

**Review of, J. M. Bloom, *The Minaret, Edinburgh Studies in Islamic Art*,
Edinburgh, 2013, 392 pages, (224 figs. many in colour).
ISBN: 9780748637256**

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This book is the revised and expanded edition of the book first published in a small print run in 1989 in the series Oxford Studies in Islamic Art and which was then entitled, *Minaret: Symbol of Islam*, which sold out and which was for years unavailable except at some considerable expense above the purchase price, if at all.

Who and what and where and when and how and why, are questions well worth the asking in the attempt to understand, but the answers to which oft elude any complete or entirely satisfactory answer, such is the nature of the work. Frequently the relevant sources do not survive, pertinent facts were never recorded as then being commonly understood, or the record has been lost, amended or altered, deliberately or accidentally, at times through the process of copying; or the surviving relevant sources contradict each other or can be understood in a variety of ways. People and buildings, structures, cities and countries have lived their times and been remembered differently over the generations or forgotten as though they had never existed. Some things have been deliberately erased from the record, sometimes leading to their remembrance, often in a distorted form, but others have left no discernable mark. Structures devised for one purpose are then employed to serve quite another function or are reused in a quite different manner in the same or within a different religious/cultural context over the course of time, while the same symbol can represent different meanings at different time in different religious/cultural contexts.

In consequence, as the author makes clear, the attempt to define the origin of the minaret tower attached to mosques is no simple matter, as the meanings represented by words employed to name it in the sources have varied, as has the place from which the call to prayer was given; while the aim of tracing its development, as is the case for so much else of interest in the pre-Mongol Islamic world, is hampered by the waves of destruction that have swept over Madīnat al-Mansur, Madīnat al-Salām, Baghdad, capital of the Abbasid Caliphate after its construction from 762 until 1258 and on into the 21st century, firstly in the civil war between al-Amin and al-Ma'mun between 812 and 814 (Al-Mas'ūdī records in *The Meadows of Gold*, VI: 447, 2655, '*Mansions were destroyed, most remarkable monuments obliterated...*'), the result being little surviving material evidence of the former capital of a world state, of examples of the architecture of the capital over the course of nearly 500 years, lost buildings which in all probability provided much of the inspiration and example to builders elsewhere in the Abbasid realm, including the author suggests and which forms the subject of this book, the tower minaret.

This is an important book, insofar as it enquires into the origins, the spread and development of a structure which has come to symbolise for many today the Muslim community and Islam,

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as indicated by the subtitle of the first edition of this book, '*Symbol of Islam*'; but a structure which was not designed to be a symbol of the Muslim community, nor did it exist as such at the time of religion's inception and rapid spread.

This book is divided into three parts. In part 1 are the following chapters: The History of Scholarship and the Nature of the Problem; The *Adhan*, the *Mi'dhana* and the *Sawma'a*; *Manāras* and *Manārs*; *The Mosque Tower*; *Why were Towers Added to Mosques*. In part II: The Minaret in the Maghrib in the Ninth Century; The Triumph of the Cordoban Minaret in the Maghrib; The Minaret in Egypt through the Ayyubid Period; The Minaret in the Central and Eastern Islamic Lands before the Seljuks; The Minaret during the Seljuk Era. In part III: The Minaret after the Mongol Conquests; The Minaret beyond the Persianate World; The Spread of the Minaret into Modern Times, followed by the bibliography and index.

