

## Bait al-Maqdis in Islam\*

This is an attempt to give an idea of the significance of Bait al-Maqdis in Islam, between the 1st (7th) and the 5th (11th) centuries. The sources used are generally from that period.

Traditions and reports need a critical assessment in time, locality, and tendency; they were not just pious utterances, but were related to their background and conditions.

Veneration for B. al-Maqdis began early, in Mecca, with the verse on Isrā' to al-Masjid al-Aqsa (sura xvii, 1) revealed c. 611 AD<sup>1</sup>. Early reports explain that al-Aqsa meant the city or preferably the Haram, and add that the ascension (Mi'rāj) was from there<sup>2</sup>. The Isrā' and Mi'rāj became themes for expanding pious stories.

B. al-Maqdis became the first 'qibla' in Medina for about 17 months, before Muslims were directed towards the Ka'aba (sura ii, 144)<sup>3</sup>.

Traditions enhanced the sanctity of B. al-Maqdis as the third of the two Noble Sanctuaries, especially one limiting religious visits to the three mosques of Mecca, Medina, and B. al-Maqdis<sup>4</sup>. This tradition comes in more than one form, with slight verbal variations<sup>5</sup>.

Other traditions and sayings (āthār) began to circulate early, reflecting socio-political currents. These, and later sayings, give an idea of the veneration for B. al-Maqdis and its development in course of time<sup>6</sup>.

\* Bait al-Maqdis is a transliteration to the Arabic of 'The Dome of the Rock'.

<sup>1</sup> Baladhuri—*Ansab* i p. 255 puts it one year before the hijra. Another report makes it 18 months before the hijra.

<sup>2</sup> See Ibn Hisham—*Sira* (ed. Saqqa and others) ii pp. 36–37, 39, 41, 43. Ibn Ishaq—*Sira* (ed. Hamidullah) p. 275; Baladhuri—*Ansab* i p. 255 adds: it is the mosque of Bait al-Maqdis, see also p. 256; *ibn Sa'ad-Tabaqat* iv p. 153. Tabari refers to various interpretations and then maintains that al-Masjid al-Aqsa means the mosque of B. al-Maqdis, *Tafsir* (Cairo 1328) vol. xv, p. 5, see also pp. 7, 12, 13–14.

<sup>3</sup> See Ibn Ishaq—*Sira* i, p. 277, 299; Ibn Hisham ii, p. 198–199; Askari—*Awa'il* i (Damascus), pp. 331, 334; Tabari—*Tafsir* iii (ed. M. Shakir), pp. 132–136, 138; Ibn Hanbal—*Musnad* iv, p. 283; Bukhari i (Cairo 1304), p. 59; M. F. Abd al-Baqi—*Lu'Lu'* i, p. 216.

<sup>4</sup> 'You shall only travel to three mosques, al-Masjid al-Harām (in Mecca), my mosque (in Medina) and the Aqsa mosque', see Wensinck—*Concordance* ii, p. 429; Kister 'A Study of an Early Tradition', *le Muséon* lxxxii, 1–2, 1969, pp. 173–196.

<sup>5</sup> See San'āni—*Musannaf* v, nos. 9158–9160, 9162 and 9171; Ibn Hanbal—*Musnad* ii, p. 238, 278, iii, pp. 64, 34, 51–53, 93, iv, pp. 7, 397–398; Muslim—*Sahih* iii, pp. 1014–1015, ii, nos. 415, 511–513; Nasā'ī—*Sunan* ii, pp. 37–38; *Kanz al-Ummal* xiii, p. 233, 1307–1309, 1311, 1318, Bayhaqi—*Sunan* x, p. 87; M. F. Abd al-Baqi—*Lu'Lu'* i, p. 97–98.

<sup>6</sup> Eutychius ii, pp. 17, 18.

Accounts of the conquest of B. al-Maqdis, with Umar's visit to the city, assume special importance in the annals of conquest because of the city's elevated position. Numerous and varied reports, accounts and stories have come about, and many are influenced by local, social, and religious interests<sup>7</sup>.

