

**BAIT AL- MAQDIS WITHIN A HISTORICAL AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
CONTEXT UNTIL THE END OF THE UMAYYAD
PERIOD**

BY

*DR. TALEB ABDALLAH Al-SMADI
Department of Archaeology and Tourism,
Faculty of Arts, Mu'tah University, Jordan.*

**BAIT AL- MAQDIS WITHIN A HISTORICAL AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
CONTEXT UNTIL THE END OF THE Umayyad PERIOD**

DR. TALEB ABDALLAH AL-SMADI
*Department of Archaeology and Tourism,
Faculty of Arts, Mu'tah University, Jordan.*

Abstract:

This paper concentrates on three main points:

- a) The City of al-Quds is An Arab - Islamic City for 5000 years. It was founded by the Arab Canaanites. Archaeological and Historical evidence, such as Egyptian sources, the Execration Text, Tell al-Amarna Tablets as well as the Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian sources, clearly. Show this fact.*
- b) Moslem and Christian historical and geographical sources emphasize the religious, historical, economic, cultural and political Status of Bait al - Maqdis. The architectural elements such as the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock passed through restoration and reservation activities under the Moslem rules ever since the inception of the Islamic State, 1500 years ago, al-Quds has not fallen to foreigners during the Moslem rules except in the Frank Period. In for thirty years modern time it has been under Israeli occupation.*
- c) Archaeological excavations conducted by Israeli scholars in the South-West corner of the Haram al-Sharif Area indicate, without doubt, that there is no evidence of the prcsence of the so-called Solomon Temple. Furthermore, all the archaeological findings, such as pottery, coins, and architecture point to the Islamic architectural character which is refleeteel in the Umayyad palaces in Bilad al-Sham (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan).*



بيت المقدس في سياق تاريخي وأثري حتى نهاية العصر الأموي

د. طالب عبد الله الصمادي
معهد الآثار والانثروبولوجيا
جامعة اليرموك

ملخص البحث :

يركز هذا البحث على ثلاثة موضوعات رئيسة :

- ١ - الموضوع الأول يتحدث عن تأكيد حقيقة أن مدينة بيت المقدس مدينة عربية وإسلامية منذ ٥٠٠٠ عام من الآن ، حيث أنشأها الكنعانيون العرب، كما تشير إلى ذلك الأدلة الأثرية والتاريخية والتي منها المصادر المصرية كنصوص اللعنة ورسائل العمارة والنصوص الأكادية والبابلية والآشورية القديمة وغيرها .
- ٢ - الموضوع الثاني يتحدث عن أن جميع المصادر التاريخية والجغرافية العربية الإسلامية منها والمسيحية تؤكد على مكانة بيت المقدس من النواحي الدينية والتاريخية والسياسية والاقتصادية والثقافية والفكرية بالنسبة للمسلمين. لذلك فإن المباني الدينية كالمسجد الأقصى وقبة الصخرة المشرفة في الحرم القدسي الشريف بقيت تحت سيادة الدول الإسلامية المتعاقبة عبر التاريخ ولم يتخللها أي سيطرة أجنبية استعمارية إلا فترات قصيرة في الفترة الإفرنجية الصليبية، وفي العصر الحديث السيطرة الإسرائيلية .
- ٣ - الموضوع الثالث يتناول الحفريات الأثرية والتي قام بها فريق من علماء الآثار الإسرائيليين في الجهة الجنوبية - الغربية من الحرم القدسي الشريف ويؤكد بما لا يدع مجالاً للشك أنه ليس هناك أية أدلة أثرية على ما يُسمى بهيكل سليمان المزعوم وأن جميع المكتشفات الأثرية من أواني فخارية وقطع نقدية ومنشآت معمارية كلها تشير إلى مباني قصور أموية إسلامية، مطابقة من حيث التخطيط للقصور الأمورية المنتشرة في بلاد الشام (الأردن وسوريا ولبنان وفلسطين) .



I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

It was about 3000 B. C. that the "Canaanites" moved out of the Arabian Peninsula to settle on the high plateau overlooking the fertile central plains of Canaan. Furthermore, a Canaanite extraction known as "Jebusites" settled in Canaan and built their capital-city around 2600 B. C. This City was identified as "Jebus" and "Jebusi", and is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament⁽¹⁾. The Canaanites and their place names were mentioned in the Egyptian sources: First, in the Execration Texts of the twentieth and nineteenth century B. C. These texts were composed in order to bring disasters on the heads of the Pharaohs' enemies; and in the whole manner a list of towns and tribes are preserved for us. Among these towns the name of al-Quds is mentioned⁽²⁾.

The second source is the Tell al-Amarna Tablets⁽³⁾, which are dated back to the New Kingdom of Egypt (15th C. B. C.). The texts record letters from the kings of Canaan to the Pharaohs asking protection against raiding Semitic nomads. Six of these letters were sent by King of (Orosalem)⁽⁴⁾, Abdu-Hiba, asking assistance from the Pharaoh, Thutmose I (r. 1525 - 1495 B. C.), against the Apiru / Hapiru nomads who were connected with the Hebrews⁽⁵⁾.

According to the Biblical Tradition, at about 1200 B. C., the Israelites' invasion of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua (Moses' successor) began with the destruction of Jericho. By the time of Joshua's death most of the country had been conquered in a great campaign of bloodshed and destruction. Only Jebus held out, and finally King David conquered the city. Thus about 1000 B. C. King

David established his capital for the tribes of Judah and Israel together with its indigenous inhabitants⁽⁶⁾.

At the beginning of the eighth century B. C. Israel and Judah retained some autonomy because of the westward growth of the Assyrian Empire. Then Jerusalem passed through western Hellenistic and Roman influences for nine hundred and sixty years until the Islamic Conquest which turned it again in an easterly direction.

During the sixth century B.C., the Kaldaeans (New Babylonians) captured al-Quds when they marched against the Jewish State and brought the Jews into exile⁽⁷⁾ After that the City of al-Quds flourished during the Roman and Byzantine periods. The Byzantines were interested very much in Bilad al-Sham in general and in al-Quds, in particular⁽⁸⁾ Thereafter many Christian monuments were erected in al-Quds such as the Church of the Ascension⁽⁹⁾.

During the seventh century A. D. Muslim tribes from the Arabian Peninsula swept through the Middle East and North Africa, creating a vast new Islamic state. Therefore, the conquest of Palestine was ascribed to three of the Muslim army commanders, Shurahbil ibn Hasana, `Amr ibn al-`As and Abu `Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah. Since Palestine was familiar to `Amr ibn al-`As through his commercial travels before the rise of Islam⁽¹⁰⁾. In accordance with that al-Quds (Aelia) was capitulated to Abu `Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah in the year 16 A.H./637 A.D., or 17 A.H./ 638 A.D⁽¹¹⁾. According to al-Ya`qubi (d. 259 A.H./ 872 A.D.) in his Ta'rikh al-Ya`qubi, after Abu `Ubayda had conquered Qinnasrin and its districts, he came to `Amr ibn al-`As while the latter was

besieging al-Quds. Thus the people of the City requested of Abu `Ubayda's security and peace according to the conditions offered to the other cities in the Bilad al-Sham. Therefore, the treaty "Sulh" between Muslims and the Christians of al-Quds was conducted by `Umar ibn al-Khattab who came to Syria to set the line of its administrations and paid a visit to the City of Jerusalem⁽¹²⁾. Al-Baladhuri mentions that Christian accounts indicate that the City only surrendered to the Caliph in person⁽¹³⁾. When the text of this "Sulh" was developed in time to be known as the "Covenant of `Umar" (al-`Uhda al-`Umariya)⁽¹⁴⁾, reflecting local and social religious interests.

The "Bait al-Maqdis" or the term "al-Haram al-Sharif" used in the ottoman period⁽¹⁵⁾, is located in the center of the City of al-Quds and is mentioned several times in the traditions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. These traditions relate to Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri that there are three Sacred Mosques in Islam: The Sacred Mosque (al-Masjid al-Haram), the Mosque of the Prophet (al-Masjid al-Nabawi) and the Aqsa Mosque (al-Masjid al-Aqsa)⁽¹⁶⁾.

The Bait al-Maqdis became the first (qibla) in Islam for about 17 months, before Muslims turned towards the Ka`ba which occurred in the second year of the Hijra⁽¹⁷⁾. Thus, al-Quds occupies the third Holy City in Islam, after Mecca and al-Medina, and doubtless, it is remained important through its long history until the present. Why Muslims turned their direction in praying away from Bait al-Maqdis? It has been argued that may have been done to reconcile the Jews, though this would appear unlikely if it had been Muhammad's custom at Mecca where there were no Jews to pray towards al-Quds⁽¹⁸⁾.