A structure that was initially often termed *mi'dhana*, the place for *adhan* describing the function, or *sawma'a* describing the shelter on the roof of the mosque for the muezzin and with a ladder, or with an internal or an external staircase - a '*staircase minaret*'; or by the words, *manār* employed to mean a boundary marker/beacon/a place of light, or *manāra* employed to describe a lighthouse such as the Pharos of Alexandria (as employed by Benjamin of Tudela in 1168, "*a large tower, a lighthouse, called Manar al Iskandriyyah in Arabic*". Benjamin of Tudela, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (1907). Trans. Commentary, N. M. Adler 2005 [EBook #14981], 104; Ed. T. Wright, *Early Travels in Palestine*, New York: Dover, (1848) 2003, 122, perhaps indicating the use of the word *manār* to describe a lighthouse rather than a lighthouse always being described by the word *manāra*.) which functioned as such until 1344, with the word *al-manāra* becoming attached to a form of tower, and so to the tower attached to a mosque, leading to the word minaret-*minare*; and yet – and yet there are and there have been mosques without tower minarets; while there are also structures which resemble in form the tower minarets of mosques, but which were not built for a mosque and did not serve the same functions as the minaret of a mosque, but were marker towers, like the minaret-marker tower constructed at Âkhur by the Caspian shore in Jurjan, visible from a great distance across the desert (G. Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*. Cambridge, 1905, 379). Others constructed of this tower form were lighthouses, others were victory towers (Such as the 72 m. high Qutb Minar in the Quwwat al-Islam (Might of Islam) Mosque, Delhi, from 1199, serving as both a victory tower and a tower minaret; or the Yivli-fluted minaret of Antalya, Turkey, a victory tower of c. 1226 converted into a minaret in 1373, although as R. Hillenbrand has remarked, the sound of the *adhan* would have been almost inaudible given from a height respectively of 72 m., R. Hillenbrand, *The Mosque in the Islamic World*, 33-51 in, Ed. S. Cantacuzino, *Architecture in Continuity-Building in the Islamic World Today*, 1985, 35, or one of 40 m. and, therefore, it is perhaps reasonable to suggest that the balconies served at times a larger purpose concerned with not just the *adhan*, but with the lighting of these structures, such as the mosque-less hill-top *manār* at Kirat in Khurasan, with its balcony), others were tomb towers, and there were and are also today multiple function towers, serving simultaneously as markers, lighthouses and tower minarets to major mosques, as at Siraf in the early IXth c., with its tower serving as a lighthouse and marker for the port and for the congregational mosque (p. 72-3), as also the incomplete multi-functional Tour Hassan of Rabat, Morocco in the XIIth c., as also the multi-functional Huaisheng Light Tower minaret in Canton (p. 290-2, re-dated from the Tang Dynasty to the XIVth c.) and also the multi-functional 1993 minaret of Hassan II at Casablanca, Morocco (p. 343-5).

The minaret has become for many the most easily recognisable sign of an Islamic community and yet - when the call to prayer was given within the lifetime of the Prophet of

Islam and in the first centuries, there were no tower minarets attached to mosques. The call was uttered by the first muezzins (muezzin from *al-muadhdīn*) from the roof of the mosque or from the mosque doorway, as remained the case for example in Almoravid ruled Seville where the call was given from the doorway to the mosque, recorded in the *Risāla* of Ibn Abdun d.1134 (p. 166), and then the *sawma'a*, a cell-like shelter on the roof was built to protect the muezzin from the elements, while remaining at the level of the roof of the mosque.

It was after the passage of more than two centuries that minaret towers, as distinct from the earlier 'staircase minarets,' where the muezzin remained at the level of the mosque roof, started to become a standard for congregational mosques.

