceed (N02 & N13). An interviewee (N02) involved mentioned soliciting help from pearl divers who

might be able to shed some light on how to reconstruct the well. When the bulldozer collapsed into a patch of weak ground, initially a crane was brought in to free it but was unsuccessful. Project management proceeded to enlist the help of a local truck owner whose trucks were parked immediately outside of al-Anwar (G02). A large truck was tied to the bulldozer and was able to set it free from the soil. State agencies unrelated to the Antiquities were often called upon as well, such as the army for demolition and the local fire brigade for cleaning (G02).

This ambiguity in operation could be seen in responses by the architect team as well. When the project first started, apart from Hassan Fathy and his team, the architects and engineers involved had never worked on a restoration project. When asked about the use of concrete at al-Anwar, one member of the design team (N14) explained how initially the Project team visited other restoration sites in Cairo to familiarize themselves with conservation norms which is where they learnt that it was commonly used. In certain aspects of the design there was an element of trial and error. Upon receiving instructions to design a 'Fatimid' domed structure for the well, having never attempted such a design before, the architect based his design off of the dome in al-Juyūshī. It is remarkable that an element of the masjid whose design seems to be so happenstance would over time become one of its most iconic features.

6.5.6 Criticism

Interviewees and textual sources are very much aware of the criticism levelled against the Project, especially the *Project Report* which in many places takes on an apologetic tone. Interviewees also mention receiving criticisms from various individuals and organizations. A member of the design team (N14) mentioned an 'American' woman, as well other foreigners, who often visited the site while the restoration was on-going and questioned the approach and intentions of the Project. Participants also became aware of some of the local inhabitants' perceptions of the Project. Some disapprovingly would say that the government has sold al-Anwar to the Bohras, while others, especially after the restoration and seeing the results, would praise the Project and refer to the masjid as '*Masjid ʿaẓamat al-sulṭān*', the Sultan's Masjid as an acknowledgment of the Syedna's contribution (N03). There was resistance from within the Ministries of Āthār and Waqfs as well. An informant (N02) said that he was once told by a member of the Āthār that you are not restoring a masjid, you are making a new one.

6.6 Conclusion

The manner by which architectural restoration manifests itself is a representation of the restorer's motives (Earl 2003). In this chapter, the influence of the Bohra community's primarily religious motivation in the restoration of al-Anwar and its intent to return a masjid to its original form and

function, can be seen in the principles it claimed to have adhered to and the manner by which it executed these principles over the duration of the Project. The *uslūb* documented by the Project in its report is one that shows an awareness and appreciation of modern conservation, yet maintains that a masjid cannot be restored like other historic monuments. Four traits in particular were attributed by the project to the masjid which when analyzed by this study can be seen as statements regarding a masjid's unique religious stature and sanctity, its significant social role and the specific aesthetic qualities it requires in order to reflect this sacredness and cater to this role. Chapter 8 will explore the themes introduced in these discussions in greater detail.

The chronological account of the restoration combined with the thematic analysis of interview data and textual sources suggest a general commitment to conservation norms, procedures and practices. Much of the critical commentary regarding the restoration, when read in context of the account provided here, merits further scrutiny. Simultaneously, however, certain observations reported in secondary sources regarding the restoration accurately convey site realities. The Bohras, for instance, seemed to operate with a certain level of autonomy unlike other restoration projects in Cairo and were able to secure permissions for interventions with which many modern conservationists later took issue. Did perhaps the Bohras' arguments regarding the distinct nature of a masjid vis-à-vis other monuments resonate with individuals within Āthār and Waqfs? Chapter 7 will look to explore the legacy of the al-Anwar restoration within the Bohra community. In addition, it will consider whether the values and principles by which the Bohras claim to have restored al-Anwar resonated with the wider community of individuals who visit and patronize the masjid and with the management of other masjid restoration projects in Cairo.

Chapter 7: The legacy of the al-Anwar Restoration

7.1 Introduction

Although nearly forty years have passed since the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, the masjid continues to be a dynamic religious, historic and architectural site both physically and discursively. Craith and Kockel (2015:426) have argued that although heritage 'looks emphatically to the past' its

> process is deeply present-centred. From our contemporary perspective, we interpret resources (both tangible and intangible) that are drawn from a perceived past in order to generate meanings in the present and for the future.

Al-Anwar as a restored masjid in Historic Cairo is very much part of the present. To this day, members of the Bohra community are drawn to it as are the inhabitants of Gamaliyya where it is situated. It is a persistent landmark in the visual, scholarly and literary landscape of the Dawoodi Bohra community. As one of the largest and oldest masjids in Cairo, a cherished national site and popular tourist location, it continues to exert its influence on other masjids and their conservation throughout Cairo. This chapter looks to explore the impact and legacy of the al-Anwar restoration on the Dawoodi Bohra community, visitors and patrons of the masjid and the conservation of Cairo's religious architecture as it has developed over the last four decades.

7.2 The legacy and impact of the al-Anwar restoration on the Dawoodi Bohra community

Since its completion nearly 40 years ago, a unique discourse surrounding the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar has developed within the Bohra community, the thematic analysis of which reveals the restoration's impact on the community's social, architectural and philosophical development. Syedna Burhanuddin has repeatedly described the al-Anwar restoration as a source of *barakat* and attributes to it the community's contemporary spiritual and material prosperity, specifically the proliferation of construction and building that took place in its wake. Although shortly after the inauguration Syedna Burhanuddin revealed the nine-miracle narrative of the restoration, over time and in retrospect, this 'miraculous' nature of al-Anwar's restoration has intensified and, in some ways, has even taken up a legendary or mythical status. The logistics that went into the organization and mobilization of resources for the restoration as well as the 10,000 people gathering in Cairo have paved the way for many more such international gatherings, especially the annual ʿAsharah Mubārakah gatherings which commemorate the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson, Imam Husain (Syedna Burhanuddin 1991). Managing the al-Anwar restoration was also attributed to boosting community confidence and capacity to engage with

major projects and undertakings elsewhere in the world. Syedna also says that the Project led to the development of an ethos of financial contribution and acts of goodwill (Syedna Burhanuddin 1991). Finally, the restoration of al-Anwar paved the way for the restoration of numerous other Fatimid era monuments in Cairo, as well as other historic buildings of religious and social importance to the Bohra community in the Middle East and South Asia (Saifuddin 2000, 2002), ultimately resulting in the emergence of both a distinct philosophy towards architectural restoration and a style of architecture particular to the community (Sanders 2008).

7.2.1 *Barakat*

To a Dawoodi Bohra, the word *barakat*, or blessings, is largely synonymous with al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar. In nearly every annual ʿAsharah since the restoration to his passing in 2014, Syedna Burhanuddin repeatedly stated that al-Anwar's blessings had led to prosperity throughout the community the likes of which were previously unknown. In his sermons in 1413/1992, Syedna Burhanuddin (1994:166) made the following remarks which follow a pattern the community is accustomed to hearing (N01) (translated from Lisān al-Daʿwat):

> I always tell you this, again and again in [my] sermons, that from the day we restored the masjid of Imam Hakim, *barakāt* (pl. of *barakat*; blessings) have tremendously pervaded this *daʿwat*. Community masjids were built, homes flourished, souls flourished, bodies flourished; homes were overwhelmed with *barakat*.

Barakat, although commonly translated as blessings, is a slightly more complex phenomenon. As explained by Meri (1999:63), it is:

> the emanation and perpetuity of holiness in the person of a saint, which manifests itself in objects, or persons with whom he has come into contact posthumously or during his life. In addition to people, its most common receptacles include earth, water, rocks and trees, not to mention architectural forms such as tombs, shrines, mosques and other structures.

The notion of seeking *barakat* from physical objects associated to the Prophet, his family and the Imams is centuries old and features regularly within many Islamic traditions (Von Denfer 1976, Meri 1999). It was a common practice during the Fatimid period for the Imam-Caliphs to distribute their used shrouds to members of the *daʿwat* or others for them to retain as material objects imbued with the Imam's *barakat* (Sanders 2001, Sokoly 2017). A building associated to the Imam, particularly a sacred space such as a masjid, would have similar *barakat*. Many individuals visit al-Anwar with the intent of seeking *barakat* through various physical acts such as drinking the water from al-Anwar's well or kissing and touching the mihrab marble. *Barakat* can also be sought as a form of cure from illness (Westermarck 2014). Individuals, sometimes at the instruction of the Syedna, visit al-Anwar and sweep the floor to seek cure from various diseases but especially those without known cures such as vitiligo. For the community, the *barakat* pervades nearly all associations to al-Anwar, both physical and spiritual. Syedna Saifuddin (2013) once remarked that even the dirt and rubble removed from al-Anwar embodied

barakat, enough so that the location where they were discarded eventually became a garden.[73] For the Bohras, the *barakat* of al-Anwar was so potent that it transcended the physicality of the masjid, extending by virtue of the restoration to the entire *da'wat* and all the believers in its fold. Not only was the physical location considered a vessel of *baraka*, but the very association to al-Anwar and its restoration too held an opportunity for blessing.

7.2.2 'Revival' of Fatimid architecture

The expression of faith through architecture has been an important aspect of the Dawoodi Bohra community in the 20th and 21st centuries. The proliferation of building within the community coincides largely with the inauguration of al-Anwar in 1980, and is phrased as a 'revival of Fatimi architecture' (Abdulhusein 2001:35, Simonowitz 2004). The inauguration marked the start of a period where community centres in South Asia and across the globe had either outgrown current buildings our had become established enough to build their own purpose-built structures. The architecture, which was heavily influenced by al-Anwar and other Fatimid masjids of Cairo and was later termed by art historians as 'neo-Fatimid'[74] (Simonowitz 2004:490), became a conduit for the expression of the community's faith. Simonowitz (2004:336) saw this use of architecture as 'far more important and sweeping' than other aspects of the community's modernization during the same period. Al-Anwar was restored as a site of living heritage, and through the use of its architectural and artistic elements, this 'living tradition' was transplanted throughout the 'Bohra diaspora community' (Sanders 1999:165).

The Bohra use of Fatimid architectural styles in their contemporary buildings can be seen as an extension of their restoration philosophy whereby buildings become sites of living tradition and offers additional insight into their understandings of authenticity. Amīr ʿImaduddin (2002:147) has described the process of using Fatimid architectural, epigraphical and artistic elements as 'replication' which he sees as a vehicle for the preservation of Fatimid faith adopted by its proponents and those made responsible for its survival. Sayyida Arwa al-Sulayhi (d. 532/1138), a key figure in the Tayyibi *da'wat*, is described as having replicated the site conditions and building form of al-Juyūshī in her mountain city of Zī Jibla in southern Yemen. In contemporary times, ʿImaduddin (2002:148) suggests that the community leadership has 'initiated a revolution in the transfer and replication of Fatemi art and architecture, to reflect the Fatemi legacy that they had inherited from their predecessors'. The material forms of Fatimid architecture in Cairo were designed and built to sustain the Fatimid faith (Bierman 1998). Their physical restoration is a

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[73] It is not entirely clear which location is being referred to but N13 claims it was a dump in Fustat which had recently been converted into a municipal garden.

[74] This term does not seem to have currency within community publications.

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means to preserving and restoring the functions for which they were created. For the Bohras, the restoration of al-Anwar's original minaret and its replication elsewhere (Figure 7-1) are similar endeavours: they both "call" to the Fatimid faith and sustain the religious activities and sentiment for which the original structure was designed.

Figure 7-1 Through the process of 'replication', a modified version of the façade of al-Anwar was reproduced for the masjid at the Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah Nairobi campus which included two scaled replicas of the western minaret and a notional reconstruction of their missing finials (Author 2018).

7.2.3 Pride and Identity

The Bohra community regularly associates its identity, particularly as an international community, with its penchant for architecture which almost categorically references the restoration of al-Anwar. The community's ID card for instance bears an image of the al-Anwar façade on its back and the logo used to represent most community locations, especially during the Hajj pilgrimage where it must distinguish itself from the millions of other Muslims for logistic purposes, is the icon of al-Anwar's lamp, the *mishkāt* (G01). The distinct clothes worn by Bohra men and women are referred to as *Libās al-Anwar*, The Garbs of Anwar, since their prominence and usage within the community rose when thousands arrived to Cairo for the al-Anwar inauguration donning this distinctive attire (Figure 7-2) (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Physically and discursively, the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar has become an integral part of the Dawoodi Bohra community identity. It features prominently in nearly any publication, presentation or exhibition displaying the community's development[75] and its distinct identity as a traditional, yet

[75] Multiple news stories regarding Bohra public relations programs on thedawoodibohras.com, the community's official website, reference the al-Anwar restoration visually or textually. See for example

forward-looking, modern Muslim community (Abdulhussein 2001). The Bohras utilized the universal appeal of architectural conservation to promote their contribution to society and simultaneously highlight the revival of an Islamic place of worship to illustrate their contribution to Islamic heritage, either deliberately or unknowingly avoiding the criticisms against the al-Anwar restoration.

Figure 7-2 Men and women from the Bohra community dressed in *Libās al-Anwar* in al-Anwar (Photo courtesy of Sylvia Smith 2015).

7.2.4 Mythical status

In time, almost all discussions pertaining to al-Anwar in official Bohra community publications were featured in the *tisʿah āyāt* framework including the most authoritative work thus far, Syedna Saifuddin's (2016) epistle. Having been associated to miraculousness from the very start, it is perhaps no wonder that the restoration has taken up a legendary almost mythical status. In some cases, in tertiary publications or spoken communication delivered by community representatives to their congregations, the al-Anwar narrative picks up 'additions'. For instance, a common unconfirmed assertion typical of this type of generic discourse surrounding al-Anwar is that UNESCO had attempted to carry out the restoration prior to the Bohra's work in 1980 but was 'deterred by the magnitude of the project' (Abdulhussein 2001:37, H 2009, Mala 2014). In some versions of UNESCO's role, the international organization is characterized as a co-actor or sponsor of the restoration (indirectly lending the Bohras legitimacy) (Munaim 2014:52). Neither of these scenarios, however, feature in Syedna Saifuddin's authoritative work nor were any of the

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"Colombo City Circle members take an eye-opening tour of the city's Bohra masjid" (www.thedawoodibohras.com/2018/02/02/colombo-city-circle-members-take-an-eye-opening-tour-of-the-citys-bohra-masjid/, accessed 12/01/2019) (Anon 2018a) and "Congressman Roskam attends Chicago outreach program" (www.thedawoodibohras.com/2018/03/08/congressman-roskam-attends-chicago-outreach-program/, accessed 12/01/2019) (Anon 2018b).

interviewees approached for this study able to verify this. Statements are also often made regarding the significance of the restoration of al-Anwar and its architecture for Cairo and Islam in general. The restoration is described as having 'reconquered the hearts of the people of Misr (Egypt)', for which they are all grateful (Anjuman-e-Saifee Chicago 1981:1, Yamani 1981). The generous descriptions of the al-Anwar restoration and its influence on Cairo indicate that apart from the authoritative discourse found in official publications, details of the restoration are elaborated upon and literarily annotated by the wider community especially in informal discourse.

7.2.5 Scholarly legacy

Williams (2002:464) has suggested that the restoration of al-Anwar resulted in the loss of 'a research tool'. Her statement is part of a wider discourse that purports that the restoration hampered scholarly understanding of al-Anwar rather than contributing to it. The reconstruction of many peers and the loss of original fabric in some areas has of course nullified certain avenues of research. However, certain archaeological artefacts and details that have come to light as a result of the restoration have been given little scholarly consideration. The unearthing of fragments of al-Anwar's foundational inscriptions, the revealing of portal inscriptions after the removal of the Qurqumas mausoleum, the uncovering of an original Fatimid blind niche in the *majāz* and the discovery of a hidden inscription during archaeological investigation in the western minaret are substantial findings that the Bohras argue increase understanding of the masjid's architecture and epigraphy (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981). The *majāz*'s blind niche can be comparatively studied with other stucco inscriptions in the masjid for a better understanding of Fatimid vegetal patterns. The year 394/1004 in the recently uncovered inscription in the western minaret is also intriguing when considering the upper inscription on the same minaret dates to 393/1003 suggesting the possibility of craftsmen working from the top down (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016).

The removal of the Qurqumas tomb revealed original inscriptions on the front façade of the monument portal. In his reconstruction of the portal, Creswell (1978) had suggested that the portal's two flanking façades had one arched panel each, yet the location of the inscriptions revealed by the removal of the tomb confirmed that there were in fact two arched panels on each side. As the portal was restored by the Bohras over the following decades, additional inscriptions were found on the walls of the inner vaulted passage of the portal and in the ground nearby. These discoveries led to the confirmation that the portal had a total of ten arched panels, which Syedna Saifuddin (2016) has posited relates to the ten gates of heaven and other references to the number ten in Fatimid philosophy, instead of Creswell's (1978) suggestion of eight. The five arched panels on each side would also match the number of niches found on each side of the façade of al-Aqmar (Williams 1985b).

The discovery most emphasized in Bohra discourse is that of the two fragments of the original foundational inscription. The inscription, which dates back to 393/1003, was sketched by Wilkinson (in Hammer-Purgstall 1838:398) when it was on the brink of collapse who suggested that someone should endeavour to secure 'this curious document for some European museum, ere it be destroyed'. By 1880, the inscription had fallen and Rogers (1880) salvaged some of the pieces which eventually made their way to the Museum of Islamic Art. During the course of the restoration, the Project unearthed two fragments of an inscription during excavation work near the portal and determined that they were part of the original inscription sketched by Wilkinson. Six additional pieces of the inscription were identified in Museum archives. After securing permission for their retrieval, the entire inscription was restored and reinstalled to its original location (Figure 7-3). For the Project, this was a tremendous discovery and accomplishment. The discovery and installation of the foundational inscription is considered one of the restoration's nine miracles and is recorded in the Bohras' own inscription dedicated to the restoration which was installed directly beneath the original. The inscriptions' history, discovery and epigraphical significance were compiled in a detailed Arabic essay in one of the only publications prepared by the Project for external consumption (Shakir 2002). The Bohras also rely on the inscription to contend accusations that the Imam-Caliph al-Hakim claimed divinity, citing the Imam's description of himself as ''abd Allah', God's servant, as evidence (Shakir 2002, Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016).

Yet the restored inscription fails to fall on the radar of contemporary scholarship. In an article written two years after the restoration, despite citing the text of the foundational inscription and mentioning Wilkinson's sketch, Bloom (1983:19) claims that the context of the six limestone inscriptions at the Museum (which were no longer there) 'has yet to be established; in the meantime they are of no help whatsoever' in understanding the epigraphy of the masjid. Even 20 years later, Walker (2002:101) insists that this important foundational inscription is 'now lost'. The culture of dismissing the overall restoration within conservation and architectural scholarship has resulted in an almost blanket disregard for any contributions the restoration may have had to better understanding al-Anwar's history and Fatimid architecture.

Figure 7-3 The foundational inscription on the inner wall of the masjid above the main entrance restored with original fragments. The darker portions are the original pieces (Author 2015).

7.2.6 **Formation of a distinct philosophy of conservation**

Multiple publications on the restoration of al-Anwar and subsequent restorations in Cairo have also led to the emergence of a unique philosophy towards architectural conservation distinct to the Bohra community which could be captured in the term *iḥyāʾ*. Although many of the concepts and thoughts trace back naturally to the restoration of al-Anwar which was uniquely given this name, over time, they have organically grown to incorporate a wider frame of reference and often consider historical incidents and textual references that did not feature, or at least are not documented as having featured, in the discussions that took place during al-Anwar's restoration in 1980.

At the inception of the restoration project, apart from the insistence that al-Anwar be restored as a masjid and not a monument, interviewee discussions seem to indicate that the Project did not consider its approach to be drastically different from other projects in Cairo (N14). However, over the course of the 2-3-year process of restoration and the attention it received from various Egyptian and non-Egyptian scholars, Project leadership became more aware of the criticisms levelled against it. It is only in the wake of this criticism that the Bohras became aware of their distinct approach towards restoration, which was documented in the *Project Report* produced at

the *end* of the restoration, and it was only many decades later in the works of Amīr ʿImaduddin[76] (2002, 2004), where an active defence of the Bohra approach to restoration is made. In his works, the initial groundwork for a conservation philosophy based upon Fatimid textual traditions is laid. However, it is only in the epistle on the al-Anwar restoration, *Shukr Niʿam Ashab al-Barakat*, where Syedna Saifuddin (2016) clearly states that the al-Anwar restoration followed a distinct Fatimid philosophy of architectural conservation which is unlike others.