II. THE AQSA MOSQUE:

The significance of `Umar's visit to the City of al-Quds, his only visit to a city outside Arabia, was relevant to its sanctity and to establish precedents in their interests. It is related to Ibn `Abbas that the Aqsa Mosque was built by Prophets and dwelt by the Prophets, and it has no space which has not been touched by a Prophet or a king⁽¹⁹⁾. Thus this has been confirmed by the Holy Qur'an when it says that the Prophet Muhammad sojourned by night from the Sacred Mosque at Mecca to the Farthest Mosque, The Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, and the land around which is blessed⁽²⁰⁾. According to al-`Umari (d. 745 A.H./1349 A.D.), in his *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar*, the sacred land around the Aqsa Mosque is 40 miles in length by 40 miles in width and this Mosque is in the center of the earth⁽²¹⁾.

It is well known that, after the liberation of al-Quds, `Umar ibn al-Khattab cleared the Haram area, uncovered the Rock and prayed south of it. Hence a simple mosque was soon erected there⁽²²⁾. This mosque was not an exceedingly impressive structure, as we are told by the Christian Pilgrim Arculf, who visited al-Quds in (50 A.H./670 A.D.) and saw the original Aqsa Mosque. Arculf gives a description of it, as it was a quadrangular building, rudely constructed, with planks and great beams set on certain remains of ruins, and capable of holding 3,000 men at a time⁽²³⁾.

In the Chronicle of the Byzantine historian Theophanes (d. 203 A.H. / 818 A.D.), who wrote his Chronicle towards the end of the eighth century A.D., and he was, therefore, prior by more than half a

century to the earliest Muslim authorities, we found mention of `Umar's structure⁽²⁴⁾. Although there is none of the earlier descriptions of the Bait al-Maqdis, such as those of al-Ya`qubi and Ibn al-Faqih, contain any statement of attributing the construction of a mosque to `Umar; we believe that there is no reason for doubting that `Umar ibn al-Khattab did erect the first mosque with a timber roof on the Haram Area; it is not possible to say whether this event took place in 18 or 20 A.H.⁽²⁵⁾. But it is very likely to have been done immediately after the city's liberation in 17 or 18 A.H.

During the Umayyad period, Bait al-Maqdis received special attention, for political-religious reasons. The sanctity could mean Islamic Prestige and support for the Umayyads. If their opponents refer to al-Medina and al-Kufa, then they have Bait al-Maqdis. Therefore, it was no coincidence that both Mu`awiya in 41 A.H./661 A.D., and `Abd al-Malik in 65 A.H./685 A.D. received the bay`ah (Oath) in Bait al-Maqdis⁽²⁶⁾.

Recent excavations in al-Quds have revealed that the Umayyads, the first Muslim dynasty to establish its hegemony over the new Islamic state, sponsored many building projects throughout Palestine, including numerous monuments on and around the Haram al-sharif area⁽²⁷⁾. This is very likely because during the reign of the Caliph `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, Bait al-Maqdis became the administrative center of the state. Hence, the governor's palace or (dar al-imara) was built, because the prime goal of the city's religious, as indicated by their names of the city: the Sacred House or Bait al-Maqdis and the Holy or (al-Quds), which are still employed in Arabic today.

Before his accession to the caliphate, Sulayman ibn `Abd al-Malik founded al-Ramla when he was governor of the military District of Palestine (Jund Filastin)⁽²⁸⁾. Therefore, the administrative capital of Palestine was shifted from Bait al-Maqdis; thus, the City ceased to be the center of authority in the country⁽²⁹⁾.

This first mosque remained until the time of the Umayyad Caliph al-Walid I (d. 96 A.H./715 A.D.) who constructed the Aqsa Mosque. This stage of constructions has been regarded by Creswell and, later adopted by Hamilton, as the First Aqsa Mosque (Aqsa 1)⁽³⁰⁾. According to Fikri, the Aqsa Mosque had been rebuilt by al-Walid I in the year 87 A.H./706 A.D., and not by `Abd al-Malik in 65 A.H./685 A.D. In the time of al-Walid I, the Aqsa Mosque took the rectangular shape: the length of the south wall was 65 meter and the width was 50 meter. The praying-niche (mihrab) was not in the center of the south wall. At that time, the mosque had 21 doors, eleven of which are located in the East Side and ten were situated in the north side⁽³¹⁾.

The second author who attributes the construction of the mosque to `Umar, after Theophanes, was Euty chius (d. 316 A.H./939 A.D.), who states that the Temple Area had been made the dumping ground for all the filth and sewage of al-Quds, to outrage the feelings of the Jews. He describes how `Umar and his followers cleared the enclosure from the filth so as to lay bare the Rock or (Sakhra) and erected a mosque in front of it⁽³²⁾. According to Creswell, this account first appears in the Muslim literature in al-Bakri (d. 487 A.H./1094 A.D.), and was later copied by al-Suyuti (d. 911 A.H./1512 A.D.)⁽³³⁾.

Accordingly, there is no description of the Bait al-Maqdis from the Umayyad period, therefore, we have to rely upon the literary sources which came down to us from the Abbasid period. Accounts of geographers like Ibn al-Faqih and al-Maqdisi, and travelers like Nasir Khusrew show the great sanctity the City of al-Quds enjoyed in the 4th-5th C. A.H./ 10th-11th C. A.D.⁽³⁴⁾. Accordingly, the earliest preserved description of the Bait al-Maqdis was that written by Ibn al-Faqih (d. after 290 A.H./903 A.D.), still reflects the original achievement of the Umayyad Caliphs `Abd al-Malik and his son al-Walid. Ibn al-Faqih in his Mukhtasar Kitab al-Buldan describes the Bait al-Maqdis as a large area⁽³⁵⁾.

Contemporary with Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn `Abd Rabbihi (d. 328 A.H./940 A.D.), in his Kitab al-`Iqd al-Farid, gives this description of the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock⁽³⁶⁾.

Al-Maqdisi (d. 387 A.H./997 A.D.), was an observant and scrupulous reporter, experienced in the lands of the tenth centuries Islamic state by reason of his broad travels and his acquaintance with almost all the classes of the Islamic society. Al-Maqdisi in his Kitab Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma`rifat al-Aqalim, gives a very well description of the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock⁽³⁷⁾.

In the 5th/11th century A.D., Nasir-I-Khusrau who wrote about 436 A.H./1045 A.D. mentions that the mosque was rebuilt by the Fatimid Khalif al-Zahir in 426 A.H./ 1035 A.D. According to Nasir-I-Khusrau, the mosque measured 420 cubits from north to south and 150 from east to west⁽³⁸⁾.

Three centuries later, al-Qazwini (d. 682 A.H./1283 A.D.), in his *Kitab Athar al-Bilad wa Akhbar al-`Ibad* gives a description of the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock which matches that of al-Maqdisi mostly⁽³⁹⁾.

Abu'l-Fida' (d. 732 A.H./1331 A.D.), in his *Kitab Taqwim al-Buldan*, confirmed the existence of a mosque in the time of `Umar ibn al-Khattab⁽⁴⁰⁾, though he is late authority and does not tell from where he got his information, but, he definitely must have taken his information from earlier sources, for instance al-Maqdisi⁽⁴¹⁾.

How long did al-Walid's structure last? It appears to have been damaged by the earthquake of 747/748 A.D. The first mention of its rebuilding occurs in late work as in the fourteenth century A.D. According Shihab al-Din al-Maqdisi (d. 765 A.H./1363 A.D.), in his *Muthir al-Gharam ila Ziyarat Bayt al-Maqdis wa'l-Sham*, the work has to be attributed to the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur, because during the reign of al-Mansur (d. 158 A.H./775 A.D.), both the eastern and western portions of the Mosque had fallen down, but the Caliph replied when he was asked to rebuild it, that there was no moneys in his treasury. Therefore, the plates of gold and silver were stripped off and coined dinars and dirhams, which moneys were expended on the rebuilding of the Mosque until it was completed⁽⁴²⁾. This account must have been taken from earlier sources, for instance, al-Maqdisi⁽⁴³⁾.