However, the location of this tower minaret has varied, from being opposite the mihrab, or at a corner of the courtyard, or actually built over the mihrab, as by the Almohads at Tinmal of c.1150 (p. 168-171) and at the congregational mosque of Yahudiyya-Isfahan (p. 93, fn. 26), innovation upon innovation, (For other West African examples of a minaret over the mihrab see p. 187, fn. 77) or beside the *qibla* wall as at Diyarbakır, and there are also paired minarets at the corners by the entrance, as at the al-Hakim Mosque, Cairo of 990-1013 (p. 198-204), the first Fatimid mosque in Cairo to have minarets; or at the entrance portal to some mosques from the late XIth onwards, as with the 1259 Sahib Ata Mosque in Konya; or the tower minaret was built over the portal of the mosque, as with that constructed after 918-19 on top of the new Bab Ibrahim by the Masjid al-Haram at Mecca (p. 224), the pair on top of the pīstaq-portal of the congregational mosque at Yazd, Iran, of 1364, and, one over each of the two portals to the Isa Bey Mosque by Ephesus of 1374; as also a pair by the portal of some medrese (while the Char-Minar Medrese of Bukhara, Uzbekistan of 1807 has four symbolic rather than functional minarets crowned with domes of turquoise tile-work) such as the 1253 Çifte Minareli Medrese of Erzerum and the Sivas Gök Medrese of 1271 and the Sivas Çifte Minareli Medrese of 1277-2 with its 7 candles carved on the adjacent buttress (its construction ordered by Sahib-i Divan Muhammad Şemseddin (Sun of the Religion)). While there are also, in addition to those of Mecca and Medina, some mosques with multiple minarets, seven at Basra (cited by G. Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1992, 343, from H. A. R. Gibb, & H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, II, Oxford, 1950, 277), but usually four or six, which, if these multiple minarets were constructed before the modern age, were usually constructed by order of and for Ottoman Sultans, as at Hagia Sophia (Aya Sofya), the four at the Süleymaiye, at the Selimiye, Edirne, likewise with four and Sultan Ahmet with six, etc. or by the Safavid Shahs or by the Mughul Emperors of the subcontinent, like the Badshai Mosque, Lahore, built for Shah Jahan with tower minarets at each of the four corners.

The arched niche/apse-like architectural form of the mihrab (in the Masjid at Quba (of the Two Qibla, to Jerusalem and then to Mecca) S.E. of Medina, the direction of prayer was indicated by a stone block, *Ar. qibla* set into the wall, from which precedent the idea of the mihrab emerged) found from the start of the VIIIth c. onwards (p. 50) with the rebuilding of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina in 707-9; followed by the dome over the mihrab, as at al-Aqsa in the VIIIth c., (It is unknown if al-Walid's grand mosque at Damascus had a domed roof. The Kairouan congregational mosque of 836 also has a dome over the mihrab) were the first innovations in mosque construction, innovations which were made under the Umayyads, before the tower minaret (distinct from the 25 m. tall marker towers *manār* that marked the corners of the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina in its rebuilding of 709 (p. 54) and those four added by the Abbasids to the Haram at Mecca by 786, (p. 56) with a further two added at the end of the IXth c. (p. 223-4) that distinguished these from all other mosques), another innovation, were introduced under the Abbasids between 772 and 825 (p. 73, p. 96-111) as a visible marker, initially only of

the *masjid al-jami'*-congregational mosque of a city from where the *khutba* was given at Friday prayers. These new mosque marker towers expressed allegiance to the Abbasid Caliphs (p. 115) marking the mosque where the *khutba* was given in the name of the Abbasid Caliph, and they later became the usual place from which the call to prayer was given. If there was some mental link made in the late VIIIth c. with the already existing chains of beacon towers, such as those which were employed by Abu Muslim to signal the successes of his uprising against the Umayyads to a wider audience in Khorasan in 747 (A. Clot, *Harun al-Rashid and the World of the Thousand and One Nights*, Trans. J. Howe, Saqi, London, 2005, 14), bringing the Abbasids to power; the lights signaling the advance of Abbasid forces, that could be linked in some way with the subsequent spread of the tower minaret through Abbasid territory seems to be unknown and it is not suggested in this book. Today, these tower minarets are usually the place where the loudspeakers are placed that broadcast a tape of the summons to prayer amidst the silence of dawn or in the noise from the traffic on the street, and on which, and between which, if there are two or more minarets, lights are suspended to mark the nights of the festivals across the night sky.

