

Madrasas

Islamic Architecture

No'man Bayaty

Introduction

- Madrasas are institutions of higher education.
- It was usually residential, and used for the teaching of Islamic sciences.
- This building, unlike the mosques, appeared later, and was not affected like mosques by the previous civilizations' traditions. On the contrary it was tailored as a result of a specific need of the Muslim community.
- These buildings appeared when the Islamic civilization was at its peak, and its architecture has developed its own styles.
- In it also appeared the interchangeability of functions with the mosque.
- The early madrasas were simply a room in the teacher's house.

Architectural Origin

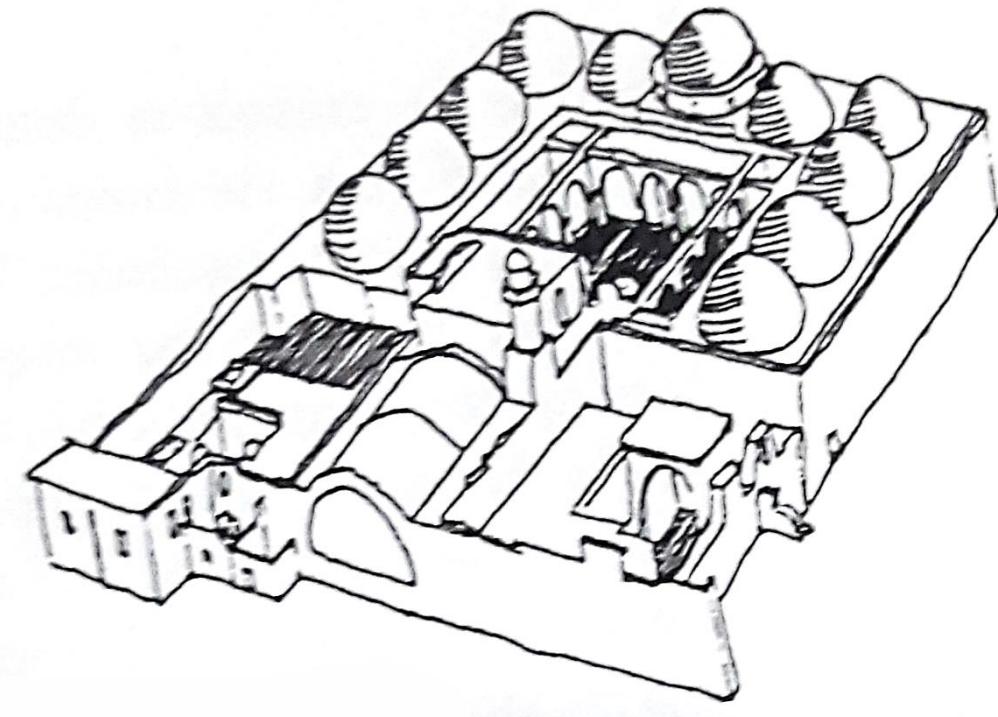
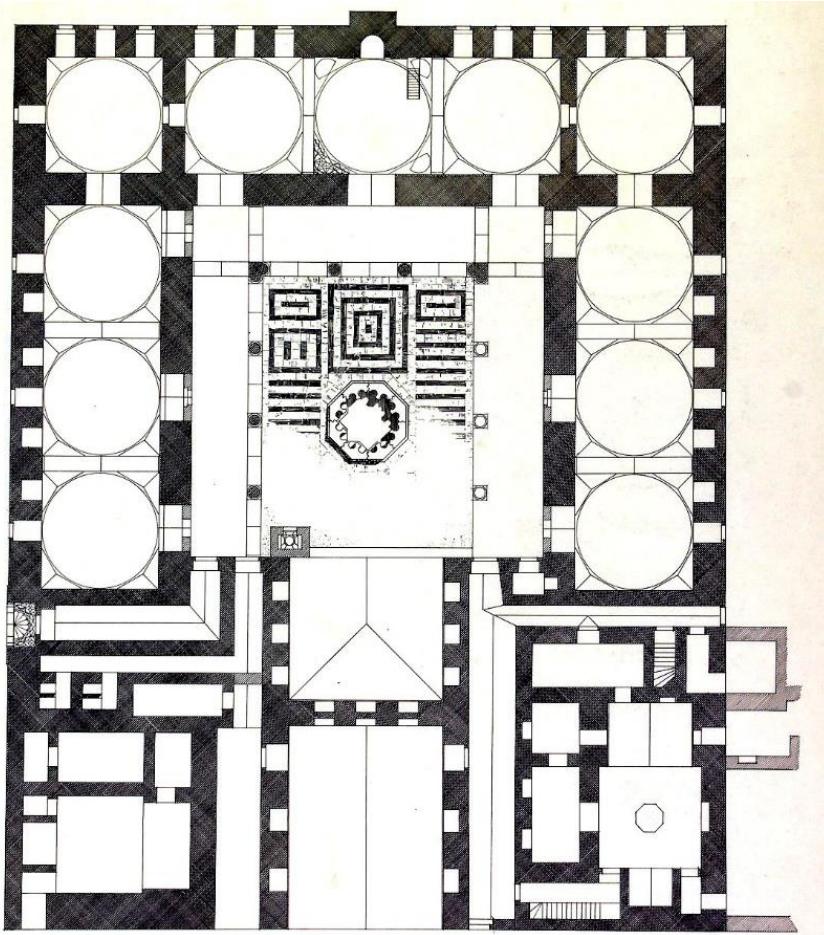
- The main origin of madrasas is probably the eastern Iranian traditions.
- There are two theories for its origin, one comes from the Buddhist temples between Iran and Afghanistan, and the other comes from the typical Khorasani house.
- Mainly these buildings started from the Seljuk madrasas in Iraq. In Egypt also the Fatimid state established key important institutions.
- This shows that madrasas were state-backed institutions.
- Some theories propose that even some of the grandest mosques were built as madrasas, and that madrasas were independent, large buildings able to accommodate many students.
- This is proved by the presence of a second level surrounding the courtyard in mosques which suggests a different function, like teaching.

Syrian Madrasa

- The Syrian madrasas are mostly unavailable.
- The early ones were very small in size compared to other countries. They had the Iranian elements of 4 Iwans and a central domed space.
- The later ones rejected these elements, and focused on one important space. This means that these madrasas focused on one (madhab).
- It is thought that students' accommodation was not a priority.
- It is also thought that these buildings were deliberately kept small, and they served their immediate locality.
- They were not established by the sultans, but lesser emirs or their wives.
- For the Ayyubids, small was beautiful and functional.
- At later times the Funerary madrasas (turba) appeared.

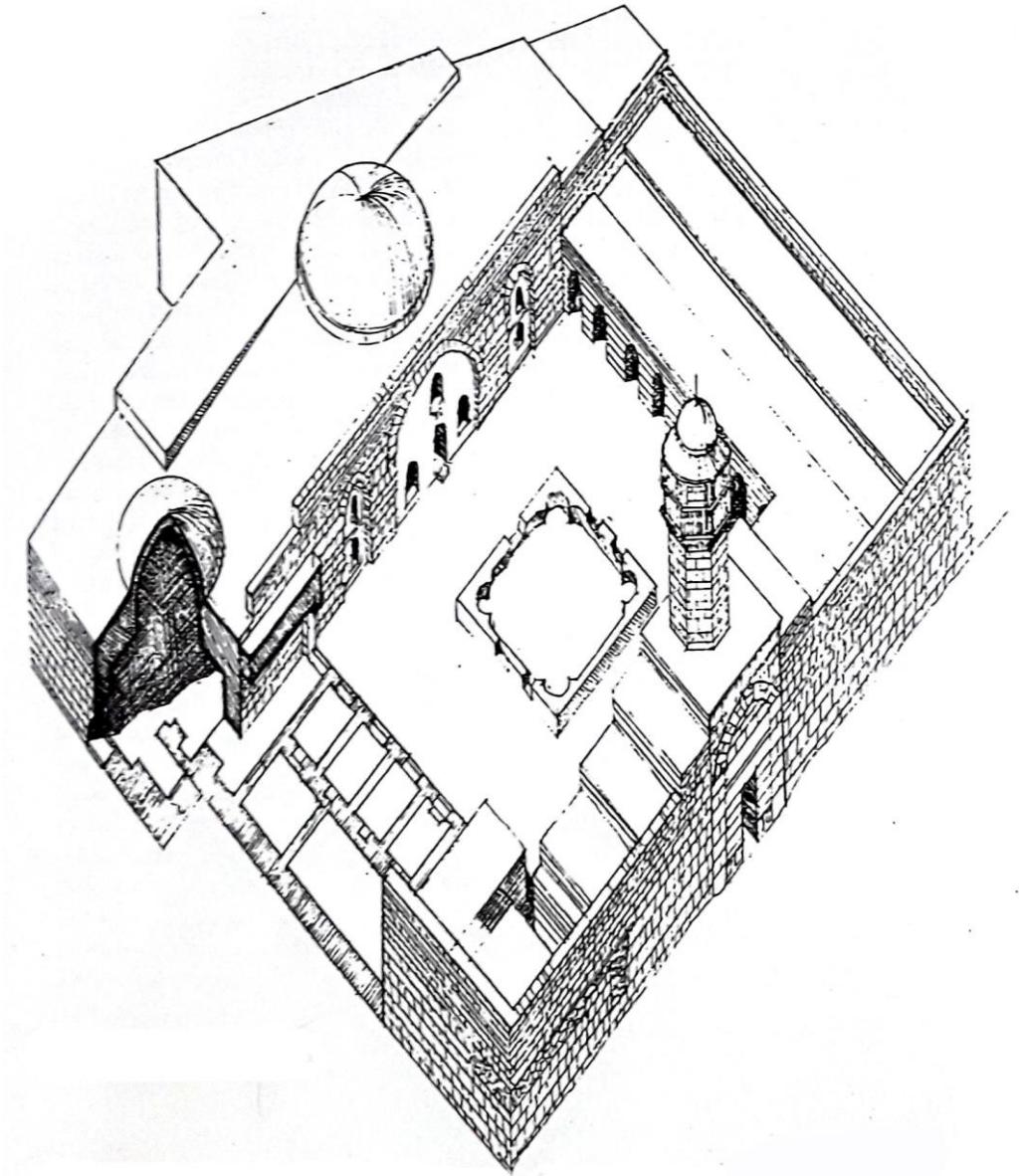
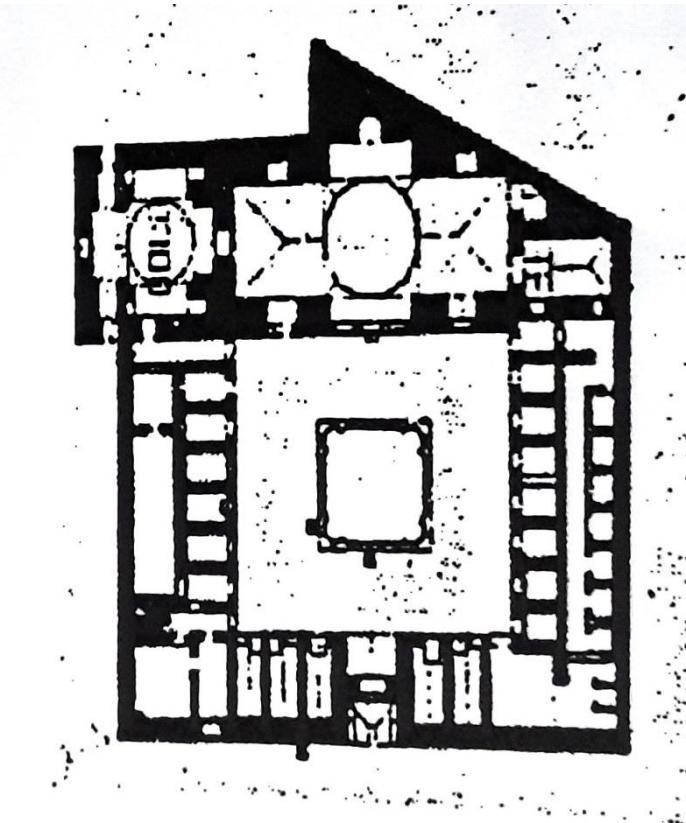
Syrian Madrasa (Ayyubid)