7.3 Al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar visitors and patrons: Usage and Perception

Advancing the discussion of the legacy of the al-Anwar restoration and its continued impact on stakeholders, the following section aims to uncover current perception of the masjid as held by those who visit and patronize it. This is achieved with the help of a three-pronged, REAPs inspired research methodology comprising of behavioural mapping (Appendix II, p. 205), semi-structured interviews of al-Anwar visitors and qualitative categorization of public Instagram data (See p. 25). It also seeks to identify contemporary usage of this Muslim public space and place of worship. Ultimately, the observations provided here regarding the perception and usage of the masjid speak to the restoration's impact and validity, but also help understand the values by which Muslims perceive and understand built heritage of a sacred nature.

Visitor perception and usage of heritage sites, especially in a tourism context (Lekakis 2009, Orbaşli 2000, Laurajane Smith 2006), is a well-researched phenomenon. However, there are fewer studies which utilize data collected from visitors in order to analyse heritage policies, particularly perceptions regarding restoration or 'their opinions on historical reconstructions' (Holland 2011:55). Similar to the research methods adopted here, Holland (2011) interviewed visitors at the Red Hill National Memorial in Virginia, USA, to weigh in on the debate surrounding historical reconstructions. In the context of Islamic places of worship, Rudolf (2006) interviewed visitors and patrons of two Islamic monuments in different countries, al-Jāmiʿ al-Azhar in Cairo and al-Jāmiʿ al-Kabīr in Damascus, to illustrate the inadequacy of current models of heritage definitions and evaluation.

The data collection and analysis presented below also offer insight into the concept of *iḥyāʾ*. Since the restoration was pegged as *iḥyāʾ*, it seemed an ability to measure the masjid's liveliness would speak to the relative success or failure of the approach. The *Rasaʾil* have defined life as movement (Al-Mastur 1995a). According to the *Rasaʾil*, 'motion is not predicated on cause, but is inherent in the divine being; movement is alive because the universe and being are alive' (Vicente

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[76] The Amīr has also compiled a detailed report in Arabic on the history, architecture and restoration of Masjid al-Luʾluʾa which remains unpublished.

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2007:54). The concept of motion being linked to life is found in other Islamic texts as well, and can be further divided into two categories: physical and spiritual (Vicente 2007). Thus, al-Anwar's capacity to cater to and encourage movement, both physical in the sense of movement in and between spaces, as well as motion in terms of religious and/or social activity, was observed and noted. It is the primary investigator's contention that such 'activity' and 'movement' is possible of reflecting the extent of the masjid's 'liveliness'.

7.3.1 Al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar: A centre of activity

Al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar is a site full of activity which caters to multiple religious, social and personal functions. As al-Anwar's history has shown, apart from prayer and worship, the Fatimids, Ayyubids and Mamluks used the site for ceremonies and religious rituals as well as the dissemination of knowledge (Sanders 1994, Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Architectural features, such as an intimate chamber in the western minaret, indicate that the masjid provided spaces which catered to private or solitary use as well (Creswell 1978). Despite centuries of cessation in its original function and the passing of nearly 1000 years since it was constructed, al-Anwar's present-day ability to cater to the functions for which it was initially built is a reflection of its architecture and design and the philosophy and manner by which it was restored. The following sections provide a summary of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar's contemporary usage which essentially falls into three broad categories of activity: religious, social and personal. The discussion surrounding its usage is followed by an explorative study of visitor perception of al-Anwar as a restored Islamic monument.

7.3.1.1 A place of worship

Al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar retains its primary function as a religious place of worship as seen in data collected from behavioural mapping and interviews. The religious character of the masjid is especially obvious, as would be expected, during times of prayer (ṣalāt) with the number of worshippers fluctuating depending on the prayer of the day and the day of the week. Friday prayers are the most popular throughout the Islamic world and there is no exception at al-Anwar. Instagram data revealed that major celebrations, or occasions of religious significance, also see large numbers of people especially throughout the month of Ramaḍān and on days of Eid or public holidays in Egypt. Of the nearly 1100 specific, individual activities identified during behavioural mapping, approximately 320 were recognized solely as prayer and worship, the largest category dedicated to a single activity. One out four individuals observed in prayer were female who were generally concentrated in a section of the masjid to the north of the mihrab dedicated for female worshippers. Although many of the interviewees questioned were engaged in another form of activity prior to the interview, nearly half of them stated that their primary purpose in visiting was

for prayer. It should be noted, however, that although prayer reserves the largest number of visitors, the duration spent at al-Anwar in prayer in comparison to other activities is substantially less. Interviews revealed that people may come for *ṣalāt*, but stay on or arrive earlier for other social purposes that are discussed below.

Mapping also revealed that religious activities such as prayer and the recitation of the Quran were primarily limited to the *bayt al-ṣalāt*, specifically the area underneath the *majāz* by the mihrab and notably under the eastern corner dome of the masjid where the Bohra community was observed conducting its own prayers[77] and gatherings. With five colonnades, the *bayt al-ṣalāt* is the deepest bay of the masjid and offers more privacy and during the afternoon heat, is cooler as well. Figure 7-7 is a site map which shows the intensity of the three categories of activity in different areas of the masjid based on data collected during behavioural mapping.

7.3.1.2 A social hub

Historically, masjids throughout the Muslim world have functioned as important venues for social exchange and in their varying capacities have fulfilled important developmental roles within the societies and communities in which they were built (Abd al-Fattah 2010). In many ways al-Anwar functions, as do other urban masjids throughout the world, as 'a pious space that permits the tenor of life, work, education, and social and commercial activity to be tempered with a pause for prayer five times per day and with an opportunity for pious repose' (Kahera 2002:96). Outside of prayer times, the masjid clearly offers visitors a unique venue to carry out various social activities including but not limited to conversation, photography, partaking in refreshments and leisurely pursuit.

Although occurring throughout the masjid, social activity is most common within the vast courtyard and along the arched colonnades that surround it. During fieldwork, multiple groups were observed or interviewed under the iconic arches. Apart from the worshippers' use of the ablution pools for religious ritual purity, social activity seems to dominate the courtyard especially during evening hours prior to and after sunset when the marble pavement has a unique cooling effect (Figure 7-4). Despite their liturgical origins, the ablution pools in the northern and western corners, along with the iconic well structure towards the centre of the courtyard, serve as social nodes and attract substantial attention much like water features in urban plazas (Whyte 2001). The aesthetics of the space also contribute to its appeal. The courtyard's numerous vantage points

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[77] The Bohras lead their own congregational prayers in accordance with the Ismaʿili Tayyibi tradition. Like most Muslims, the Bohras offer five distinct prayers, yet do so at three times in the day. *Fajr*, or morning prayer is on its own, while the *ẓuhr* and *ʿaṣr* prayers are combined into a single afternoon session, and the *maghrib* and *ʿishāʾ* into an evening session (Blank 2001).

and vistas set against the backdrop of the masjid's iconic minarets and series of arches are a prime reason behind its popularity. When questioned about which area of the masjid respondents preferred most, the most frequent answer was the courtyard.

Figure 7-4 Visitors gathered in centre of the courtyard in the evening hours (Author 2015).

Social activity varied during different times of the day, and on different days of the week, with Friday being the most popular day. The most detailed and populated behavioural map was a result of mapping carried out on a Friday evening shortly before sunset. The masjid was full of activity including two wedding parties (Figure 7-5) in the transept area near the mihrab. The bustle brought about during such periods of intense social activity is not universally appreciated. During such times of peak occupancy outside of prayer times, masjid attendants appointed by the Ministry of Waqfs request occupants to exit the masjid with repeated announcements on the speaker system informing visitors that the masjid is "*li al-ṣalāt faqaṭ*" — for prayer alone. The Ministry has placed large posters at the entrance which describe the religious significance of masjids and list acceptable and unacceptable behaviour indicating perhaps management's displeasure with the largely social character of the masjid. Instagram data, however, reveals that most visitors are quite cognizant of their presence in a masjid. Although clearly engaged in social activity by virtue of their photography and use of Instagram, the frequency of the word 'mosque' (the 3rd most popular hashtag) in Instagram captions indicates that users are identifying the space as a masjid (Figure 7-10). This deliberate usage perhaps suggest the normalization and acceptance of social activity within Muslim places of worship in the eyes of the general public, which in this case is predominantly younger visitors more likely to be using Instagram (Jang et al 2015). One interviewee expressed their displeasure with the increasingly social character of the masjid (SS02). The increased activity has also been a concern for management due to the added pressure on maintenance, and the danger to existing original fabric — a problem common to many historic monuments (Bartlett 2019). There are signs of vandalism, misuse and wear and tear throughout

the masjid, but especially on the front façade and the monumental entrance which being situated 'outside'78 the masjid is subject to greater activity.

Figure 7-5 More than prayer. A bride and groom have their photos taken while an elderly lady looks on; two children play in the distance (Author 2015).

78 Informal non-participant observation and a single mapping exercise indicated that the plaza outside the masjid is far more populated and socially active than any area inside the masjid. Throughout the day children and young adults play football and ride their bikes causing repeated damage to the masjid façade (one of the masjid's pierced window grilles was broken after it was hit by a ball, E01). In the evenings and night, café owners across the street setup tables along the side the masjid's façade making strategic use of the government's architectural lighting installations for ambience (although most of the lighting fixtures have been stolen).
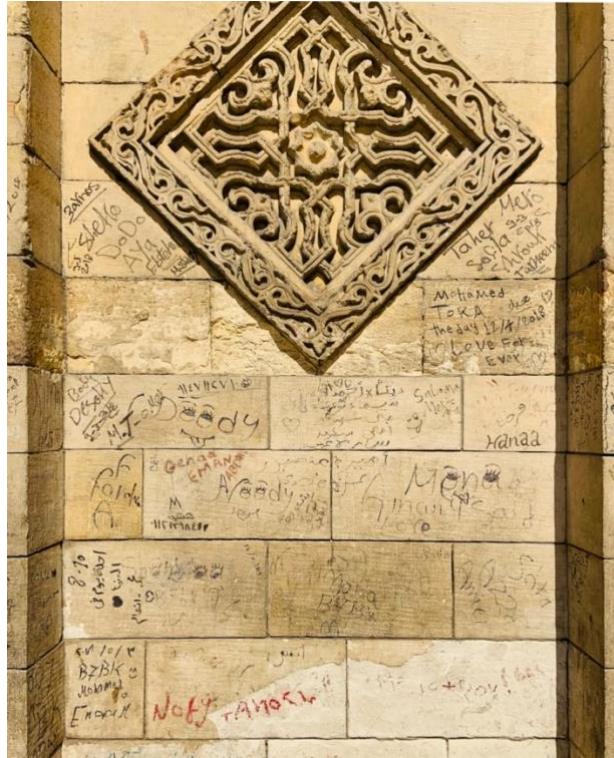
Figure 7-6 Vandalism on the southern façade of the monumental portal (Author 2019).
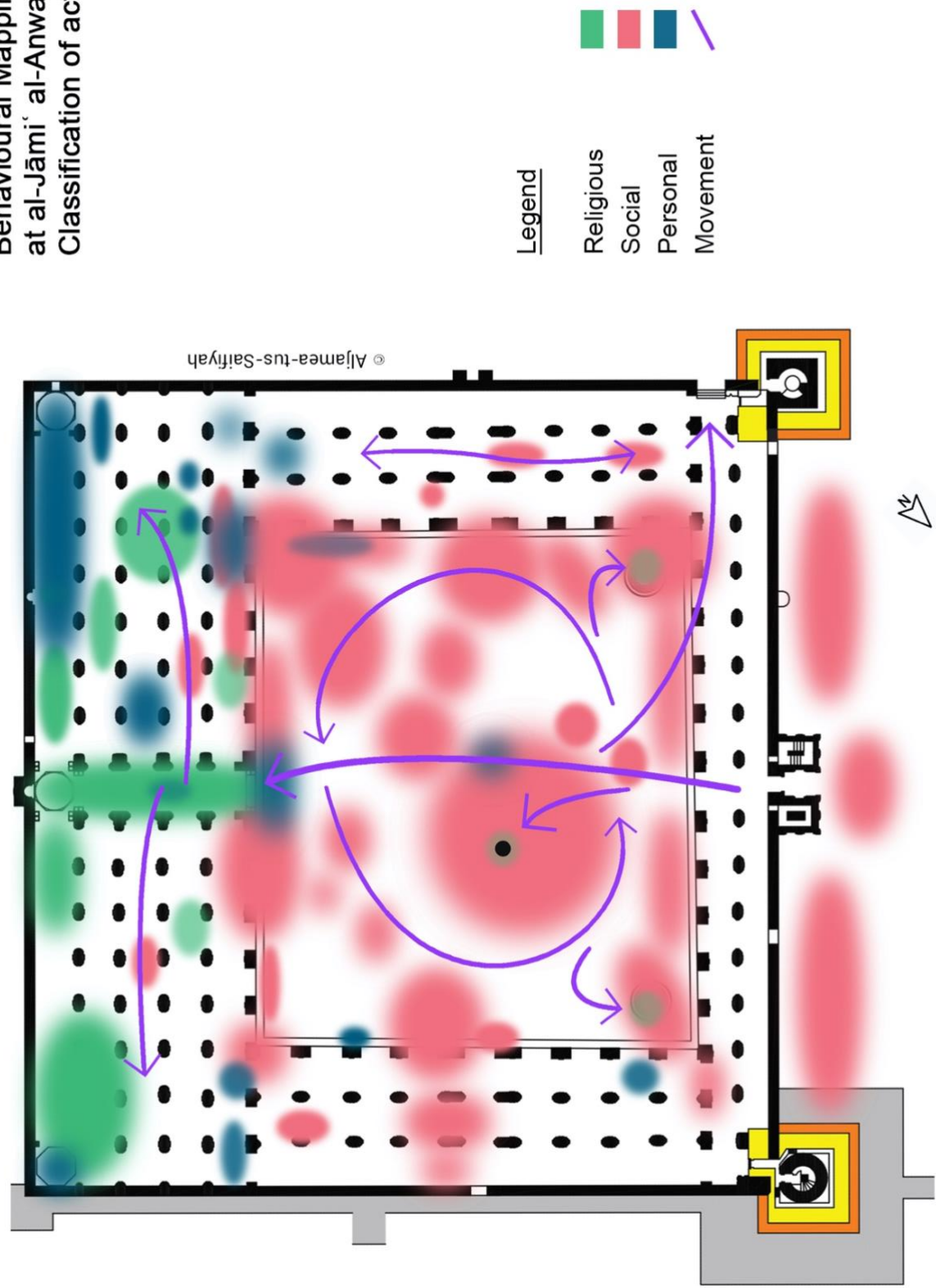
Figure 7-7 Behavioural mapping data represented in a single plan of the masjid showing key areas for different types of activity (Author).

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7.3.1.2.1 Photographers h(e)aven

One of the most dominant forms of social activity at al-Anwar is photography. While carrying out non-participant observation at the site during preliminary stages of the study, photography was so ubiquitous that it was identified as its own category of activity for behavioural mapping. Results showed that nearly 13% of all individuals observed were taking a photograph at the precise moment of observation although the actual percentage of individual who take photos once inside al-Anwar is probably far greater. It is the primary investigator's contention that nearly all visitors to the site, at some point during their time at al-Anwar, engage in photography, making it the single most prolific activity at al-Anwar.

Figure 7-8 A group of women taking a selfie in the courtyard of al-Anwar (Author 2015)

Qualitative categorization (p. 28) of Instagram images from al-Anwar also reveal that photography is not motivated simply for its social purposes, but also because the aesthetic quality of the masjid lends itself to photography and other forms of artistic expression. Of the 365 images evaluated, 22% reflected some sort of social activity or were the expression of such activity, i.e. a selfie or group photo (Figure 7-9). However, 76% of photographs were either of the architecture of the masjid or portraits meant to highlight the subject upon the background of an iconic feature of the masjid such as the minarets, the well or harmoniously sequenced series of arches. If photographs with human subjects are excluded altogether, 2 out 5 Instagram images posted regarding al-Anwar are still related to the masjid's architecture: either landscape photographs of the courtyard, vistas of the repetitive piers and colonnades or close-up views of particular architectural elements or details. The word 'photography' is the 6th most popular hashtag from the Instagram data set analyzed for this study (Figure 7-10). The masjid is clearly popular for its dramatic visual aesthetics and the opportunity it provides photographers, as well as other artists, for unique compositions. Aside from photography, a variety of other artistic activity was recorded on site such as sketching and calligraphy.
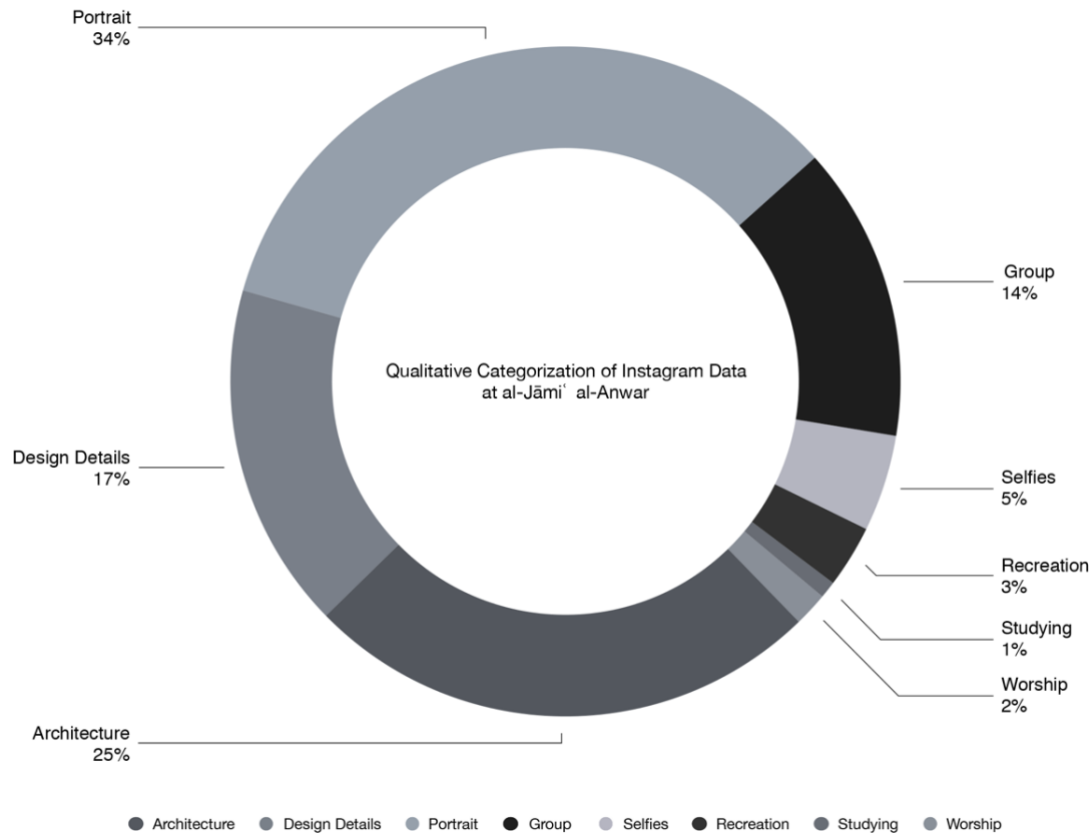
Figure 7-9 Qualitative categorization of Instagram data at al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar depicting the nature of photography on site (Author).