This third innovation of the tower minaret was then followed by another, perhaps the most significant innovation to date, a change in the form of the floor-plan of the prayer hall of a mosque, from having the longest wall facing in the direction of Mecca, to a square plan for the covered prayer hall, often covered by a dome, or even to a building where it is the shortest, rather than the longest wall of the prayer hall that faces Mecca, and yet - to be in one of the first three rows for prayers has always been of some considerable importance and hence the typical rectangular form of the prayer hall of mosques with the longest wall facing the *qibla* until the XIVth c.

In terms of its form it is hard to believe that any of the Companions of the Prophet would recognise in many places in the world today the mosque with a minaret for being a mosque at all, such has been the extent of innovation made to its form since the VIIth c. and the Almighty best knows the motives of these innovations.

How did it come about that the minaret tower, the third of the four major innovations made to the form of the mosque, has become over the course of time for many Muslims and non-Muslims alike an entirely expected part of a mosque, and so much a part of, and a sign of the Muslim community of today that to remember that the first Muslim community in Medina *al-munawara* - the enlightened, prayed in a mosque constructed under the Prophet's own direction and which was without a mihrab, a dome or any form of minaret, seems today to be very strange indeed, to belong to some very distant, almost to the pre-historical past. The minaret in some cases is a truly monumental structure marking the skyline for miles around, such as the minaret of the mosque of al-Mutawakkil 846-61 at Samarra, the 1196-99 44 m. high incomplete remains of the Almohad Tour Hassan, Hassan tower, Rabat, Morocco, which was planned to stand 88 m. high (p. 177), the 4 minarets, defining the mosque as being founded by the Sultan, of the Ottoman Selimiye Mosque in Edirne, minarets which reach 70.9 m.; the two 90 m. high minarets of the Islamic centre at Duga Poljana in Serbia, recently constructed for the Bosniak community, the minaret/lighthouse of the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca, Morocco standing to a height of 210 m. housing a laser beam indicating the direction of the *qibla*, and the two minarets standing 230 m. high at the Grand Mosalla, in Tehran.

It seems quite extraordinary that with the circulation of hadith concerning *bid'ah*-innovation in worship, such as the hadith recorded and circulated in the IXth c. at the time when these tower minarets began to spread through the Dar al-Islam which reads: "*Every innovation is a misguidance and every misguidance goes to Hell fire.*" (Sahih, Muslim, as likewise the chapter

in *Riyadh as-Salihin* by an-Nawawi (1233-1278), *On Prohibition of Innovations in the Faith*, that the tower minaret itself did not become the subject of surviving bitter controversy and polemic within the Sunni Muslim world, this presumably because it was regarded as being a praiseworthy, as distinct from a blameworthy innovation, as it certainly was/is an innovation in the religion to mark a congregational or any mosque in this fashion, as also to raise the muezzin above the level of the roof of the mosque, and the author draws attention (p. 107-108) to this absence of surviving recorded controversy concerning the introduction of the innovation of the tower minaret which seems to be most remarkable, at a time when the educated in the religion were willing to be lashed, imprisoned or executed to ensure the maintenance of what they believed was the correct Prophetic tradition. Although it is noted (p. 229) before 988 that the Ismā'īlī Ibn Hawkal related, in respect to the people of Faryab adding a tower minaret to their mosque because the congregational mosque in the adjacent city of Yahudiyya already had two, “*But one knows well that posterity accomplishes an evil deed by altering the way one sees the past.*”, in his response to the claim by the people of Faryab that the addition of a minaret to the mosque, “*was an act in conformity with the sunna.*” Ibn Hawkal certainly knew it as an innovation in the religion.