A study of early accounts shows that B. al-Maqdis capitulated to Muslim commanders, as Medinese<sup>7</sup> and Iraqi<sup>8</sup> reports generally show, and that Umar came to Syria to set the lines of its administration, and paid a visit to the city<sup>9</sup>. But Syrian and Christian accounts indicate that the city only surrendered to the Caliph in person<sup>10</sup>, thus reflecting local social and religious interests.

The 'ṣulḥ' with B. al-Maqdis assumed special importance, but descriptions of this 'ṣulḥ' vary. Early reports indicate that it was similar to agreements concluded by commanders with other cities in Syria—safety for the people, their property and churches, in return for payment of the Jizya<sup>11</sup>. The texts of the 'ṣulḥ' given by Ya'qubi and Eutychius follow this line<sup>12</sup>.

Tabari, quoting Saif b. Umar (180/796) reports that a special 'ṣulḥ'—different from those drawn up for other cities of Palestine—was concluded with Ilya (B.M.), and produces a text with further guarantees for religious freedom and safety of churches and stipulates that no Jew is allowed to live in Ilya<sup>13</sup>. The unusual wording of the text, and the reference to the Jews, not in line with normal practice, arouse doubts. Besides, it finds no support in early Arabic sources<sup>14</sup>. Ibn

<sup>7</sup> Salim b. Abdullah, in *Tabari* i, p. 2403; Khalifa b. Khayyat i p. 125; Ibn Ishaq in *Tabari* i, p. 2360; Laith b. Sa'ad in Abu Ubaid—*Amwal*, pp. 224–225, and Baladhuri—*Futuh*, p. 139.

<sup>8</sup> Saif b. Umar in *Tabari* i, pp. 2397–2402, see also p. 2404–2405, 2408; Ya'qubi—*Tarikh* ii, pp. 160–161.

<sup>9</sup> See Ibn Asakir—*Dimashq* i, pp. 553, 554, 556; Ya'qubi ii, pp. 160–161.

<sup>10</sup> See Baladhuri—*Futuh*, pp. 138–139 (from Abu Hafis al-Dimashqi and others) and p. 139 (from Hisham b. Ammar al-Damashqi); *Azdi-Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 24–25, 247–251, 258; see Ibn A'tham i, pp. 289, 291–292, 301; Abu Ubaid—*Amwal*, pp. 245–6; see Ibn Asakir—*Dimashq* i, p. 553; Khalifa i, pp. 124–125.

<sup>11</sup> See *Azdi-Futuh*, p. 250; Baladhuri—*Futuh*, p. 139; Ibn A'tham i, p. 291; Tabari i, p. 2404; *Yaqut-Buldan* v, p. 598–599.

<sup>12</sup> Ya'qubi ii, p. 167; Eutychius ii, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Tabari i, pp. 2405–2406; see *Muthir al-Gharam*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>14</sup> Michael le Syrien—*Chronique* ii, p. 425 mentions the prohibition of the Jews and makes the ṣulḥ for all Christian in Syria.

al-Jawzi, however, quoting another report of Saif, gives the text of the 'sulḥ', without the additions, and in the usual style<sup>15</sup>. It seems that the text in Tabari reflects later, probably Christian, ideas<sup>16</sup>.

The text of this 'sulḥ' ('ahd) was developed in time, to be known as the Covenant of Umar<sup>17</sup>. It comes in different versions from the 2nd (8th) century onwards, and was generalized for all Christians of Syria<sup>18</sup>. A study of these texts shows that they have no relevance to the period of the conquest, but reflect the position of Christians, and occasionally their claims, in Muslim society from the time of Umar II onwards. Some texts give a legal framework for later developments<sup>19</sup>.

Umar's visit to B. al-Maqdis—his only visit to a city outside Arabia—was on account of its sanctity. The visit accounts for reports and stories by Jews and Christians, as well as Muslims, to establish precedents in their interests<sup>20</sup>.