- Al-Firdaws madrasa, Aleppo



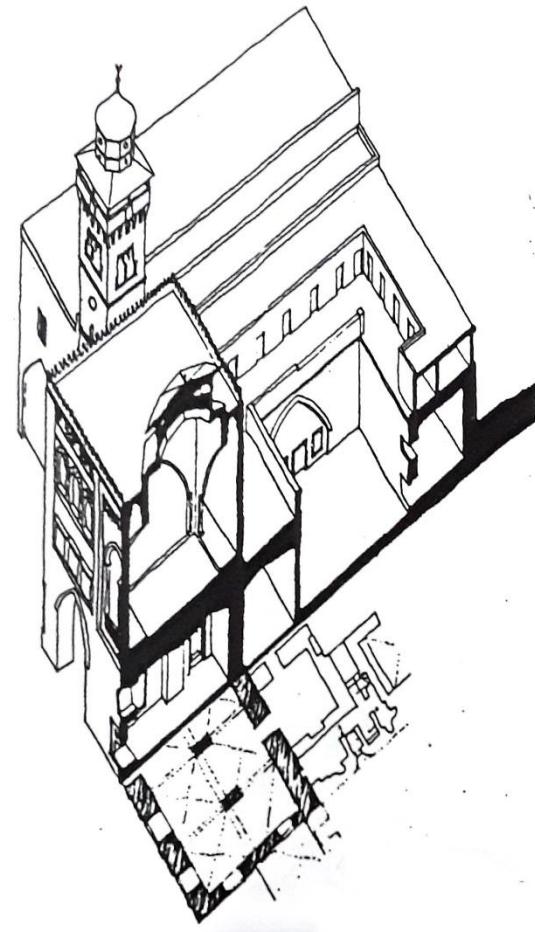
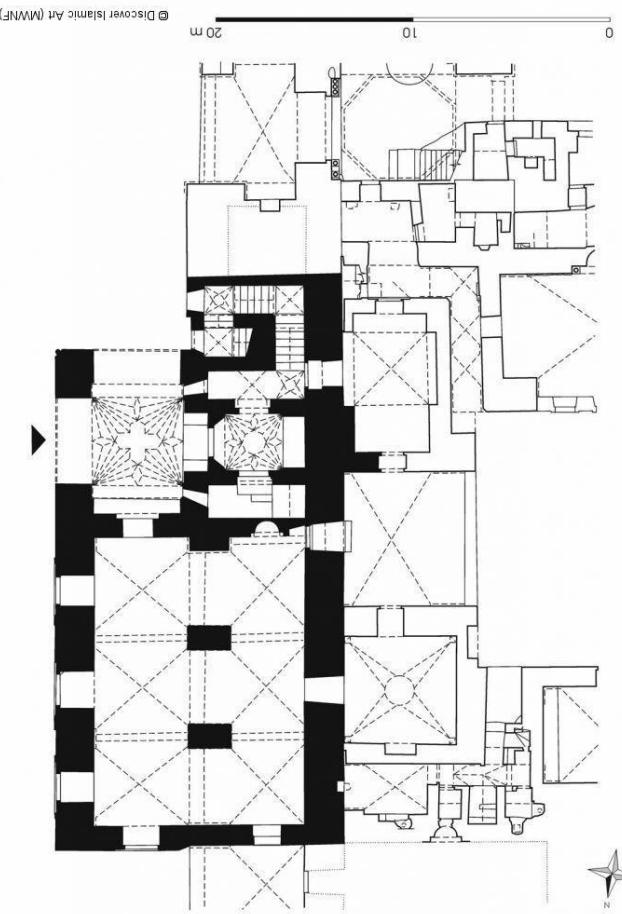
Syrian Madrasa (Ayyubid)

- Al-Sultaniya madrasa, Aleppo



Syrian Madrasa (Mamluk)

- Al-Ashrafiya madrasa, Jerusalem

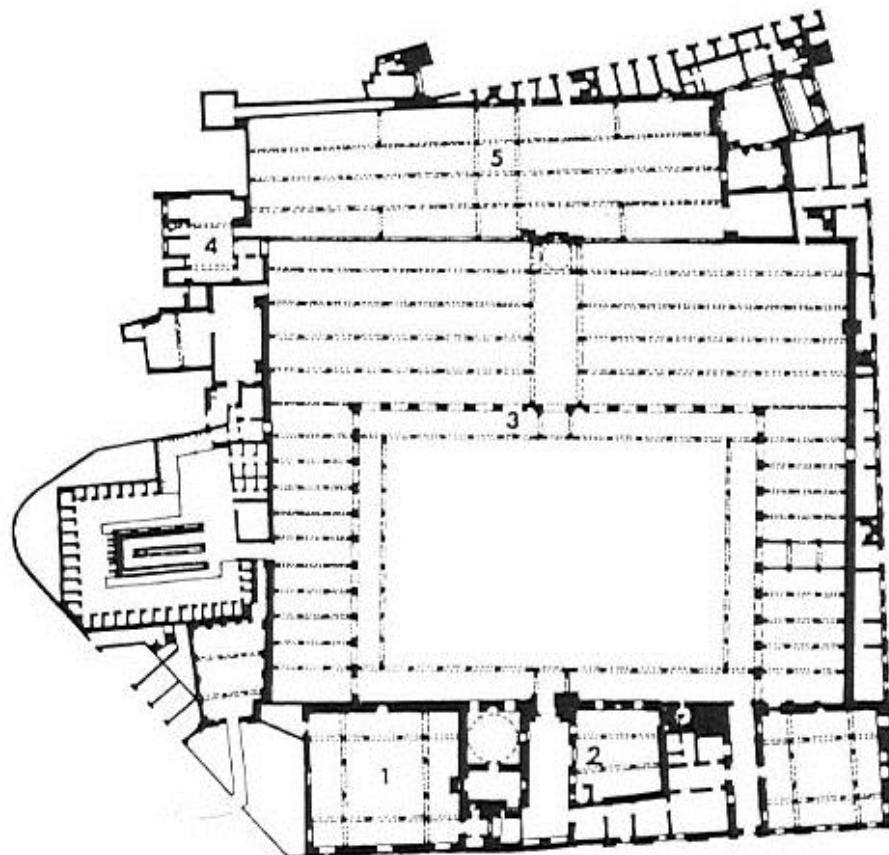


Egyptian Madrasa

- We can find the proof of the Iranian origin of madrasas in Cairo. For example, there is no other explanation of the availability of the four iwan plan in a city's madrasas with no such earlier tradition.
- At the Fatimid time, Egypt was Shi'ite, this is why the Sunni (madhab) based madrasas were not possible.
- The Egyptian madrasas were fewer in number but much larger in size than the Syrian ones, showing the effect of the state's desire and propaganda. They also appeared after them.
- The Mamluk period witnessed a jump in the madrasas architecture. These were large, very decorated, richly endowed, and the Iwans were used in a different way than the Iranians. Sometimes a single Iwan or two or three, with different sizes, giving importance to different parts.

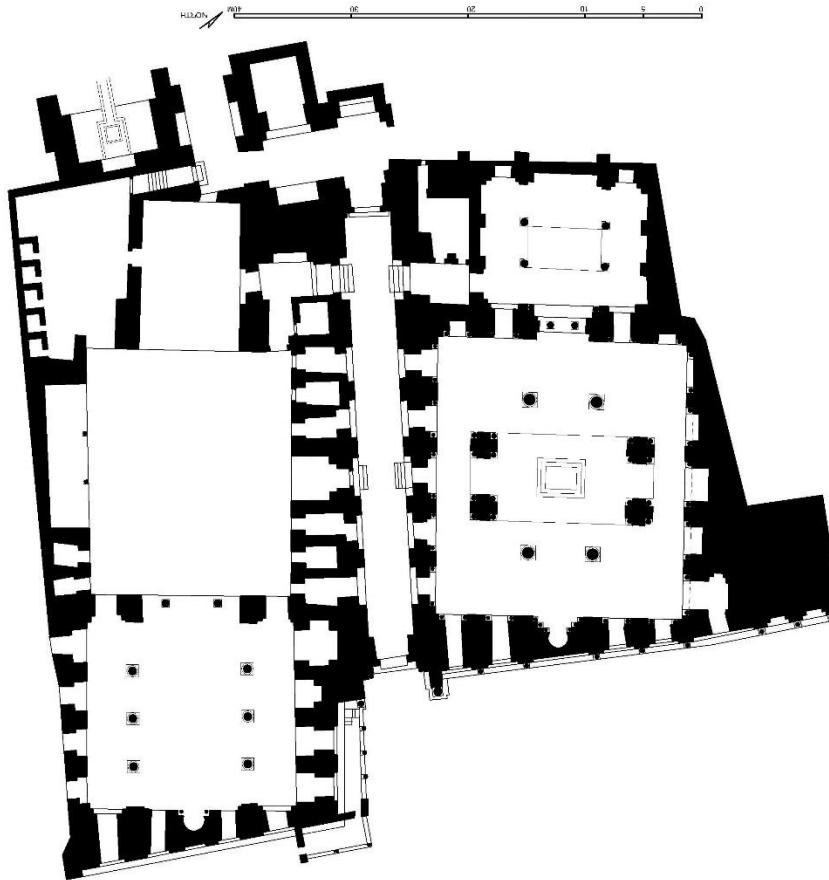
Egyptian Madrasa (Fatimid)

