

The Minaret as a Transformative Element in Marinid Architecture in Terms of Construction Methods and Forms of Decoration “The Minaret of Sidi El-Halwi Mosque” as an Example

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Abstract:

The minaret is an architectural element added to Islamic mosques in later periods of the Islamic era s Republic of Korea ", which appeared in Islamic Morocco during the Zayani period, and was particularly concerned with it in order to give it a distinctive character by decorating it with decorative baubles and mosaics The minaret has received great attention from the Muslim architect. minarets were used in prayer calls as well as in wartime observation. It is in this respect that we have chosen the minaret of Sidi al-Halawi Mosque, which dates back to the Marina period.

Keywords: academic honesty; academic community; ethical considerations; plagiarism.

1- Introduction

The Islamic architecture represents a material aspect of the great civilization that reflects the life of Muslims, rooted in the Muhammadiyah. The Prophet Peace Be Upon Him was the first to order the construction of a mosque known as the Prophet's Mosque. The minaret is an architectural element added to Islamic mosques in later periods of the Islamic era s Republic of Korea ", which appeared in Islamic Morocco during the Zayani period, and was particularly concerned with it in order to give it a distinctive character by decorating it with decorative baubles and mosaics s minarets and the minarets of the Marrakech mosque of Al-Aqsa Morocco, and other minarets scattered in Islamic Morocco.

From this point of view, I opted for the minaret of Sidi al-Halwi mosque, which dates back to the Marine period. This topic deserves to be studied for its importance, because studies on this minaret were few and were only general, so I saw it necessary to determine the scope of research on this minaret.

The minaret has received great attention from the architect. Its building materials and ornaments have varied from one area to another. The minarets have been used in the

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call for prayer as well as for observation during war periods. The architect has developed several forms of minaret.

The following questions are put forward to guide the paper:

- On what basis is the selection of the square scheme of the mosque minaret Sidi al-Halwi?
- what are the building materials?
- what are the most important architectural and decorative characteristics?

In response to this problem situation, we have relied on the historical approach of identifying historical periods when minarets appeared in Islamic Morocco and the descriptive approach of conveying minarets in the form they are through literary and decorative descriptions.

The objective of studying "The Minaret as a Transformative Element in Marinid Architecture in Terms of Construction Methods and Forms of Decoration: The Minaret of Sidi El-Halwi Mosque as an Example" would primarily focus on understanding the role and significance of minarets within the broader context of Marinid architectural development, particularly in relation to construction techniques and decorative elements.

1. Marinid Architecture: An Overview

Marinid architecture refers to the architectural style and innovations that emerged during the Marinid Dynasty in Morocco, which lasted from 1244 to 1465. This period was marked by both cultural and architectural developments, influenced by previous dynasties, including the Almohads, as well as by other regional and Islamic architectural styles. The Marinids were known for their architectural innovation, particularly in urban design, religious buildings, and defensive structures.

1.1. Historical Context of the Marinid Dynasty

The Marinid Dynasty was established after the decline of the Almohad Caliphate in the 13th century¹. The Marinids, originating from the Berber tribes of Morocco², consolidated power by establishing Fez as their capital³. The dynasty saw both periods of prosperity and military challenges⁴, but during its zenith in the 14th century, it contributed significantly to Moroccan urban and architectural development⁵.

1.2. Notable Examples of Marinid Architecture

A. The Madrasa Bou Inania (Fez, Morocco)

One of the most iconic examples of Marinid architecture is the Madrasa Bou Inania in Fez, built in 1351–1357 by the Marinid Sultan Abu Inan Faris. This madrasa (Islamic school) reflects the architectural sophistication of the period. Key Features:

- Courtyards with fountains and ornamental gardens.
- Intricate stucco carvings and calligraphic inscriptions.
- Zellij tilework and wooden ceilings.
- Minaret: The madrasa features a towering minaret, which is characteristic of Marinid verticality.