Umar cleared the Haram, uncovered the Rock and prayed south of it. A simple mosque was soon erected there. Al-Azdi 321/933) states that Umar planned there a 'miḥrāb' on the eastern side 'which is the site of his mosque'<sup>21</sup>. Both Muhallabi (4th/10th century) and Maqdisi (Mutahhar b. Tāhir) refer to the erection of a mosque in the time of Umar, while Theophanes, Eutychius and Michael the Syrian state that Umar ordered the erection of this mosque<sup>22</sup>. A later report mentions the minbar (pulpit) of this mosque under Mu'awiya<sup>23</sup>, while Bishop Arculf who visited the city c. 670 AD (50 AH), described the mosque<sup>24</sup>. Half a century later, it was rebuilt on a grand scale.

Umar sent a companion (Ubadā b. al-Sāmit) to be judge and teacher, a step reserved only for important provincial Arab centres<sup>25</sup>. This, with the references to many companions

and followers (tabiún) who visited B. al-Maqdis or lived there, are indicative of its high place<sup>26</sup>. The pious Abu Dharr—about to be banished—expressed the wish to go to Mecca, or to B. al-Maqdis, while Abu Ubaida b. al-Jarrāh died on his way to it to pray in the Haram<sup>27</sup>.

With the Umayyads, B. al-Maqdis received special attention, for politico-religious reasons. The city's sanctity could mean Islamic prestige and support for the Umayyads. If their opponents refer to Medina, not to mention Kufa, they have B. al-Maqdis. It was no coincidence that both Mu'awiya in 40 AH (660 AD), before the abdication of al-Hasan<sup>28</sup>, and Abd al-Malik, in conflict with Ibn al-Zubair<sup>29</sup>—received the bay'a (oath) in B. al-Maqdis. Besides, those two and other Umayyad Caliphs—Walid, Sulaiman, Umar II and Yazid II—frequently visited the city, thus showing their veneration for it<sup>30</sup>.

The great monuments of B. al-Maqdis were erected by the Umayyads, to emphasize the sanctity of the Haram and to gain more respect and renown among Muslims.

Abd al-Malik built the magnificent Dome of the Rock in 72 AH (691–2 AD)<sup>31</sup>. Ya'qubi's (284 AH/895 AD) report that the Caliph meant to divert the pilgrimage to the Dome, to keep people away from the da'wa of Ibn al-Zubair<sup>32</sup>, can be dismissed on internal and external evidence<sup>33</sup>. It is an isolated report with anti-Umayyad leaning. It makes the Caliph invoke the authority of Zuhri (124 AH/741 AD), who only visited Damascus ten years later (82 AH) and was even then young and unknown. Besides, Abd al-Malik, a Hadith scholar, fighting for his Caliphate, could hardly run against Qur'anic injunctions<sup>34</sup>. Later historians reiterated this report<sup>35</sup>; Muhallabi, a geographer (4th century AH/10th AD), and in line with Shiite views attributed the decision to Walid, to prevent people from knowing the virtues of the family of the Prophet<sup>36</sup>. Both Ya'qubi and Muhallabi report that pilgrim-

<sup>15</sup>See Tabari I, p. 2399 ff; Ibn al-Jawzi-Fada'il al-Quds (Beirut 1979), pp. 123–124.

<sup>16</sup>al-Himyari gives a summary of the terms and adds: 'They (Christians) stipulated that Jews do not live with them', *al-Rawd al-Mi'tar*, p. 69. See Hamarneh in *Folia Orientalia IX*, 1969, p. 145 ff.

<sup>17</sup>Ibn A'tham I, p. 196 gives the first reference to this document which Christians in B. al-Maqdis attribute to his days.

<sup>18</sup>Tabari I, p. 2405, Ibn Asakir—*Dimashq I*, pp. 563–564, 564–565, 566–567, 567–568, Mujir al-Din—*Uns al-Jalil I*, p. 253–254, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya—*al-shurūt al-Umariyya*, ed. Subhi al-Salih (Damascus 1961).