The tower minaret was introduced firstly to the outside of, and then by the courtyard wall facing the mihrab, as at Kairouan, Tunisia, the first mosque tower in the Maghrib, which originally stood outside the courtyard, built to a design based upon the Roman lighthouse at Salakta; of a height and position, although not necessarily form (p. 123), that seems to have been initially restricted to congregational mosques in Sunni Abbasid territory. Fatimid, Zaydi, Alid and both Ibadi and Sufri Khariji mosques continued to be constructed without minarets, suggesting their objection to the employment of this innovation (See for example the quote from a IIIrd c. Zaydi Manual of Hisba, (p. 182, fn. 4, and again cited, p. 228), that, ‘*The manarāt of mosques should not be raised above its roof, and those that are higher, should be made lower,*’ citing a saying attributed to Alī ibn Abu Tālib, although murdered in 661 and with *sawma’a - manarāt* hardly common by this date, it seems unlikely that Alī was the author of this statement, this tradition clearly records opposition to raising the minaret above the level of the roof of the mosque), as also indicating their opposition to the Abbasids and to the Abbasid clients who employed it (p. 115-6). Yet the Fatimids, as likewise the Umayyads in Andalusia also eventually adopted the tower minaret, as at the Mosque of Hakim in Cairo, or under the Umayyads at Cordoba, with its construction from 951-2 onwards and at Umayyad Fez, at the Qarawiyyin Mosque from 955 and the Andalusian Mosque from 956; and Andalusia produced some influential examples, including the Almohad’s 1198 ‘*La Giralda*’ in Seville, originally 80 m. high (p. 175), of a form associated with victory and victory towers in the Jihad in Andalusia against the advancing Latin Christians.

The tower minaret seems to have been initially employed as a visible marker of allegiance to the Abbasid Caliphate and minarets were at times erected and destroyed as territory changed hands between the supporters and the opponents of the Abbasids, as later the tower minaret of the Almoravid mosque at Marrakesh of 1129 was destroyed by the Almohads in the mid-XIIth c., (p. 162). In the 19th c. the Fulani destroyed mosque minaret towers (p. 333) in Northern Nigeria as being *bid’ah* and replaced them with ‘staircase minarets’ (A. Petersen, *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*, Routledge, 1996, 190), once again returning the muezzin to the level of the roof, but which perhaps surprisingly was not the case for the Wahhabi in the 18th c., and is not the case for Saudi Arabia or for the Wahhabi influenced or funded mosques of today, where the innovation of the tower minaret is standard.

There is a teaching story recounted by the great late XIIIth c. Hoja Nasudin that may reflect

residual reservations concerning the innovation of and the origin of the tower minaret:

“Nasrudin was wandering along a desert track, when he met three fierce Arabs.

They had been arguing.

‘There are three possibilities as to how minarets could have come about,’ they said. ‘We have just heard of them, and are wondering which is the correct one.’

Nasrudin was not sure. ‘Tell me your theories, and I will judge,’ he said.

‘They fell from heaven,’ said the first.

‘They were built in a well and hoisted up,’ said the second.

‘They grew like cacti,’ said the third.

Each man drew a knife to reinforce his version.

Nasrudin said: ‘You are all wrong. They were built by giants of olden times, who had a longer reach than ours’ (The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasrudin, I. Shah, Picador, 1973, 132).

Conclusions

This book is certainly the most complete account to have been published in English to date of the origin, development and spread of an architectural form, the tower minaret, from the inception of this innovation, probably in Baghdad, in the late VIIIth - early IXth c. through to the present day, together with a wealth of illustrations, plans and photographs.