B. The Mausoleum of Moulay Idriss II (Fez, Morocco)

Another example is the Mausoleum of Moulay Idriss II, which is located in Fez and houses the tomb of the founder of the city, Moulay Idriss II. Though it was established earlier, during the Idrisid period, it was expanded and renovated during the Marinid era. Key Feature: the mausoleum combines Marinid and Idrisid architectural elements, with a focus on decorative stucco work and tile mosaics.

C. The Sidi El-Halwi Mosque and Its Minaret (Fez, Morocco)

This mosque is another example of Marinid architecture, where the minaret stands out as an important structural and decorative feature. It reflects the transformation in minaret design during the Marinid period, combining traditional elements with new ideas of height, slenderness, and ornamentation.

D. The Royal Palaces of Marrakesh (Palais el-Badi and Palais Royal)

During the Marinid period, Marrakesh became an important political and cultural center, and it saw the construction of several royal palaces. These included the Palais el-Badi, a grand palace built by Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur in the late 16th century, after the end of the Marinid Dynasty, but which had strong architectural roots in Marinid traditions. Key Features:

- Massive scale and symmetry.
- Courtyards, gardens, and water features.
- Use of decorative tilework and stucco carvings.

2. General Concepts

The minaret, with its grandeur and beauty, is a symbol of Islam and its victories, and a scientific expression of the meanings of monotheism. It is considered a new architectural element added to Islamic mosques since their early spread. Over the centuries, the minaret evolved, adopting many names and forms in the Islamic world. Muslim architects paid special attention to it to give it a distinctive character, allowing them to highlight its architecture and decoration.

2.1 Definition of the Minaret

The word "adhan" in Arabic means announcement, used specifically in the context of calling to prayer or announcing the Hajj. There are various opinions about the origin of the adhan. In Sahih al-Bukhari, Ibn Umar narrates: *When the Muslims first arrived in Medina, they used to gather and wait for prayer without any call, so they discussed the issue. Some suggested using a bell like the Christians, others suggested using a horn like the Jews, and Umar said, "Why not appoint a man to call for prayer?" The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) then said: "O Bilal, rise and call to prayer."*

In linguistic terms, there are three words in Arabic used to describe the minaret: "muezzin", "sawm'a", and "manara".

2.1.1. Muezzin:

It comes from the root word "adhan," meaning to announce or call for prayer⁶. The minaret is a tall structure used for announcing prayer times and calling Muslims to prayer five times a day and on Fridays⁷. The term "Muezzin" refers to the person who calls the faithful to prayer in Islam⁸. This call is called the *adhan* (or *azan*), and it is traditionally performed from a mosque's minaret or loudspeakers⁹. The muezzin recites the adhan at specific times throughout the day, marking the five daily prayer times: Fajr (dawn), Dhuhr (midday), Asr (afternoon), Maghrib (sunset), and Isha (night)¹⁰.

The role of the muezzin is important in Islamic communities, as they help maintain the rhythm of daily life with the prayer call, which serves as a reminder to pray. Traditionally, muezzins are skilled in recitation and may possess a melodious, resonant voice to ensure the adhan is heard by the community.

2.1.2. The Sawm'a:

The term "sawm'a" refers to a monastic tower or hermitage, especially used for the homes of monks, and is similar to a minaret in its design. In the Quran, the term "sawm'a" is used for the monastic cells of monks: *"And had it not been for Allah repelling some*

people by others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is much mentioned, would have been destroyed."

In Morocco and Andalusia, the word "sawm'a" is used instead of "minaret," due to its resemblance to the towers of ascetics¹¹. The term *Sawm'a* (also spelled *Sawm'a* or *Samaa*) refers to a specific architectural feature in traditional Islamic architecture¹². It is a type of prayer hall or a chamber used for prayer and religious activities, particularly in older mosque or religious buildings¹³. These prayer rooms or spaces are often designed to be quiet, tranquil, and conducive to reflection, worship, and communal prayer¹⁴.

In some interpretations, *Sawm'a* can also be used to describe a more private or secluded area for worship and contemplation, where individuals can focus on their spiritual connection to God. It may also refer to spaces where certain religious practices or learning takes place, like study or spiritual retreats. In certain contexts, the term may overlap with other religious or architectural terms that denote a place of solitude and prayer.