<sup>19</sup>See the text published by the patriarchate of al-Quds in 1.1.1952 in Arif al-Arif—*Mufassal fi Tarikh al-Quds*, pp. 49–50. See Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects*, pp. 5 ff.

<sup>20</sup>See Azdi—*Futuh*, p. 259; Eutychius II, pp. 17–18; Tabari I, pp. 2408–2409; Ibn A'tham I, p. 296; *Encyclopedia Judaica, Art. Jerusalem*. (Christians relate (Eutychius) how Umar respected their churches, especially the Holy Sepulchre, how the Patriarch suggested the neglected Haram area as a site for a mosque, and how he stipulated the barring of Jews from the city. A Jewish account claims that Jews petitioned Umar to allow 200 Jewish families from Egypt to come to the city, but on the objection of the Patriarch Umar agreed to let 70 families come and live south of the Haram. Egypt was conquered some years later. See *Ency. Judaica, Art. (Jerusalem)*.

<sup>21</sup>Azdi—*Futuh*, p. 259; pseudo- Waqidi—*Futuh I*, p. 151.

<sup>22</sup>Muhallabi, in *Majallat Ma'had al-Makhtutat*, 1958, p. 48, p. 45; Maqdisi, *al-Bad' wa'l-Tarikh IV*, p. 87; Eutychius II, p. 81; Michael le Syrien, p. 423; Le Strange *Palestine*, p. 140 fn.

<sup>23</sup>See Ibn Firkāh *Bā'ith al-Nufus* (from Khalid b. Safwan), p. 14; Himyari—*Rawd*, p. 69; Qalqashandi, *Subh IV*, p. 101; Ibn Khaldun—*I* (Bulaq), p. 297.

<sup>24</sup>Palestine Pilgrims Texts Society, VII (N.Y. 1971) pp. 4–5.

<sup>25</sup>Ibn Hajar—*Isaba II*, p. 160 and Ibn Abd al-Barr (in Morgin) p. 441.

<sup>26</sup>Ibn Asakir—*Dimashq VI*, p. 370; Wathima—*Bad' al-Khalq*, p. 192; *Muthir al-Garam*, p. 7 ff; Suyuti—*Ithaf* (mss), fols. 86a–93a.

<sup>27</sup>See Baladhuri—*Ansab VI*, pt. I p. 534; Ibn Hajar—*Isaba II*, p. 245; Ibn Asakir—*Dimashq VI*, pp. 316, 317. A later report says that Mu'awiya made a pact of alliance and mutual support with 'Amr at B. al-Maqdis. *Muthir al-Gharam*, p. 14.

<sup>28</sup>Tabari II, p. 15; Maqdisi—*Bad' IV*, p. 87; *Tarikh al-Khulafa* (Anon.), p. 121; Qalqashandi—*inafa I*, p. 110; Wellhausen (Arabic), p. 96.

<sup>29</sup>In *Ramadan 65 A. H.*, Khalifa I, p. 329.

<sup>30</sup>See Ibn Abd Rabbih—*Iqd IV*, 434, Basawi—*al-Ma'rifa wa'l-Tarikh II*, p. 370. The governors of Palestine were usually from Umayyad princes (like Abd al-Malik and Sulaiman) of distinguished men (like Ibn Bahdal), see Baladhuri—*Ansab IV* (1), p. 160, p. 359. Sulaiman received the bay'a at the Haram, Munajjid—*Mu'jam Bani Umayya*, p. 67; *Muthir al-Gharam*, p. 45.

<sup>31</sup>Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture I*, p. 65. See Jahshiyari—*Wuzara*, p. 18; Eutychius II, p. 39; *Wasiti-Fadā'il*, p. 81 ff.

<sup>32</sup>*Tarikh II*, p. 311; Eutychius II, p. 39. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies II*, p. 44–47 accepted this report, and Creswell *Early Muslim Architecture I*, pp. 65–67 followed.