- Al-Azhar complex, Cairo



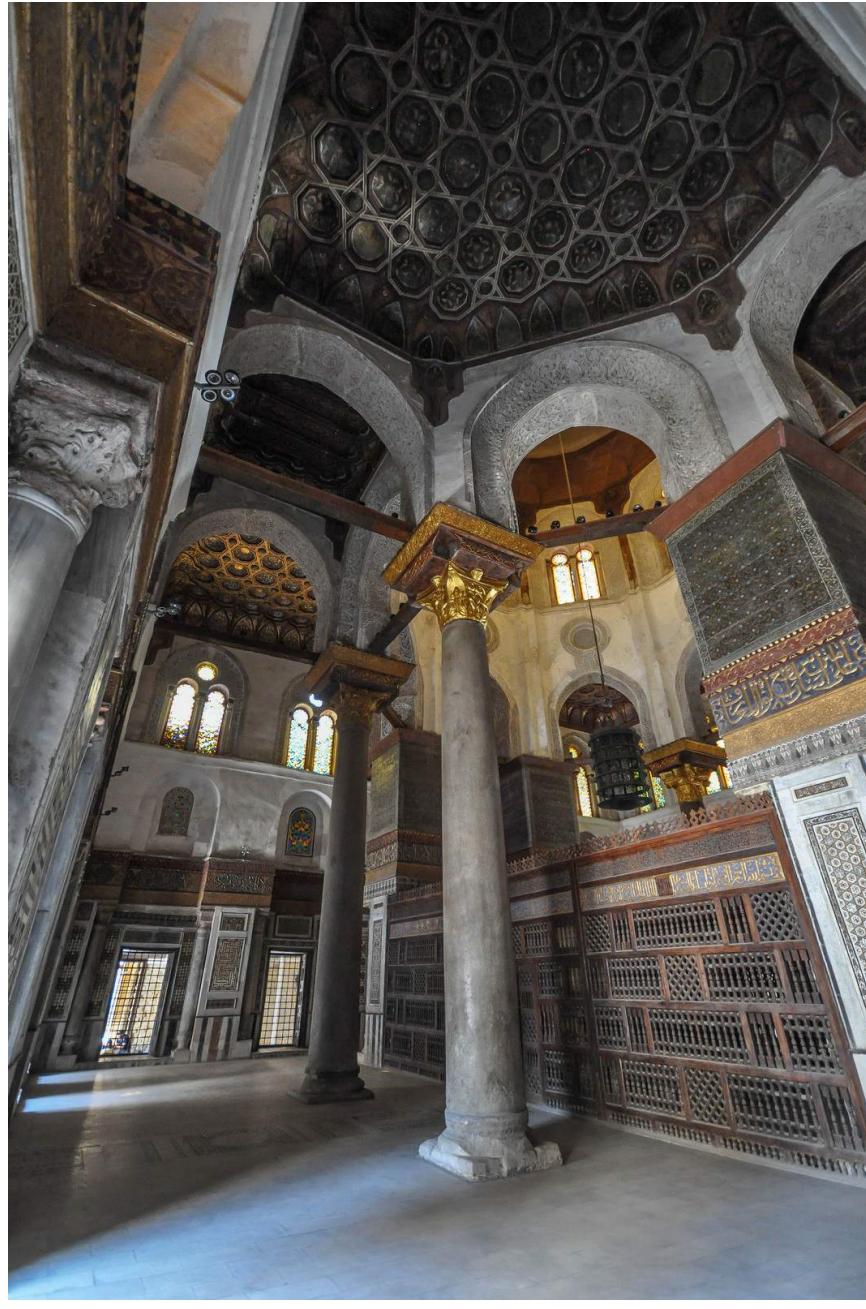
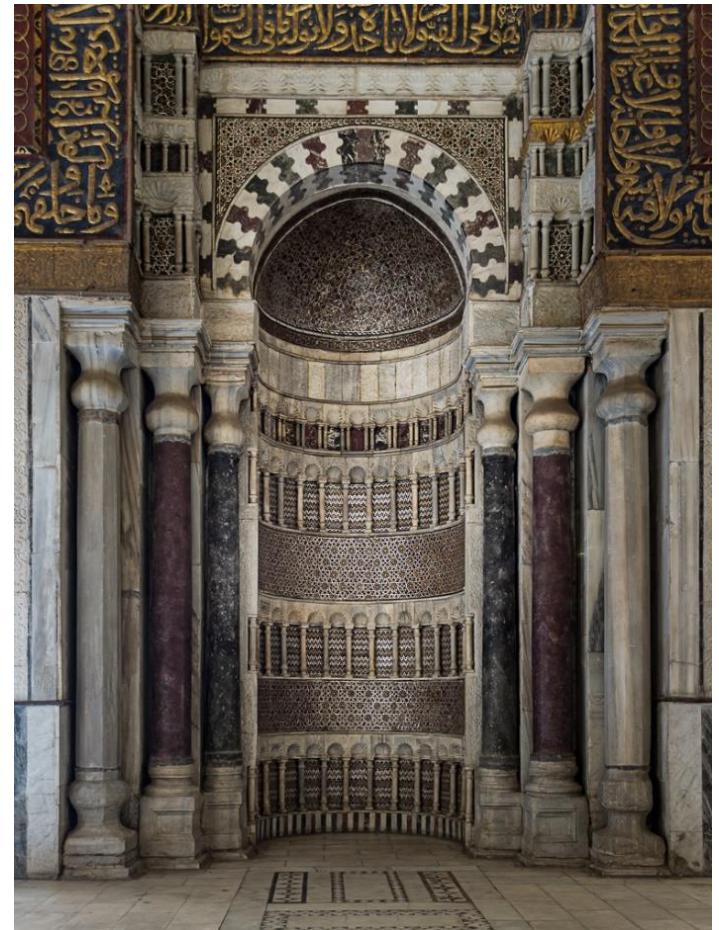
Egyptian Madrasa (Mamluk)

- Sultan Qalawun complex, Cairo



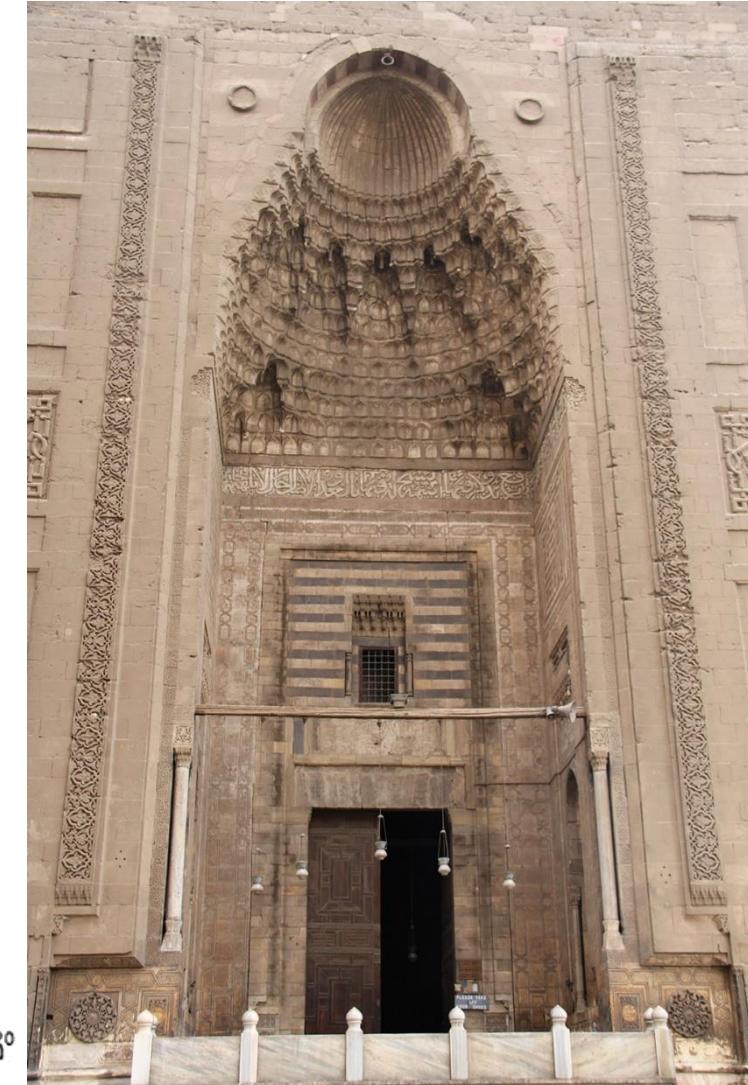
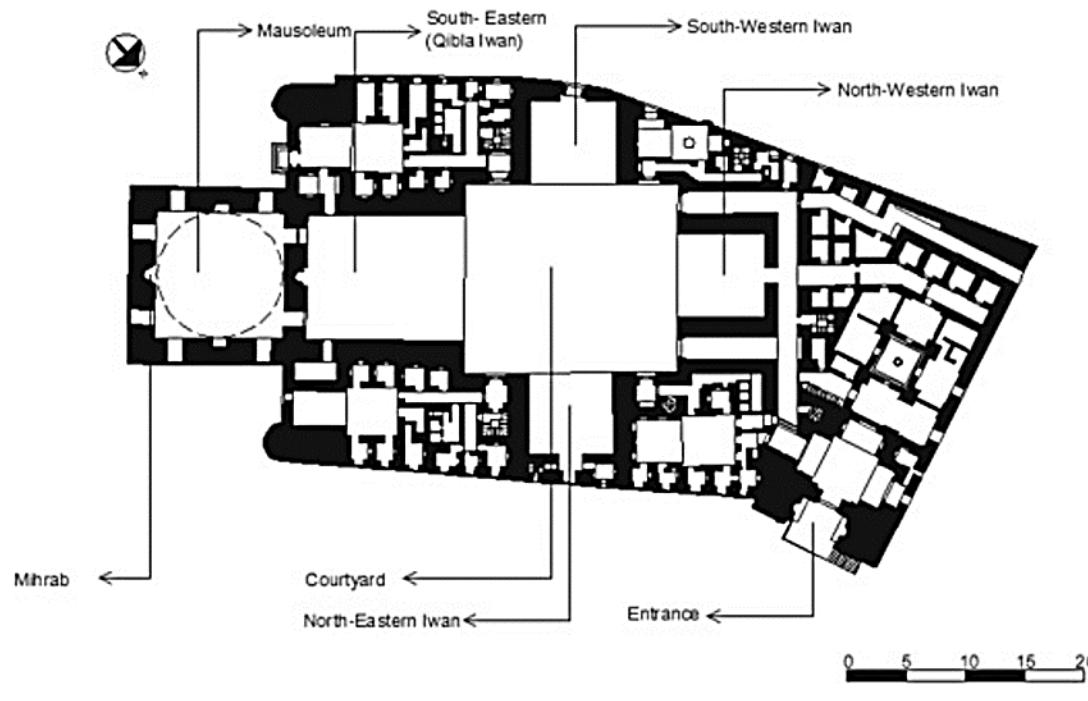
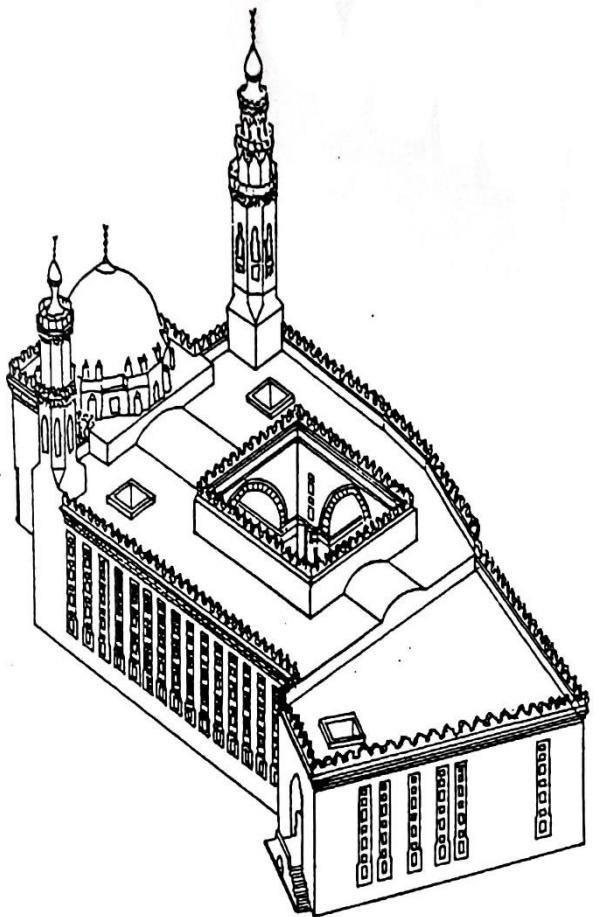
Egyptian Madrasa (Mamluk)