In the days of the Caliph al-Mehdi (d. 169 A.H./785 A.D.), a second earthquake destroyed the building that al-Mansur had rebuilt. Thus al-Mehdi changed the plan from rectangular to almost square,

and the restoration of the mosque was completed⁽⁴⁴⁾. Al-Maqdisi does not give a date for this earthquake, but he says: "An earthquake in the days of the Abbasids⁽⁴⁵⁾. He also does not say which caliph carried out the restoration, but according to Shihab al-Din al-Maqdisi in his *Muthir al-Gharam*, it was al-Mehdi, who carried out the rebuilding of the mosque, and it has been suggested that the work was carried out in the year 163 A.H./780 A.D.⁽⁴⁶⁾.

During the Crusader's period, al-Quds was captured in 493 A.H./1099 A.D., and the Franks slaughtered more than 70,000 people, among them a large number of (Imams) and Muslim scholars⁽⁴⁷⁾. Furthermore, the Franks stripped off the Dome of the Rock of more than forty silver candelabra; each of them weighing 44 Syrian pounds, as well as 150 smaller silver candelabra and more than 20 gold ones. Thus the Aqsa Mosque in its present form has been regarded as mainly due to the Crusaders and Salah al-Din. In fact, this is a big mistake, for a great deal of al-Zahir's (d. 623 A.H./1226 A.D.), mosque still exists⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali (d. 927 A.H./1521 A.D.), describes the Aqsa Mosque as follows: "The length of the Aqsa Mosque from the north to south is 100 dhira` [225 feet], and the width from the eastern gate to the western is 76 dhira` [170 feet]⁽⁴⁹⁾. If we have to believe some of the Arabic authors, then, the Second Aqsa Mosque (Aqsa II) was built by al-Walid ibn `Abd al-Malik and not by `Abd al-Malik. Because the contemporary Aphrodite Papyri of al-Walid's governor on Egypt, Qurra ibn Sharik, from 88-96 A.H./ 709-714 A.D., refers to the maintenance of labors and skilled workmen employed on the Aqsa Mosque. These Papyri gave the date 97 A.H. /715-16 A.D.).

This leads to the conclusion that there is no doubt that the Second Aqsa Mosque was built by al-Walid and not by `Abd al-Malik⁽⁵⁰⁾. Meanwhile the most comprehensive existing account of the mosque, based on historical and architectural evidence, is that which forms Chapter V of Creswell's *Early Muslim Architecture*. Comparing the literary evidence with that afforded by inspection of the structure, Creswell and Hamilton distinguished five principal stages in the history of the Aqsa Mosque⁽⁵¹⁾.

III- The Dome of the Rock:

III- 1- Description of the Dome of the Rock:

The Dome of the Rock is the oldest existing Islamic monument preserves its architectural and decoration features, while other Islamic monuments were either dismantled, or, at least, their plan and shape had been altered as, for instance, the Mosque of the Prophet at al-Medina⁽⁵²⁾.

The Dome of the Rock is a magnificent structure dated by an inscription to 72 A.H./691-92 A.D⁽⁵³⁾. Its structure took the octagonal plan, consists of a wooden Dome, measuring 20.44 meter in diameter set on high drum, four piers and twelve columns placed in a circle, arranged as three columns alternate with each pier. This circle is placed in the center of a large octagon, averaging 20.60 meter a side formed by eight walls. There is a door 2.60 meter wide and 4.30 meter high in each of the four sides of the octagon, which face the four cardinal points. According to Creswell, the space between the octagon and the circle is enough to make pilgrimage, supporting the

point view of al-Ya`qubi! He adds that an intermediate octagon consisting of twenty-four arches rested on eight piers and sixteen columns arranged that two- column alternate with each pier. Thus the two concentric ambulatory formed were intended for making the (tawaf) around the Ka`ba which is the Rock⁽⁵⁴⁾. The interior was lit by fifty-six windows: five in each face of the octagon = totally forty, and sixteen in the drum of the Dome, which agrees with the number given by Ibn al-Faqih⁽⁵⁵⁾. On each side of the Octagon are represented thirteen mihrabs.

III- 2- Architectural Origins of the Dome of the Rock:

The origin of the Dome of the Rock has been attributed to different periods and compared with Christian churches both within the Bilad al-Sham and outside. For example, De Vogue argues that the Dome of the Rock goes back in its architectural origin to a Christian Church in Busra, built between 512-513 A.D., which has the octagonal plan and a Dome. Rivoira insists on that this plan is taken from the Roman architecture and gives examples of Saint Hilana which goes back to 312 A.D⁽⁵⁶⁾. Baramki attributes that to the Church of Yuhanna at Jerash⁽⁵⁷⁾. Thus if we look carefully to the plan of this church we found that it was a circle within a square, while what we have in the Dome of the Rock is a circle within an octagon. Hence, this leads us to the conclusion that this analogy has no basis to stand. Other scholars refer it to the Hellenistic period. For example, Hartmann points out that this plan is similar to that of the Church of Anastasius; while others emphasized that the plan of the Dome of the Rock is derived from that of the Church of Ascension in al-Quds; where its plan is

based on the diameter of the Dome and six piers with twelve columns⁽⁵⁸⁾. Finally Creswell concludes that the plan of the Dome of the Rock is based on that of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in al-Quds⁽⁵⁹⁾.

Based on the architectural features of the Dome of the Rock, we argue that this plan is an Islamic invention has no precedence⁽⁶⁰⁾. These examples given above, in some way or the other, have one or two architectural features similar to that in the Dome of the Rock but never identical.

III- 3- Reasons Behind Constructing the Dome of the Rock:

There are many theories put forward for the construction of the Dome of the Rock. One of the most dangerous theory was that based on the opinion of the geographer and historian al-Ya`qubi. Al-Ya`qubi (d. 284 A.H./ 897 A.D.) who was an Imami shi`i , Azdi⁽⁶¹⁾, in his Ta'rikh al-Ya`qubi, gives a political reason that forced the Umayyad Caliph `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan to construct this building⁽⁶²⁾. Meanwhile, Al-Maqdisi gives a different reason for constructing the Dome of the Rock⁽⁶³⁾.

As soon as the text of al-Ya`qubi reached western scholars, they were convinced that this opinion was the prime motive for `Abd al-Malik to build the Dome of the Rock⁽⁶⁴⁾. This account is very doubted because there was no other contemporary or near contemporary authorities seem to be aware of this singular piece of religious blasphemy on the part of the Caliph⁽⁶⁵⁾. In fact, none of the earliest Arab authorities, such as al-Baladhuri (d. 279 A.H./891 A.D.), al-Tabari (d. 310 A.H./923

A.D.) and al-Maqdisi (d. 387 A.H./997 A.D.) mention this assertion by al-Ya`qubi as a reason for `Abd al-Malik to build the Dome of the Rock. Al-Ya`qubi's opinion can be dismissed on internal evidence, because it is an isolated report with an anti-Umayyad leaning.

To strengthen his position, al-Ya`qubi attributed to al-Zuhri the tradition which allows performing pilgrimage to the Aqsa Mosque. This account is very doubted either, for al-Zuhri was young and unknown at this time, (72-73 A.H.), and only visited Damascus ten years later (82 A.H.), where he had met `Abd al-Malik, where the latter had a religious problem. After he solved it, `Abd al-Malik was admiring of him and encouraging him to pursue his studies⁽⁶⁶⁾. Creswell points out that six Arab historians, two Christians and four Muslims, repeat the account of al-Ya`qubi without any comment⁽⁶⁷⁾. These authorities cited by Creswell, are all late sources and much later than al-Baladhuri and al-Maqdisi, the more reliable authorities.

Fikri, based on the *Kitab al-Uns al-Jalil bi-Ta'rikh al-Quds wa'l-Khalil*, states that when `Umar ibn al-Khattab cleared the Rock from the filth, he consulted Ka`b al-Ahbar for the suitable place to build a mosque, thus his counselor advised him to build it behind the Rock, of which place the two (qiblas) will be in accordance⁽⁶⁸⁾. `Umar did not accept his opinion and said: "We were not commanded by the Rock but we were commanded by the Ka`ba⁽⁶⁹⁾". Therefore the plan of the Dome of the Rock itself was different from that of the mosques and it was not suitable to make circulating (tawaf) and pilgrimage (hajj). Hence, it is possible that al-Ya`qubi meant it to be a mausoleum and did not intend to accuse `Abd al-Malik by turning the pilgrims to

Jerusalem instead of Mecca. It is possible that al-Ya`qubi intended to praise the first (qibla) for ibn al-Zubayr seized the second one. Furthermore, it is very likely that `Abd al-Malik meant to express the splendor of Islam in architectural terms in a city rich in magnificent churches⁽⁷⁰⁾. It is more likely, however, that he wanted to show the sanctity of the Bait al-Maqdis and to gain prestige among Muslims. This is implied by the inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock which reflect its universality of Islam as the final revelation⁽⁷¹⁾. Therefore, it is possible that the reason given by al-Ya`qubi was a political reason, since we know that al-Ya`qubi was grown up in the Abbasid court, the enemies of the Umayyads, then the reason for his assertion would be an ambiguous, for he was blatantly pious against the Umayyads.