7.3.1.3 Solitude among the piers

Although built as a *jāmiʿ* or congregational masjid designed to accommodate large masses of people, the '[m]ultiplication of massive square piers discreetly relieved by engaged colonettes … was conducive to isolation and privacy in worship' (Riter 1981:306). Besides worship, these isolated spaces are used for a variety of solitary activity: visitors were noted resting, sleeping (mostly men), in contemplation or simply seated in solitude. Research revealed that the masjid is popular also with students from nearby schools who come to study, often in small groups. An Al-Azhar University business school student revealed during an interview that he enjoyed *fikra* or contemplation in al-Anwar's *bayt al-ṣalāt* and frequented the masjid often for this purpose while one respondent said he came to al-Anwar for a quiet place to study (SS02 & SS05). Hidden in the various nooks and corners of the masjid one also finds many male/female couples, demonstrating the extent to which individuals were comfortable with the privacy offered by the masjid's layout and massing. Despite being considered slightly taboo, a notion confirmed by multiple critical remarks from interviewees, the sight was quite common at al-Anwar.

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Due to its depth and multiple rows of colonnades, the *bayt al-salāt* seemed to cater to most of the personal activity within the masjid (Figure 7-7). Being furthest from the entrance and most removed from the bright courtyard, it provided the greatest privacy and silence. Also observed was the popularity of certain piers over others and the preference for a particular pier by the same visitor on separate occasions. Sitting at the base of piers along the outer perimeter of the courtyard was also popular as it provided views across the courtyard. It should be noted that these personal, more private activities find little representation in Instagram data and account for only 5% of all such photos (Figure 7-9).

Figure 7-10 Word cloud of captions and hashtags from 365 Instagram images tagged to al-Anwar (Author).

7.3.1.4 A space in motion

Behavioural mapping revealed certain visitor patterns throughout the masjid, the most obvious being a southeastern movement from the masjid's main entrance across the vast courtyard towards the raised transept of the main prayer hall or sanctuary (Figure 7-7). As visitors entered the masjid, the tendency was to head toward mihrab with a brief stop at the well. This movement speaks to the Fatimid architectural innovation which introduced the raised transept to masjid architecture as a means of highlighting and drawing attention to the mihrab (André Raymond 2000). Once in the sanctuary area visitors moved perpendicular to the qiblah in either direction ultimately returning to the courtyard. Of course, those who were more familiar with the masjid tended to head straight to their particular area of choice. Other smaller patterns of movement emerged due

to the location of the water installations as well as the access to the washrooms in the western corner of the masjid (Figure 7-7). Movement patterns determined from behavioural mapping ultimately illustrate that due to the masjid's size and multiple areas of intrigue, visitors are regularly moving throughout the space adding to the site's 'activity' in a most real sense.

7.3.2 Do you see what I see? Visitor perception of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar

The observations from the data above demonstrate that al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar serves as a complex public site, activated by the religious, social and personal experiences and uses of its visitors. The data collected also helps in understanding how the masjid is perceived by those who use it since the perception of an architectural space, particularly a heritage building, ultimately determines its value and usage (Strike 1994). A key motivation behind this study is the conservation community's perception of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar as a 'failed' restoration and the questions regarding its historic authenticity and materiality that were raised based off of this perception (Myllylä 2008:228). Particularly relevant was the assertion that the restoration had 'given us instead a new building' (Rodenbeck (1983) in Sutton and Fahmi 2002:81), which had killed 'its spirit' (Fowler 1995:14) and destroyed its 'sense of antiquity and authenticity' (Lewcock 1985:50).

7.3.2.1 Old vs new; dead vs alive

The questions posed in semi-structured interviews looked to determine whether present-day visitors shared a similar perception of the masjid as earlier conservationists (Appendix IV: Semi-structured interview). Interviewees were asked whether they saw the building as dead or alive, and old or new. Of the twenty-two visitors interviewed, all but two saw the masjid as a 'living' building. In his response to why he saw the site as 'dead', one respondent (SS04) explained that it was the masjid's very social character that made him feel like it was not a masjid but a "tourist place", and hence, not living. The respondent was equating religious activity within the masjid to its quality of being living. Interviewee responses as to whether they saw the building as old or new, however, were split nearly equally. A couple saw the masjid as both old *and* new simultaneously (SS16 & SS22), while one individual (SS07) said he saw the masjid as neither old nor new laying bare the premise to the question that all visitors see the building in terms of a binary age-value.

There also seems to be no correlation between these two questions. A living building was not necessarily an old building and a new building did not mean that the masjid no longer represented history and was therefore dead. In fact, when a list of reasons was presented to interviewees as to why a Muslim place of worship should be restored, the most common response was 'for the sake of history'. Thus, the masjid's perceived 'newness' did not obstruct from its capacity to represent

history, a characteristic seen by some respondents as even more important than its religious value. In Wells' (2017:21) study of civic perception of historic Charleston, '[d]ecay (or, in a more positive sense, patina) appears to be necessary in order for an historic environment to feel authentic', yet this was not the case at al-Anwar. The 'newness' of the masjid did not distract from its perceived authenticity or historicity. This was evidenced in the fact that a gentlemen (SS03) on his first visit to al-Anwar explained to the investigator that masjids are not a novelty in Egypt, they are on every corner, and that the purpose behind his visit to al-Anwar that day was the masjid's history, not necessarily its religious character. It was to share with his son Cairo's rich heritage of 'Islamic monuments'. It comes as no surprise then that four out of the top five hashtags associated with Instagram images of al-Anwar are terms related to Cairo and Egypt demonstrating users' sense of pride and association of the masjid with national history and heritage (Figure 7-10). The loss of heritage lamented at the time of the restoration seems to have very little relevance to present day visitors.

7.3.2.2 Relevance of past criticism

The reasons why al-Anwar's restoration was faulted by conservationists did not seem to resonate with interviewees. Most interviewees were aware that the masjid had been restored and found the results before them more than satisfactory. Photo elicitation, when permitted by time and circumstances, gave interviewees a glimpse of the masjid's past and based solely on the visual difference between previous conditions and current, respondents seemed impressed with the results of the restoration. At this juncture in the interview some of the criticisms of the restoration[79] were described to which most people had little to say maintaining their original position that the masjid had been well-restored. The short format of the interview and the description of the criticism out of context of the larger discourse may also explain why respondents did not offer any comments. One respondent, however, did try to explain the criticism as couched in the different manner by which materiality is perceived in Islam and in '*al-gharb*' — the West. The only exception to the general positive perception of the restoration results, was SS04 who insisted that the government had restored the masjid poorly. As a graphics artist who valued dramatic aesthetics, he felt that the masjid had lost its historic character and although he saw the masjid as an 'old' monument, he preferred the "better" restoration carried out at the "older" Jāmiʿ Ibn Ṭulūn and suggested it offered more impressive "views". His response, and

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[79] A brief summary of Williams (2002) criticisms regarding the masjid was described to interviewees in Arabic.

similar ones from other interviewees, shows that not all visitors were aware that the Bohras had a role in the restoration 40 years on.

<u>7.3.2.3 Comparison to Ibn Ṭulūn</u>

Jāmiʿ Ibn Ṭulūn has seen its share of restorations but the most recent restoration carried out in 2005 was widely received positively in international conservation circles (Swelim 2015). As a popular tourist destination, it seemed like an obvious choice for a separate data point to further explore the perceptions surrounding the al-Anwar restoration and therefore a question regarding it was included in the interview schedule. Of the interviewees who had visited Ibn Ṭulūn (18 out of 22), all except one (SS04) preferred the results of the al-Anwar restoration over those of Ibn Ṭulūn. A sample mapping exercise conducted by the investigator as well as non-participant observation on multiple occasions revealed that Ibn Ṭulūn experienced less visitors than al-Anwar, although this observation is far from conclusive and requires greater investigation. Physical traces of accretion and erosion indicated that the masjid was lacking sufficient storage and proper maintenance and had been affected by severe water damage. Apart from the presence of a number of tourists, locals from the surrounding areas were not present in substantial numbers suggesting that Ibn Ṭulūn does not fulfill the same social role that al-Anwar does. Although the data collected at Ibn Ṭulūn does not suffice for a suitable comparison, preliminary observations suggest that, differences in area demographics and population aside, the distinct approaches in the restoration of each masjid have yielded different results in usage and possibly perception.

7.3.3 Conclusion

The sample sizes for the interviews and behavioural mapping are relatively small and further data collection along these lines should provide for more robust conclusions. However, triangulation through Instagram data helps confirm a number of assumptions regarding the usage and perception of the masjid. Aside from some brief notes of usage of Ibn Ṭulūn which remain inconclusive, this line of inquiry would benefit with comparison to data gathered from other restored masjids in Cairo.

The two operative words in the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar were *iḥyāʾ* and *ʿimārah*, both of which were a call to reinstate the masjid's functionality through the presence of human activity. Fieldwork at al-Anwar carried out for this study clearly shows that the masjid is an active religious and social site. Outside of times of prayer, the majority of movements at al-Anwar are of a social nature. Many of the more controversial interventions of the restoration, including paving the courtyard with marble and the installation of ablution pools and a drinking fountain are the very elements which visitors engage with and which draw them to the site. The restoration was carried

out with the intent of restoring al-Anwar 'as a place of worship', and although this was achieved, it fulfilled many other social requirements for the local community in the vicinity, some to the detriment of the masjid. The Gamaliyya area has no major parks or open areas, and the masjid and the plaza outside provide an exclusive, well-maintained, free of charge venue for recreational activity. Although the restoration in the 1980s resulted in the return of a public place of worship, it is the regular upkeep, maintenance and persistent ʿimārah that is a significant part of the experience of al-Anwar today and speaks to the benefits of engaging religious communities with ties to heritage sites in their conservation. It is no wonder then that the results of the al-Anwar restoration are emulated at other historic masjid restorations in Cairo, which will be briefly discussed in the following section. Ultimately, questions remain as to which specific concepts embedded in the restoration of al-Anwar find resonance with Muslim visitors and how they relate to Muslim perception of built heritage: questions which are considered in Chapter 8.

7.4 Impact on Cairo conservation

The al-Anwar restoration was one of the first full-scale restorations of a large, historic Cairene congregational masjid since the disbanding of the Comité (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). As discussed in Chapter 5, with the exception of the specialist conservation community and anti-Shʿia contingents, the results of the restoration found acceptance and appreciation with large swathes of Egyptians: in the government, the press and the locals who visit it to this day. As head of the EAO, Adam (1980a) had hoped that the al-Anwar restoration would become a model for other restoration projects and it seems that his desire has materialized to some extent. Glimpses of the restored al-Anwar can be seen in other restoration sites in Cairo. When visiting on-going restoration work at the Zahir Baybars masjid in 1996, Sanders (2008:157) observed that

> it was being paved in white marble. When asked about the marble, the workers on the site commented that the architects supervising their work had seen the restored al-Hakim mosque and liked it, so they decided to incorporate the white marble into their restoration. Now, a decade later, several other Mamluk-era mosques also boast white marble in their interiors.

In the major and controversial restoration of Masjid of ʿAmr bin al-As in the early 2000s, Egyptian authorities replaced pre-cast concrete columns from a 1980 restoration with Carrara marble, the same marble used for the replacement of the capitals and bases of al-Anwar's marble columns[80] (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016, Williams 2002). The use of marble is not the only similarity between al-Anwar and other restored Cairene masjids. The reconstruction of missing

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[80] The actual columns at al-Anwar are original; they were removed, repolished and reinstalled on new capitals and bases which had severely deteriorated.

arcades in order to 'complete' massing, renewal of material fabric (light-coloured rendering, dry sand blasting, etc.), polychromatic painting of inscriptions and custom 'historic' lighting fixtures are common interventions witnessed across Cairo. Such interventions can be seen at multiple masjids that underwent restoration in the 2000s such as the Masjid of Sultan al-Muʾayyad, the Madrasa of Sarghatmish, Ibn Ṭulūn and the Masjid of ʿAmr bin al-ʿAs — although the results have varied as too have the responses (Williams 2006).

The most significant criticism of al-Anwar after the Bohra restoration was its 'new' look, yet subsequent restorations of places of worship in Cairo would suggest that this newness was also its greatest appeal. In his description of conservation activity prevalent after the al-Anwar restoration in Cairo, Lewcock (1985:52) explains that most work is 'superficial' and often involves 'merely applying bright coats of paint'. Yet he also admits that the

> justification for this approach, which has certainly been substantiated by the results, has been the wide-spread quickening of interest in the Islamic monuments among the general public of Egypt. As the monuments appear clean and smartened up, gardens have been created to set them off, and new museums opened, so that today crowds are enjoying monuments which earlier were the preserve of only the most devoted connoisseurs. Perhaps this will pay dividends in the future (Lewcock 1985:52).

More than 20 years after the al-Anwar restoration and Lewcock's observations, Williams (2006:279–80) has acknowledged that the Egyptian authorities 'are expressing an idea of restoration that values the new' and that '[m]ost Egyptians esteem a site for its religious and associative values rather than for the artistic or historic value'. She speaks of a Canadian conservator with similar observations who remarked 'with surprise that it was more the spirit of the place than the historic fabric of the building that interested her Egyptian coworkers' (Williams 2006:280). However, her underlying concern that this Egyptian approach to conservation 'counters' the approach of 'international conservators' remains, suggesting that the international aim is to 'preserve what is authentic about the structure' through the use of compatible materials and recognizable and reversible alterations (Williams 2006:279). The remarks from conservationists cited here demonstrate that the results of the al-Anwar restoration, which drew widespread criticism, are now hallmarks of government conservation efforts throughout Cairo and resonate with the Egyptian people who visit and worship at these sites.

7.4.1 Al-Jāmiʿ al-Azhar

One of the most obvious examples of al-Anwar's influence on Cairene restoration can be seen in the multiple restorations carried out at al-Jāmiʿ al-Azhar in modern times. As a major symbol of Egypt's prominence in the Islamic world and because of its association to its namesake university, the al-Azhar masjid regularly benefits from official patronage that aims to showcase the masjid's historicity, but also its grandeur (Rabbat 1996). Al-Anwar's restoration philosophy, which

emphasizes historical and religious significance through new material fabric and premium materials, was ideally suited for this purpose. The appeal of the Bohra restoration approach, and preliminary similarities noticed at al-Azhar during the late the 1990s restoration led UNESCO to caution Egyptian authorities 'to ensure that the authenticity of the monument (al-Azhar)' was respected, 'which unfortunately was not the case for the three Fatimid Mosques', a reference to later Bohra restorations based on the al-Anwar model (UNESCO 1997:28). The 1998 al-Azhar restoration, however, arguably exceeded the al-Anwar restoration where no original Fatimid ornamentation was lost or removed. At al-Azhar, in order to correct leaning columns, 'the main Fatimid aisle was demolished and reconstructed, losing the oldest stucco floral decorations' (Bumbaru et al 2000:96).

The results of the most recent restoration of al-Azhar completed in 2018, partly sponsored by Saudi Arabia (El-Aref 2018), are remarkably similar to al-Anwar's. The courtyard was paved in Thassos marble for its pure sparkling whiteness and extraordinary elegance, and interestingly is the same marble used in Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca (Anon 2017). An underground cistern dating to the Mamluk period, much like the well in al-Anwar, was 'discovered' during excavation work in 2015 in the courtyard and is now marked with a small structure above ground (ʿAlī 2018). The results of the restoration, much like al-Anwar's, present a new building which 'now stands as proudly as it did in its heyday' (El-Aref 2018:12). The similarities in intent and aesthetics are striking.

Figure 7-11 The restored al-Azhar masjid with its white marble courtyard and well (Author 2019)

The use of gilded and painted inscriptions during the al-Anwar restoration has also been copied at al-Azhar, yet in a significantly different manner. Inscriptions from the Fatimid times are known to have been painted and gilded (Laila Aly Ibrahim 1970), and this is confirmed by traces seen even to this day at al-Anwar. Accordingly, backgrounds in the *new* inscriptions which were added by the Bohras to the dome above the mihrab and in the window grilles along the qiblah wall were

painted green and blue respectively. However, the original inscriptions which bore traces from the Fatimid period were left unaltered. At al-Azhar, however, this is not the case. Bluish paint has been added to the inscriptions of the original Fatimid mihrab, the oldest existing Fatimid Kufic inscriptions in Cairo, in what is debatably a poorly executed job. [81]

In what is the recent al-Azhar restoration's most interesting emulation of al-Anwar, new lanterns were fabricated to mimic the 'original' Fatimid lanterns used at al-Anwar and other Fatimid sites. The *mihskāt*, as it is termed by the Bohras, is a glass lantern designed by the Bohra community at the time of the al-Anwar restoration based off of a Fatimid stone relief in the façade of al-Aqmar which carries a depiction of a lamp. After the al-Anwar restoration, the *mihskāt* lanterns were installed at other Fatimid monuments restored by the community. They were also donated to other Fatimid-era monuments, such as al-Azhar, and to the shrines of the Prophet's family in Cairo and elsewhere in the Middle East. After the removal of the 'original' 'Fatimid' *mishkāts* provided by the Bohra community during the recent restoration of al-Azhar, replica 'Fatimid' *mishkāts* were manufactured by the al-Azhar authorities and installed throughout the entire masjid. The adaptation of the al-Anwar lantern at al-Azhar as an 'authentic' Fatimid feature speaks to claims of legitimacy through architectural reproduction, the fluidity of notions of authenticity and the lasting influence of al-Anwar's restoration on the Cairene architectural conservation landscape.

Figure 7-12 Original Fatimid lamp motif on al-Aqmar façade (left), lantern designed and manufactured by the Bohras during al-Anwar restoration (middle), and replica of Bohra 'original' lantern installed at al-Azhar (right) (All photos by author).

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[81] A manager at the al-Anwar site was quite critical of the work carried out at the original Fatimid mihrab. Painting is done poorly and the colours are not consistent throughout.

7.5 Conclusion

The impact of the al-Anwar restoration on the Bohra community and its continued relevance to community discourse four decades onwards are indicative of the significance of heritage and the role of architectural conservation within this Muslim community. The impact and continued relevance also suggest the presence of a set of religious values embedded in the restoration narrative that allow for persistent engagement in a wide array of contemporary faith-related issues.

The legacy of al-Anwar lives on in Cairo as well. The acceptance and appreciation of the results of the al-Anwar restoration by Muslim visitors and the obvious parallels between the restoration and conservation efforts at other religious sites in Cairo over the last half century suggest the emergence or presence of a similar set of values which inform Muslim perception of places of worship and the expected outcomes of their restoration. The continued use of al-Anwar as a visual repository within the Bohra community and the influence of its physical attributes on restoration projects in Cairo support the existence of a distinct visual typology for restored places of worship within Muslim communities. The following chapter will seek to understand how the visual characteristics of al-Anwar, brought about as a result of the restoration, reflect the Fatimid textual tradition making the argument for a pan-Islamic set of shared values towards religious heritage.

Chapter 8: Fatimid texts and visual aesthetics: Spirituality in built form

8.1 Introduction

Project leadership had explicitly stated that the restoration's philosophical basis was founded upon principles and values from within the Fatimid Islamic tradition and this claim was reiterated in community publications and participant interviews (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). Thus, the restoration of al-Anwar and Fatimid texts are profoundly connected. Throughout the course of this study, the process of *inductive* thematic analysis has identified important themes regarding the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar which formed a template that is used in this chapter for the *deductive* thematic analysis of texts from the Fatimid tradition. Distinct theological discussions as well as historical anecdotes were identified which helped determine the underlying Islamic values and philosophies which influenced the Bohra restoration.

There is a strong visual dimension to the restoration discourse. The themes identified throughout the study are related primarily to the restoration's transformation of the visual character of the masjid, such as the masjid's 'new' appearance or the extensive use of bright marble. As discussed in Chapter 5, criticism of the restoration focused mostly on what the masjid looked like while Chapter 6 showed that the community's design and material choices were also determined by preconceived notions of a restored masjid's visual character. Although the themes identified in the study thus far relate primarily to physical attributes of the masjid, by referencing them to Fatimid texts through the processes of thematic analysis and *istinārah*, multiple layers of possible meaning and symbolism are revealed.