However, it seems possible that the link between the lighthouse tower, the beacon tower and the tower minaret, between *manāra* and *manār* was not only, nor primarily, a matter of the architectural form of the structure, as at Kairouan with the Roman lighthouse at Salaka providing the model for its form, as perhaps also with the lost initial tower minaret examples from the maritime/riverine capital city of Bagdad, which were perhaps likewise based upon some surviving Roman or Sassanian examples or upon the lighthouses erected by the Umayyads in Iraq, including that which was constructed by order of the Umayyad governor of Iraq al-Hajjaj, to mark for ships the navigable channel opened through the newly drained marshes and constructed before 714 which was called the Manāra Hassan on the Hwar al-Muhammadiya (p. 47; G. Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*. Cambridge, 1905, 43) and that lighthouse constructed by order of the Umayyad governor of Iraq, Khalid b. ‘Abdallah al-Qasri for the Caliph Hisham (724-743) (p. 46-7), possibly the lighthouse on Lighthouse Point on the Tigris where the ashes of Mansur al-Hallaj were scattered in 922 (F. E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1994, 341). But rather, the link between *manāra*-lighthouse, the beacon tower and the *manār/minare*/minaret-tower minaret was one of substance rather than form and was far closer than the author suggests in this book. This link being less a matter of re-using at times an earlier architectural form, than being a matter of *nāra* - *nūr*, of light, of the light at night acting as a marker, and with the reflected sunlight during the day from the cupola and finial if covered in glazed tile-work or sheathed in metal or tile-work, or possibly, in one case, it seems the entire tower minaret was encased in brass, as ordered by Ya’qub ibn al-Layth (867-79) as the second *manāra* for his mosque in Zaranj, capital of Sistan (p. 227), and with the light from the sun reflected from glazed ceramic tiles applied at times to the exterior, producing a structure that was primarily concerned with marking through light and reflected luminosity. This light at night and light reflected from the sun during the day would have acted as a symbol, not only of the Abbasids, but as a reminder of the Light of the Almighty in the temporal world, in addition to the marker function provided by the height of the tower

minaret itself in daylight.

R. Hillenbrand notes that, “A chance literary reference establishes that in 582/1186 the practice of placing a lamp at the top of a minaret was sufficiently common in Khurasan to occasion no comment” (R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture-Form, Function and Meaning*. Edinburgh 2000, 154-5), which clearly suggests the minaret’s function as a lighted marker. While the fact that a spark set fire to a manāra in 915 in Baghdad’s madina is noted (p. 223), but that the source of the spark might have been from the lighting devices on the manāra itself is not, and this was probably also the case for the September 1256 fire that burned the sanctuary of the Prophet to the ground and which was rebuilt by Sultan Baybars from 1269 onwards. While later it seems possible that the lightning strike that brought down the south-eastern minaret of the Prophet’s mosque in Medina on the 23rd night of Ramazan 886 (November the 15th, 1481) and which resulted in a fire that almost entirely destroyed the mosque, was caused by the oil from the lamps on the balconies of the minaret, lit during Ramazan nights, smashing onto the roof of the mosque and setting the mosque roof on fire (F. E. Peters, *The Hajj, The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places*. Princeton, New Jersey 1994, 141). The longstanding practice of adding lighting to the exterior of minaret towers, including on the balconies of minarets for the two great festivals, is recorded, amongst others by Ottavio Bon, Venetian Balio in Istanbul 1604-7, who writes: “at twilight they light lamps round about the steeples (minarets), which burn till morning” in Ramadan (O. Bon, *The Sultan’s Seraglio*. London 1996, 135). While the glass oil lamps which were employed on the upper sections of minarets into the 19th century are recorded by Richard Burton in 1853: “To these (the wooden arms extending from the Munar (minarets) at the Prophet’s tomb in Medina) and to the galleries (muezzin’s balconies) on all festive occasions, such as the arrival of the Damascus caravan, are hung oil lamps...” (Sir R. F. Burton, *Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah*. I. New York 1964, 334). There is most unfortunately however no chapter in this book, nor is there any significant note taken of the practice of employing lighting in the tower minaret, nor to the meanings that may well have been associated with the lamp-light in this central location above the congregational mosque, nor are the important meanings in Arabic of the word manār as in: A stand for a lamp; a thing upon which a lamp is put, mentioned. It does however seem to this reviewer that it may well have been the case that the eventual widespread adoption of the tower minaret with its varied architectural forms and locations was really far more due to and a function of the light that the tower minaret housed at night and the light that it reflected during the day, a luminous marker, than of the built structure itself or of its particular location in respect to the qibla of the mosque, and it was the light(s) that it supported, rather than the physical structure of the tower minaret, that was regarded as being the symbol of Islam.