- Sultan Qalawun complex, Cairo



Egyptian Madrasa (Mamluk)

- Sultan Hassan complex, Cairo

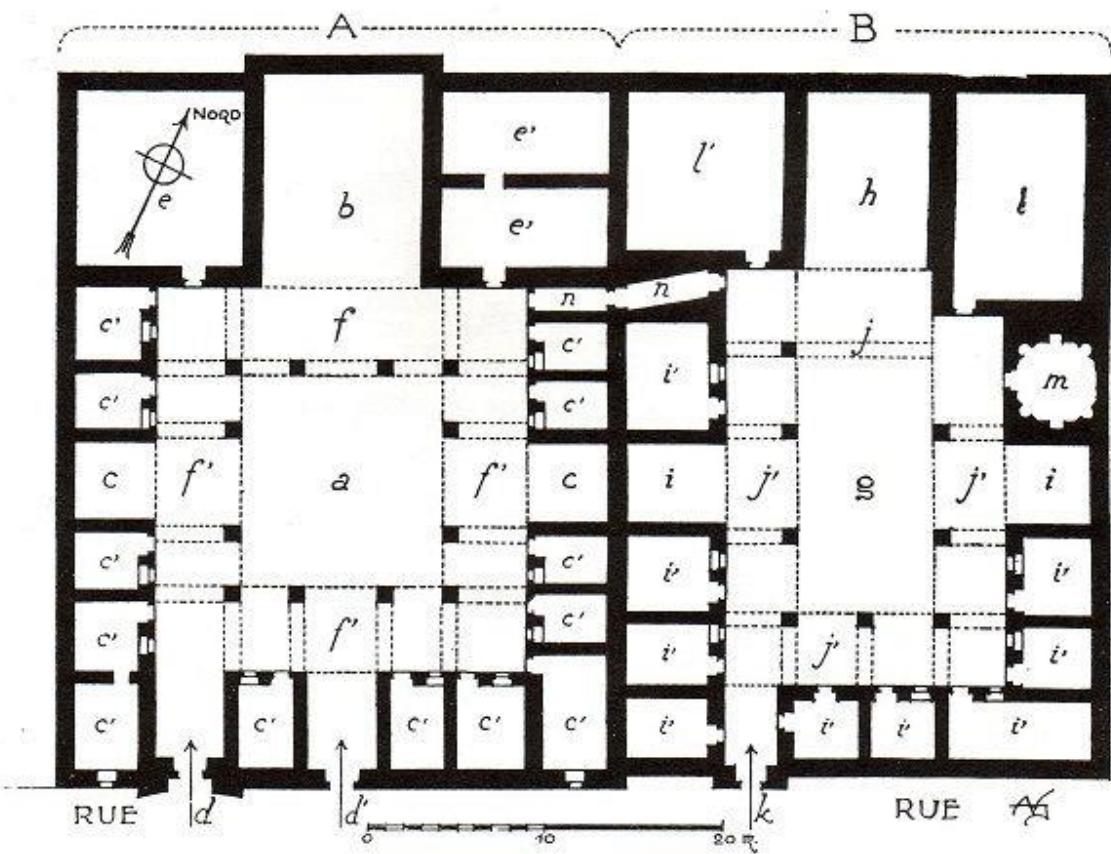


Anatolian Madrasa

- Early Anatolian madrasas unlike most of others, were spread on many towns, cities and even villages.
- They didn't have a dominant single type arrangement, they were either open-courtyard planned, or closed-domed planned.
- The courtyard madrasas usually had a long plan and short elevations.
- Ottoman madrasas were rational in plan, and much larger than the early Anatolian madrasas. The iwan is gone and the domed chamber is used.
- They were also large complexes of education and prayer functions, and sometimes these functions mix very strongly.
- The number of students' cells increased, and they were domed too. The courtyards, which were very large, were filled with trees. Students' rooms were on the ground floor only.

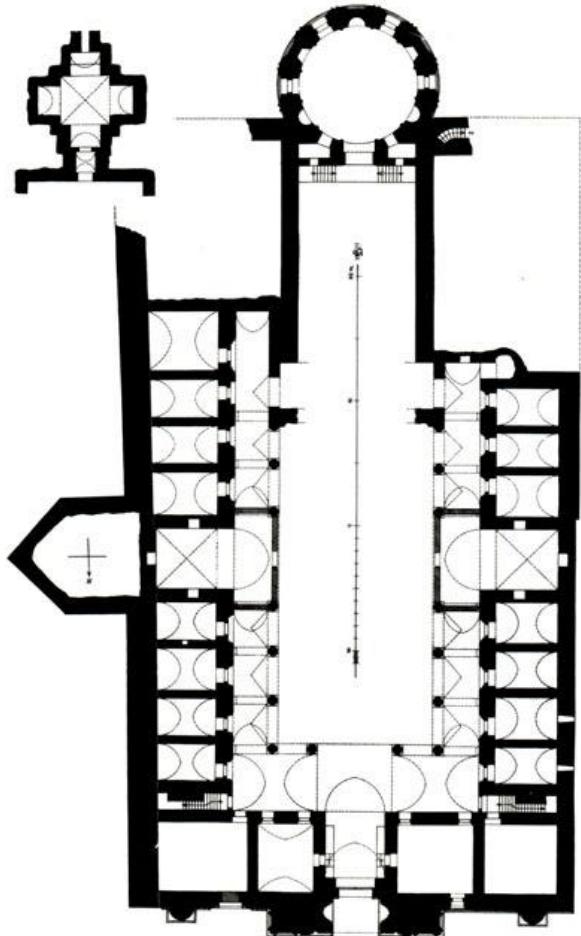
Anatolian Madrasa (Early)

- Cifte minare medrese, Kayseri



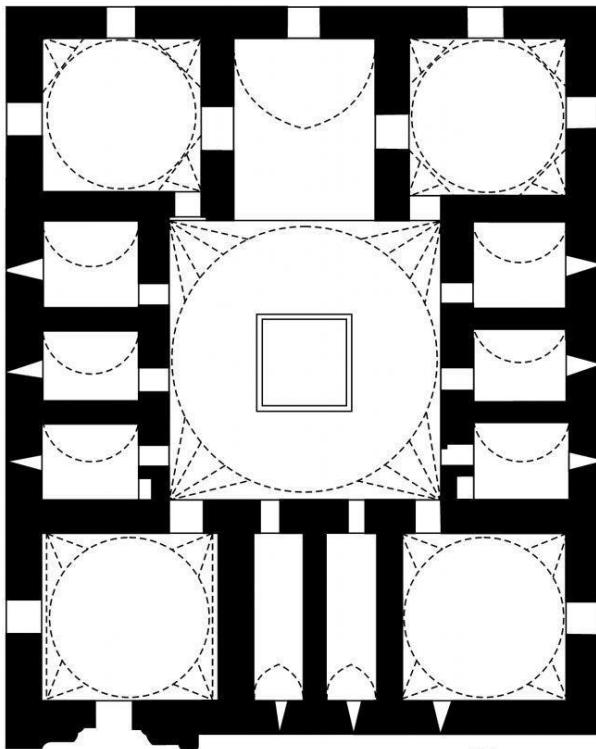
Anatolian Madrasa (Early)

- Cifte minare medrese, Erzurum

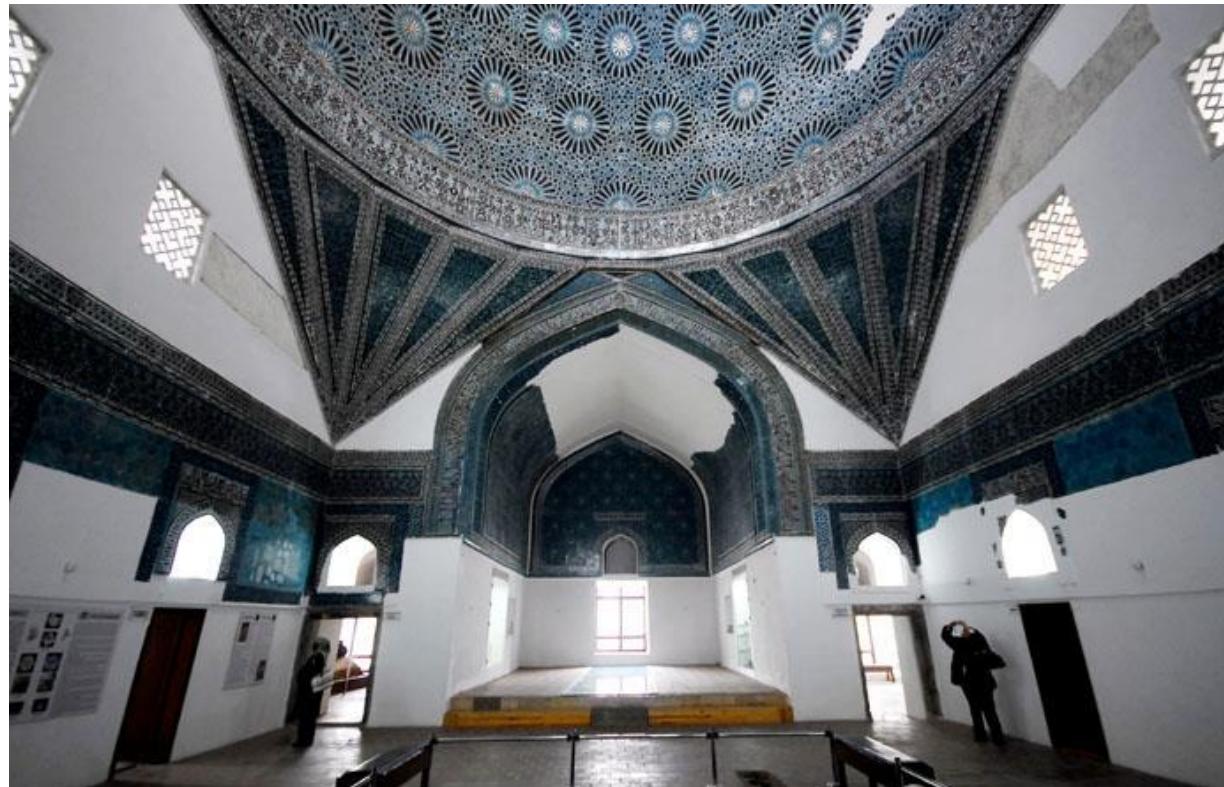


Anatolian Madrasa (Early)