The values and concepts of the Islamic tradition as found in the Quran and other foundational texts inspire a certain visual aesthetic which manifests itself in the religious and cultural artefacts and built environment of Muslim civilization (Gonzalez 2001, Necipoğlu and Al-Asad 1995, Trevathan 2020). Elements of this aesthetic, as interpreted and understood by the Dawoodi Bohra Muslim community, can be glimpsed in the results of the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar and contribute to an understanding of how an Islamic aesthetic influences heritage practices and the architectural conservation of places of worship in particular. The discussion on visual aesthetics will begin with a general evaluation of the concept of beauty in Islam, and how it was understood and conveyed at al-Anwar, and will then move on to other factors which determined the masjid's physical appearance and material palette. This chapter will illustrate how beautification and certain aesthetic treatments of al-Anwar were not only desired for the physical enhancement of

the site and its implications for user experience, but to honour the symbolic meanings represented by these acts and respect the sanctity of al-Anwar as a house of Allah.

8.2 Beauty

In their message to the people of Egypt at the time of its conquest in 358/969, the Fatimids declared that among their many desires for their newly-conquered territory, they wished to repair its masjids and enhance them with beauty (Al-Husaini 2007). The creation and display of beauty remained a passion of the Fatimids, which is evidenced in the rich legacy of material art and architectural heritage that dates back to their period, specifically at al-Anwar (Yalman 2001). It is evident from the drastic visual changes to al-Anwar from pre-restoration to post-restoration that the Project deliberately sought to enhance certain physical qualities of the masjid in an attempt to restore what it understood to be the masjid's 'original grandeur'. The *Project Report* specified that the masjid was restored in accordance with its *jalāl* and *jamāl* (p. 103). This section looks to explore how the changes brought about by the restoration might be related to the conception of beauty in Islam and discusses its significance to the faith in general, and to masjids specifically.

8.2.1.1 Allah is Beautiful

Allah is Beautiful (Muhammad 1991) and all His actions, according to Badr al-Jamali's *Majālis*[82] (2005), are beautiful as well. Quranic commentary supports arguments for beauty in all Creation:

> There are many other Koranic references to the beauty that was instilled into creation generally and mankind specifically. For example, in several verses God is called "the Beautiful-doer" (*al-muḥsin*), and the Koran says, "He made beautiful everything that He created" (32:7). Addressing human beings, it says, "He formed you, and He made your forms beautiful" (40:64) (Chittick 2011:11).

Kazuyo (2017:31), suggests that all the verses which feature the root of *ḥ-s-n* in the Quran are used to 'designate beauty in a whole range of beings', from Allah Himself, to the Prophet Mohammed, to humankind and all of His Creation. Within Islamic philosophy, Türker (2011:74) explains that the

> essence of coming into existence is beauty itself. It is not that God creates beings and then makes them beautiful, but God beautifies them as they are created. All beauties in the world are the manifestation of the absolute beauty of Him.

Very few other words or concepts have a greater or more intimate association to God in the Islamic tradition than beauty.

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[82] The *Majālis* refer to *Kitāb al-Majālis al-Mustansiriyya*, a compendium of sermons delivered in the Caliphal Palace of Imam al-Mustansir bi Allah attributed to the Fatimid vizier Badr al-Jamali (Daniella Talmon-Heller and Frenkel 2019).

As houses of Allah, masjids have also been linked to the notion of beauty: 'O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (*zīnat*) at every mosque' (7:31). Exegetists explain the context of this verse in that men and women used to circumambulate the Kaʿba disrobed which is why God then instructed them to wear *zīnat*, i.e. clothes. In its most literal meaning, however, *zīnat* refers to beauty and suggests that expressions of beauty are a means of deference to places of worship. As a building dedicated to God, who is Beautiful, the masjid demands a level of aesthetic compliance, both in actions and appearance.

In Fatimid Tayyibi literature, the Imam too is praised for his unparalleled beauty. He is the source of beauty, as Allah's representative, and gives beauty to all that is beautiful. Like the masjid which a Muslim is instructed to approach donned in beauty, according to al-Qadi al-Nuʿman's text on the etiquette required of the Imam's followers[83], the Imam, too, must be approached in a similar way. Recognition of the Imam's stature is expressed by grooming oneself, wearing fine clothing and adopting an overall beautiful and pleasing demeanour (Muhammad 2005).

8.2.1.2 Harmony and beauty

Discussions on how beauty can and should be defined, theorized and perceived are found in Fatimid texts. The *Rasaʾil* have shown beauty to be 'well-proportioned and well-balanced compositions that suit people's natural dispositions and please the soul' (Akkach 2018:191). Medieval Islamic aesthetic theory conceptualized ideal beauty as the soul's attraction to 'brightly coloured' and 'harmoniously proportioned' visual forms (Necipoğlu and Al-Asad 1995:197). The Bohras' alleged preference for 'symmetry over asymmetry' might be explained by this conception of beauty which emphasizes the pursuit of harmony (Sanders 1999:161). The removal of the Qurqumash tomb, for instance, much like the Comité's removal of ʿUmar Makram's mihrab '*pour l'harmonie du sanctuaire*' (for the harmony of the sanctuary), restored harmony to the balanced façade which relied on symmetry to highlight the masjid's monumental portal (Pauty et al 1936:127). The pursuit of harmony in architectural conservation was not a value held by all however; Ruskin (in Jokilehto 1999:199) argued that 'symmetry' was inferior to a monument's 'antiquity' advocating the prioritizing of historicity over beauty.

8.2.1.3 Hidden beauty

Inner beauty was a reference to seeking good character and fostering good intent. According to Imam Ali, the beauty of what is hidden is greater than beauty that is apparent, a saying that is

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[83] *Kitab al-Himmah fi Adab Atbaʿ al-Aʾimma* (Alexandrin 2017:48).

often used to prioritize actions and deeds over looks and appearances (Syedna Burhanuddin 2011:186). Exemplary conduct, cooperation with others and/or the commitment to religious acts that are beyond what is required have been described in Fatimid texts as 'beautiful' deeds (Muhammad 2004, 2005). Beauty's true form was spiritual and originated from the spiritual realm (Koliji 2016).

The masjid, as a venue for such beautiful acts and a building dedicated to spirituality, was designed not only to embody beauty in both its physical and spiritual forms, but inspire it as well. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2004:389) claim that '[t]he architectural design and physical elements of the built structure can transport the believer to a different place and reality, enabling him/her, as Smith (1978) points out, to experientially find heaven on earth'. From the onset, the project was dedicated to returning al-Anwar to its original grandeur (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). It was this perception and pursuit for *jalāl* and *jamāl* that determined the Project's decisions regarding al-Anwar's aesthetics and visual form.

8.3 'Light of the Heavens'

The light coloured rendering and choice of shades of white marble in the sanctuary and courtyard would indicate the Project's preference for white which in the Islamic tradition has theological and symbolic significance. Pilgrims performing hajj don white clothes as a sign of their sincerity and humility before Allah (Bianchi 2004). The Prophet preferred the colour white and stated that there was no better colour for clothing (Muhammad 2014). He instructed for the dead to be shroud in white and chose it as the colour for his banners (Alexander 2000). Like the Prophet, the Fatimids similarly adopted white banners and the Imam-Caliphs are known to have worn white robes on the occasion of several major annual celebrations (Jiwa 2017). An emphasis on white is apparent in Islamic artistic production, especially in Fatimid textiles, and was often used to convey notions of purity or light (Aziz 2004, Farinaz and Mahmonir 2018). The Bohras too have adopted white clothing which Blank (2001) suggests is to distinguish themselves from other Shiʿa communities who traditionally have worn black.

The preference for white in various visual aspects of Islamic liturgy and material culture reflects the colour's symbolism for knowledge, truth, righteousness and purity. White is often portrayed as the colour of truth when contrasted with black, or used to distinguish enlightenment from ignorance (Al-Shirazi 2005). The 43rd Tayyibi *dāʿī* Syedna Abde ʿAli Saif al-Din (1945) composed verses comparing the light of guidance with the darkness of evil.

> The radiance of spiritual guidance cannot be compared in terms of its benefits to the darkness of evil.

Then each individual is besotted with that which he resembles; there are those drawn to white and there are those drawn to black.

The *Rasaʾil* have described light and darkness as 'spiritual colours' and have compared them with the 'corporeal colours' of white and black. They go on to explain how light and radiance reveal the nature of all things just as the colour white references all other colours, whereas darkness, similar to the colour black's blocking out all colours, obscures all things (Chenciner 2003).

The colour white's comparison with light, or *nūr* as it is termed in Arabic, is significant since al-Anwar is named after light and because Allah has been described as the Nūr, or Light, of the heavens and earth in the famous Verse of Light[84]. Thus, the white rendering of a place of worship reflects divine radiance and guidance and reinforces the notion that God is the source of light and His worship is a means of self-illumination and enlightenment (Böwering 2001). That three prominent Fatimid masjids, al-Azhar (The Resplendent), al-Anwar (The Luminous) and al-Aqmar (The Moonlit), are given light-related epithets is then no coincidence: the Fatimid Imam-Caliph was 'an emanation of divine light' and these epithets were symbolic of his 'brilliance and luminousness' (Sanders 1994:41). At al-Anwar in particular, the Light Verse features quite prominently on a series of stone window frames on the northern minaret along with other Quranic phrases referencing light (Syedna Saifuddin 2016). The stark contrast of al-Anwar's bright interiors with its surroundings, criticized by 'experienced conservationists', was perhaps the precise expression the Bohras had set out to achieve considering the implications of white for Islamic aesthetics, philosophy and the masjid's own symbolism (SPARE 1981a:3).

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[84] The Verse of Light is cited often in Islamic lore and used often to embellish buildings and objects within the Islamic tradition (Koliji 2016).

> Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things (24:35).

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of the thesis due to copyright restrictions

Figure 8-1 Verse 2:257, 'from darkness to light', in a roundel in the northern minaret (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016:34).

8.4 Newness and novelty

Renewal through physical changes to material fabric and appearance was a common theme in the history of al-Anwar restorations (p. 50). Al-Anwar's 'newness' after the Bohra restoration was an issue of concern for modern conservationists, yet the significance of 'newness' within the Islamic tradition, its impact on the visual aesthetics of the masjid, its relation to purity and the history of periodic renewal movements would suggest that a 'new' appearance was by design. Locals and visitors seem to appreciate this new character (p. 158) and is a common objective in the restoration of other livings place of worship in Cairo, such as al-Azhar (Roy 2013, Williams 2006).

The quality of being new and a preference for novelty can be gleaned in various Islamic traditions and textual sources. The Prophet counselled his grandson Imam Husain to renew two things regularly: turbans and shoes (Muhammad 1991). Imam Ali b. Abi Talib has compared good character and etiquette to clothes that are ever-renewing (Al-Raḍī 2004). At the theological level, the Fatimid *dāʿī* Hamid al-Dain al-Kirmani (d. after 411/1020-21) describes the need to seek out what is new as innate to human nature (Al-Kirmani 2008). According to al-Kirmani, this is why when people have strayed from a prophet's religion, God sends forth a *new* prophet with a *new* religion to reengage them. The renewal of certain states or acts has also been encouraged as a sign of commitment and dedication. For instance, even when already in a state of ritual purity, Muslims

are encouraged to renew their ablutions for subsequent prayers (Muhammad 2004). Fatimid texts also speak of the renewal of the oath of allegiance, a core component of the Tayyibi faith (Ezzuddin and Nooruddin 1999). Forgiveness was tantamount to renewal as well as evidenced in the Prophet's instruction for the recently forgiven to start their deeds anew (Muhammad 2004). Newness had a dual role in the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar. The visual aesthetics achieved by al-Anwar's 'new' building represented Islamic values which give preference to what looks and feels new. And equally important was the process of *tajdīd* itself, which Badr al-Jamali explicitly linked to masjid restoration and *ʿimārah*, because it paralleled other aspects of Islamic faith and practice that call for renewal.

8.5 Completeness

The word *ikmāl* accompanies the word *iḥyāʿ* in the Project's dedicatory inscription at al-Anwar. Derived from the Arabic root *k m l*, which means to be or become whole, perfect or complete — the Project specified that part of the process of *iḥyāʿ* was to return al-Anwar to its complete form, implying that the restoration itself was a form of completion or perfection. The idea of *ikmāl* is not unlike Viollet-le-Duc's (in Jokilehto 1999:159, emphasis not in original) notion of restoration which he believed reinstated a building to 'a condition of *completeness* which may never have existed at any given time'. In its intent to present the significance of the masjid in its original wholeness, *ikmāl* resembles modern conservation's notion of integrity which 'is a measure of the wholeness and intactness' of a site (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2005:22). The Bohras completed the form of the masjid by reconstructing the missing piers, the locations of which had previously been occupied by the Silahdar school, but also added elements to the masjid that may not have existed in the original masjid but were seen as necessary for its completion. The marble mihrab replicated from al-Azhar; the motifs installed on the mihrab wall from other Fatimid masjids; the completion of missing portions of Quranic inscriptions; and the reinstallation of all missing window grilles with varying Fatimid patterns — some existing at al-Anwar, some existing elsewhere, and some completely new — can all be considered part of this process of completion.

Like the other physical characteristics described above which contribute to the masjid's aesthetic value and resulted in alterations, completeness is of philosophical and theological significance as well. Incompleteness is seen as a flaw and imperfection; in congregational prayer, for instance, an entire row of worshippers must be completed before the row that follows is occupied (Muhammad 2004). If a worshipper hastens through his prayer, it is considered incomplete. Even

belief in Allah, the fundamental basis of Islam, is described in *Daʿaʾim al-islam*[85] in terms of completion (*tamām*), imperfection (*nāqiṣ*) and excellence (*rujḥān*) (Muhammad 2014:8). Within the philosophical tradition of Islam, existence is often portrayed as the dualism of *kamāl awwal* and *kamāl thānī*, the first and second perfection (Al-Shirazi 2002). The first perfection is attained by all humans of sound mind and body, but the second is reserved for those who through knowledge and good deed seek the enlightenment and betterment of their soul. Thus, completion is a constantly sought after state of being for Muslims. Aside from its implications for the form and aesthetic character of the masjid, the *ikmāl* of the masjid may also have been informed by the concepts of completion and perfection within the Islamic tradition.

8.5.1.1 Form and beauty

The notion of being complete is related to beauty. In an early 19th century Tayyibi expository treatise on *Daʿaʾim al-Islam's* chapter on marriage, the highest level of beauty is described as *wajāha* and is defined as 'beauty of form and physique (*ḥusn al-hayʾa*)' (Saifi 2005:97–98, translated from Arabic). An important consideration for the Project's conception of al-Anwar's visual aesthetic was completing the masjid's original form, particularly prominent features such as the monumental portal and mihrab. The Project's 'completion' of these features was seen as an important step towards returning the masjid to its original form and layout and reinstating the original spatial relations between its different architectural components. Because of the importance of this process of completion, some of the more drastic interventions to the site, such as the removal of the Qurqumas tomb and the installation of a replica of al-Azhar's mihrab in marble, were seen as necessary.

Aside from its impact on the visual character of the masjid, the completion of these architectural forms were seen as a means of reinstating their symbolism. Within the Ismaʿili Tayyibi tradition, key architectural forms are seen to represent esoteric aspects of faith or individuals within the *daʿwat's* hierarchy (Muhammad 2006). The Prophet Mohammed, for instance, referred to himself as the city of knowledge and Imam ʿAli b. Abi Talib as its gate (Muhammad 1990). The Arabic term for gate, *bāb*, held significance beyond the Fatimid tradition as well.

> This term signified the rank of Muslim saints, serving as the 'gates', through which God, a *quṭb* of the Sufis or a 'concealed Imam' of the Shiʿas, communicates with the faithful. The word *bāb* was even a part of the title of many Sufi *shaikhs* and *awliyā*, the most well-known of whom happened to be the Bab, the founder of Babism, a religio-political movement in Iran during the nineteenth century.

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[85] *Daʿaʾim al-islam* is the single most important Ismaʿili work on jurisprudence and was authored by the famous jurist, the Fatimid *dāʿī* and chief justice al-Qadi al-Nuʿman b. Muhammad (d. 363/974) (Jiwa 2017).

The Muslim architecture that actualized many doctrinal postulates of Sufism realized the ritual symbolism of doors, gates and thresholds in numerous architectural images of portals, gates and towers located over gates, without which a saint's tomb is just inconceivable (Suvorova 2004:72).

In Tayyibi literature, the Imam or *dāʿī* was often referred to as the qiblah or mihrab, since believers are oriented towards him in their faith (Al-Shirazi 1949). For the Project, completing these forms was an essential part of recognizing and paying respect to the individuals whom they represent.

8.6 Ornamentation

The Fatimids distinguished symbolically significant architectural forms of the masjid and emphasized them with surface decoration (G. R. D. King 1989). Space, according to Jones (1995:162), 'is defined by surface and, since surface is articulated by decoration, there is an intimate connection in Islamic architecture between space and decoration'. Inscriptions and surface decorations have an integral role in contributing towards the visual aesthetics of a masjid. Although the Quranic verses inscribed in sacred Islamic spaces conveyed religious and political messages, they also functioned as an important form of ornamentation and were the focus of significant artistic and creative effort (Gonzalez 2001). The Fatimids paid special attention to masjid inscriptions as evidenced in the many examples of vegetal motifs and floriated Kufic which survive at al-Anwar and later Fatimid masjids (Bloom and Blair 2009, Flury 1912, Tabbaa 1994). In his exhaustive study of al-Anwar's stone inscriptions, Allen (2012:10) concludes that the wide variation in the minaret and façade inscriptions and the intricacy and complexity of many of the patterns suggests 'a deliberate display of originality'.

The Bohras named the final stage of the restoration — which dealt primarily with completing missing inscriptions and installing surface decorations from other Fatimid monuments — *tazyīn* (Mashrūʿ ʾIhyāʾ wa Tarmīm al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar 1981). The use of the word *tazyīn*, which means beautification and is derived from the same root as *zīnat*, would suggest that the Bohras saw the completion of missing ornamentation as well as the addition of new elements to the masjid their adherence to the Quranic injunction to 'take adornment' at places of worship. Considering that over the centuries al-Anwar had lost many of its decorative features, such as the stucco grilles in the window openings, portions of Quranic inscriptions in the *bayt al-ṣalāt*, and most importantly, the mihrab covering, their replacement was seen as a necessary step in the restoration. Ornamentation was thus not superficial beautification, but the restoration of an integral aspect of al-Anwar's architecture and a key component of its visual aesthetic.

Figure 8-2 The roundel at the apex of al-Anwar's central dome was copied from the Jūyūshī Mash'had. Verse 9:18, inscribed in Kufic script upon a green background, was also added by the Bohras (Author 2016).

The Bohras carried out a number of interventions in the name of *tazyīn*. New, patterned stucco grilles were installed in the masjid's openings (Figure 8-4), some replicas of originals and others designed by the Bohras. Quranic inscriptions were restored and missing portions were completed in the same style, which although historically has been the practice at al-Anwar[86], is rare in restorations in Cairo today (Figure 8-3). Additions were made to the mihrab area as well. Apart from the Fatimid roundels replicated from al-Aqmar and al-Juyūshī, verse 9:18 referring to ʿimārah was inscribed in the dome above the mihrab, an allusion perhaps to the Bohras' own contribution to the masjid's ʿimārah (Figure 8-2). The addition of historically undocumented elements would normally be seen as a violation of modern conservation norms, but such additions were in line with the tradition of past restorers adding their own mark and were seen by the Bohras as a component of the masjid's *tazyīn* without which the restoration was incomplete.

[86] Multiple styles of Kufic stucco inscriptions in the *bayt al-ṣalāt* at al-Anwar suggest they were carried out during later restorations during the Mamluk period (Bloom 1983).

Figure 8-3 A mihrab inscription at the Sayyida Ruqaiyya shrine which was restored recently in 2016 in the Khalifa area of Cairo (Anon 2016). Despite sufficient evidence of the Quranic verse, it was not completed most likely in adherence to modern conservation guidelines (Author 2019).