<sup>33</sup>See Goitein, *Studies in Islamic Civilization*, pp. 135 ff. Grabar, *The Umayyad Dome of the Rock*, pp. 35–36.

<sup>34</sup>See Basawi—*Ma'rifa I*, p. 626–629; Tabari II, p. 1085.

<sup>35</sup>See Ibn Taghri Bardi—*Nujum I*, p. 217; Ibn Kathir—*Bidaya VIII*, p. 280; Qalqashandi—*Inafa I*, p. 129.

<sup>36</sup>Muhallabi, op. cit. p. 54; see Eutychius II, p. 39.

age from Syria stopped until the end of the Umayyads, contrary to historical evidence<sup>37</sup>.

Abd al-Malik probably meant to express the splendour of Islam in architectural terms in a city rich in magnificent churches<sup>38</sup>. It is also more than likely, however, that he wanted to show the sanctity of the Haram and to gain prestige among Muslims. This is implied by the inscriptions in the Dome, which reflect the Islamic-Christian dialogue at the time, state basic Islamic concepts and give a vindication of Islam and its universality as the final revelation<sup>39</sup>.

The choice of the site of the Dome is significant. Early reports and accounts, both Syrian and anti-Umayyad, tend to link the site with the 'ascension', and probably with resurrection. Umar's attention to the Rock is specially noted. Thus the Rock is made the focal point of the Haram. Such reports were in circulation at the time in Syria<sup>40</sup>.

Thus Abd al-Malik built a monument of Islamic significance and connotations. His descendents noted that with pride<sup>41</sup>. The Abbasid Al-Mahdi confided to his minister that the Dome was one of four great signs to which the Umayyads gave precedence<sup>42</sup>. Al-Walid continued his father's work and built the great Aqsa mosque.

Traditions, sayings and stories, including isrā'iliyyāt, about the merits of the Holy Land and the Aqsa mosque were related, and some qurānic verses were expounded to refer to them, during the Umayyad period<sup>43</sup>. The Umayyads probably encouraged this activity. Statements attributed to Mu'awiya extol the Holy Land—the place of prophets, the land of resurrection, the best of lands for which the best of people were chosen<sup>44</sup>. Abd al-Malik and Walid probably spoke of the merits of B. al-Maqdis—place of resurrection—and of visiting al-Aqsa—place of ascension. Some people—probably Quṣṣaṣ—used to lecture or talk about the virtues of B. al-Maqdis there<sup>46</sup>.

Traditions were reported about the merits of visits to, and prayers in the Aqsa mosque, compared to the mosques of

Mecca and Medina<sup>47</sup>. Spreading these traditions was not motivated merely by pious considerations; it would have some socio-political connotations, reflecting opposite political opinions.

First there was the famous tradition 'you shall only set out to three mosques'. It is to be expected that Umayyads and Syrians favoured its circulation. It was transmitted mainly through two chains (isnād)—one on the authority of Zuhri 124 AH/741 AD (Ma'mar b. Rashid, Zuhri, Said b. al-Musayyab, Abu Huraira) who was a frequent visitor to Syria and in contact with more than one Umayyad Caliph<sup>48</sup>. The second was on the authority of Quza'a (74 AH/692–3 AD)<sup>49</sup> (Abd al-Malik b. Umair (136 AH), Quza'a, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, or Sa'id b. Abi 'Aruba, Qatada (117 AH)—Quza'a, Abu Said al-Khudri) who was a client of the Umayyads (Ziyad b. Abihi or Abd al-Malik)<sup>50</sup>.

Secondly there were traditions which limit travel to the two mosques of Mecca and Medina, or give prayers in al-Aqsa less merit than in the mosque of Medina<sup>51</sup>, or advise against travel to B. al-Maqdis<sup>52</sup>.

Thirdly other traditions simply stress the virtues of B. al-Maqdis, or emphasize the merits of visiting it, or of praying in al-Aqsa<sup>53</sup>.