Traditions were reported about the merits of visits to and prayers in the Aqsa Mosque, compared to the mosques of Mecca and al-Medina. However spreading these traditions was not motivated merely by pious considerations; it would have been socio-political connotations, reflecting opposite political opinions. First, there was the famous tradition "you shall only set out to three mosques." It was transmitted mainly through two chains (isnad): One on the authority of al-Zuhri (d. 124 A.H./741 A.D.), who was a frequent visitor to Syria and in contact with more than one Umayyad Caliph. Secondly, the propagation of these traditions reflect opposite political interests and local loyalties. Circulating traditions which limit travel to the two Sanctuaries could indicate an anti-Umayyad lines. It is noticeable that their authorities come from a period, between the 1st and 2nd C. A.H. /7th and 8th C. A.D., which was a period of intense political conflict between the

Umayyads and opposing political parties⁽⁷²⁾.

Apparently, with the advent of the Abbasids, the political importance of Bait al-Maqdis was over, and its Islamic significance and standing were now stressed. The Abbasids, with their emphasis on the Islamic line, paid much attention to Bait al-Maqdis. It was visited by more than one caliph during their first period. While the Aqsa Mosque was repaired by al-Mansur and rebuilt by al-Mehdi⁽⁷³⁾. Moreover the Dome of the Rock was repaired and embellished by al-Ma'mun⁽⁷⁴⁾.

IV- The Umayyad Palace - Complex in Jerusalem:

IV- 1- Previous Research:

In 1961-1963 Kathleen Kenyon, in cooperation with the French Biblical and Archaeological School in Jerusalem, conducted excavations inside the so called the "Dungan Gate", near the southwest corner of the Haram al-Sharif.

Area and in the southeast sector of the salient wall⁽⁷⁵⁾. De Vaux reached a conclusion that he had located two Byzantine buildings, one running east-west; the other north-south, which he suggested that they were part of two hospices built by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (r. 527-565 AD) for foreign pilgrims. Meanwhile, the death of De Vaux in 1971 prevented him publishing his results. Thus, Kenyon continued the excavations thereafter in 1972 and is inclined to accept his conclusions⁽⁷⁶⁾. From her excavations, Kenyon doubts that the three buildings claimed to be Umayyad structures are actually so. Rather, she thinks that what has been uncovered are actually the

remains of two Byzantine buildings, one extending east-west and the other north-south. Hence both De Vaux and Kenyon found in these structures a two-stage use: first as Byzantine hospices and then later in the Islamic period, first in the Umayyad Period and then on into the Fatimid⁽⁷⁷⁾. Benjamin Mazar, however, argues that the use of this building - complex must be restricted primarily to the Umayyad period. In this early Islamic era, the Muslims would build structures close to the site where the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque were located. In 1968, Ben Mazar and Ben-Dov carried out excavations behind the Southern and Western Walls of the Haram al-Sharif Area. Thus three seasons of excavations have been conducted⁽⁷⁸⁾. The preliminary reports of these excavations were first appeared in Hebrew in 1969 and 1971⁽⁷⁹⁾, and appeared in English in the same years⁽⁸⁰⁾. The results of these extensive excavations seem to support the idea that the Umayyads engaged in extensive building activities in the Bilad al-Sham.

The Israeli scholars' aims from these excavations were to expand the area of the Wailing Wall which extends 60 meter to become 485 meter and secondly, to display the remains of the Jewish Temple. In 1971, Ben-Dov excavated in the same area, and uncovered of an Islamic palace-complex that is dated to the Umayyad period. Ben-Dov points out that these structures were Umayyads and they were almost identical with the Umayyad palaces in the Bilad al-Sham, especially those of Qasr al-Kharana, Khirbat al-Mafjar and Khirbat al-Minya⁽⁸¹⁾.

III- 2- Description of the Umayyad Palace - Complex:

The three buildings uncovered on the site were numbered by the excavators as II, III and IV. Building II is the largest structure, measuring ca. 48 by 96- meter. The open central court is paved with square flagstones; this court was surrounded on all four sides by covered galleries, the roof of which rested on the walls of the adjoining halls and on a row of columns surrounding the court. There is absolute symmetry between the eastern and western sides. Access to the halls from the galleries was by means of doorways at the inner ends of the halls. Access to the building II was given by means of two principal gates: one is located on the East Side and the other on the north. However, the main gate was the one on the East Side⁽⁸²⁾. Rosen-Ayalon raised the possibility that Building II was the palace of one of the Umayyad Caliphs⁽⁸³⁾. Therefore, it is very likely that Building II was the palace constructed and inhabited by the Umayyad Caliph al-Walid I. There is a bridge led from this Building to the Haram al-Sharif Area. That bridge is of direct relevance in this matter. We should also note that several other palaces built in this period were located adjacent to major mosques, on the South as is the case here.

Along the Western and Southern Walls, two streets were paved, meeting at the southwestern corner of the walls. Thus these buildings were separated from each other and from the Haram al-Sharif by two streets that are also belong to the same period. The western street ran from north to south along the Western Wall, continuing further south; the southern street ran from east to west from the "Double Gate" to the "Western Hill", which leads the excavator to the conclusion that the Lower city had been settled in the early Islamic period⁽⁸⁴⁾. These streets were paved for a length of more than 70 meter; this work

ascertained that the streets were constructed at the same time of the construction of the large palace-complex and especially Building II. The ascription of these streets to the Umayyad period is based on the fact that they were contemporary with the large Umayyad building to the south⁽⁸⁵⁾. Beneath the original Umayyad floors there was a broad network of water channels of two sorts: First, some of these channels were used as drainage and supply of fresh water. This channel leads to the region of the "Double Gate," where there are numerous cisterns. There are also plastered channels leading to building II from the west, from the main city aqueduct. Second, other channels uncovered during the excavations were used as sewage⁽⁸⁶⁾. This would lead to the assumption that it comprised a bathhouse, the water supply and sewage arrangements, and all point to this assumption. Bathhouses may be noted in the Umayyad palaces of Qasr Khirbat al-Mafjar and Qasr Khirbat al-Minya⁽⁸⁷⁾.

During the Abbasid Period, the water system was modified: the earlier water channel made of roof tiles, was no longer used and was replaced by a stone-built channel, plastered and covered with stone slabs. This latter carried water from an unknown source on the west side and continued on the stone pavement along the northern wall of the Umayyad building⁽⁸⁸⁾.

The find, such as coins and pottery confirms this dating. Sixteen pieces of coins found in the excavations were assigned to the Umayyad and Abbasid periods⁽⁸⁹⁾. This would support an Umayyad and early Abbasid dating for the pottery, because the pottery shows continuity and it is hard to distinguish between the Umayyad and early Abbasid

pottery.

One of the coins found in the Northern Barrier Wall of the Armenian Garden, dated to the Umayyad period and it is judged by the numismatists at the Ashmolean Museum to be possibly from the mint of al-Ramla, between 91-102 A.H./ 710-720 AD⁽⁹⁰⁾.

IV- 3- Discussions and Conclusions:

Most of the extant historical, geographical and literary sources dealing with our period, have come down to us from the Abbasid Period, the opponents of the Umayyads, thus it is difficult to do justice to the Umayyad cause. However, from our analysis of these historical, geographical and literary sources pertaining to the Umayyad establishments throughout the Bilad al-Sham in general and Bait al-Maqdis in particular, we have seen that most of the information was plagiarized from earlier sources adding personal observation, thus the value of some of the later sources was limited to the preservation of these information. Nevertheless, though these sources were late in date to our period, so we have to depend on them, but with great doubts, because they are the only evidence we have about the Umayyad history and their establishments.

During the Umayyad period, Bait al-Maqdis received a special attention from the Umayyad Caliphs for political-religious reasons, because of the sanctity of the City of al-Quds that could mean an Islamic prestige and support for the Umayyads. Thus if their opponents, `Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr, refer to al-Medina and al-Kufa, then they have Bait al-Maqdis.