2.1.3. The Manara:

The word "manara" refers to a lighthouse or a tower with a light used for guiding ships. It was also used as a signal for enemy movements. The term appears in several contexts, including religious festivals, architecture, and language. In the Islamic world, "manara" is often used interchangeably with "minaret" in parts of Africa, especially in reference to towers that have similar functions.

The term *Manara* (or *Minara*) refers to a **minaret**, which is a tall tower or spire commonly found in Islamic architecture, often attached to mosques. The minaret serves several purposes, the most prominent being as the place from which the **muezzin** calls the faithful to prayer (adhan).

Minarets are an iconic feature of Islamic structures and vary in design, from simple, straight towers to more ornate, spiraled designs. They typically have a balcony or platform at the top from which the muezzin would call out, though modern minarets may use loudspeakers instead.

In addition to its functional purpose of prayer calling, the minaret can also serve as a symbol of Islamic presence in a city or region. The architectural style of minarets differs across regions, influenced by local culture, materials, and aesthetics.

3. Minaret Shapes

The Arabs were influenced by previous civilizations, like the Roman and Persian cultures, but they did not stop there. Instead, they exceeded these influences with their

creativity and innovation, developing their own architectural style. The minaret, as an architectural element, was adopted from Roman culture, but the Arabs refined and decorated it in unique ways. Various styles of minarets emerged, depending on the region and era. For example:

- In Persia, minarets typically took a conical shape.
- In the Levant, Morocco, and Andalusia, they were often square.
- In Turkey, cylindrical minarets with pointed conical tops were common.
- In Egypt, minaret styles evolved, with a distinctive Egyptian style emerging during the Mamluk era.

Early minarets were square in shape, possibly influenced by the towers of pagan temples, especially the Roman ones. They were simple in design, reflecting the Arabs' tendency toward simplicity and asceticism. The minarets in the western Islamic world largely retained the square shape, as seen in the Great Mosque of Kairouan.

4. The Minaret of Sidi El-Halloua Mosque in Tlemcen

The Minaret of Sidi El-Halwi Mosque in Tlemcen, Algeria, is a remarkable example of Islamic architecture from the Marinid period¹⁵. Tlemcen, during the 14th century, was under the rule of the Marinid dynasty, which was responsible for some of the most iconic architectural landmarks in the region¹⁶. The Minaret of Sidi El-Halwi Mosque is one of the most significant structures associated with this era¹⁷. Here is an overview of the Minaret of Sidi El-Halwi Mosque

- Location: The mosque is located in Tlemcen, a city in northwestern Algeria. Tlemcen has long been a cultural and religious center in North Africa.
- Period: The mosque and its minaret were built during the Marinid period, in the 14th century.
- Architectural Style: The mosque and its minaret reflect a blend of Marinid, Andalusian, and Maghrebi architectural styles. These influences can be seen in the minaret's form, decoration, and overall design.

The minaret of Sidi El-Halloua Mosque in Tlemcen is considered the third Marinid minaret in the city¹⁸. It was built by the Marinid Sultan Abu Inan Faris and is almost identical in design to the minaret of Al-Abad Mosque, sharing the same blueprint, construction materials, and decoration style¹⁹. This minaret was built along with the

mosque in 1354 CE, about 14 years after the construction of the Al-Abad Mosque by Abu al-Hasan Ali²⁰.

4.1 Location of the Minaret:

The minaret is located to the right of the main entrance to the mosque. It has a square shape, beautifully decorated with colored marble at the top of its balconies. On the northern side of the minaret, you can find a basin, while on the southern side, it overlooks the western courtyard of the mosque. To the west, it faces the residential area, and to the east, it is adjacent to the mosque, overlooking the courtyard.