- Karatay medrese, Konya

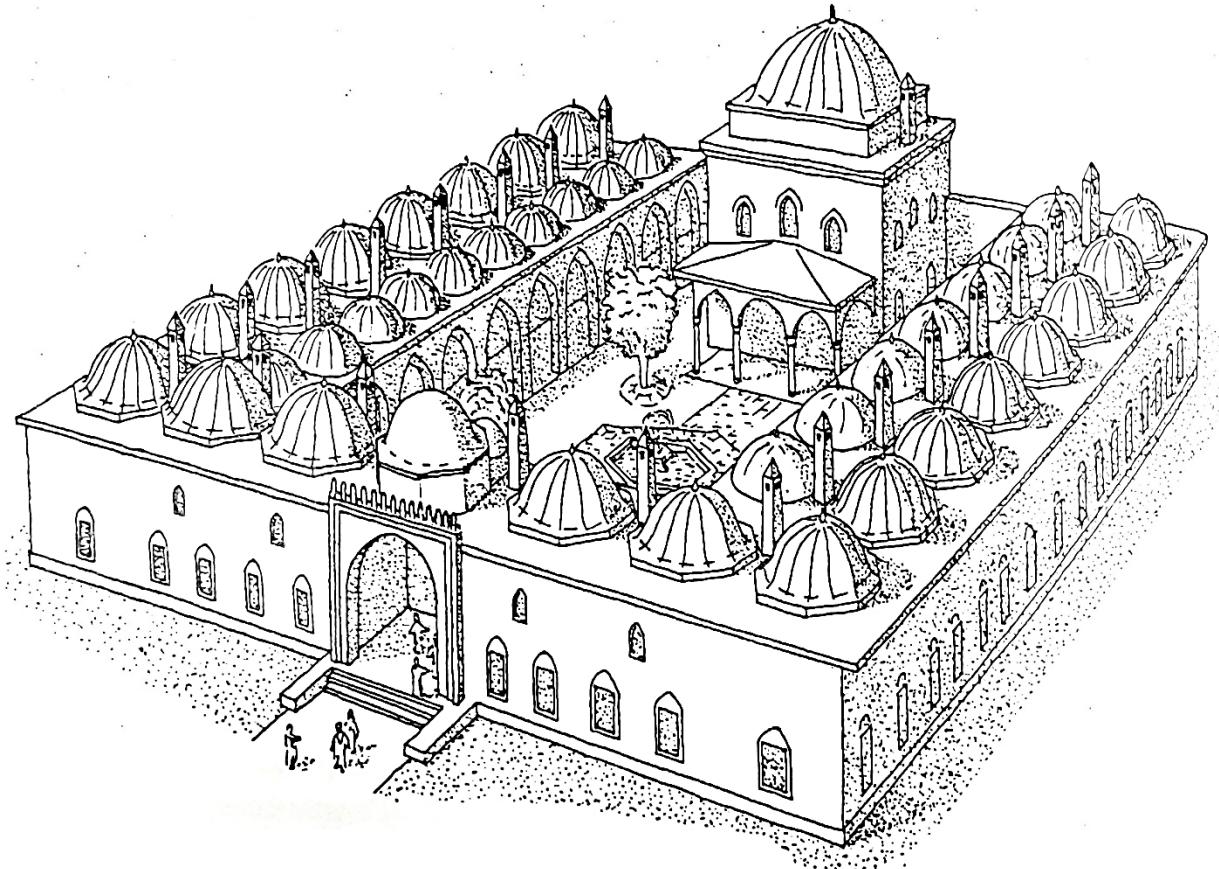
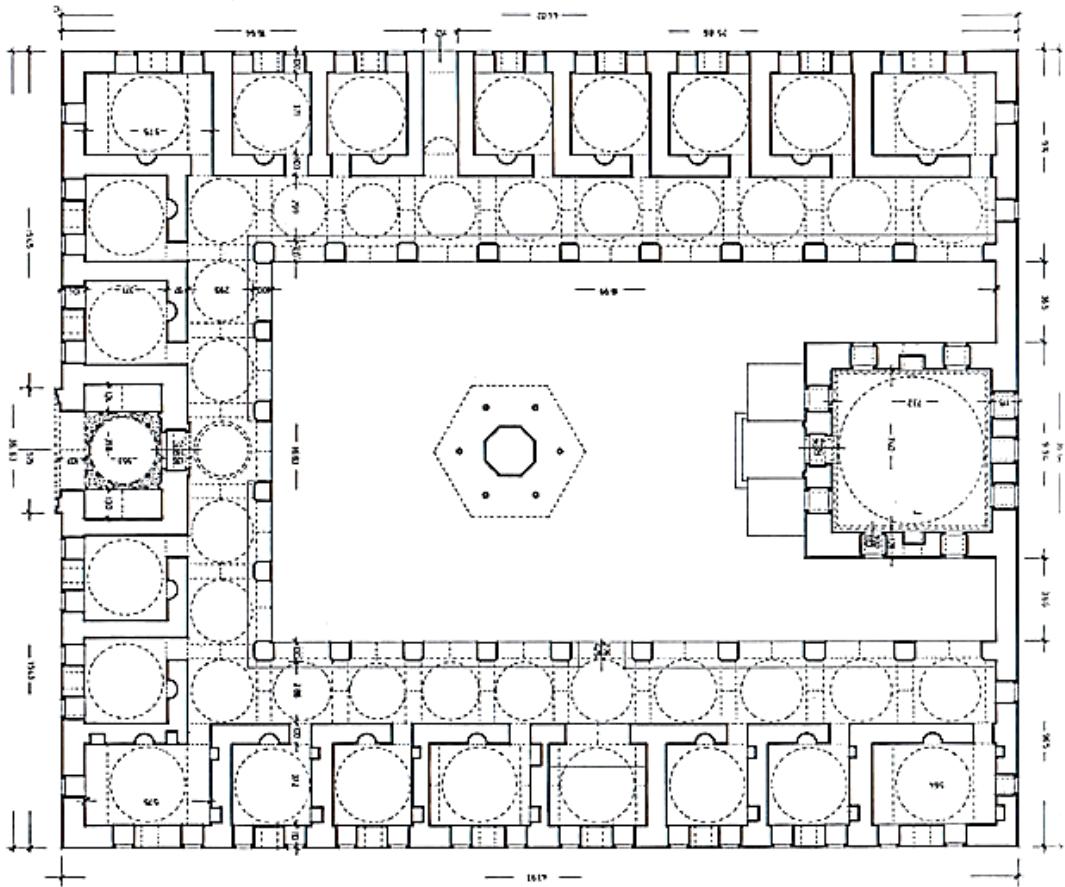


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Anatolian Madrasa (Ottoman)

- Madrasa of Sultan Bayazid II, Istanbul

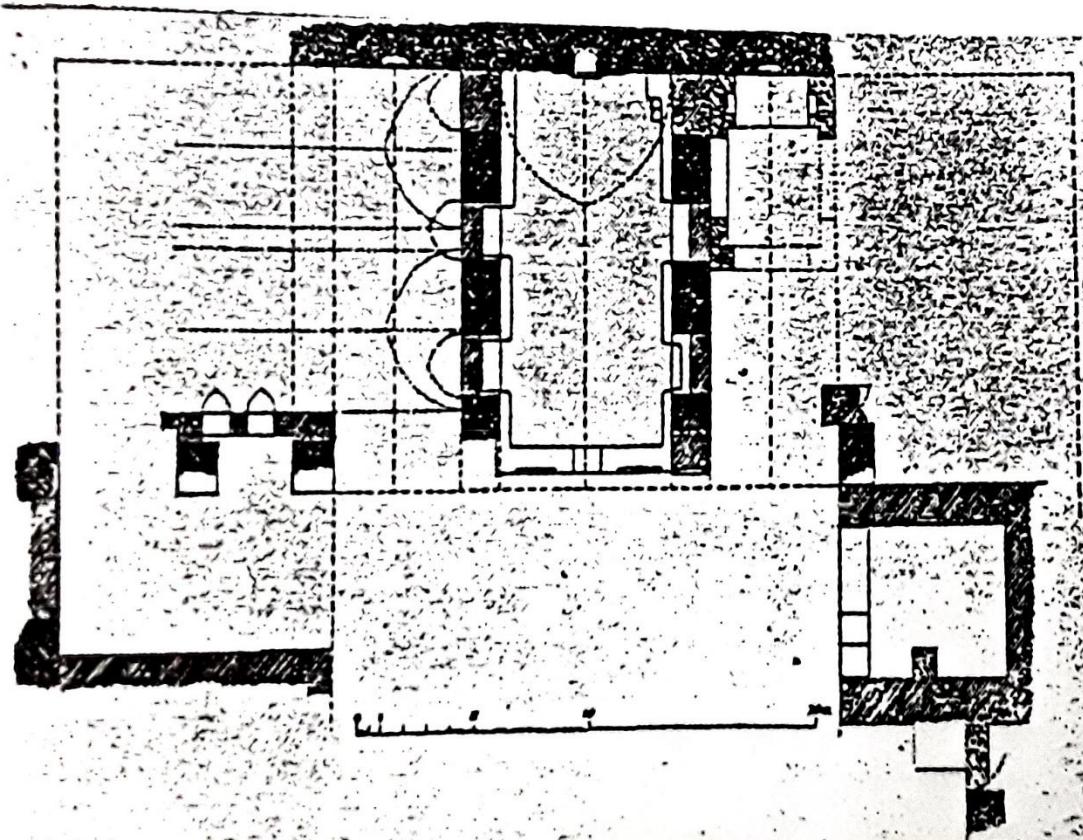


Iranian Madrasas

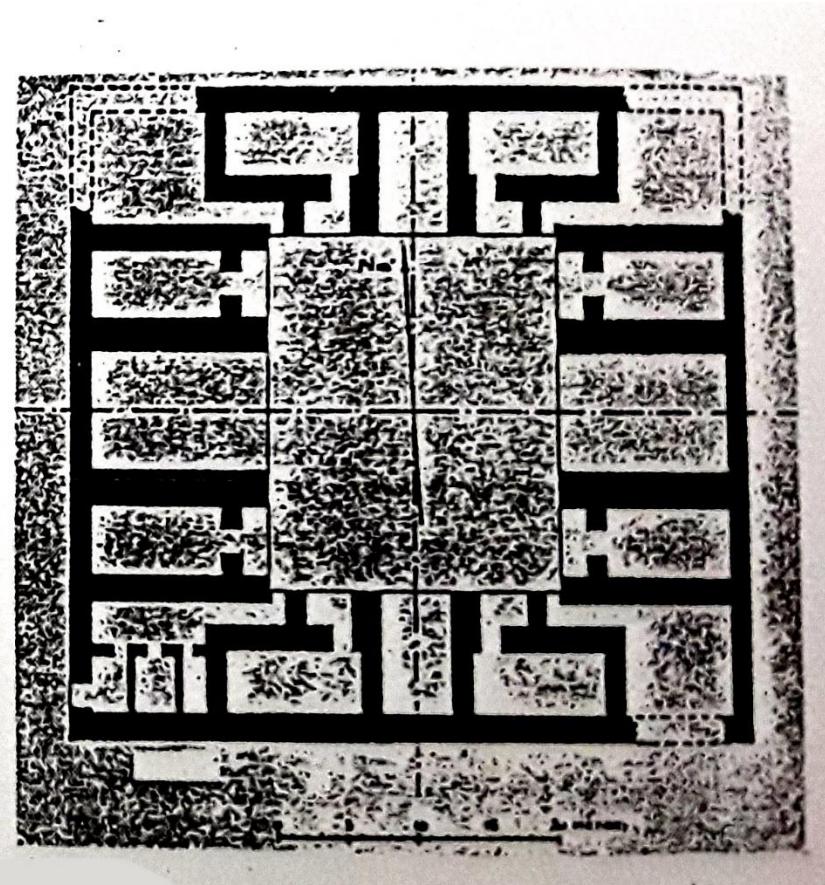
- The most important name rising here is (Nizam-ul-Mulk) a Seljuk (Wazir) who the studies says, built a madrasa in each city.
- The early madrasas (Seljuk) started as mosques, a courtyard with four iwans. The main character here is their vague, unclear function.
- Ilkhanid madrasas didn't have a specific planning system.
- The Timurid madrasas represent the golden age of Iranian madrasas through the massive scale of the four-iwan system. They became a model for the Iranian Safavid and even the Indian Mughal madrasas. They also merged the mosque with the madrasa. These madrasas were heavily decorated. They followed the Ottoman tradition of large size and fewer numbers.
- The Safavid madrasas followed the same Timurid tradition.