Figure 8-4 has been removed from this version
of the thesis due to copyright restrictions

Figure 8-4 A restoration drawing detailing the new stucco grilles for the *majāz* openings (JA.101.A, © Al-Anwar Site Archives).

8.6.1.1 Beyond beauty

With regards to the Quranic stucco inscriptions specifically, having been placed directly beneath the ceiling their visual inaccessibility would suggest that simple ornamentation[87] was not the sole purpose of their installation (Dolezalek 2017). Their presence then must be explained also as a

[87] In a few places, such as underneath the mihrab dome, the script is titled outwards to increase legibility (Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

marker of the masjid's sacredness and spirituality and not solely for aesthetics (Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

> In the minds of Muslims, ornamental friezes with Qur'ānic content, such as those used in the Fatimid mosques of al-Azhar, al-Aqmar or al-Ḥākim (above), would probably have greatly enhanced the sacredness of the spaces (Dolezalek 2017:106).

This also speaks to the nature of the masjid's visual aesthetics as a whole. The masjid was treated with surface decoration and various visual enhancements as discussed above because they imbue the masjid with a special visual quality that marks its distinction as a sacred place of worship. The Bohra *tazyīn* of the masjid then is not simply its beautification but a process which acknowledges the masjid's special status and sacredness in Islam.

The inscriptions are also seen as a sort of 'talisman' for the masjid which protect it and provide *barakat* and blessings to the masjid's visitors (Dalu Jones 1995:168, Syedna Saifuddin 2016:673). Quranic inscriptions have long been used as talismans and been recognized by Muslims as having 'healing and protective qualities' (Mommersteeg 1990:65). The tradition of amulet-boxes which contained Quranic inscriptions in fact dates back to the Fatimid period (Kool 1999). What art historians saw as the anachronistic and unauthentic use of secular, artistic motifs from a widely diverse and 'highly creative Fatimid period' (Lyster 1988:80), Bohras saw as the installation of sources of *barakat* and symbols of religious meaning which bore inscriptions from the Quran and the names of the founder of Islam, Mohammed, and his legatee ʿAli.[88]

8.7 Premium materials

The Fatimids are known to have used marble in their masjids and embellished them with silver trimmings and fixtures (Behrens-Abouseif 1992). Imam Hakim furnished al-Anwar with linen curtains and silver chandeliers and lamps (Sanders 1994). When discovered in 1933, the original Fatimid mihrab of al-Azhar showed traces of gilt (Laila Aly Ibrahim 1970), and Imam Hakim gave similar instructions for the use of gold inscriptions in masjids around Cairo (Bierman 1998). The Fatimids used premium materials in their masjids to enhance their visual appeal and signify their importance and this practice was continued by successive dynasties in Egypt including the Mamluks and Ottomans. Administrators of international conservation efforts in Cairo also recognized the importance of marble. In his description of the German Institute of Archaeology's approach to the conservation of monuments in Darb al-Qirmiz a short distance from al-Anwar, Speiser (1995:26) suggests that the 'reconstruction of the marble mosaics of a prayer niche

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[88] The Project added a roundel from the façade of al-Jāmiʿ al-Aqmar above the mihrab and at the apex of the dome above the mihrab, they installed a medallion from the Mash'had Juyūshī's mihrab dome which lies at a similar location.

emphasized its importance for worshippers'. In their adherence to Fatimid precedence, the Bohras too used premium materials in the restoration of al-Anwar for similar purposes. Although such use was often criticized, critics acknowledged that the 'gleaming marble and shining gilt of the mihrab' were 'impressive' (Williams 2018b:243), and the adaptation of white marble in restorations throughout Cairo suggested the favourable reception of this practice amongst Egyptians.

There remains no consensus within Muslim communities on the use of opulent material in a place of worship. Bohra gilding and use of marble was called un-Islamic because it was said to distract worshippers from prayer (Abd al-Baqi Ibrahim and Mostafa 1990). Yet it seems the Bohras see a correlation between the quality of a material and its spiritual significance where inferior materials are seen as unbecoming of spiritually significant forms or practices. An Iranian Sufi, according to Saramifar (2018:357), shared a similar sentiment when describing inexpensive, plastic rosaries as having 'no soul'. Although a plastic '*tasbih* could emit some signification, he held that plastic did not and could not convey that signification in the way some other materials were able to' (Saramifar 2018:357).

The use of gold and other premium materials is also seen as a form of sacrifice. The significant costs that arise from their acquisition and use are seen as the sacrificing of material value in favour of spiritual significance. Syedna Saifuddin (2012), for instance, explains that precious metals and jewels in Bohra religious structures are a declaration of devotion to those represented by such commemorative structures and a renunciation of materialism which the costly use of the materials represents. In a couplet dedicated to Imam Husain b. Ali (d. 61/680), Syedna Taher Saifuddin emphatically states that souls, not just gold and silver, should be sacrificed for the love of Husain (Syedna T. Saifuddin 1993). The use of gold and marble at al-Anwar represents a specific understanding found in Bohra lore and literature regarding the nature of fine materials and their ability to express notions of sacrifice and devotion through their use and disuse.

8.8 Conclusion

In the Fatimid Tayyibi tradition, as in many other interpretations of Islam, the masjid is distinguished from other structures for its sacredness and sanctity. As an Arabic noun of place (*maṣdar mīmīy*), a masjid is literally defined as a *place* for prostration and its primary identity lies in its differentiation between 'the profane world of the outside and the sacred place of the mosque' (Alshdaifat 2014, Khaghani 2012:48). This sacredness meant, according to the Bohras, that al-Anwar could not be restored like any other historical monument and nowhere was this distinction more obvious than their visual treatment of the masjid. The results of the restoration reveal the Bohra understanding of Islamic aesthetic values and their association to the masjid's sacrality and

spirituality. The *Rasaʾil* (in Trevathan 2020) inform us that 'forms, shapes, structures, and attributes which you see in the world of bodies and material substances, are symbols, similitudes, and colours of those forms that are in the world of spirits'. The visual results of the al-Anwar restoration are a window into the Islamic spiritual beliefs of the Dawoodi Bohra community and illustrate the influence of religious values in the practice of architectural conservation.

However, not all the concepts discussed in this chapter are accepted by all Muslims. The very notion that a masjid is inherently sacred is contested with some suggesting that such attributions of sacredness were imported from the Judeo-Christian tradition (Eade 1996). Bianca (2000:100), who had suggested that 'the enormous courtyard of the Hakim mosque…be used as a green public space' (Antoniou et al 1985:159), correspondingly claimed that 'the mosque building is not sacred in itself'. The importance of certain parts of the masjid over others is also not a universally held belief[89], while beautification and superior material and craftsmanship are also questioned. A member of the Tablighi Jamaʿat in East London informed Eade (1996:226) that 'it was not important to have a beautiful building to pray in' and that attention to material objects of a masjid was a 'wasted effort'.

As stated in the introduction of this study, there is no singular understanding of Islam in modern scholarship nor what makes a process, object or action 'Islamic'. Different Muslim communities engage with Islam's primary sources, the Quran and the Prophet's life, through different mediums and lenses of interpretation. This chapter has demonstrated that the values upon which the Bohra community determined their approach to the restoration of al-Anwar, particularly the visual aspects of the site including its form and materiality, are anchored in the Fatimid textual tradition and the interpretations provided by the Fatimid Imams and Duʿāt . Earlier chapters have shown that despite their Shiʿa origins, many of these practices resonate with those who visit al-Anwar today from a largely homogeneous Sunni population suggesting that there are a set of shared values between different Muslim communities in their perception and interaction with sacred places of worship in Islam. More importantly, this chapter illustrates how a Muslim community derives meaning from its sacred texts and the values expressed therein to form its own tangible approach to conservation and formulates its own tests of authenticity, particularly in the care of its religious heritage. The following chapter will explore these notions of authenticity in relation

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[89] During behavioural mapping exercises at al-Anwar and non-participant observation at al-Azhar, it was noticed that while Bohras prostrate and kiss the floor and walls of the mihrab as signs of respect and to perhaps seek *barakat*, other visitors treat the mihrab as they would any area of the masjid, often having conversations within it, sleeping, or eating and drinking.

to Muslim places of worship as it summarizes the main arguments of this study and discusses their implications for the wider field of architectural conservation.

Chapter 9: *Iḥyāʾ*, authenticity and the future of Islamic values in conservation: A discussion

Through an interpretive study of the Dawoodi Bohra Muslim community's restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, the research presented here has explored how Islamic values, as represented in past Muslim conservation activity, i.e. *ʿimārah*, and found in the Fatimid Tayyibi textual tradition, have influenced the architectural conservation of an Islamic place of worship. This study identified various themes throughout the research — from the detailed account of the restoration to its reception and perception by various stakeholders — and cross-referenced them with the Fatimid Islamic textual tradition. The thematic analysis resulted in the emergence of a set of religious values pertaining to aesthetics, space, time, materiality and authenticity which were shown to have influenced the manner in which the al-Anwar restoration was considered and carried out. In doing so, the study has highlighted areas where Islamic values and practices of conservation are either in contradiction, or in congruity, with modern conservation as practiced by the international heritage community. Because of their emphasis on the religious nature of the building and the act of restoration itself, and due to their intent to restore the building as a functional, sacred site of living tradition, the Bohras named the restoration — *iḥyāʾ*. Before an analysis of this term and its implications for the Project's understanding of authenticity, a brief synopsis of this study and how it has achieved the objectives set out in the introduction is provided below.

9.1 Summary and synthesis

9.1.1 Conservation in Cairo

Building and tending to masjids, often referred to as *ʿimārah*, is a religious tenet laid down in the Quran and Prophetic traditions and as such has motivated Muslims to look after places of worship since the very beginning of Islam. In Egypt, the Fatimid vizier al-Sayyid Badr al-Jamali established a philosophy of *ʿimārah* that incorporated renewal and restoration which he preserved in his foundational inscriptions. As a key religious landmark, al-Anwar was subject to multiple large and small-scale restorations over its 1000-year history. The common thread amongst these interventions was an indignation with the masjid's inappropriate state and resolve to facilitate or return it to its original function. Together, the Fatimid inscriptions and history of restorations at al-Anwar demonstrate that restoration was religiously motivated and was informed by values which prioritized masjid sanctity and functionality over the preservation of fabric and often even form. Badr al-Jamali's 'instructions' for *ʿimārah* were identified by the Bohra community as

inspiration for their restoration while al-Anwar's own history of restorations provided additional context to the Bohra interventions (Saifuddin 2002).

Where medieval Muslim restorers of al-Anwar approached the restoration of al-Anwar almost exclusively with religious functionality in mind, the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe, formed in the wake of European involvement in Egypt in the 19th century, saw al-Anwar primarily as an historic monument giving little regard to its significance as a religious building. The conversion of al-Anwar to a museum is symbolic of this perception and indicative of overall European treatment of Cairo's Islamic heritage during this period. With their origins in the debates of 19th century western Europe, the continued dominance of international conservation guidelines over the conservation of Cairo's masjids meant that the Comité's secularization of places of worship continued into the modern era.

Although this study has shown that the 20th century restoration of al-Anwar partly departed from international conservation standards, it was linked in intent and mannerism with the restorations that had taken place on site for over a millennium. Modern conservation, particularly as presented in the Venice charter, advocates for the preservation of all layers of a monument's history as a means of respecting its past. These layers are seen as contributing factors to the monument's authenticity. Yet alongside physical traces of past restorations, historic sites are often associated to restoration traditions and customs as well which can be argued to be as integral to the site's history as the physical alterations they most likely were responsible for. These practices, which sometimes involved replacing material fabric or adding and subtracting from a monument, are discouraged by modern conservation. In the example of al-Anwar, with their additions and removals, the Bohras were seen to be violating modern conservation norms. However, through a more inclusive lens, the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar can be seen as being true to the traditions and practices of restoration that have developed at al-Anwar over the course of centuries.

9.1.2 An account of the restoration

The lack of verifiable details regarding the restoration al-Anwar was a significant gap in Cairo's conservation scholarship. The comprehensive account provided by this study was based on primary sources and revealed the somewhat unconventional methods the Bohra community utilized to achieve its restoration objectives. The account also challenged the dominant characterization that the restoration took place without documentation or research and lacked any supervision from the Egyptian authorities, highlighting how social and political factors often obscure conservation discourse. Interviews revealed that the restoration had a certain urgency to it but was simultaneously characterized by periods of inactivity.

The account provided here benefits from the first-hand experiences of a number of individuals involved in the restoration which helps connect authoritative discourse provided by organs of the community's administration to common perception and experience. The single most dominant characterization of participant response is the perception of the restoration as a religious act. As such, decisions taken on site were often associated with textual traditions, for instance the use of marble was linked to al-Qadi al-Nuʿman's reference to the material in esoteric texts (N03). Although the results of the al-Anwar restoration may speak to a visual aesthetic that was borne out of precise philosophies and deliberate choice, interviewee descriptions also suggest an understanding of the restoration as a fortuitous series of events brought about by destiny.

9.1.3 Restoration perception and legacy

The study identified major themes in the literature written in response to the restoration and the periodicals published at the time of its completion. Criticism documented in Chapter 5 revealed the conservation community's precise issues with the restoration: the resultant 'new' state of the masjid, the loss of authenticity through the loss of original material and the epistemological failure to support the restoration with sound research and evidence. However, the literature also shows more nuanced positions within the scholarly community which recognized the Bohra departure from normative conservation founded in religious motivation and a need to restore the masjid's functionality. When compared with the account of the restoration provided in Chapter 6, some of the criticism seems to have less to do with the Bohra's approach and practice, and more so with their beliefs and background. As a result, a truer picture emerges as to where the Bohra restoration was truly in conflict and in harmony with modern conservation offering important lessons for contemporary conservation discourse and the possibility of bridging gaps in understanding.

On completion of the project, al-Anwar and its restoration have reached an almost mythical status for the Dawoodi Bohra community, particularly its association to the concept of *barakat*. It is the restoration's perceived success which motivated the community's involvement in the restoration of the remaining Fatimid-era places of worship in Cairo in later years and ultimately consolidated their approach to architectural conservation as well as their reputation within heritage circles.

The restoration as carried out by the Bohras — which emphasized a certain visual aesthetics and enhanced functionality through the use of premium materials and the addition of 'inauthentic' decorative and architectural features — achieved an environment conducive to social activity that would likely not have been the outcome had the masjid been restored strictly to the standards of modern conservation. A comparison between the literature review of restoration criticism and the data analyses of site visitor usage and observations showed that visitor perception did not align with conservationists' critique. The visual qualities of the restored masjid which happened to be

the primary basis for criticism against the al-Anwar restoration, seem to be the very factors that drew visitors and worshippers to the restored masjid. The results once more reinforced the notion that international conservation norms, or perhaps more accurately the 'elitist' ideology that upholds them, prioritize certain values for the conservation of Islamic places of worship that do not seem to resonate with the visitors whom inhabit and patronize these sacred spaces. The replication of the al-Anwar restoration's visual aesthetics and material palette at other religious sites in Cairo speaks to this phenomenon.

9.1.4 Motives and principles

The Dawoodi Bohra community restored the al-Anwar masjid because they believed that until worship resumed within its premises, the masjid was being disrespected, and as spiritual heirs to the Fatimids, they were obligated by faith to ensure this disrespect was ended. Thematic analysis of interview data and publications issued by the Bohra community clearly show the religious motivation of the restoration and the ultimate intent to bring the masjid back to life, i.e. its *iḥyāʾ*. Al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar is a masjid, and not solely an historic monument according to the *Project Report*. As such, the masjid's sanctity as a place of worship and its social status in Muslim society could not be compromised. Returning and reinforcing the masjid's sanctity and status was achieved through the implementation of a specific visual aesthetic which the Bohras believed such sanctity and status mandated. Although publications and interview data showed an understanding of modern conservation requirements, it was resolved that in order to achieve the *iḥyāʾ* of the masjid and restore its functionality, some of these principles had to be deprioritized. The Bohras believed that their intent to restore a monument within an Islamic country as a living, functional masjid required them to carry out the restoration in the manner that they did.

9.1.5 Islamic visual aesthetics

A key feature of Bohra faith is the community's adherence to both *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, i.e. the exoteric aspects of faith along with their corresponding esoteric hidden meanings (Blank 2001). As such, the decisions made during the restoration were guided by metaphysical concepts and values regarding spirituality which resulted in a deliberate and calculated visual aesthetic meant to embody these concepts. In a way, these visual markers were a road map to help explore Fatimid texts. An analysis of the Fatimid textual tradition through the lens of a template of themes derived throughout the course of the study resulted in the identification of multiple values which correspond to and explain the aesthetic treatment of the masjid. The provision of bright interiors, for instance, was related to divine radiance, and the use of premium materials was associated with the principle of sacrifice. Consequently, it was determined that a masjid's sanctity as a place of worship and its representation of key individuals from the Tayyibi *daʿwat*, are recognized through

physical acts that enhance its value. Hence, a restoration which intends to return a masjid to its original form and function is required to adhere to these aesthetic principles and only then results in what the Bohras termed *iḥyāʾ*.

9.2 Authenticities

The motives, principles, practices and philosophies of the Bohra restoration have not received due consideration in contemporary scholarship because, according to modern conservationists, the restoration had resulted in a loss of the masjid's authenticity — the ultimate failure of any conservation project in today's heritage discourse. Thus, a study regarding the al-Anwar restoration and its implications for understanding Islamic values towards architectural conservation is incomplete without due consideration of the role of authenticity in the restoration. After criticizing the Egyptian authorities' restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Azhar in 1997, UNESCO (1997:15) recognized the need to better understand the concept of authenticity within the Islamic context and recommended 'that a meeting be organized for the persons responsible for the religious monuments of the region to provide information on the notion of authenticity.' An analysis of the notion of authenticity as perceived by the restorers of al-Anwar is fitting for this penultimate chapter and sets the stage for a discussion on the status of Islamic values in contemporary architectural conservation.

The definition of authenticity in modern conservation remains in flux yet generally incorporates some aspect of being *true* to the monument. According to English Heritage (2013:131), authenticity is defined as 'those characteristics that most truthfully reflect and embody the cultural heritage values of a place'. In the pre-modern, Ruskinian discourse that shaped much of contemporary conservation practice, a monument's authenticity, and subsequently, a restored monument's capacity to be a true reflection of itself, was linked predominantly to its material fabric (Siân Jones 2009). The Venice Charter is said to have 'reinforced a materialist approach to authenticity in heritage policy' (Siân Jones 2009:134). Yet such an understanding of authenticity, one which relies on the materiality of a site, is not relevant to all monuments, especially those outside of Europe and most notably within the context of a living, religious tradition (Rudolff 2003). At the time of the Bohra restoration, the World Heritage Convention's *Operational Guidelines* (1980) stated that the test of authenticity[90] was determined by 'design, materials, workmanship or setting', none of which al-Anwar satisfactorily preserved according to critics. However, in her own observations on masjid restorations, Rudolff (2003:71) concluded that

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[90] The attributes of authenticity as listed by the World Heritage Convention in its latest *Operational Guidelines* (2019) have changed significantly and include function and spirit among other qualities.

cultural significance for Muslim communities was 'determined by authenticity in "spirit and feeling" and "use and function" instead of authenticity in material or design or workmanship or setting'.

In conservation discourse, authenticity has 'been associated with notions of the 'original' and the 'genuine'' (Siân Jones 2009:134). Certain terminology employed by the Project, specifically the instructions by Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (in Syedna Saifuddin 2016:454) that the masjid be returned to its '*aṣal binā*', i.e. original structure, suggests that the Bohras had a similar understanding. In the process of returning the masjid to its original state, the Bohra restoration can be seen to have prioritized "spirit and feeling" and "use and function" over material fabric (Rudolff 2003:71). In contemporary conservation parlance in the Arabic speaking world, authenticity is translated as *aṣālah* (Mahdy 2008:3), which historically is more accurately understood as 'originality' from the Arabic word for origin — *aṣl* (Ouyang 2013). Thus, in the Arab-Islamic cultural context, a return to an original form or one's origins is a means of expressing and achieving authenticity. Although the restoration may have not passed the contemporary tests for authenticity as defined by the aforementioned international guidelines, it seems to have operated according to its own internal conception of authenticity and desire for the restoration to be truthful to the masjid's origins. The Bohra's concern for authenticity and their desire to return the masjid to its origins is perhaps best understood in the context of the term and philosophy of *iḥyāʾ*.