Archaeological excavations in Jerusalem have showed that the Umayyads sponsored building projects throughout Palestine, including numerous architectural buildings on the Haram al-Sharif area. This is strongly supported by the evidences that during the reign of the Caliph `Abd al-Malik, al-Quds became the administrative center of the state, therefore, he constructed Dome of the Rock and his son, al-Walid, constructed the Aqsa Mosque and the palace-complex located to the south of it.

Arguments have developed about the purpose and origin of the construction of the Dome of the Rock. Al-Ya`qubi accused the Caliph `Abd al-Malik when he asserted that he built the Dome of the Rock to turn the pilgrims from going to Mecca, fearing of giving alliance to Ibn al-Zubayr. Furthermore, al-Ya`qubi relates that to the traditionalist al-Zuhri who put forward some sayings of the Prophet Muhammad that about the fada'il of Bait al-Maqdis and to make pilgrimage to it instead of the Ka`ba⁽⁹¹⁾.

To solve this problem, we can say that the plan of the Dome of the Rock is different from that of the mosques and it was not suitable for making circulating (tawaf) and pilgrimage (hajj). Therefore, it is possible, as al-Duri implied that the reason given by al-Ya`qubi was a political one, since we know that al-Ya`qubi was grown up in the Abbasid court, the opponents of the Umayyads⁽⁹²⁾. Hence it is more likely that he meant by building the Dome of the Rock to be a mausoleum and did not intend to accuse the Caliph by turning the pilgrims to al-Quds instead of Mecca. It is very likely that al-Ya`qubi

intended to praise the first qibla, since Ibn al-Zubayr seized the second one. It is possible that `Abd al-Malik meant to express the splendor of Islam in architectural terms in a city rich in magnificent churches.

Concerning the origin of the Dome of the Rock which has been attributed by various scholars to different periods and compared with Christian churches within and outside the Bilad al-Sham, we have seen that, based on the architectural features of the Dome of the Rock, that the plan is of an Islamic invention that has no precedence, and that is a unique plan in its world.

Al-Maqdisi mentions that one of the names of the Aqsa gates was (bab al-balat)⁽⁹³⁾, which is to be derived from the latin term (Balatium) that has the meaning of palace. In this context, the fact that al-Maqdisi calls one of the Aqsa gates by this name are of great importance. Thus we may assume that such a gate would lead to the palace, and careful reading of al-Maqdisi has led us to assume that (bab al-balat) was located in the southeastern part of the Haram Area⁽⁹⁴⁾.

The nature and purpose of the Umayyad Palace-Complex in al-Quds have been questioned by Mazar as why they were built south of the Southern Wall, at the same time as the paving of the street leading up to the "Double Gate"? One theory holds that it was the governor's house or (dar al-imara), or possibly a building which stood adjacent to it, such as the guesthouse for noble pilgrims visiting the holy places. However, Rosen-Ayalon tends to consider the Building II as was being the residence of the Haram servants, mentioned in the Aphrodite Papyri dated to the ninth C. A.D. found in Egypt. These

round towers in the corners and the semi-circular ones at the middle of the walls are lacking entirely in contrast to the other Umayyad palaces⁽¹⁰⁴⁾. This leads Ben-Dov to the implication that this lack of towers determined the purpose of such towers. According to him, it is usually considered that the Umayyad builders derived their basic plan from the Byzantine fortress plan, giving the towers no specific function. Some of these palaces were indeed intended for defense in the isolated palaces which is indicated by the absence of such towers in al-Quds structures, because they were within the city wall and required no defense of their own⁽¹⁰⁵⁾.

It seems obviously that Ben-Dov was mistaken in his assumption, because the Umayyad establishments were built within the Umayyad domains, and the Bilad al-Sham, in which these palaces are located, was no longer served as a frontier zone as it was in the Roman-Byzantine periods. These towers were not intended to serve as defenses, as Ben-Dov argues for, but, in fact, they served as an expression of mighty as well as an aggressive gesture of power. Therefore, I would suggest that there were circular towers built within the walls of the City of al-Quds, at the corners of these structures as well as semi-circular ones in the center of each side, thus, as al-'Abidi points out, there was no need for these palaces to have their own towers⁽¹⁰⁶⁾.



Reference

- (1) See the Old Testament, Gen. 10: 16; Deut. 13: 29; Exod. 3: 8. See also Hanayneh, K.Q., 1994. *Azrihat al-Sahabah al-Ajilla' fi Wijdan Ali Hashim*. Amman: Department of Antiquities, Pp. 4, 10.

- (2) Yohanan Aharoni, 1979. *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*, 2nd. Edition, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press: p. 144.

The Execration Texts are names of Palestinian city-states and towns together with appropriate curses, written on pottery vessels, such as bowls, jars, which are smashed and buried under the foundations of temples, as a process of magic means that these cities would not come to life again.

- (3) Tell al-Amarna is located in the central Egypt, at about 300 km. South of Cairo. At this site some 350 Clay Tablets uncovered in 1885, written in Akkadian cuneiform letters . Most of these letters were sent from the kings and princes of Syro - Palestinian City-States, Mittani, and Hatti Lands to the Pharaohs of Egypt Amenhotep III (r. 1405-1367 B.C.) and his son Amehotep IV (Akhenaton = r. 1367-1350 B.C.), asking for assistance. Therefore, the letters of Tell al-Amarna give us a very important picture on the social and political life in the Near East.

See Peter A. Clayton, 1994. *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*. London: Thames and Hudson: p. 126;

See also Hanayneh, 1994: Pp. 4, 10.

- (4) Alistair Duncan, 1972. *The Noble Sanctuary: Portrait of a Holy Place in Arab Jerusalem*, London: Longman Group Limited: p. 12; See also Aharoni, 1979: p. 144; Hanyneh, 1994: Pp. 4,10.

The name "Orosalem" is mentioned in the Amarna Tablets in the 15th century B.C. This Term is of a Canaanite origin. It is formed of two parts: (Oro) which is a Canaanite word means "City", and the other part (Salem) has the meaning of "peace." Thus the whole term (Orosalem) means the "City of Peace". Duncan believes that the name "Orosalem" is of an Aramaic origin.

- (5) Duncan, 1972: p. 12; Aharoni, 1979: pp. 170-72, 175; Hanayneh, 1994: pp. 4,10.

See also John A. Wilson, 1969. "Egyptian Historical Texts," Pp. 227-64 in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd edition. Edited by James B. Pritchard. Princeton: Princeton University Press, especially pp. 254-55.

- (6) Al-Maqdisi, Shihab al-Din, 1994. *Muthir al-Gharam ila Ziyarat Bait al-Maqdis wa'l- Sham*. Edited by Ahmad al-Khutaymi, Dar al-Jil: P. 131.

See also Duncan, 1972: p.12.

Al-Maqdisi mentions that in the two Sihah, Abu Dharr al-Ghafari narrates a tradition in which he said: "I asked the messenger of God, peace be upon him, about the first Mosque that was built on earth. The messenger of God replied "It was al-Masjid al-Haram = the Sacred Mosque." Then Abu Dharr sked: "Which Mosque was built next? The Messenger of God answered: "al-Masjid al-Aqsa = The Aqsa Mosque." The Abu Dharr asked: "How much time lapsed between the two Mosques? The Messenger of God replied "Forty Years." This tradition indicates that the construction of Kings David and Solomon were on an old foundations and they were not the first builders of it, but actually were the Renewers of it.

- (7) See Pritchard, J.B. 1969. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 563.
- (8) See Foss, Clive, 1980. "Byzantium: an empire under stress", Pp.284-88 in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, edited by Andrew Sherratt. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- (9) Creswell, K.A.C. 1979. *Early Muslim Architecture, Vol. I, Part 1*. New York: Hacker Art Books, p. 107.
- (10) al-Maqdisi, 1994: pp. 154-58; see also F.M. Donner, 1981. *The Early Islamic Conquest*, Princeton: Princeton University Press: p. 115.
- (11) Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Jabir al-Baladhuri, 1956-1957. *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan, Vol. I*. Edited by Salah al-Din al-Minajjid, al-Qahira: Maktabat al-Nahza al-Misriya: Pp.164-65.

- (12) Ahmad ibn Abi Ya`qub ibn Wadih al-Ya`qubi, 1960. *Ta'rikh al-Ya`qubi*, Vol.2. Beirut: Dar Sadir: Pp. 160-61; al-Baladhuri, Vol. I, 1956-57: Pp. 164-65.
- (13) Al-Baladhuri, 1956-1957, Vol. I, Pp: 138-39.
- (14) Al-Maqdisi, 1994: Pp. 161-62; Duncan, 1972: P.22.