If this was in fact the case, then of importance for understanding the tower minaret’s acceptance as an element of both Abbasid and of non-Abbasid mosques is the complex of associations different Muslims drew with light itself: *shams*, *shamsa* (For the shamsa sent by the Imam-Caliph al-Mu’izz to the Ka’ba in 972, see, I. A. Bierman, *Writing Signs, The Fatimid Public Text*, University of California Press, Berkley/Los Angeles/London, 1998, 74), *ṣemi ilāhi*, *ṣemi felek*, *Ṣemsüddin*, *nūr*, *al-nūr al-a’zam*, *nūr al-anwār*, *nuri ilāhi*, *Nuri Âlem*, *ishraq*, etc., stemming in part from the importance that is placed upon the light from the olive oil in a lamp in the Sūrat *Al-Nūr*, (Chapter Light) 24:35, an analogy between the lamplight and the light of the Almighty (As likewise Ibn Sina (980-1037) in the *Kitābu’l-Ishārāt* identifies the Aristotelian ‘Aql, the Prime Reason, with the Light of Allah, with reference to Sura 24:35), as also from 24:36 “His light is found in Temples which God has sanctioned to be built for the remembrance of His name. In them morning and evening, His praise is sung.”, and from the

understanding that from the darkness the Almighty made light (Eg., I. A. Bierman, *Writing Signs, The Fatimid Public Text*, University of California Press, Berkley/Los Angeles/London, 1998, 82. From the hadith: “*the first thing that God created was light*”), light in both the physical and its metaphysical senses, the Light of which the Prophet was made and the Light given to the dead man raised to life, the believer to walk with amongst men (Holy Koran Sura *Al-An’am*, Cattle, 6:122 For the importance of remembrance as light, and that: ‘*The religion of God is Light. His Book is light. His messenger is Light. The abode which he has prepared for His friends glows with light. God is the light of the heavens and earth; one of His names is Light. And by the light of His face is darkness dispelled.*’ see for example: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *The Invocation of God, Al-Wābil al-Sayyib min al-Kalim al-Tayyib*, Trans. M. A. Fitzgerald, & M. Y. Slitine, *Islamic Texts Society*, Cambridge, 2004, 61-2). Thereby forming a set of associations which may well have resulted in the tower minaret’s widespread acceptance and adoption over time, overriding the matter of *bid’ah*-innovation and overriding the knowledge of the earlier use of this form as a tower marker signifying the Abbasid *khutba*, its state and its rulers.

Who were regarded as the custodians of the true Light of Islam, the Fatimids or the Abbasids, as they certainly both employed architectural as well as artistic and literary works to express their particular if divergent associations with light and the Light (as with the suggested Abbasid introduction of the tower minaret. For a Fatimid example (see p. 220-1 fn. 40) as also the use of sunlight and shadow by the *wazīr* al-Ma’mun on the al-Aqmar mosque with the sunlight each day passing through the pierced screen and writing the names ‘Ali’ and ‘Muhammad’ in shadow across the vestibule of the mosque, see: I. A. Bierman, *Writing Signs, The Fatimid Public Text*, University of California Press, Berkley/Los Angeles/London, 1998, 115); but the tower minaret with its light/lights, doubtless to many from the IXth to the XIVth centuries became an accepted and a valued part of the environment, understood to represent a varied range of truths, a symbol of the Light of the religion, as well as indicating the location of the mosque.