9.2.1 The four elements of *iḥyāʿ*

Iḥyāʾ, as discussed above, literally means to bring back to life and was consistently used by the Bohra community and the Project to describe the restoration. The Bohras' *iḥyāʾ* of al-Anwar was an attempt to return the masjid to what they believed was its original state of existence as a *living* place of worship. The process of *iḥyāʾ* and the intent to return the masjid to its *aṣal* and origin can thus be seen more as a means of retrieving the masjid's authenticity rather than one of preserving it. In recent discussions surrounding authenticity in heritage discourse, there has been a shift 'from the conceptual analysis of authenticity to the dynamic process of authentication' (Zhu 2015:3). In the context of local communities and their heritage, these discussions attempt to illustrate the nexus of authority within local communities as opposed to nation-states or transnational organizations.

The concept of *iḥyāʿ* can be seen as a 'performative approach of authentication based on people's identity, memory and their bodily interaction with heritage objects' rather than an existential approach (Zhu 2015:4). Zhu (2015:4) distinguishes between the two with the following statement:

> Different from the existential approach that relies on the state of being true, the performative approach focuses on the process of becoming authentic through embodied practices.

In defining what he sees as the four elements of *iḥyāʿ*, Syedna Saifuddin (2016:444-445, translated from Arabic) cites the following hadith[91] in his epistle:

> Respect your masjids, cleanse them, perfume them with incense every seven days, and provide them with *maṭāhir* (lit. lavatories), i.e. water features which can be used for ablutions.

He explains that the philosophy of *iḥyāʾ* implemented at al-Anwar is captured in the four instructions prescribed by the Prophet in this hadith. Although this remains unelaborated in the epistle, if *iḥyāʾ* is meant to achieve the masjid's authenticity by returning it to its original, living state, the instructions listed here can be seen as performative acts which contribute to the process of authentication.

Masjids are established as sacred places of worship, and as such, their origins are bound to sacrality. Respecting a masjid becomes part of a process of authentication, and the Project's emphasis on the masjid's distinction as a place of worship and *ʿaẓamat* was a definitive feature of the al-Anwar restoration. Dismay at the loss of a masjid's sanctity was regularly expressed by past restorers and chroniclers of al-Anwar and was their primary motivation in returning the masjid to its original state . Cleaning a masjid comes second, which too, was a pivotal and unique stage for the al-Anwar restoration and also a key motivator for past restorations. For most projects, cleaning the site is neither a prerequisite for the restoration nor often practical. A masjid is built as a pure, sacred house of God, and, in the Fatimid Tayyibi tradition, represents the pure Imams. The northern minaret of al-Anwar bears a roundel with verse 33:33[92] which describes the purity of the Prophet's family (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah 2016). For the Bohras, although material fabric dating back to the original building may have been present and preserved, the state of purity which had been its original feature when built by the Imam-Caliph had been compromised. Authenticity for the Bohras, who as Ismaʿili Muslims maintain ritual and inner purity as one of the pillars of

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[91] Although elements of this hadith are narrated in similar traditions, specifically the two aspects related to incense and bathrooms, the entire hadith as reproduced here could not be located except in al-Qadi al-Nuʿman's *Kitab al-Tahara*.

[92] 'And Allah only wishes to keep all abomination from you, ye members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless.'

Islam (Muhammad 2006), meant returning the masjid to its original, clean state and was thus seen as an act of authentication.

The third and fourth instructions of the hadith can be seen to reflect conceptions of authenticity that brought about more physical changes at al-Anwar. Perfume had a special significance in Islam and was often associated to the Hereafter (H. King 2010). To perfume a masjid with incense every seven days was to reinforce its spiritual dimension and create a pleasing environment that would stimulate and inspire prayer. Thus, perfuming can be seen as representing all those acts which enhance the beauty and ambience of the masjid. In Islam, the 'conception of beauty … cannot be imagined without its conception of truth' (Türker 2011:73). The original masjid was beautifully created, and created beautiful, and as such a key characteristic of the masjid's authenticity was its beauty (Rudolff 2003:74). The aesthetic changes to the masjid which reinstated the masjid's original form or completed its missing Quranic verses, were an integral aspect of its authenticity. Repeating the perfuming at regular intervals suggest the process of authentication is a perpetual one and masjid maintenance is integral to a persistent 'authentic' state.

Finally, the placement of water installations is a very specific and obvious intervention, which the Bohras carried out quite literally, but also speaks to a larger theme of ensuring that the masjid is returned to a state in which it may once again cater to its original function. Original use and function are now recognized as valid attributes of authenticity in conservation discourse (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2019). Ritual ablution with water is a prerequisite for prayer. A masjid's very purpose is to cater to worship, and as such, its genesis and continued existence is inherently linked to its functionality. For the Bohras, and perhaps other Muslims as well, a masjid that does not function is not an authentic masjid. A masjid's sanctity, purity and beauty are all elements of its functionality and become irrelevant when worship ceases to take place. Within the Fatimid Tayyibi tradition, there is a strong emphasis on ʿamal, or action, alongside ʿilm, which is knowledge (Najmuddin 1963). In Islam, action validates and authenticates knowledge, and in this same way, the act of worship in a masjid validates and authenticates its sanctity, purity and beauty which is why the presence of worshippers brings a masjid joy (See p. 94). For the Bohras, reinstating al-Anwar's sanctity, purity, beauty and subsequently its functionality, the four principles embedded in the hadith above, was tantamount to returning it to its original state. As such, the masjid's authenticity was secured not merely by a restoration, but by the elaborate philosophy and performative process of iḥyāʾ.

9.2.2 **The source of authenticity**

For the Bohra restoration of al-Anwar, it would seem the masjid's *aṣal* was arrived at using multiple notions of authenticity. Apart from the masjid-specific notions of authenticity discussed above, the Project also relied on more conventional modes. For instance, some original material fabric, such as broken stucco grilles and inscriptions in the *bayt al-ṣalāt*, was preserved in situ, as was the overall original form of the masjid which had been well-documented in historical sources. Syedna Burhanuddin had used the term *aṣal binā'*, suggesting that the masjid's structure or *binā'* also contributed to its authenticity and not just the four conceptual elements discussed above. But beyond these levels of physical and conceptual modes of authenticity, there was a higher and ultimate conception of authenticity which formed the foundation for all others.

Two separate incidents involving Imam Jaʿfar al-Sadiq help explain this ultimate source of authenticity and truth within the Ismaʿili tradition. While performing his Hajj, Imam Sadiq was approached by a man named ʿUbbad al-Basri who questioned his choice of fine clothing (Muhammad 2005). He suggested that the clothing was unbecoming of him as the descendant of ʿAli, who was known for his asceticism, and thus, untrue to his origins. The Imam responded by saying, "If Ali was alive today, he would have worn what I wear, and if I wore today what he wore then, people would say that I am merely a pretender like they say of you" (Muhammad 2005). Thus, the authenticity of the Imam's clothing as descendant of Imam ʿAli was not predicated on the materiality of ʿAli's clothing, but the knowledge of knowing what ʿAli would do. It is embracing ʿAli's understanding, which fittingly only the Imam can accurately know, which gives authenticity to his actions, and not, quite literally, the material fabric of his clothing.

On another occasion, Abu Hanifa (d. 150/767) is said to have come across Imam Sadiq who was resting upon a walking stick. He suggested to the Imam that he had not reached an age where he required the assistance of a staff to which the Imam responded stating that it was the Prophet's staff and he was seeking its *barakat*. Abu Hanifa then said that if he could know for sure that it was the Prophet's staff he would kiss it, thereby questioning the authenticity of the staff and the veracity of the Imam. The Imam holding out his arm retorts, "If you doubt the staff, do you also doubt that this is the Prophet's body, his flesh and hair?" As Abu Hanifa attempted to kiss his hand, the Imam walked away (Al-Shirazi 2011). Here the Imam counters Abu Hanifa's doubts regarding the authenticity of the staff by repositioning the authenticity within himself and identifying himself as the bearer of the Prophet's knowledge and truth by virtue of his being the Imam from his descendants.

The anecdotes mentioned above feature prominently within the Shiʿa Ismaʿili Tayyibi tradition, and help explain how the Bohras perceive the founder of Islam, the Prophet Mohammed, and his

legatee ʿAli as sources of knowledge and authenticity, a mantle which they believe was inherited by the Fatimid Imams. Through his association to their actions and thoughts, the *dāʿī* too is seen to possess this authenticity. For the Project and its leadership, Syedna's instructions as the *dāʿī* were thus tantamount to the Imam's own, and therefore truly authentic. This form of authenticity, which is often associated to a specific community's embodied knowledge, has been identified and recognized in other cultural contexts as well. In her discussions pertaining to authenticity and the restoration of the Djenne masjid in Mali, Joy (2012:146) describes the artisans and craftsmen of the town — whose variations in traditional practices are often described by international bodies as inauthentic — as being 'the locus of their own authenticity'. In his capacity as heir to the Fatimid Imams and bearer of their traditions of knowledge, the *dāʿī* too can be seen as the locus of his own authenticity (Blank 2001). Multiple interviewees (N03, N07 & N13), when asked about the authenticity of the interventions carried out at al-Anwar, responded simply by stating that since the instructions had come from Syedna, whatever the intervention was — it was authentic.

9.2.3 <u>We have returned as we had left</u>

The four elements of *iḥyāʾ* in the Prophet's hadith, which were analyzed and presented as components of the masjid's authenticity, are a set of instructions. As the source of authenticity in Islam and the nexus of authentication, the Prophet's instructions involve Muslim masjid patrons within the performative process of authenticity-making. The Syedna's own instructions during the al-Anwar restoration are a continuation of this collective, social means of authentication. Although masjids are considered inherently sacred and pure, what makes them authentic in the eyes of worshippers is their attainment of the four attributes of sanctity, purity, beauty and functionality through *ʿimārah*, and in the case of al-Anwar, *iḥyāʾ*. At its very core, a masjid is a place to come together and engage in collective, social worship. Similarly, it would seem the process of restoration as executed at al-Anwar, and subsequently authentication, is no different. *ʿImārah* is to make a masjid well-peopled, and like its intent and objective, the process is social as well. In fact, verse 9:18 implies that *all* Muslims, if they are true believers in Allah and the Day of Judgement, must partake in the *ʿimārah* of masjids. The crépissage or remudding celebration of the Djenné masjid, for instance, is one such example whereby a masjid's authenticity is inherently linked to its patrons' engagement with the masjid through traditions of reconstruction and renewal (Joy 2012).

It is this social process which establishes a masjid's authenticity. As Jokilehto (1994:11) suggests, 'authenticity could be identified—if it is at all possible—not so much in the originality of material

or form, but rather in the process'. In comparing individual authenticity with societal, Lee (1997:1) explains that:

> [I]ndividual authenticity means that I as a person should be who I am and not someone else, I should not follow external recipes for ethical behaviour and success but should be guided, by the innermost instincts of my being. By extension, societies must collectively set agendas that reflect not the theories of international planning agencies but the cultural heritage of their own peoples.

The Bohra leadership's understanding of this social and communal dimension of authenticity is made clear in Syedna Burhanuddin's statement at the time of the inauguration to the crowd of 10,000 community members who had gathered in Cairo. 'As you had left, you have returned' were his words to those before him (Syedna Saifuddin 2016:1131, translated from Lisān al-Daʿwat). Adherents of the Fatimid faith who had worshipped in these very walls centuries ago had returned in the same manner they had left. Despite the millennium that had passed and the physical changes and alterations the masjid had undergone, the people who now populated this sacred space, hold the same beliefs as those who had once occupied it when it was first built. This was a return to the original structure, and this was authenticity not of material or form or design, but of belief and spirit which was the ultimate vindication and validation of the *iḥyāʾ* of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar in the eyes of the Bohra community.

As this study concludes, having established the highly social aspect of the concept of authenticity and the complexity and richness of the values embedded in the restoration of al-Anwar, it is an opportune time to reconsider the place of Islamic values in the conservation of Islamic places of worship and explore possibilities for the future.

9.3 The state of Islamic values in architectural conservation today

The above section regarding the conception of authenticity within the Fatimid Ismaʿili Tayyibi tradition, as well as previous chapters on the motives and philosophies of the restoration, have demonstrated the multiple layers of meanings and values Muslim communities like the Bohras attribute to sacred built heritage and the processes of conservation and restoration. Since the restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar in 1980, and even the later Bohra restorations of Fatimid monuments in the 90s, much has changed on the international conservation scene. Modern conservation today includes a greater acceptance of local, religious and indigenous values (De la Torre 2013), a movement from the tangible to the intangible (Rudolff 2006), recognition of the problematic nature of universality (Avrami et al 2000) and a focus on 'value-led planning' in conservation (Stubbs 2009:36). Architectural conservation today is a complex social process. As De la Torre (2013:157) has argued, 'the expansion of accepted heritage values has changed the practice of conservation' as we know it. In the following discussion, the case has been made for

three movements or shifts (Figure 9-1) within conservation discourse that are needed to further accommodate Islamic values, such as those adopted by the Bohra community, into the processes of international conservation.
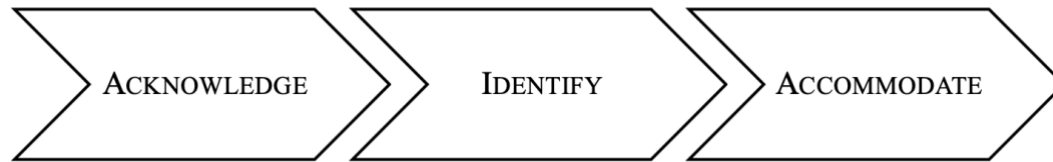

Figure 9-1 The future of Islamic values in modern conservation (Author).

9.3.1 Acknowledge and appreciate

The first step is to acknowledge that there are indeed values based within the Islamic tradition which inspire and guide Muslims from different persuasions in their perception and treatment of sacred places of worship (Isakhan and Meskell 2019, Wyndham 2019). In Cairo today, there are a number of local and foreign conservationists and organizations involved in the protection and safeguarding of Cairo's Islamic heritage.[93] In the last few decades, both Egyptian and non-Egyptian organizations have implemented programmes in the historic quarters which focus on conservation and the socio-economic betterment of the individuals who live in these areas (Shoukry 2015). There is greater involvement of the local population in both the decision making processes of architectural conservation as well as the actual practice (Kotb and Sukkar 2019, Panetta 2020). These efforts are praiseworthy and cannot be forsaken. Yet, one constant remains: the standards by which the success of a restoration project is measured still rely on the values and principles outlined in 'international' charters. Moreover, despite local community engagement in conservation through socio-economic mechanisms, an approach based upon religious values or involving religious stakeholders still seems largely unexplored. Silva (2015:2) argues that 'local heritage managers are trapped within the UNESCO doctrine and conservation practices introduced during colonial eras' which often makes it difficult to acknowledge or appreciate local religious values towards heritage. In Cairo and elsewhere, Islamic values founded upon teachings

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[93] There have been various initiatives and organizations, foreign and Egyptian, involved in heritage conservation of Historic Cairo since the turn of the 21st century. In 1998, the Historic Cairo Restoration Programme (HCRP) was undertaken (Williams 2006). The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) programme has been involved in urban regeneration in the al-Darb al-Ahmar locality of the ancient city (UNESCO 2012). The AKTC describes its conservation efforts in Cairo as conforming to 'international standards' and underpinned by 'the ethical principles of Islam' (Aga Khan Trust for Culture 2015). The Urban Regeneration for Historic Cairo (URHC) was established to prepare planning and management tools for the conservation, economic-revitalization and environmental upgrading of the historic area of Old Cairo (UNESCO 2012:18). Various organizations have also started community-building initiatives through urban conservation in post-revolution Egypt including Tadamun, Megawra and Athar Lina (Elkhouly and Haroun 2014).

in the Quran and Sunnah have yet to be included as a formally acknowledged aspect of conservation of sacred Islamic places. Whether such inclusion would have a positive impact on architectural conservation in Cairo can only be ascertained once a conversation takes place where such Islamic principles are considered.

9.3.2 Identify and discuss

Contemporary conservation discourse lacks scholarship on Islamic values in architectural conservation. Before Islamic values can be accommodated, these values must be identified, discussed and even debated. Although social values feature more regularly in conservation discourse, the fact that they are incommensurable and often incompatible with one another, forces conservationists and practitioners to prioritize one set of values over another (De la Torre 2013). Conflict of values has been a constant in architectural conservation, yet 'as new groups of stakeholders come to the table with their own values and challenge traditional conservation approaches', this conflict continues to grow (De la Torre 2013:161). Far too often international bodies such as UNESCO 'rely on problematic assumptions about how the local population value and engage with their heritage… and the value they place on its reconstruction' (Isakhan and Meskell 2019). In architectural conservation's complex value-driven process, unless and until 'Islamic' values are identified and their practical implications on restoration approaches considered — the primary aim of this study — they can have no meaningful and effective role in the conservation and restoration of religious buildings. It also bears significance that the values identified by the present study are informed by Shiʿa texts and traditions and relate to a religious site with Shiʿa origins. As a minority in the Muslim world, Shiʿa heritage is often under attack and Shiʿa perception towards heritage in lands of equal importance to all Muslims, such as the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, is often disregarded (Rizvi 2015). Within conservation discourse, there must be a space to put differing Islamic values regarding heritage and sacred spaces in conversation with one another as well.

A strong scholarly and cultural discourse supports the role of Islamic values in protecting non-Islamic monuments in Muslim dominated countries (Manhart 2016). However, the role of Islamic values must go beyond a simple, and often apologetic, defence of Islam's safeguarding and protection of heritage. Such literature has gained prominence in the wake of widespread, wanton destruction by militants who justify their actions with references to the Islamic tradition (Rico 2017b). As important as it is to counter such arguments with discussions which couch Muslim and non-Muslim heritage safely within the sanctuary of Islam, it is ultimately reactionary. It is equally important to identify values within Islamic tradition and represented in Islamic history that demonstrate Islam's pro-active participation in the conservation and restoration of its own heritage.

9.3.3 Accommodate and embolden

The accommodation of Islamic values into the mechanisms and systems of modern conservation is the final step of this process. Even if the first two steps above are achieved, there still remain potential areas of resistance in accommodating Islamic, religious, values-based approaches to restoration, one of which is the continued rigidity of the positivist nature of architectural conservation discourse. As Glendinning (2003:376) had hoped, the cult of age-value has in theory at least been 'emancipated from the concern to preserve old material substance' endeavouring to 'become a truly universal movement'. The Western, Eurocentric bias in conservation practices and charters has been acknowledged and policies continue to develop along greater 'international' lines (Wells 2010). Yet policies rarely immediately translate into practice. Overall conservation mechanisms still favour scientific articulation which is 'not well-suited to address any heritage of religion and belief' (Rico 2019:154). This means that although there is a will to accept religious values and formal acknowledgement in some places, the mechanisms and policies by which global organizations attribute value to heritage and prioritize conservation approaches, are not designed to accommodate them (Rico 2019). Conservation's overall positivist and rational approach, a continued resonance of its European origins, still prioritizes scientific reasoning over faith-based, relativist belief (Shua 2018).