Umar's treaty with the Christian inhabitants is remarkable for showing a magnanimity rarely offered by others towards their vanquished foes in this city. The treaty says:

"In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. This is the covenant which `Umar ibn al-Khattab, the servant of Allah, the Commander of the Faithful, grants to the people of Aelia (Bait al-Maqdis" the Holy House). He grants them security of their lives, their possessions, their churches and crosses? they shall have freedom of religion and none shall be molested unless they rise up in a body. They shall pay a tax instead of military services? and those who leave the city shall be safeguarded until they reach their destination."

- (15) Grabar, O. "al-Haram al-Sharif" Pp. 173-75 in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. III. Edited by B. Lewis, V.L. Menage, Ch. Pellat and J. Schacht. Leiden: E.J. Brill and London: Luzac & CO. Especially p. 175.
- (16) Al-Ya`qubi, 1960, Vol. 2: P. 261; See also Zakariya ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Qazwini, 1969. *Athar al-Bilad wa Akhbar al-'Ibad*. Beirut: Dar Sadir wa Dar Beirut lil-Tiba`a wa'l-Nashr: Pp. 160-61;
See also `Abd al-`Aziz al-Duri, 1982."Bait al-Maqdis in Islam", Pp. 351-55 in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*, Vol. I. Edited by Adnan al-Hadidi. Amman: The Department of Antiquities, especially P. 353.
Al-Duri mentions that al-Wasiti (5th - 11th C. A.D.) relates a tradition "the Holy (Quds) of the earth is al-Sham, the holy of al-Sham is Palestine, the holy of Palestine is Bait al-Maqdis, and the holy of Bait al-Maqdis is the mount (al-Jabal), the holy of the mount is the (Aqsa) Mosque, and the holy of the Mosque is the Dome."
Abdallah ibn Mas`ud narrates a tradition in which he said that: "God divides the Good into ten tenths, nine of the tenths were remained in al-Sham, and the remainder one tenths was for the whole earth. God also divides evil into ten tenths, one is for al-Sham, and the rest is for the whole earth."
See al-Maqdisi, 1994: Pp. 97-98.

(17) The Holy Qur'an, Sura XI: 144.

See also Hillenbrand, Robert 1994. *Islamic Architecture, Form, Function and Meaning*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, P. 68.

(18) See F.E. Peters, 1985. *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrimages, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: P. 179.

(19) Al-Qazwini, 1969: Pp. 160-61.

(20) The Holy Qur'an, Sura XVII: 1, states: "Glory to (God) Who did take His Servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, Whose precincts We did Bless, - in order that We Might show him some of Our signs: for He is all- hearing and All- seeing."

(21) See Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Fadl Allah al-`Umari, 1985. *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar*. Edited by Ayman Sayid. Al-Qahira: al-Ma`had al-`Ilmi al-Faransi lil- Athar al-Sharqiya: Pp. 63-64.

(22) It is well-known that after `Umar reached the City of Jerusalem, he asked to be taken to the Holy Rock. Then the Patriarch took him to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and invited him to pray with the Christians, but `Umar declined because he said that to do so would encourage his followers to turn the church into a mosque. He withdrew a little to the south part of the atrium of the basilica to pray on the site known today as the Mosque of al-`Umari.

(23) Robert H. Hamilton, 1949. *The Structural History of the Aqsa Mosque*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: P. 73; See also Peters, 1985: p. 195.

(24) G. Le Strange, 1975. *Palestine under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500*. Boston and New York: AMS Press: P. 92.

(25) See Creswell, 1979, Vol. I, Pt.1: P. 34.

- (26) See al-Duri, 1982, Vol. I: p. 352.
- (27) J. Magness, 1991. "The Walls of Jerusalem in the Early Islamic Period," *Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 54, No. 4: Pp. 208-9.
- (28) Al-Baladhuri, 1956-1957, Vol. 1: Pp. 170-71.
- (29) See M. Rosen-Ayalon, 1975. "The Medieval City: the Islamic Architecture of Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy Land, 1968-1974*. Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society: Pp. 93-94.
- (30) Hamilton, 1949: p. 73; Creswell, 1958. *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, 1st. edition. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books: p. 10.
- (31) Ahmad Fikri, 1961. *Masajid al-Qahira wa Madarisuha, al-Iskandariya*: Dar al-Ma`arif: Pp. 211-12.
- (32) Creswell, 1979, Vol. I, Pt.1: Pp. 32-33.
- (33) Creswell, 1979, Vol. I, Pt.1: Pp. 32-33.
- (34) Shams al-Din Abu `Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Maqdisi, 1906. *Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma`rifat al-Aqalim*. Edited by M.J. Goeje. Leiden: E.J. Brill. Beirut: Maktabat Khaiyat: Pp. 166-67, 172; See also al-Duri, 1982: p. 354.
- Al-Maqdisi states that: " Bait al-Maqdis combined the merits of this world and the next; that it had all the virtue (fadl) since both Mecca and al-Medina - who were elevated by the Ka`ba and the prophet - will go there.
- Nasiri Khusrew (d. 438 AH/ 1047 AD) confirms this and adds that thousands from the ends of the world go to al-Quds (the Holy as the people called it then) and stay until they die, so that they will be resurrected there.
- (35) Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Hamadani ibn al-Faqih, 1885. *Mukhtasar Kitab al-Buldan*, edited by M.J. Goeje. Leiden: E.J. Brill: Pp. 100-101.

Ibn al-Faqih in his *Mukhtasar Kitab al-Buldan* describes the Bait al-Maqdis as follows:

"The length of the Haram al-Sharif at Jerusalem is 1,500 feet, and its width was 1,050 feet. There are (in its building) 4,000 beams of wood, 700 pillars (of stone) and 500 brass chains. It was lighted every night by 1,600 lamps, and it was served by 140 servant. The monthly allowance of olive oil was 100 kists [about 150 quarts] and yearly they provide 400,000 yards of matting, also 25,000 water jars. Within the Haram al-Sharif were sixteen chests for volumes of the Qur'an set a part for public service, and these manuscripts are the admiration of all men. There were four pulpits for volunteer preachers and one set a part for a salaried preacher; and were also four tanks for ablutions. On the various roofs, in place of clay, were used 45,000 sheets of lead to the right of the prayer niche. In the Aqsa Mosque was a slab on which was written the name Muhammad- God's blessing be upon him - and on a white stone behind the southern wall was the inscription: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Muhammad is God's Apostle. Hamza [the Prophet's uncle] was his helper. Within the Mosque were three enclosures for the women, each enclosure is being 105 feet in length. There were within and without (the Haram) altogether fifty gates. In the middle of the Haram Area was a platform measuring 450 feet in length, 60 feet across, and its height was 13.5 feet. It had six flights of stairways leading up to the Dome of the Rock. The Dome rises in the middle of this platform. The ground-plan of the same structure measures 150 feet by 150 feet. Its height was 105 feet, and its circumference was 540 feet. In the Dome every night they light 300 lamps. It had four gates roofed, over each gate was a portico of marble. The stone of the Rock measures 51 feet by 40.5 feet, and beneath the Rock is a cavern in which people pray. This cavern was capable of containing sixty-two persons. The Dome was covered with white marble and its roof with red gold. In its walls and its drum were fifty-six openings, glazed with glass of various hues; each measures nine feet in height and six spans across."

- (36) Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn `Abd Rabbihi, *Kitab al-`Iqd al-Farid*, edited by Ahmad Amin, Ahmad al-Zayn and Ibrahim al-Abyari. *Al-Qahira: Matba`at Lajnat al-Ta'lif wa'l-Tarjama wa'l-Nashr*, 1940-1953, Vol. 6: pp. 363-4.

Ibn `Abd Rabbihi states:

"The length of the Mosque was 1410 feet, and its width was 853 feet. The

Mosque was lighted with 1,500 lamps. It had 50 gates (and doors), and had 684 columns. The Dome of the Rock had 30 columns inside and 18 columns outside. The Dome was covered with 3392 slabs of lead. The Dome of the Rock is lighted with 464 lamps. The height of the (Dome) Rock which was in Jerusalem in the sky was 12 miles, the people of Jericho were used to sit in its shadow (protection from the sun During the hot summer). It had a red diamond lights where the people of the Balqa' could see it. In the Mosque there were three rooms for women, the length of each was 120 feet and the width was 75 feet. It had 15 domes, and 24 water-reservoirs, and four minarets for the mu'zinns."

(37) al-Maqdisi, 1906: Pp. 168-9.