Iranian Madrasa (Seljuk)

- Khargird madrasa

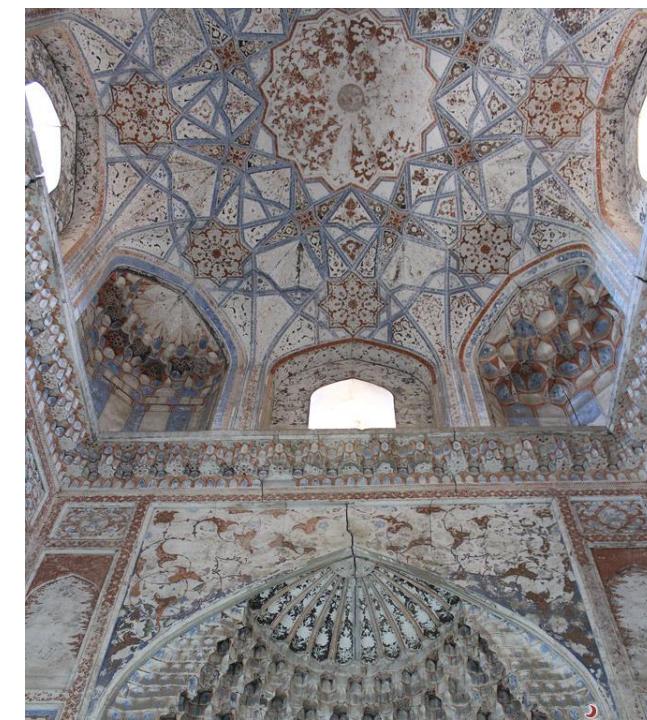
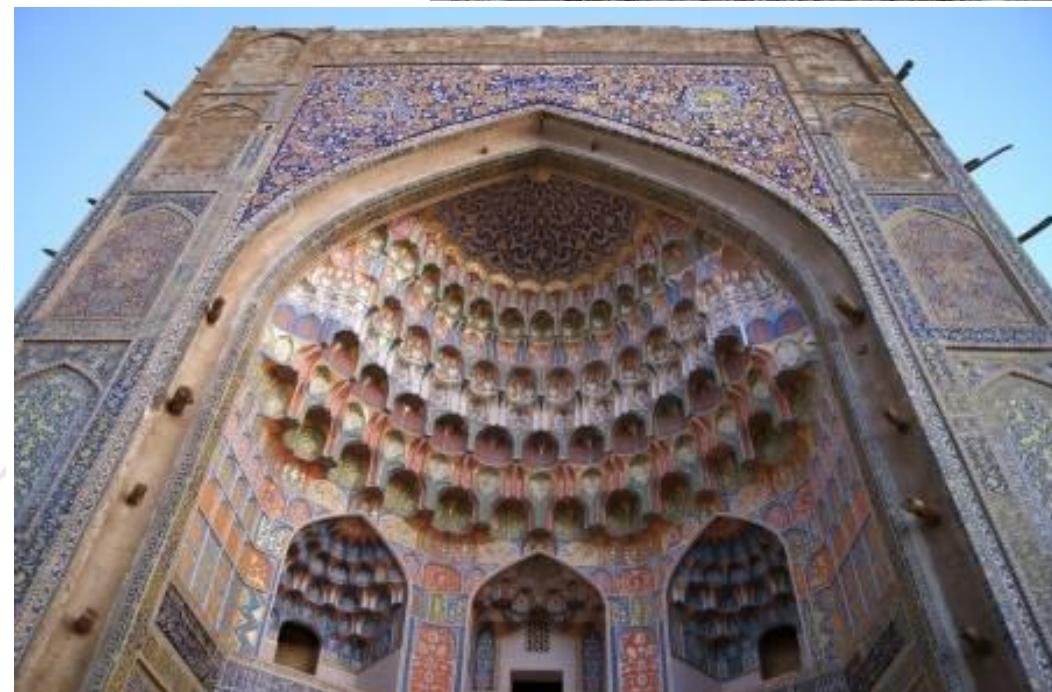
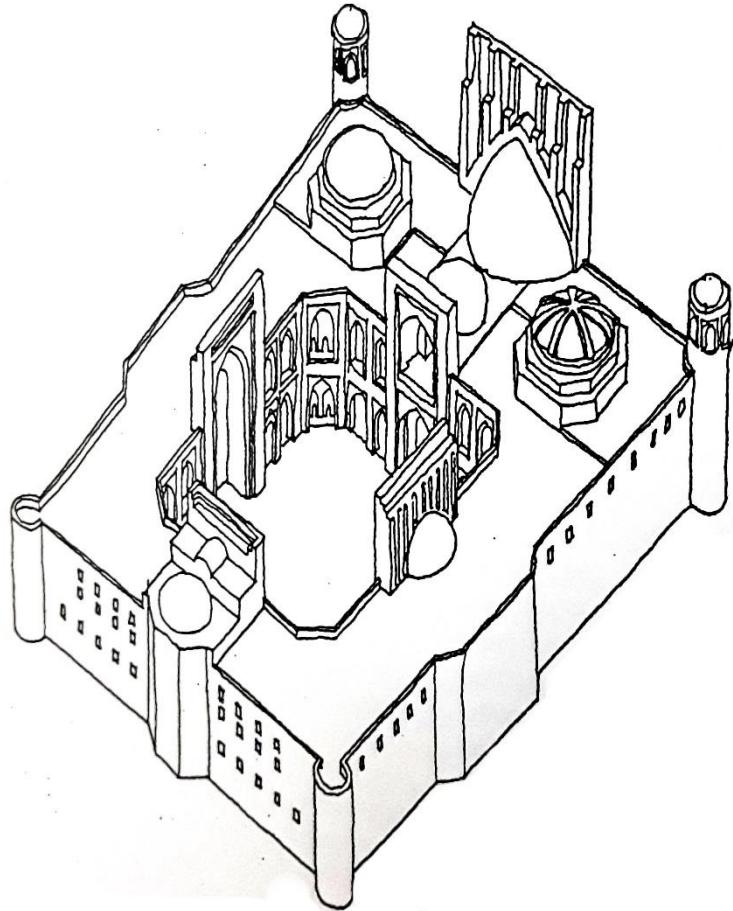
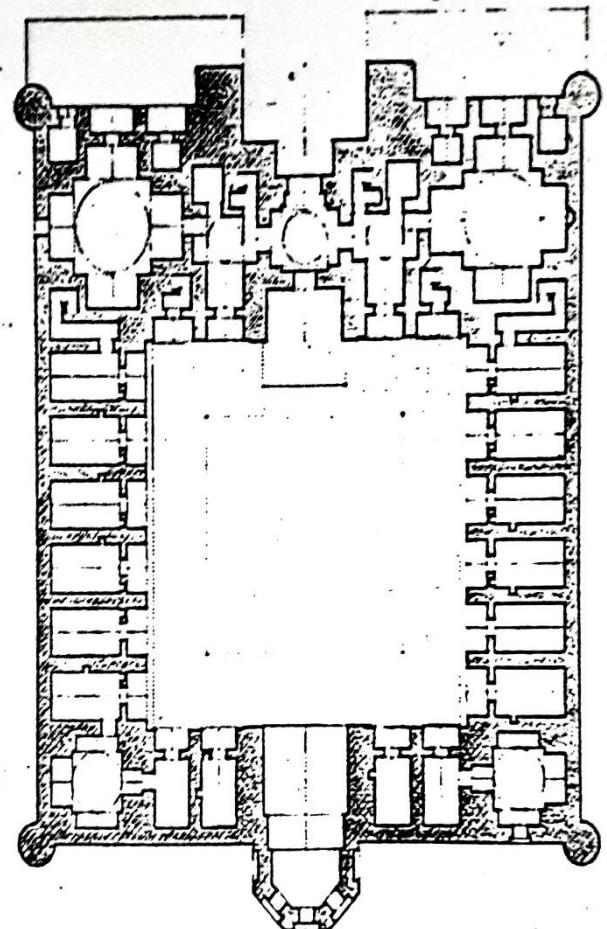