Concurrent with accusations of Eurocentrism in heritage discourse, are issues of elitism (Rudolff and Buckley 2015:527), which is another obstacle in the way of greater acceptance of al-Anwar-like restorations. Referencing Goldstein's (2011) study of the Aya Sofya and linking elitism with religious monuments, Rico (2019:157) has argued that elite preservationists' bias against religion in conservation has shaped 'Western consciousness about heritage resources'. '[P]rivileging the opinions of foreign experts and technocrats over those of the local population' has long been a common phenomenon in international architectural conservation (Isakhan and Meskell 2019). Poulios (2010:178) argues that even contemporary values-based approaches which are meant to give greater voice to local communities, fall short in accommodating the needs and religious values of a living heritage site's 'core community' since the 'conservation professionals' are usually given managing authority over the site. At the time of al-Anwar's restoration, as discussed in previous chapters, this elitist perspective often derided popular local perception of al-Anwar. When the researcher posited the popularity of al-Anwar with the local people of Gamaliyya as a possible indication of the validity of the Bohra approach to the restoration, a well-published Egyptian scholar suggested that the opinions of such locals did not matter (E02). According to Mahdy (2017), elitism persists to this day in Egypt and is not limited to foreigners. He argues the gap between conservationists and the local communities continues to widen because 'Egyptians who adopted the European cultural and intellectual framework saw their heritage and fellow Egyptians through the eyes of Orientalism' (Mahdy 2017:51).

Contemporary practice must extend beyond merely accommodating religious agents in the dialogue surrounding the conservation of their heritage, and instead allow their beliefs and values to contribute to the parameters within which restorations operate and the criteria by which their success is measured. The account of the al-Anwar restoration presented here showcases how one Muslim community attempted to achieve this and provides lessons in its perceived accomplishments and failures for future cooperation between international and national agencies and religious stakeholders. The following concluding chapter takes a closer look at the contributions of this study to the conservation discourse and examines potential limitations and avenues of further research as the study draws to a conclusion.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

As was declared in the research aim (p. 17), through an analysis of the Dawoodi Bohra community's restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, this study has situated a Muslim community's values towards the architectural conservation of a sacred place of worship within the larger context of contemporary heritage discourse, giving voice to a particularly underrepresented phenomenon in modern conservation scholarship. By using the very specific and detailed example of the al-Anwar restoration, the research and findings presented here help address the 'severe shortage of heritage literature in English' and brings 'nuance to past and current approaches to the material past from the perspective of Islamic values and concerns' (Rico 2016:26). The conclusion presented here lists some of the key contributions this study has made to the field, reflects upon some of its challenges and limitations and discusses some possible future directions for this important line of inquiry.

10.1 Key findings and contributions to knowledge

The restoration of al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar at the hands of the Dawoodi Bohra community was guided by a set of Islamic values regarding materiality, aesthetics, novelty, completeness and notions of authenticity as demonstrated by the findings presented in this research study. These values resulted in very specific types of alterations and amendments to the masjid and were the impetus behind the striking results of the restoration which remained the subject of much discussion and controversy for several decades in Cairo's heritage discourse. These findings are important in that, firstly, they clearly establish the practice of architectural conservation within the sphere of Islamic religious activity. Secondly, they help clarify and provide context for a highly misrepresented and misunderstood event in Cairene conservation history. And finally, they relate specific acts of conservation with specific concepts from the textual tradition, an exercise that remains uncommon in conservation literature pertaining to Islam. The explicit link demonstrated to exist between conservation practices as Muslim lived experience and Islamic values in the textual tradition is perhaps this study's most significant contribution to contemporary heritage discourse.

The exploration of conceptions of authenticity, the process of authentication, and their inherent associations to *iḥyāʾ*, are of special significance for the field of Islamic heritage studies. Accusations of inauthentic restoration have been the surest means of disenfranchising communities from the protection of their heritage and the largest impediment towards recognizing local and religious values as legitimate factors in conservation. Critics argued that the al-Anwar restoration stripped the masjid of its authenticity, yet the Bohra community's extensive literature

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on the restoration maintains that the masjid's authenticity was never compromised. If anything, it was restored. This study has demonstrated that the community did indeed have its own conception of authenticity and the masjid's acceptance by locals and the replication of its methods and results at other Cairene masjids would suggest that this understanding of authenticity resonated beyond al-Anwar and the Bohras. These discussions not only identify factors which may help better understand Muslim conceptions of authenticity in other contexts, but also illustrate how local communities and non-professional stakeholders, often in contrast to international criteria, provide their own definitions and norms for authenticity.

The discussions surrounding verse 9:18 of the Qur'an and concept of *ʿimāra* demonstrate that conservation and restoration of places of worship was a common practice throughout Cairo's history and was often inspired by notions of piety and religiosity. Based off of ideas first presented by Amīr ʿImaduddin (2002, 2004), this study has suggested that the Fatimid vizier al-Sayyid Badr al-Jamali enshrined a philosophy of architectural conservation in a series of inscriptions which the researcher argued to have redefined the prevalent understanding of *ʿimāra* to include the renewal, restoration and reconstruction of existing places of worship as well. Aside from contributing to a better understanding of the concept of *ʿimāra*, these findings demonstrated *ʿimāra* as being a historical precursor to the modern concept of architectural conservation for Muslim places of worship.

This study also adds to the post-colonial, post-modern body of literature which discusses the interplay of orientalism and Islamic heritage (Reid 2002). The detailed analysis of the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe's interventions at al-Anwar suggested that purveyors of European conservation dogma in Cairo during the 19th and early 20th centuries clearly valued the masjid's artistic and historic character over its religious and cultural significance. The parallels presented by this study between the Comité and modern conservation activity in Cairo in their treatment and perception of al-Anwar illustrate the ongoing, lasting impact of colonialism, orientalism and imperialism on Cairene Islamic heritage discourse.

The current body of literature which aims to link concepts and teachings of the Islamic tradition with architectural conservation and heritage values tends to focus primarily on existing, functioning sites of living tradition which are actively maintained. More often than not, such discussions are linked specifically with the institution of waqf (Ghazaleh 2011, Khalfan and Ogura 2012, Nour 2012). However, within what is already a limited field of inquiry, there is little research into the values associated to complete reconstruction or rebuilding of *ruined* Islamic places of worship despite the preponderance of destroyed Islamic monuments in conflict zones throughout the Islamic world and the interest in their reconstruction. With al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar having reached a nearly complete ruined state and the Bohra community intent on restoring it as

a living place of worship, this study is perhaps one of the very few which specifically examines notions of reconstruction and rebuilding and their association to concepts such as *iḥyāʾ*, *tajdīd* and *kamāl*.

The methodology employed for this study is also worth highlighting once more at this final stage. The manner in which the research was presented here is unlike most studies in this niche area which attempt to link concepts found in the Islamic faith with practices of masjid conservation through a top-down approach. Instead of identifying theoretical or conceptual issues from within the textual tradition and then supporting them with examples of conservation practices, this study adopted an inductive, bottom-up approach. The analysis of conservation practices at al-Anwar, both during the classical period at the hands of Muslim rulers and in the modern period at the hands of the Bohras, resulted in the compilation of a body of acts, decisions and discussions which when tallied with the textual tradition, both theological texts as well as inscriptions, allowed for the identification of specifics heritage values regarding aesthetics and authenticity that were ultimately demonstrated to have influenced Muslim conservation of sacred places of worship.

The qualitative approach adopted here runs counter to the 'positivist institutional scholarship' which has come to characterize much architectural research and gives voice to 'non-authoritative perspectives' (Trefry and Watson 2013:4). The use of qualitative interviews has helped achieve a personal dimension to the research and has added richness, complexity and intimacy to the discussions. Aside from filling a large gap in the scholarship of Cairo's Islamic heritage, the account of the al-Anwar restoration presented in this study juxtaposes official Bohra community accounts with personal narratives provided by participants thereby providing insight into what Rico (2019:151) terms a 'lived practical experience' of Islamic values within an architectural conservation setting. This lived experience is further explored through semi-structured interviews of present-day site visitors whereby this study puts heritage values of Muslim patrons across different periods in time in dialogue with one another.

The use of classical texts in the study of Islamic architecture has long been advocated and still remains relatively unexplored (Necipoğlu and Al-Asad 1995). Although limited to the Fatimid Ismaʿili Tayyibi tradition, one of the study's more substantial contributions to knowledge is the association of specific practices of architectural conservation with concepts and teachings of Islam. The study also capitalizes on the relation between members of the faith and their textual tradition, supplementing official, authoritative proclamations with informal observations thereby illustrating the nexus between believer, religious text and sacred place of worship.

10.2 Challenges and limitations

The challenges of insider research are well-documented as are its potential benefits in uncovering 'crucial values' regarding the subject of inquiry (Hamdan 2009). Cognizant of his association to the Dawoodi Bohra community, the researcher exercised reflexivity which 'involves bringing the subject, the "doer" of the knowledge-making activity, back into the account of knowledge' (Hufford 1995:58). As part of this reflexivity, at various junctions the researcher questioned his choice of methods and sources as well as his selection of participants. Although the matter of the al-Anwar restoration is of personal interest to the researcher, as any significant scholarly pursuit would be for most academics, the author has attempted throughout the study to use his 'scholarly voice' as opposed to his 'personal voice' and as such sees the findings presented here to be the results of 'doing ethnography' and not providing testimony (Hufford 1995:65).

The issue of voice and representation is often identified as a common challenge in reflexivity (Suffla et al 2015). As part of the reflexive process, a significant realization which occurred to the researcher was that his insider positionality did not necessitate the accuracy of his interpretation of the thoughts and concepts of the wider Bohra community. Direct references to authoritative community texts aside, the research presented here is an *attempt* to portray the community's perspective and portrayal of the restoration. The researcher does not claim to speak on behalf of the community and has endeavoured to analyze both written and oral sources with the tools and methods provided by qualitative data analysis.

In his discussions surrounding insider/outsider research in religion, McCutcheon (1999:293) warns of a situation wherein reflexivity results in Self-absorbedness that leads one to construct 'a new dominant, intellectual elite' thereby losing sight of the Other. The research presented here attempts to give voice to a minority Muslim community and create space for Islamic values to feature in conservation discourse. In doing this, however, the intention has not been to place the community on a pedestal and supplant one elite narrative for another. The decisions and methods adopted at al-Anwar may find resonance elsewhere, yet are neither conclusive nor all encompassing.

As a minority (Tayyibi) within a minority (Ismaʿili) within a minority (Shiʿas), the Bohra perspective is not representative of all Muslims. This study is highly cognizant of the fact that Islam is not a monolith. The reliance on the restoration of a single masjid, by a single Muslim community, as means of understanding Islamic values towards the conservation of religious heritage is therefore not without its limitations. Hadith and sayings as found in the Fatimid Tayyibi tradition sometimes conflict, or are not found in other Islamic denominations. Moreover, the significance of the textual tradition as an element to express or understand faith varies between

Muslims (Salvatore and Eickelman 2004). Conceptions of masjid and its sacrality also differ (Mahdy 2017). Despite the acceptance of many of the Islamic values held by the Bohra community embedded in the al-Anwar restoration and its surrounding discourse by Muslim patrons visiting the site, the strength of this research lies not in in the extent to which the values held by the Bohras are accepted by others, but in the fact that even such a small community of Muslims has its own distinct approach towards conserving what it sees as its sacred heritage. Although generalization has not necessarily been the intent of this research, the case-to-case transfer of lessons learned at al-Anwar to other sites of religious significance, especially at places of Shiʿa veneration in Iraq and Iran cannot not be ruled out. Ultimately, the "thick" description of the restoration has the potential to greatly benefit in the research of other restorations and case studies (Firestone 1993:22). As Firestone (1993:22) suggests, the

> argument for qualitative research has never been that its claims for generalizability
> are exceptionally strong. Qualitative research is best for understanding the processes
> that go on in a situation and the beliefs and perceptions of those in it.

The reluctance to portray Islam as a monolith was accompanied by a similar aversion to present the West as singular entity as well. In a study which advocates for greater acceptance of diversity and flexibility in applying conservation principles to religious monuments, an essentialized treatment of either Islam or the West works against this objective. Although the subject matter of the research is relatively focused, discussions surrounding it required drawing upon and referencing much larger phenomenon and areas of scholarship, specifically the development and contemporary practice of conservation in the West. Due to the limited scope of this study and constraints of time and length, brevity was chosen in its portrayal and terms such as 'modern', 'Western', 'Euro-centric', 'Euro-American conservation community' and 'international' were adopted to represent the complex phenomenon of conservation which originates in the debates of 19th century Western Europe (See p. 5). This usage should not be mistaken for a marker of essentialized discourse, but seen as a necessary apparatus for the sake of consistency and clarity. Furthermore, although secular tendencies within the modern conservation movement may have been presented in the study as a force opposing religious values, it does not imply that the modern movement does not accommodate religious belief at all. Nor do the arguments presented here in favour of greater sensitivity towards religious values in the conservation of sacred spaces imply that scholars and communities operating within the frameworks of international heritage policy do not prioritize such values. Although modern conservation is often characterized as secular and positivist, part of its origins ultimately lies in the restoration of 19th century English churches, and as such, the two — religion and conservation — are inherently linked.

10.3 Further research possibilities

The *Rasaʾil* inform us that the *ikhtilāf* of scholars, i.e. their differences in opinion, benefit society for they offer the opportunity to self-reflect and introspect, and force us to re-examine concepts and beliefs with a greater degree of scrutiny (Al-Mastur 1995b). The genesis of this study was the critical reception of the al-Anwar restoration and the discussions that grew out of the *ikhtilāf* between multiple parties. Literature of this genre in recent years, however, has substantially diminished. According to Myllylä (2008:228), 'criticism to both the Bohra Mission and the Supreme Council of Antiquities has nearly entirely vanished' and research into Cairo's Islamic heritage at large has also lessened. This loss of interest is partially explained by the decrease in active conservation projects in the city. As active projects remain scarce and with fewer scholars specifically researching the conservation of Cairo's Islamic heritage, the possibilities to compare and contrast other restorations with the results of this study remain latent rather than manifest.

A line of inquiry that this study identified but did not fully explore is a comparative study between al-Anwar and Ibn Ṭulūn. Comparisons could also be drawn between al-Anwar and the Masjid of al-Zahir Baybars which is currently under restoration. Work began in 2007 and after several years on hiatus it has recently resumed (Tawfeek 2018). The comparison is all the more intriguing because Baybars' masjid borrows many of its architecture and design features from al-Anwar and many of the interventions being carried out today, such as the reconstruction of brick piers and the pavement of the courtyard, resemble interventions at al-Anwar from four decades ago (Behrens-Abouseif 1989, Sanders 2008). Current restoration projects in Cairo, particularly the restoration of Baybars', would be ideal venues to further explore and compare the findings of this research study.

Research questions posed in this study can be extended to other Islamic places of worship beyond Cairo as well and doing so may yield greater understanding of Muslim conservation practices in other contexts. The multi-method, post-occupancy, REAPs-inspired data collection approach developed for al-Anwar can be easily replicated elsewhere. The analysis of Islamic architecture and built heritage through the lens of classical Islamic texts is also an area that has potential in furthering our understanding of the values embedded in masjid restoration and conservation (Koliji 2016, Necipoğlu and Al-Asad 1995).

The sacrality and significance of the processes of restoration, and not just the restoration itself, are common to a number of religious traditions and merit further scrutiny. There may be wider application for general research into the social character of sacred places of all faiths as well. A pan-religious investigation into the restoration of sacred buildings patronized by living religious traditions would shed light on shared values between the world's religions. Comparative studies

between Cairo's historic masjids and Coptic churches could be a starting point because of their common historical and physical environments and the similarity of the conservation milieu in which they are situated. Shifts in public perception towards Christian religious monuments and growing acceptance of more radical means of intervention, heightened in the wake of the destruction of Notre-Dame, offer an interesting opportunity for comparative study of religious and cultural values towards heritage monuments in Christianity and Islam (Glendinning 2013, O'Brien 2019, Viñas 2005).

In parts of East and South East Asia, sacred sites belonging to Buddhism and various polytheistic faiths such as Shinto and Taoism and the ritual conservation practices carried out by their patrons have found greater acceptance in conservation discourse than the Islamic world (Khanjanusthiti 1996, Weiler and Gutschow 2017). Religious and cultural values attributed to these sites have impacted the guidelines and commentary provided by international agencies such as UNESCO and resulted in greater acknowledgement and more recognition in global discourse. Comparative studies between sacred architecture and conservation practices in these two regions may prove beneficial on several fronts, but particularly for two reasons. Firstly, such collaboration would allow for projects in the Islamic world to learn from the successes and failures of value integration into conservation frameworks in the East Asian context. And secondly, the combined discourse would further articulate the place of religious values in modern conservation.

10.4 Concluding remarks

In the first ever international document published in 1983 *specifically* to guide the conservation of Islamic architectural heritage, references to the values and traditions of the Islamic faith featured merely as a short footnote at the bottom of the page. Over the years, despites scores of major conservation projects across the Islamic world, and millions of dollars invested in protecting this heritage, little progress has been made in recognizing the role of the Islamic tradition, with its rich history and diverse philosophy, in determining the way Muslims perceive, use and subsequently, tend to their places of worship. This study has provided a detailed analysis of a small Muslim community's restoration of a major Islamic monument in Cairo with the hope that their approach and motives might shed light on how Islamic values and philosophies influence the architectural conservation of sacred spaces.

The need of the hour is not a formal policy document which attempts to piece together — in what is perhaps a retrospective exercise — a singular, cohesive notion of 'Islamic architectural conservation'. 'Islamic architecture' is a contested notion as must be any considerations of 'Islamic architectural conservation'. However, this inability does not preclude the need for a simple, yet profound and well-articulated declaration that Muslims are connected to their places

of worship and have a rich history of preserving and safeguarding these sacred spaces. Across the Islamic world, various communities engage with these places in meaningful and enriching ways, some of which are expressed as acts of conservation, restoration and alteration. Like all buildings that hold meaning for their occupants and dwellers, masjids speak to them, influence them and inspire them. Al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar, a sacred millennium-old monument in the heart of Historic Cairo, spoke to the Dawoodi Bohras; it 'complained' of its dire condition — and the community responded.

Appendixes

Appendix I: Al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar layout (Author)
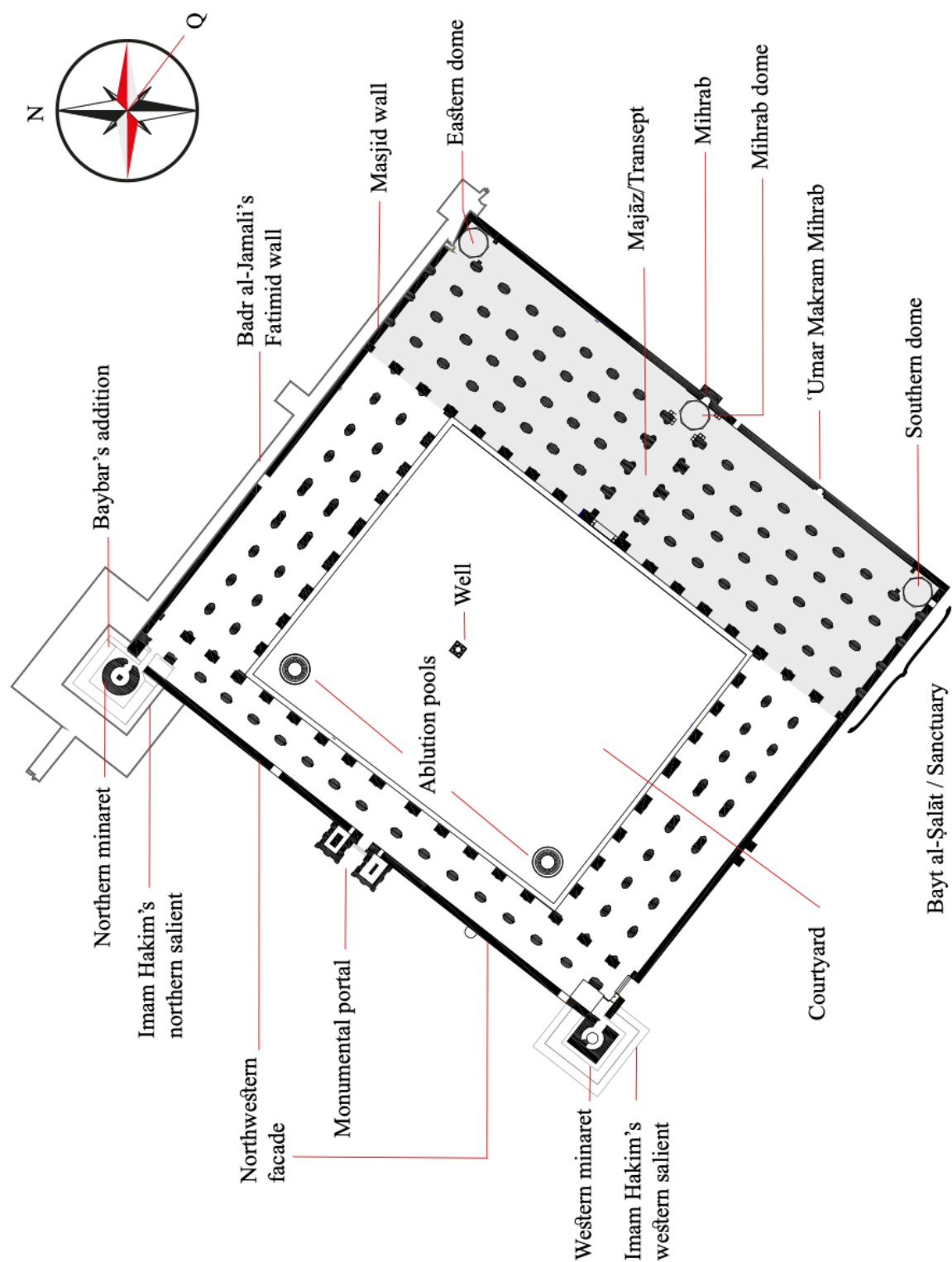
(Syedna Saifuddin 2016)

Appendix II: Thematic analysis of Fatimid inscriptions

Complimenting their zeal for building, the Fatimids were known to embellish their constructions with monumental inscriptions imbued with messages and overtones of their dynastic ambitions and religious doctrines (Bierman 1998, O'Kane 2018, Sanders 1994, Swelim 2015). Study of the Fatimid's special attention to architecture and restoration of past buildings along with their predilection for monumental inscriptions suggests the possibility of uncovering their attitude towards restoration. The following section offers a survey and analysis of select Fatimid inscriptions so that the operative terms and key concepts identified might shed light on a larger philosophy related towards the architectural conservation of sacred buildings.