4.2 Architectural and Decorative Description:

An architectural and decorative description of a manara (minaret) highlights both its structural and aesthetic features. Here's an in-depth look at how a typical minaret is designed and decorated

4.2.1. Architectural Description:

The minaret consists of two main sections: a lower part and an upper part (the "jawsq"). The lower part is the main tower, with a square base measuring 4.62 meters per side and a height of 19.75 meters, divided into three sections by decorative brick frames. The upper part, or the "jawsq," has a height of about 5.27 meters and a square base of 2 meters per side, topped by a half-spherical dome and a shaft with three spherical decorations. Among the architectural features:

a. Structure and Shape:

- Tall, Vertical Tower: The minaret is designed to be tall, typically cylindrical or octagonal in shape, often narrowing as it rises. The height allows the call to prayer to be heard from a great distance.
- Multiple Levels: Minarets often have several levels or tiers, with each level typically becoming smaller as the tower ascends. Each tier may feature a series of windows or decorative elements.
- Balcony or Gallery: At the top of the minaret, there is usually a balcony or gallery, which was historically where the muezzin would stand to call the adhan. In modern times, the muezzin may use loudspeakers instead.
- Spire (Crescent or Finial): The top of the minaret often features a spire, sometimes capped with a crescent moon or an ornamental finial, symbolizing Islamic identity.

b. Functionality:

- **Call to Prayer:** Traditionally, the primary function of the minaret was to allow the muezzin to be heard across the surrounding area as they called the faithful to prayer.
- **Symbol of Islam:** The minaret serves as a visible representation of Islam, often the most noticeable feature of a mosque, symbolizing the presence of Islam in a city or region.

4.2.2. Decorative Description:

The four facades of the minaret are decorated with a pattern of diamond-shaped lattices. At the base, there are two rectangular frames: one at the bottom featuring larger proportions, surrounded by mosaic tiles forming an arch. The upper frame contains a 13-petal design with ceramic tile decorations, and the next frame has a 52-diamond pattern, interspersed with arches. The upper part of the minaret is crowned with crenellations, a decorative feature that became popular in the Zayanid period and continued into the Marinid period.

The decoration of a manara (minaret) is a fusion of artistic expression and spiritual symbolism, showcasing the beauty of Islamic design principles. The decorative elements are not only aesthetically pleasing but also deeply meaningful, drawing on religious iconography, nature, and the cosmos. From geometric patterns and floral arabesques to calligraphy and stone inlay, every element of a minaret's decoration serves to enhance its spiritual and visual impact, making it an iconic feature of Islamic architecture.

4.3 Construction Materials:

- **Brick:** Brick was the most commonly used building material due to its ease of use, heat resistance, and availability in the region. It was widely used in constructing minarets in Morocco.
- **Wood:** Wood was used extensively, particularly in the roofing of minarets.
- **Stone:** Stone was typically used in the foundations due to its durability against moisture, as seen in the Sidi El-Halloua minaret.
- **Marble:** Marble was used for the decorative finishes of the minaret's facades.

5. Impact and Legacy

The Sidi El-Halwi Mosque Minaret, along with other Marinid minarets, reflects the broader transformation in Moroccan architecture during the Marinid period²¹. These minarets represent a blend of practicality and symbolism, combining advanced construction techniques with intricate decoration to serve both functional and aesthetic

purposes²². The influence of these minarets can still be seen in later Moroccan and Andalusian Islamic architecture²³.

In summary, the Sidi El-Halwi Mosque Minaret exemplifies how the Marinid dynasty transformed minaret design through innovative construction methods and elaborate decorative elements. By focusing on the integration of structure and decoration, Marinid architects left a lasting impact on the architectural heritage of Morocco.

6. Impact on Marinid Architecture

The minaret, particularly the one at Sidi El-Halwi Mosque, had a profound impact on the development of Marinid architecture²⁴. It not only served as a religious and cultural symbol but also influenced the design of subsequent minarets in Morocco²⁵. It is estimated that **over 60% of Marinid mosques** built after the Sidi El-Halwi Mosque adopted similar minaret designs, focusing on the height and decoration that became synonymous with the period's architectural style²⁶.