- Rayy madrasa



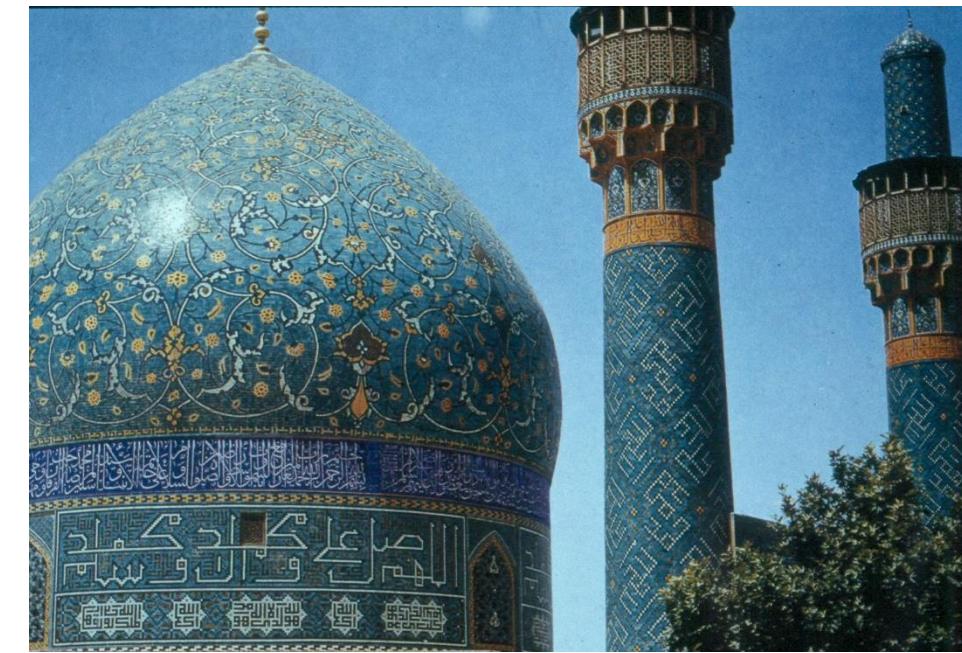
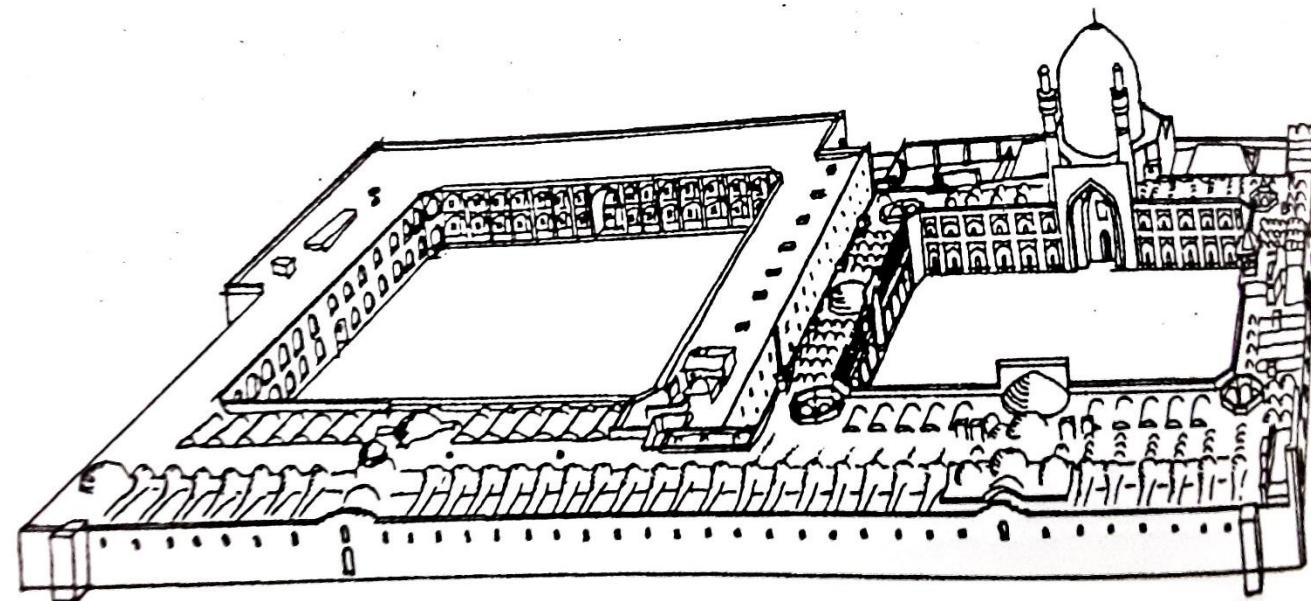
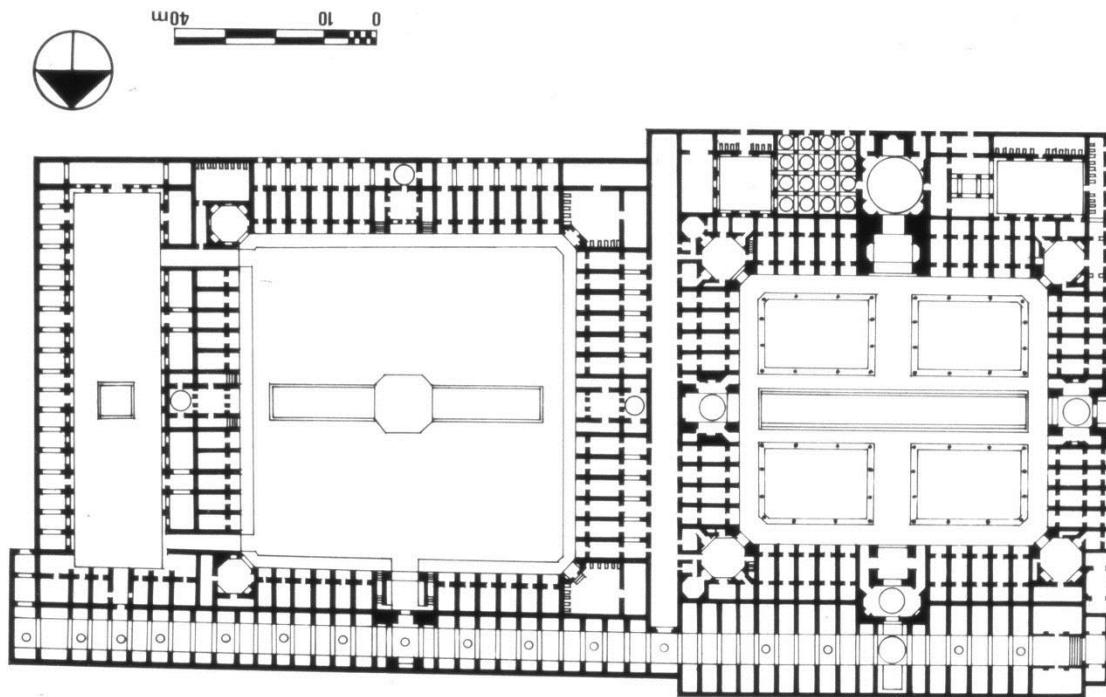
Iranian Madrasas (Timurid)

- Abd al' Aziz Khan madrasa, Bukhara



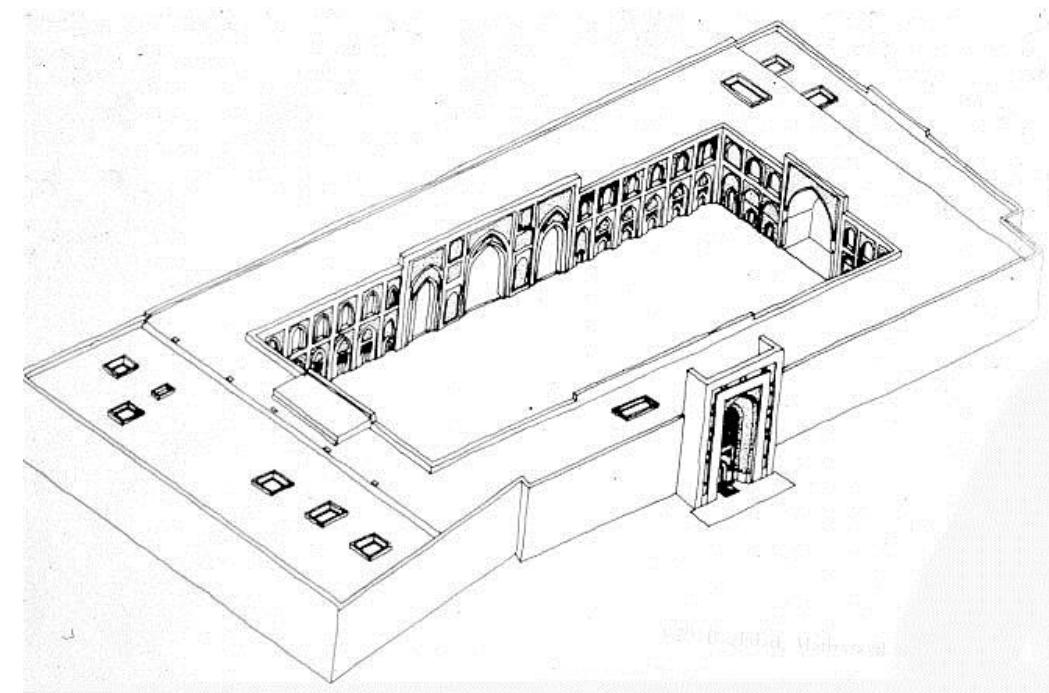
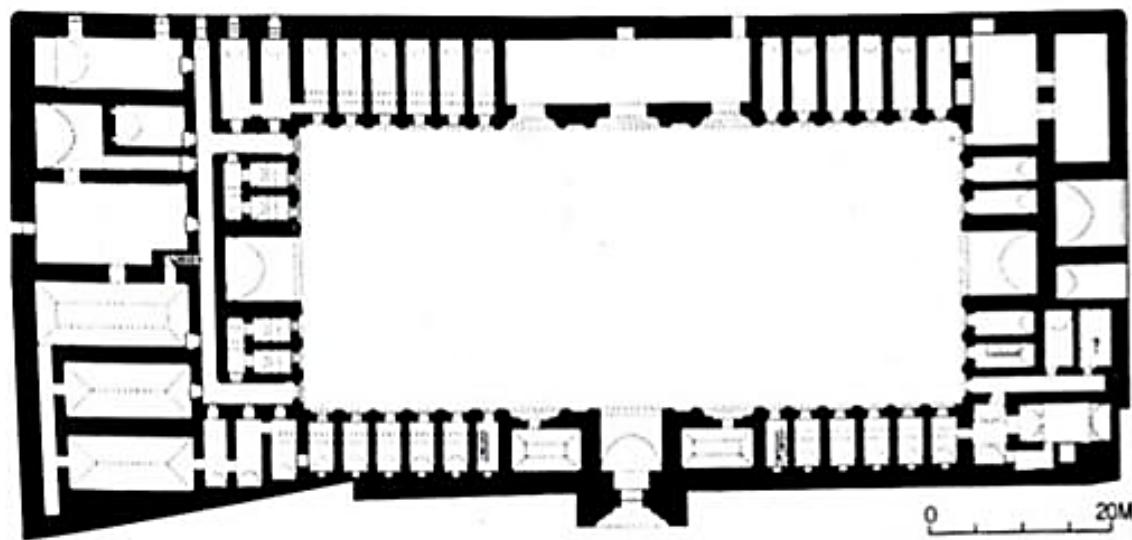
Iranian Madrasas (Safavid)