Since Fatimid inscriptions from North Africa are scant, and those that can be dated to the Fatimid period have generally been effaced, the analysis focuses on Cairene inscriptions, particularly those of the Armenian general Sayyid Badr al-Jamali (Bloom 2015). His restoration activity and the accompanying inscriptions bearing his name came after a period of extreme difficulty and destruction throughout Egypt and especially in the capital (Sanders 1998). With his arrival to Cairo in 465/1073, Badr al-Jamali restored order to the kingdom and embarked upon an ambitious construction campaign evidenced by the nearly 30 extant inscriptions bearing his name (Al-Husaini 2007, Walker 2002). In contrast, in the century since the establishment of the city of Cairo up until the Badr al-Jamali's arrival in Cairo, there are only seven extant Fatimid inscriptions (four of which are preserved in al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar) (Al-Husaini 2007). The lack of inscriptions from the period immediately preceding him and the restorative intent of his construction activity make his inscriptions of 'incommensurable value' and the ideal subject of analysis (Walker 2002:102). Table 1 lists the 13 inscriptions that form the basis of the analysis in this section. Apart from the inscriptions belonging to al-Azhar and al-Anwar which have been included to provide context, all the inscriptions bear the name of Badr al-Jamali and are associated to places of religious significance. These particular inscriptions are also significant for the current research study because, as mentioned above, the have been identified within Bohra community literature as having influenced the restoration of al-Anwar (Saifuddin 2002, Syedna Saifuddin 2016).

COMPONENTS OF A 10TH CENTURY FATIMID INSCRIPTION

The Fatimid inscriptions in Table 1 comprise chiefly of six components:
1) Bismillah and Quranic verses,
2) Fatimid figures or personalities,
3) a directive or command specifying the type and nature of construction,

4) the purpose or historical context of the construction,

5) prayers and salutations, and

6) dates.

Typical to nearly all Islamic inscriptions, the inscriptions begin with an invocation of Allah's name followed by verses from the Quran. A common verse in the inscriptions presented here is verse 9:18 which speaks of masjid *ʿimārah* as a core element of a Muslim's faith and is a recurring topic of interest in this study. The second component is a reference to the name of the Imam-Caliph followed by other figures relevant to the construction. The inscriptions include a directive component, which in the current sample set, begins with the term *mimmā amara* or 'that which was ordered by'. The phrase is combined with a specific term which identifies both the type and object of the act being commemorated. On occasion, the building or object the inscription is commemorating is referred to only as a *ḍamīr*, i.e. a bound pronoun, and therefore is understood only in context of the inscription's location and position. The directive is sometimes linked to the purpose behind the restoration or construction or historical context. A prayer, most often for the executor and patron of the act, is offered towards the end and the inscription culminates with the year and sometimes month in which the act took place.

Table 1 Fatimid inscriptions from 370/970-71 to 485/1092 which demonstrate development of concept of restoration.

	AH	CE	Type of construction	Monument	Current Location	Quran Verse	Imam-Caliph	Construction ordered by	Purpose or historical context	Inscription terms	
										Type of Monument	Operative word
1	360	970-971	new	al-Jāmiʿ al-Azhar	(missing)	N/A	al-Muʿizz	al-Muʿizz	N/A	implied	*bināʾ* (construction)
2	Rajab 393	May-June 1003	new	al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar	Inner wall above main door	28:5	al-Hakim	al-Hakim	N/A	implied	*ʿamal* (act)
3	Rajab (393?)	(May-June 1003?)	new	al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar	Northern minaret	9:128	al-Hakim	al-Hakim	N/A	implied	*ʿamal*
4	Rajab 393	May-June 1003	new	al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar	Western minaret (12m)	11:73	al-Hakim	al-Hakim	N/A	implied	*ʿamal*
5	394	1003-1004	new	al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar	Western minaret (8m)	**9:18**	al-Hakim	al-Hakim	N/A	implied	*ʿamal*
6	Ṣafr 470	September 1077	restoration	Jāmiʿ Ibn Tulūn	Above entrance to the masjid	**9:18**	al-Mustansir	Badr al-Jamali	Destruction caused by a fire set by heretics	*al-bāb wa ma yalīhi* (gateway and surrounding areas)	*tajdīd* (renovation)
7	469-470	1077	restoration	Isna Jāmiʿ	To the right of the mihrab (not original)	**9:18**	al-Mustansir	Badr al-Jamali (executed by al-Qadi Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Mohammed b. Jaʿfar)	N/A	*al-jāmiʿ al-mubārak (blessed* congregational masjid)	*ʿimārah* (construction)
8	473	1081-80	new	ʿUmrī masjid (Qus)	Museum of Islamic Art	**9:18**	al-Mustansir	Badr al-Jamali (executed by Abu Mansoor Sartakin al-Juyushi)	In order to seek eternal reward	implied	*ʿamal*
9	Rabīʿ al-	July-August 1084	restoration	Jāmiʿ Aṭṭārīn	Base of the minaret	**9:18**	al-Mustansir	Badr al-Jamali	Because he witnessed it in a state of ruin and his faith obligated him to do so	implied	*ʾinshāʾ* (creation) *tajdīd*

	Awwal 477[94]										
10	478	1085	new	Juyūshī Mash'had	Above main door	72:18, 9:108	al-Mustansir	Badr al-Jamali	N/A	*al-mash'had al-mubārak* (blessed shrine)	*ʿamal*
11	Rabīʿ al-Ākhar 482	June/July 1089	restoration	Mash'had Sayyida Nafisa	Above door of sepulchre	-	al-Mustansir	Badr al-Jamali	N/A	*al-bāb* (gateway)	*ʿimārah*
12	484	1091-92	new	Asqalan Mash'had	Minbar (now in Hebron)	**9:18**	al-Mustansir	Badr al-Jamali	Discovery of the sacred head of Imam Husain; In order to seek Allah's happiness, gain eternal reward, make known Imam's honour and spread the banners of verse 9:18	*al-mash'had al-sharīf* (sacred shrine)	*ʾinshāʾ*
13	Rajab 485	August-September 1092	new	Jāmiʿ Miqyās	Three inscriptions: western wall, eastern wall and above main door	11:88, **9:18**	al-Mustansir	Badr al-Jamali	N/A	*al-jāmiʿ al-mubārak*	*ʾinshāʾ*

[94] An incomplete inscription of similar text and the same date is at the British museum. Although one cannot definitively tell, it seems that the inscription is also related to the masjid of perfumers since no other major constructions for Badr al-Jamali are known for this year.
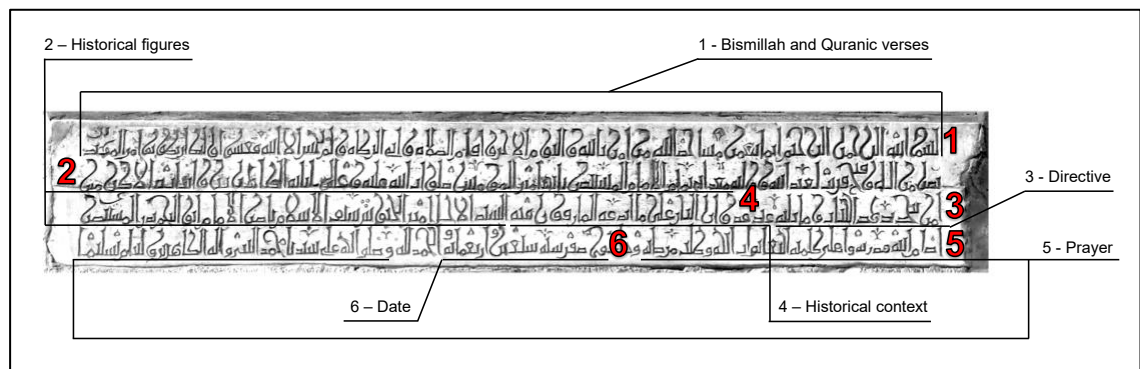
Figure 1 Components of Fatimid inscriptions. Syed Badr al-Jamali's inscription commemorating his restoration of a portion of Jāmiʿ Ibn Ṭulūn (Author, 2016).

The inscription in Figure 1 is from Jāmiʿ Ibn Ṭulūn and was installed by Badr al-Jamali after his restoration of a portion of the masjid that was destroyed during the unrest prior to his arrival (Sanders 1994). It is Badr al-Jamali's first inscription in the city of Cairo and is exemplary in its depiction of his restorative intent and that it comprises of all the components mentioned above. It translates as follows (numbers represent the corresponding component and are not in the original):

> (1) Basmalah. He only will carry out the ʿimārah of Allah's masjids who believes in Allah and the Last Day, establishes salat, offers alms and does not fear [anyone] save Allah. It is expected that they are the rightly guided. (9:18) Victory from Allah and near conquest for Allah's servant and friend, (2) Maʿad Abu Tamim al-Imam al-Mustansir bi Allah, the Commander of the Faithful, Allah's blessings upon him, his pure ancestors and his noble descendants. (3) The *tajdīd* (lit. renewal; restoration) of this gate and its surrounding areas, (4) after the heretics had caused the calamity of a fire to take place within it (the masjid), was ordered by (2) the illustrious lord, the Commander of the Armies, the Sword of Islam, Helper of the Imam, Abu al-Najm Badr al-Mustansiri, (5) May Allah extend his power and elevate his authority, (4) in order to obtain Allah's rewards and seek His happiness. (6) And it (the renewal) was in [the month of] Ṣafr 470. (5) All praise for Allah may He grace our leader Muhammad the Prophet and his pure descendants with blessings, and deliver upon them salaams (Al-Husaini 2007:172, translated from Arabic original).

READING BETWEEN THE (INSCRIPTION) LINES

In the cross-section of Fatimid inscriptions currently under analysis, five distinct words have been used to describe the construction acts being carried out. *Bināʾ* refers to 'building' while *ʿamal* implies the vaguer meaning of 'act'. Both *bināʾ* and *ʿamal* were used exclusively in the inscriptions dedicated to new construction. Badr al-Jamali describes his restorative work of the damaged portions of Ibn Ṭulūn as *tajdīd* — renewal or renovation, suggesting that seeking the renewal of religious places of worship was a pan-Islamic phenomenon. The final two terms feature in inscriptions dedicated to both new constructions as well as restorations: *ʾinshāʾ* and *ʿimārah*. In its narrowest sense, *ʿimārah* refers to construction, however, in its broader sense, *ʿimārah* is any activity that contributes to prolonging the life of a structure. Hence, the term is appropriate for describing an act of restoration as well. *ʾInshāʾ* has a more unique nuance to it and

is derived from the root verb *an sha ʾa*, meaning to create or bring into being. Like ʿ*imārah*, its use in new constructions is obvious, however, in inscriptions dedicated to restorations the term requires further explanation. One possible understanding is that the restored building, having been brought back to life, is now recreated. At the Perfumers' Masjid in Alexandria, Syed Badr al-Jamali directed the *inshāʾ* or 'creation' of the masjid which he later in the inscription equated with renewal or *tajdīd*.

> Basmalah. He only will carry out the ʿ*imārah* of Allah's masjids who believes in Allah and the Last Day, establishes salat, offers zakat and does not fear [anyone] save Allah. It is expected that they are the rightly guided. Of that the creation (*ʾinshāʾ*) of which has been ordered, by the illustrious lord, the Commander of the Armies, the Sword of Islam, Helper of the Imam, the Protector of the Qadis of Muslims, and the Guide of the Missionaries of the Faithful, Abu al-Najm Badr al-Mustansiri, upon his convoy's arrival to the frontier [city of] Alexandria and witnessing this congregational masjid (*jāmiʿ*) in a state of ruin (*kharāb*), he saw — by virtue of his good faith and devotion — that it should be renewed (*tajdīd*), as a means of seeking proximity to Allah the Almighty. And it (the renewal) was in Rabīʿ al-Awwal, AH 477 (Syedna Saifuddin 2016:445–46, translated from Arabic original).

That the inscription expands upon *inshāʾ* as *tajdīd* suggests that a masjid's renewal is tantamount to recreation. As the terminology here suggests, processes of restoration have historically been linked to notions of life and creation and contextualize the Bohra's adoption of *iḥyāʾ* as the operative term for their restoration of al-Anwar.

Appendix III: Behavioural map template

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Behavioural Map - al-Jāmiʿ al-Anwar

Date: _____

Day: _____   Observer: _____

Time: _____   Weather conditions: Temp: _____   Damp/dry: _____   Cloudy/sunny: _____

Other comments:
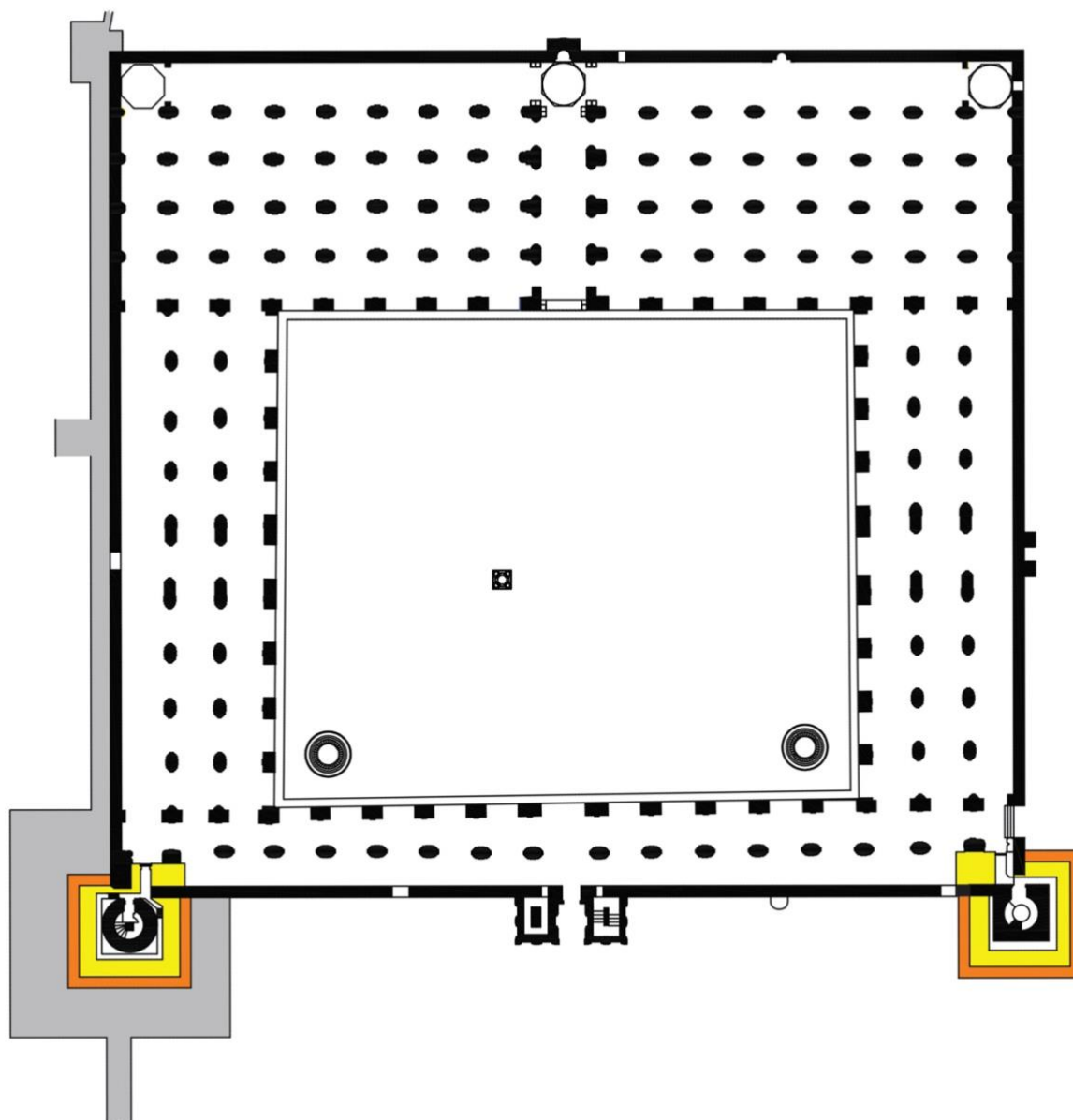
Key of Activities

═══ Resting/Sleeping	‖ Prayer
▢ Photography	◯◯ Conversation
⩔ Quran	# Solitude
↻ Food/drink	△ Children-based
⟳ Study	⟊ Maintenance
▱ Boisterous	⟝ Wedding
◇ Other (details)	$\frac{3 \text{ (female)}}{2 \text{ (male)}}$

Notes:

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Interview Schedule – Visitors (B)

Architectural Conservation in Islamic Fatimid Philosophy and Thought

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(Arabic version available as well)

- Where do you come from?

- What is your primary occupation?

- Is this your first time in al-Anwar? If not, how often do you visit?

- When you visit the masjid, what is your primary purpose?

- What is your favourite part of the masjid?

- Do you see the masjid as old or new? Alive or dead?

- Are you aware that this masjid was once in a state of ruin and was restored approximately 35 years ago. (Pictures of the masjid before restoration may be shown when this question is asked.) How do you feel the restoration has turned out?

- There are some critics of the restoration. What are your thoughts regarding the following statement?

  > They began with the Mosque of al-Hakim, 1000 A.D., which was completed in 1980 to cries of dismay and outrage from the Islamic art world. White marble was used to pave the courtyard and to cover the sanctuary wall. The ablutions fountain in the courtyard was shaped like a lingam. Anachronistic ornamentation was placed over the *mihrab* and gilded. A large cut glass chandelier illuminated the central aisle. None of this was authentic for the Fatimid period… The result is not preservation or restoration, but totally new creations. Sadly, Cairo has lost its Fatimid buildings as an authentic architectural legacy and as a research tool.

  > Caroline Williams, "Cairo's New Medieval City", *The Middle East Jounral*, p. 464.

- For which of the following reasons do you think a masjid should be restored? History, research, tourism, national landmark, worship and prayer

Appendix V: 'Masjid Layout' Plan JA.12.C

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