Al-Maqdisi, in his *Kitab Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma`rifat al- Aqalim*, gives this description of the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock as follows:

"The Aqsa Mosque, among Provincial towns none is larger than Jerusalem, and many capitals are in fact smaller..The buildings of the Holy City are of stone, and you will find nowhere finer or more solid constructions." But the Aqsa Mosque is situated at the east corner of the City of Jerusalem towards the south. Its foundations are of the work of the Prophet David. The length of the stone is 10 dhira` [25 feet] decorated and ornamented, well organized and solid. Upon which `Abd al-Malik built with beautiful and small stones and ornamented it as it became more beautiful than the Mosque of Damascus. But the earthquake, in the time of the `Abbasid caliphate, destroyed the Aqsa Mosque except what surrounded the mihrab. When the news reached the caliph, it was said to him the moneys in the treasury was not enough. So he wrote to his governors of the Provincial towns and to the army leaders, for each of them has to build a portico. So they built it stronger and heavier than before with concrete cement, therefore, it is renewed."

"The Aqsa Mosque has twenty-six gates, the gate opposite the mihrab is called the Great Brass Door. To the right hand of it are seven large doors, and to the left the same. And on the eastern side are eleven doors, unornamented, and there are 15 porticoes stand on marble columns... There are also four domes: The Dome of the Chain, the Dome of the Ascension, the Dome of the Prophet, and over the central part of the sanctuary is a gable roof, above which rises the Dome of the Rock. The roofs everywhere are sheathed with lead."

(38) Creswell, 1979: Vol.I, Pt. 2: p. 375.

(39) al-Qazwini, 1969: Pp. 162-3.

Al-Qazwini states:

"The length of the Aqsa Mosque is 1470 feet, and its width is 853 feet. It has 684 pillars, and inside of the Dome of the Rock are thirty columns. The Dome of the Rock is covered with slabs of lead of 3392 slabs, and the roof of the Mosque contains 4000 wood-pieces, and at the top of the roofs are 4500 pieces of lead. The length of the Rock is 49.5 feet and the width is 40.5 feet. The Mosque lights with 1,500 lamps and lights with 464 lamps. The Mosque has 100 quarts of oil every month and yearly allowance is 1,200,000 feet matting. It has 230 servants appointed by `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan."

(40) `Imad al-Din Isma`il ibn Muhammad Abu'l-Fida', *Kitab Taqwim al-Buldan*, edited by M.Reinaud and M. Le Bon. Paris: A L' imprimerie Royale, 1840: Pp. 240-1.

(41) See al-Maqdisi, 1994: Pp. 355-6.

(42) See Hamilton, 1949: pp. 71-2; Le Strange, 1975: p. 93; al-Maqdisi, 1994: p. 355. Al-Maqdisi writes:

"But in the reign of the Caliph al-Mansur, both the eastern and western portions of the mosque had fallen down. Then it was reported to the Caliph, saying "O Commander of the Faithful, verily the earthquake in the year 130 (746 AD) did throw down the eastern part of the mosque and the western part also; now, therefore, do thou give order to rebuild the same and raise it again/" And the caliph replied that as there were no moneys in his treasury, they should strip off the plates of gold and silver that overlaid the gates. So they stripped these off and coined therefrom dinars and dirhams, which moneys were expended on the rebuilding of the mosque until it was completed.

"Then occurred a second earthquake and the building that al-Mansur had commanded to be built fell to the ground."

(43) Al-Maqdisi, 1906: P. 168.

(44) Le Strange, 1975: p. 93; al-Maqdisi, 1994: p. 356.

(45) Al-Maqdisi, 1906: p. 168.

(46) Creswell, 1958: p. 204; al-Maqdisi, 1994: p. 356.

Al-Maqdisi writes:

"In the days of the Caliph al-Mehdi, who succeeded him, the mosque was still lying in ruins, which being reported to him, he commanded them to rebuild the same and the Caliph said that the mosque had been too narrow, and too great in length, and it had not been much used by the people, so now they should curtail the length and increase the breadth. Now the restoration was completed on the new plan during the days of his caliphate."

(47) Duncan, 1972: p. 42; Peters, 1985: p.286; Hanayneh, 1994: p. 7.

(48) Creswell, 1958: p. 205.

(49) Cited in Le Strange, 1975: p. 118.

(50) Creswell, 1958: p. 43; Ghazi R. Muhammad, 1974. "al-Masjid al-Aqsa bil-Haram al-Sharif bi- Bayt al-Maqdis," Buhuth al-Mu'tamar al-Duwali lil-Ta'rikh, Mar. 25, 1973, Baghdad. Baghdad: Manshurat Wizarat al-'Ilam: p. 449.

(51) Hamilton, 1949: Pp. 22-9; Creswell, 1979, Vol. I,Pt.1: Pp. 32-5.

(52) See Jean Sauvaget, 1947. *Le Mosquee Omeyyade de Medine*. Paris; Ghazi Bisheh, 1979. *The Mosque of the Prophet at Madinah throughout the First-Century A.H. With special Emphasis on the Umayyad Mosque*, Ph.D. Dissertation. Michigan: the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

(53) See Creswell, 1979, Vol. I,pt.1: p. 69.

This inscription says:

"HATH BUILT THIS DOME THE SERVANT OF ALLAH `ABD ALLAH
THE IMAM AL MAMUN COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL IN THE

YEAR TWO SEVENTY - ALLAH ACCEPT OF HIM".

It will be observed that the date 72 AH (691-692 AD), falls in the reign of the Caliph `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, and therefore, agrees with the sources, but that the name of al-Ma'mun has been substituted. That substitution is evident from two cases: The failure of the later mosaicist to alter the date. This substitution is clear from the crowding together the letters of the Abbasid Caliph's name and titles.

The tint of the newer mosaic, being darker, does not match that of the rest of the band. Thus this substitution probably took place in the year 216 AH (831 AD), because the bronze plates, still fixed to the lintels to the east and north entrances, that bear the inscriptions in the name of al-Ma'mun.

- (54) Creswell, 1958: Pp. 19-20; 1979, Vol. I: Pp. 105-7.
- (55) Ibn al-Faqih, 1885: Pp. 100-101; See also Le Strange, 1975: p. 48; Creswell, 1979, Vol. I, pt.1: p. 69.
- (56) Rivoira, 1975: p. 57.
- (57) Demetri Baramki, 1958. "Tatawwur al-Handasa al-Mi`mariya wa'l- Fann fi `Ahd al-Umawiyin," *al-Mu'tamar al-Thani Lil-Athar fi al-Bilad al-`Arabiya*, Nov. 18-28, 1957, Baghdad. *Al-Qahira: Dar al-Tiba`a al-Haditha*: p. 132.
- (58) For complete list, see Creswell, 1979, Vol. I: Pp. 101-9.
- (59) Creswell, 1958: p. 39.
- (60) Ahmad Fikri, 1980. "Qubbat al-Sakhra," Pp. 1-55 in *Majallat `Alam al-Fikr*, al-Kuwait, Vol. 11, No.I, especially Pp. 13-4.
- (61) Sarhan. M.S. (ed.).1988. *Mujaz Da'irat al-Ma`arif al-Islamiya*, Vol. 32. *Al-Shariqa: Markaz al-Shariqa Ll-Ibda` al-Fikri.*, Pp. 10222-23.
- (62) al-Ya`qubi, 1960, Vol. 2: P. 261. See also, Creswell, 1979, Vol. I, Pt.1: p. 66.

Al-Ya`qubi writes:

"Then `Abd al-Malik forbade the people of Syria to make the pilgrimage (to Mecca); and this by reason that `Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr was aiming at seizing on them during the time of the pilgrimage, and force them to pay him allegiance which `Abd al-Malik having knowledge of, forbade the people to journey forth to Mecca. But the people murmured threat, saying: How does thou forbid us to make the pilgrimage to Allah's house, seeing that the same was a commandment of God upon us? But the Caliph answered them, Hath not ibn Shihab al-Zuhri [a celebrated Traditionist] told you how the Apostle of God did say: Men shall journey to but three Mosques (Masajid): The Sacred Mosque (al-Masjid al-Haram) at Mecca, The Mosque of the Prophet (al-Masjid al-Nabawi) at al-Medina and the Mosque of Bait al-Maqdis (al-Masjid al-Aqsa = the Aqsa Mosque) at Jerusalem. Therefore, this last mosque is now appointed for you instead of the Sacred Mosque. And this Rock, of which it is reported that upon it the Apostle of God set his foot when he ascended into heaven, shall be unto you in the place of the Ka`ba? Then `Abd al-Malik built above the Rock a Dome and hung it around with curtains of brocade and instituted door-keepers for the same, and the people took the custom of circumambulating the Rock, even as they had paced round the Ka`ba and the usage continued thus all the days of the dynasty of the Umayyads."