The link between the light-house, beacon tower and the tower minaret with its light is therefore far closer than has been suggested in this book (An idea the author seems unhappy with, as when he remarks concerning the inscriptions around the windows on al-Hakim’s mosque in Cairo, (p. 220-1, fn. 40) ‘*Lest the tower be interpreted as a lighthouse, however, the windows so decorated are quite close to the ground.*’ As though a tower-minaret at a mosque carrying a marker light was not, both in effect and symbolically, a light bearing house – a light house, a marker therefore, given its association with the congregational and other mosques at this time, of the Light of Islam and which seems at least in part to be the reason why this mosque was termed *al-Anwar*-the Mosque of the Lights), but which is clearly stated in the Arabic words employed for light-house, beacon tower and the tower minaret with its light, while the record of the light shining at night from the top of tower minarets and from their balconies is not remarked upon in this book, although the lazar indicating the *qibla* direction shining from the Hassan II minaret in Casablanca today is. Likewise the author writes that the inscription on the tower of the Ayyubid Shrine of al-Husayn in Cairo of 1235-7, “*calls it a “blessed mi’dhana” and says it was erected to raise the beacon (manār) of Islam, indicating that two functions - a place for the call to prayer and symbol of Islam - had been combined for a structure that was clearly not a congregational mosque.*” (p. 215-6); however if the word *manār* is translated as meaning beacon, why is it not understood as meaning what it says, a marker that was constructed with a light/fire on top, with the light itself (not of course the structure) being understood as symbolising the Light of Islam (as likewise with the light on the tower minaret of a mosque),

but instead, ignoring this luminous aspect, it is the tower structure itself which is indicated by the author as functioning as the symbol of Islam, as though in some way the form of the tower itself, not the light which supported, was the symbol of Islam.

However, it is surely the case that, like the *manār*, the *şamdan*-candlestick, as also mosque lamps, both functional and symbolic, such as those mosque lamp forms that are often depicted within the mihrab and those mosque lamps that gave no light but were made of glazed ceramic to reflect the light and to remind of the True Light (For examples of these painted and glazed ceramic symbolic mosque lamps, see for example, N. Atasoy, & J. Raby, *Iznik, The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press, London, 1994, figs. 306, 355, 568-574 etc.), of the Veil of Light of the Almighty (Al-Ghazali, *The Niche of Lights*, D. Buchman, Brigham Young University Press, Utah, 1998, 51), that the tower minaret can be read as the symbol of Islam – as the first edition of this book, but not this second edition was subtitled – but only if it is clearly understood that the symbol that is referred to is not the architectural form, nor the position and height of the tower minaret itself, but rather is clearly understood as indicating through analogy with the Sura *Al-Nūr*, the tower minaret's upholding of the lamp of olive oil which has been lit by analogy with, and which was and remains a reminder of the Light of the Almighty. The symbol to which attention should be paid is of course not to the form of the lamp holder, candlestick, lamp or minaret tower itself, but to the light that issued from and which these devices supported and which serves in the darkness of the temporal night as a reminder of The Light.

It therefore seems that the longstanding problem of understanding the tower minaret so ably described in the first chapter of this book, still remains unfortunately largely unaddressed and unresolved in second edition of this volume 24 years later in 2013. The problem which has characterised the study of the tower minaret for more than a century being the fundamental one of mistaking the support for the substance; of concentrating scholarly effort upon the architectural form and parallels for it, together with the location of the tower of the minaret in relation to the *qibla* of the mosque (With the mihrab itself often carrying a depiction of a lamp and frequently with candlesticks beside it), rather than concentrating research upon the light in the tower of the minaret itself at night, and that sunlight which was and is reflected from it during the day, and of what Light, and this light issuing from the tower minaret of the mosque, meant to people between the mid-IXth and the XIVth centuries.

It is, if you like, the basic problem frequently encountered of mistaking the hand as being important of and for itself, rather than being important for what is held in it, in this case, light-the light from oil lamps-electric light or lazar light, and it was and it is this light from the tower minaret that served amongst others as a Symbol of Islam, as a reminder of The Light of the Almighty, reminded of one of the Divine Names, of the Prophet and of the Religion, “*Light upon light; God Guides to His light whom He will.*” (Holy Koran Sura *Al-Nūr*, Light, 24:35) - “*And whoever God assigns no light, no light has he.*” (Holy Koran Sura *Al-An’am*, Cattle, 6:122).