- Madar-i-Shah Madrasa, Isfahan



Iraqi Madrasa

- Al-Mustansiriya, Baghdad

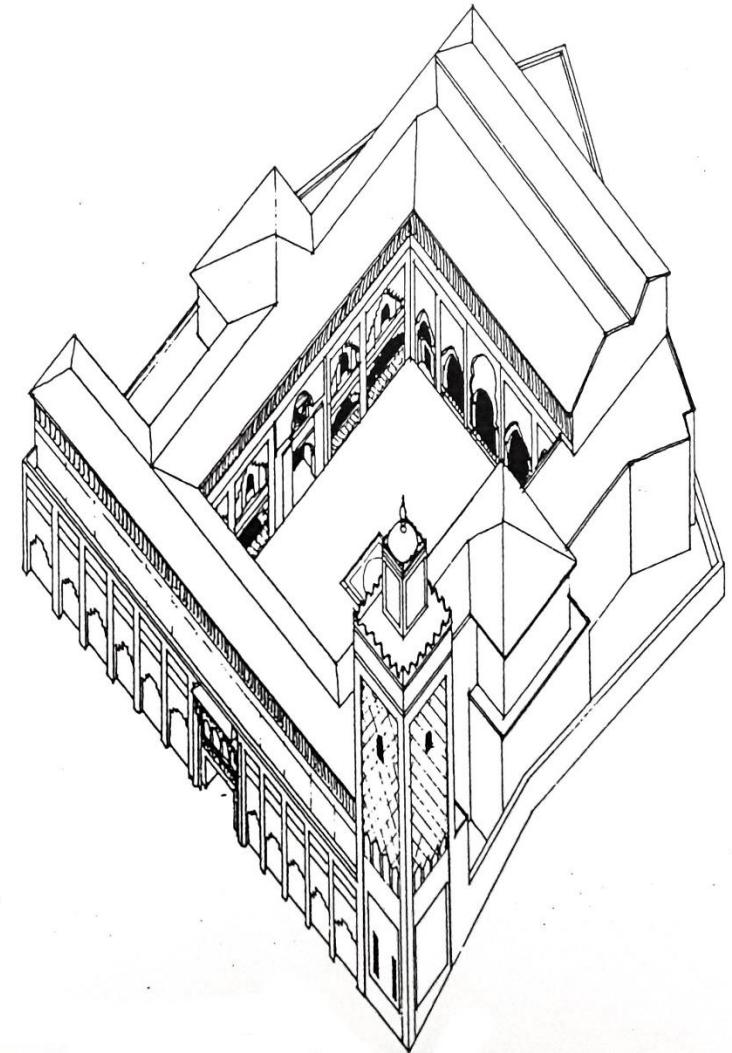
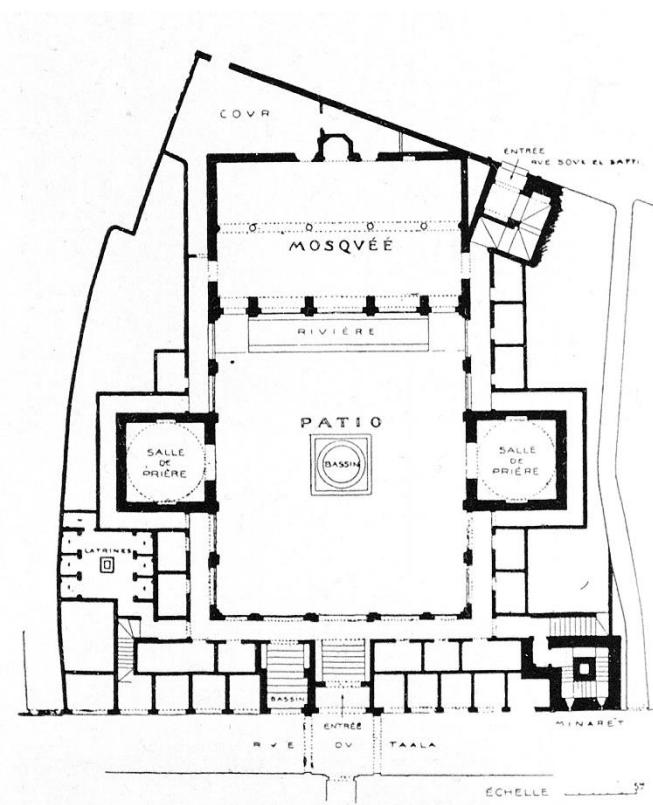


Maghrebi Madrasas

- The madrasa basically was an eastern Iranian movement, and it appeared lately in Maghrebi states; too late to make an influence on Andalusia.
- The early Moroccans built (Ribats) instead of madrasas.
- The Moroccan madrasas were smaller than the Iranian (probably taught one madhab only), and their courtyards were without iwans.
- They were of human scale, very inward-looking. Many of them had minarets, and were also affected by the mergence with the mosque.
- The Moroccan mosques' decoration was distinctive and rich (interior).
- They also used mixture of materials (tiles, marble, glass, mosaic...) and colors, with the spiritual and physical cooling effect of the water.
- Some of the Moroccan madrasas presented a broken entrance.

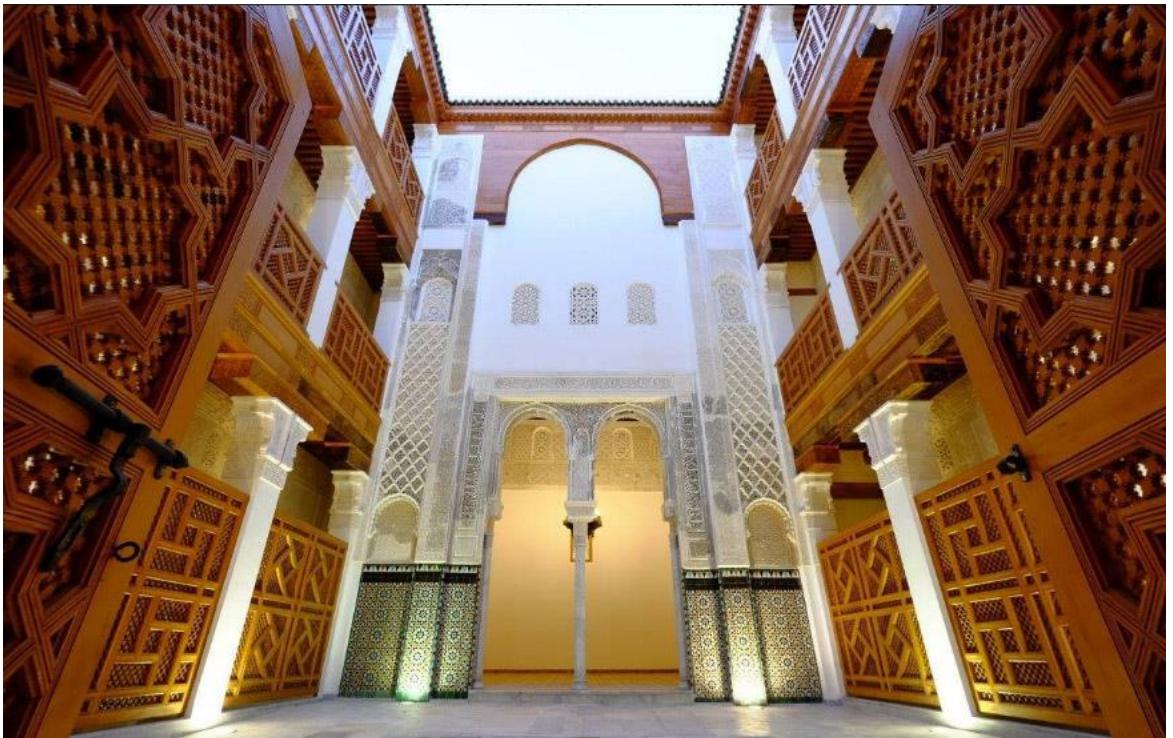
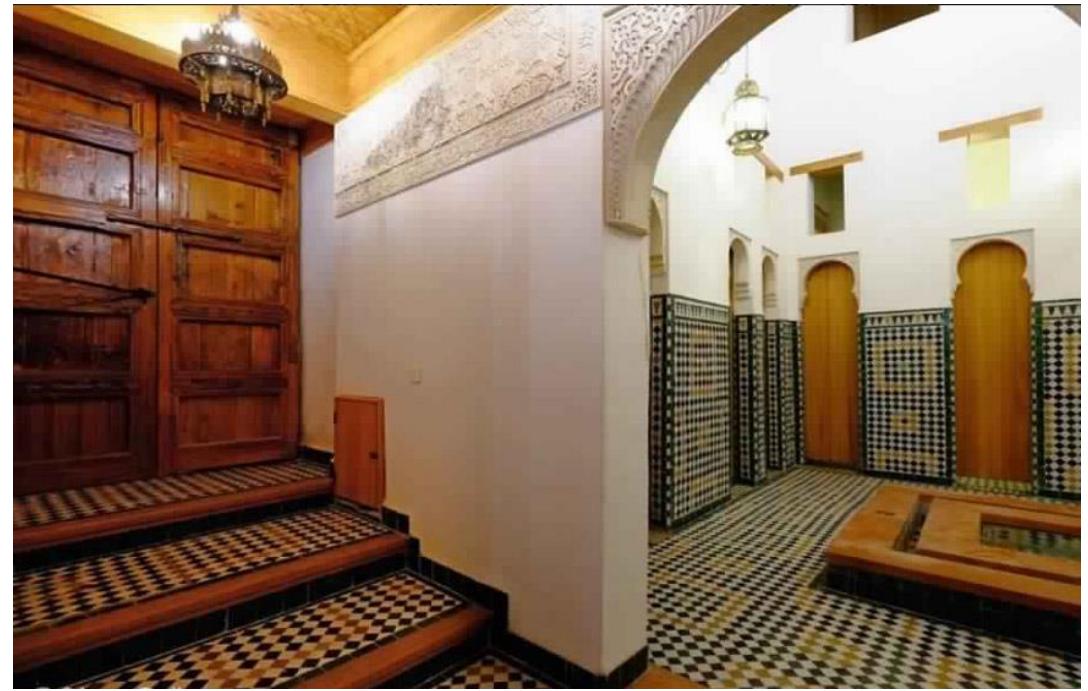
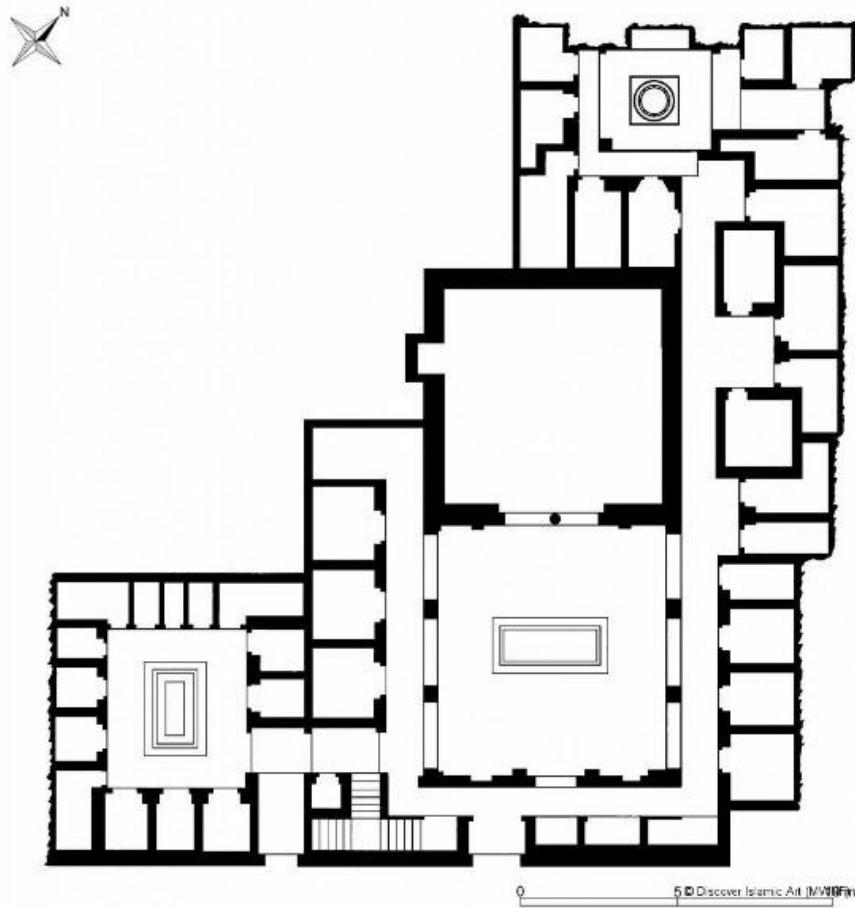
Maghrebi Madrasas

- Bu 'Inaniya madrasa, Fez



Maghrebi Madrasas

- Al-Misbahiya madrasa, Fez



Madrasas

- It is thought that madrasas were not public buildings entirely.
- These buildings, large in size and few in number, or small in size and a lot in number, served the community as educational institutions.
- Their multi-functional nature disturbs who studies them, and in many cases they were merged within other buildings.
- The effort put in them was less than the mosques.