- Vertical Design: The emphasis on verticality in the design of the minaret of Sidi El-Halwi influenced the design of other mosques in the region, such as those in Meknes and Marrakesh, where minarets were constructed to be both functional and visually striking.
- Integration of Decorative Arts: The intricate use of decoration on minarets, particularly the stucco and tile work, set a precedent for future Moroccan buildings, contributing to the development of Moroccan decorative arts that would later flourish under the Saadian and Alaouite dynasties.
- Urban Integration: Minarets, including that of Sidi El-Halwi, were strategically placed to dominate the skyline, reflecting the increasing role of Islamic architecture in defining the identity of Moroccan cities.

7. Conclusion

The minaret, with its functional and architectural uniqueness, did not exist during the construction of the first mosque in Islam, the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. The early Muslims used the highest point in the mosque for calling to prayer. It is believed by many Orientalists that the minaret originated from the towers of pagan temples. However, while the Islamic architecture was influenced by earlier civilizations, it soon established its own distinct identity, as evident in the minaret of the Kairouan Mosque, which demonstrates purely Arab characteristics. Minarets became an iconic feature of Islamic architecture, symbolizing unity and monotheism.

The future of the Minaret of Sidi El Halwi in Tlemcen depends on a balanced approach that combines preservation, education, community involvement, and sustainable tourism. It should continue to be a beacon of Islamic heritage and architectural marvel, representing both the region's past and its potential for future cultural engagement. By leveraging modern technologies, research, and collaboration, the minaret can thrive as a symbol of Tlemcen's enduring legacy and be preserved for generations to come.

Given its historical and religious significance, ensuring its survival and continued relevance is essential. Here are some key considerations and strategies for its future:

1. Preservation and Restoration:

Conservation Efforts :

- The Minaret of Sidi El Halwi needs careful and ongoing preservation to protect it from weathering, urban development, and pollution. Specialized restoration techniques should be employed, ensuring that the minaret retains its historical authenticity while addressing structural weaknesses caused by time.
- Climate and Environmental Factors should be taken into account in future preservation efforts. Extreme weather conditions, such as heavy rains, heat, and sandstorms, can accelerate the decay of the structure, so preventive measures should be designed to mitigate such effects.

Use of Modern Technology for Monitoring:

- Implementing advanced technologies like 3D scanning, detailed structural monitoring, and GIS mapping can help track any changes in the structure over time. These technologies will assist in proactive maintenance and ensure the minaret's condition is regularly assessed.

2. Integration into Cultural Heritage Tourism:

Tourism Development:

- The Minaret of Sidi El Halwi has great potential to be part of a heritage tourism route in Tlemcen, which could include other important historical landmarks in the city. By developing responsible tourism around this monument, it can generate revenue for further preservation while educating the public about Tlemcen's Islamic heritage.
- Interactive Experiences: Create digital platforms or virtual tours that allow visitors to explore the minaret and learn about its history and architectural significance, thus broadening access to the monument without physical damage.

Educational Programs :

- Establishing educational programs or workshops focused on the history, art, and significance of the Minaret of Sidi El Halwi can foster a deeper connection with local and international audiences. These programs could target schoolchildren, university students, and tourists.
- Collaboration with Local Universities and Experts: Involve local researchers, archaeologists, and architects in continuous studies and research to improve the understanding and preservation of the monument.

3. Community Involvement and Awareness:**Local Community Engagement :**

- For the minaret to thrive in the future, it's vital to foster a sense of ownership and pride among the local community. By involving local residents in its care and education, they can play a crucial role in maintaining and preserving its cultural value.
- Cultural Events and Festivals: Organize annual religious festivals or cultural events centered around the minaret, including activities such as exhibitions, recitations, and performances. These would keep the site relevant in the lives of Tlemcen's residents and visitors alike.

Awareness Campaigns:

- Conduct public awareness campaigns highlighting the minaret's significance, not only as an architectural gem but also as a symbol of Tlemcen's Islamic identity and cultural heritage. Media, museums, and online platforms could be leveraged to spread this message.

Appendices:

"Picture 01: Location of the Minaret"

Source: taken by the authors



"Picture 2: Components of the Minaret – the Main Tower and the Jousq."

Source: taken by the authors



**"Picture 3: The Jousq.
Source: taken by the authors**



**"Picture 4: Represents the decorations formed on the facades of the minaret."
Source: taken by the authors**

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