(63) al-Maqdisi, 1906: p. 159.

al-Maqdisi states:

"Now one day I said, speaking to my father's uncle, O my uncle, verily it was not well of the Caliph al-Walid to expend so much of the wealth of the Muslims on the Mosque at Damascus. Had he expended the same on making roads, or for caravansaries, or in the restorations of the frontier fortresses, it would have been more fitting and more excellent of him. But my uncle said to me in answer, "O my little son, thou has not understanding! Verily al-Walid was right and he was prompted to a worthy work. For he beheld Syria to be a country that had long been occupied by the Christians, and he noted herein the beautiful churches still belonging to them, so enchantingly fair, and so renowned for their splendor, even as are the Qumama (the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem), and the churches of Ludda and Edessa. So that he sought to build for the Muslims, a Mosque that should prevent their regarding these, and that should be unique and a wonder to the world. And in like manner is it not evident how the Caliph `Abd al-Malik, noting the greatness of the Dome of the Church

of the Holy Sepulchre and its magnificence was moved lest it should dazzle the minds of the Muslims and hence erected above the Rock, the Dome which is seen there."

- (64) Creswell, 1958: p. 39.
- (65) Peters, 1985: p. 197.
- (66) `Abd al-`Aziz al-Duri, 1960. *Bahth fi Nash'at `Ilm al-Ta'rikh `Ind al-`Arab*. Beirut: al-Matba`a al-Kathulikiya: p. 99; see also al-Duri, 1982: p. 352.
- (67) Creswell, 1979, Vol. I, pt.1: pp. 66, 151. These sources mentioned by Creswell are: Eutychius (d. 939 AD), al-Makin (b. 1204 AD), Ibn Kathir (d. 1373 AD), Abu'l-Mahasin (d. 1458 AD), Mujir al-Din (1469), and Diyarbakri (1534 AD).
- (68) Fikri, 1980: p. 24.
- (69) `Abdallah ibn `Abd al-`Aziz al-Bakri, 1945-1951. *Mu`jam ma Ista`jam min Asma' al-Bilad wa'l- Mawadi`*, edited by Mustafa al-Saqqa. Al-Qahira: Matba`at Lajnat al-Ta'lif wal-Tarjama wa'l-Nashr, Vol. 3: p. 827.
- (70) See al-Maqdisi, 1906: Pp. 159, 168.
- (71) al-Duri, 1982: p. 353.
- (72) al-Duri, 1982: p. 353.
- (73) al-Mansur visited Bait al-Maqdis twice in 140 A.H. (757 A.D.), and in 154 A.H. (771 A.D.).
- See al-Baladhuri, 1956-1957, Vol. I: p. 233; Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-Rusl wa'l-Muluk*, edited by Muhammad Abu'l-Fadl Ibrahim. al-Qahira: Dar al-Ma`arif, 1977, Vol. 7: Pp. 503-4.
- al-Mehdi also visited Bait al-Maqdis in 163 A.H. (780 A.D.).
- See al-Tabari, 1977, Vol. 8: p.148; al-Maqdisi, 1994: Pp. 355-6.
- (74) For more information, see Creswell, 1979, Vol. I, Pt.1: p. 69.

- (75) Kathleen Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem*, (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1974), pp. 276-277; Mahmud al-'Abidi, 1974. "al-Hafriyat al-Athariyah Hawl al-haram al-Qudsi," in *al-Mu'tamar al-Duwali li-Tarikh Bilad al-Sham*, Amman: al-jami'ah al-Urduniyah, P. 526.
- (76) Kenyon, 1974: p. 277.
- (77) Kenyon, 1974: p. 277.
- 74 . Mazar, 1969 b, pp. 1-21; Mazar, 1971 b, pp. 1-36; Ben-Dov, 1971 b, Pp. 37- 44.
- (78) Benjamin Mazar, "The Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem: Preliminary Report of the First Season, 1968," *The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem, The Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University* (1969), pp. 1-21; Benjamin Mazar, "The Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Near the Temple Mount: Second Preliminary Report, 1969-1970 Season," *The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem, The Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University*, 1971, Pp. 1-36; M. Ben-Dov, "The Omayyad Structures Near the Temple Mount: Third Preliminary Report," *The Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem: The Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University*, 1971, pp. 37-44.
- (79) Benjamin Mazar, *Eretz Israel*, 1969 a, Vol. IX: Pp. 161-74; Ben- Dov, *Eretz Israel*, 1971 a, Vol. X: Pp. 35-40
- (80) Mazar, 1969 b, pp. 1-21; Mazar, 1971 b, pp. 1-36; Ben-Dov, 1971 b, Pp. 37- 44.
- (81) Ben-Dov, 1971 b: Pp. 37-44; See also al-Abidi, 1974: P. 540-41.
- (82) For more details, See Ben-Dov, 1971 b: Pp. 37-44; al-Abidi, 1974: P. 542.
- (83) Al-Abidi, 1974: P. 541; Rosen-Ayalon, 1975: p. 94.
- (84) Ben-Dov, 1971 b: p. 39.
- (85) Mazar, 1969 b, p. 6; 1971 b, p. 4; Ben-Dov, 1971 b, p. 37.
- (86) Mazar, 1969 b, p. 6; Ben-Dov, 1971 b, pp. 39, 41.
- (87) Robert W. Hamilton, 1959. *Khirbat al-Mafjar: An Arabian Mansion in the Jordan*

Valley, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Pl. (CIV); al-Abidi, 1974: Pp. 541-42.

(88) Mazar 1969 b: p. 6.

(89) A.D. Tushingham, 1985. "Excavations in the Armenian Garden on the Western Hill," Excavations in Jerusalem, 1961-1967, edited by A.D. Tushingham, Toronto Royal Ontario Museum, Vol. I: p. 106.

(90) Emmett W. Hamrick, 1985. "The Northern Barrier Wall in Site T," Excavations in Jerusalem, 1961-1967, edited by A.D. Tushingham, Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, Vol. I: p. 222.

(91) See al-Maqdisi, 1906. *Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma`rifat al-Aqalim*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, P.167.

(92) al-Duri, abd al-Aziz, 1982: P. 353.

(93) al-Maqdisi, 1906: P. 167; al-Abidi, 1974: P. 544.

al-Maqdisi mentions that the "bab al-balat" or as it has been called "bab al-Qasr al-`Azim", the "gate of the great palace" is located in the southeast area of the Haram and was leading to this great palace.

(94) Ben-Dov, 1971 b: p. 43, note: 16.

(95) al-Maqdisi, 1906: P. 171; al-Abidi, 1974: P.545.

See also: Rosen-Ayalon 1975, pp. 93-94.

Arabic sources indicate that the "dar al-Akhmas" was located to the South of the Haram al-Sharif which would be the second building-complex. If this conclusion is correct, then the servants of the Caliph `Abd al-Malik were living in the first floor of the great palace and were entered to the Haram Area through the "Double Gate" which would be located in the third building. The fourth building would be a Mosque because of the existence of a mihrab in the qibla side.

(96) W. Harold Mare, 1987. *The Archaeology of the Jerusalem Area*. Michigan: Baker Book House, p:275.

- (97) Al-Maqdisi, 1906: P. 171.
- (98) al-Maqdisi, 1906: P. 171.
- (99) Ibn Abd Rabbihi, 1940-1953. Kitab al-Iqd al-Farid, Vol. 6: Pp. 263-64.
- (100) See al-Abidi, 1974: P. 545.
- (101) Le Strange, 1975: P. 174.
- (102) Ben-Dov 1971 b: P. 43; al-Abidi, 1974: P. 545; Bihannasi, A. 1975. "al-Qusur al-Shamiya wa Zakhirifuha fi Ahd al-Umawiyin," Majallat al-Hawliyat al-Athariya al-Arabiya al-Suriya, Vol. 25, Nos. 1&2: Pp. 15-16.
- (103) Creswell, 1979, Vol. 1, Pt. 2: Pp. 385, 473,, 510, 553.
- (104) Mazar, 1969 b: P. 17; Ben-Dov, 1971 b: P. 37; Ben-Dov, 1975. " The Area South of the Temple Mount in the Early Islamic Period," Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology of the Holy City. Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society: P. 97.
- (105) Ben-Dov, 1971 b: P. 37; 1975: Pp. 99-100.
- (106) al-Abidi, M. 1972. "al-Hafriyat Hawl al-Haram," Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Vol. 17: Pp. 35-36.