The propagation of these traditions reflects opposite political interests and local loyalties. Circulating traditions which limit travel to the two Harams could indicate an anti-Umayyad line. It is noticeable that their authorities come from a period, between the last third of the 1st (7th) century and the first quarter of the 2nd (8th) century (like Jābir b. Abdallah 78 AH, 'ATĀ' 115 AH, al-Sha'bi 105 AH). It was a period of intense political conflict between the Umayyads and opposing political parties.

Traditions which give prayers in the mosque of Medina and in al-Aqsa equal merit, and those which simply extol al-Aqsa, remind us of the political conflict between Damascus and Medina. Some Umayyad supporters, on the other hand, talked of the 'two Houses', 'The House of God' (in Mecca)

<sup>37</sup>See Goitein op cit., p. 135 ff, Baladhuri V, p. 355 ff., Tabari II pp. 781–783.

<sup>38</sup>See Maqdisi, *Ahsan al-Taqaṣim*, pp. 159, 168.

<sup>39</sup>See Grabar, op. cit., pp. 53 ff.

<sup>40</sup>See Ya'qubi II, p. 311; Muhallabi, op. cit., p. 54 (both anti-Umayyad). See Ibn 'Abd Rabbihī-Iqd VI, p. 265; Abu Ubaid-Amīval, pp. 225, 226 (both Syrian reported). Ibn Khaldun I, p. 297. N. Khusrew in the 5th (11th) century maintains this view, see his *Rihla* (Arabic), pp. 30–31, 21. Wasiti in the 5th (11th) century relates a tradition 'The Holy (Quds) of the Earth is al-Sham, the holy of al-Sham is Palestine, the holy of Palestine is B. al-Maqdis, and the holy of B. al-Maqdis is the Mount (al-Jabal), and the holy of the Mount is the (Aqsa) mosque, and the holy of the Mosque is the Dome' Ibn Asakir-*Dimashq* I, pp. 141–142.

<sup>41</sup>See Sulaiman's statement in *Jahshiyari* (331 AH/942 AD), p. 148.

<sup>42</sup>See *Muthir al-Gharam*, pp. 53–54; Suyuti, *Ithaf*, p. 99.

<sup>43</sup>See for example Wathima, *Bad'al Khalq*, pp. 24, 167–180; Tabari, *Tafsir* x, p. 168; Ibn Asakir-*Dimashq* I, pp. 140–141.

<sup>44</sup>See Baladhuri, *Ansab* IV (1), p. 23, Mada'ini from Awana; Nasr b. Muzahim, *Siffin* (1382 AH), p. 31; Ibn Asakir-*Dimashq* I, p. 69.

<sup>45</sup>Though both Ya'qubi's II, p. 311, and Muhallabi's, (op cit., p. 54) reports are anti-Umayyad, yet they indicate this.

<sup>46</sup>Wasiti' *Fada'il*, p. 165. See Suyuti, *Ithaf*, p. 8a.

<sup>47</sup>See Kister 'You shall only set out for three mosques', in *le Muséon* LXXXII, 1969, pp. 173 ff.

<sup>48</sup>Ibn Hanbal-*Musnad* II, pp. 234, 238, 278; San'āni-*Musannaf* v, nos. 9158, 9159; Muslim-*Sahih* II, nos. 415, 511, 512, Bukhari I (ed. Ali Sabih) II, p. 73, Nasa'i-*Sunan* II, pp. 37–38, *Kanz al-Ummal* XIII, nos. 955, 966.

<sup>49</sup>Ibn Hanbal II, pp. 7, 51–52, 77; see also pp. 93, 54, 231, II, p. 51; Bukhari II, 74; Muslim II, p. 215; Bayhaqi x, p. 82; Wasiti, p. 4.

<sup>50</sup>Ibn Hajar—*Tahdhib* VIII, p. 377. See Bukhari II, p. 74, and Bayhaqi—*Sunan* x, p. 82, where he is described in the Isnad as a client of Ziyad; *Muthir al-Gharam*, pp. 49–50.

<sup>51</sup>San'āni—*Musannaf* v, nos. 9131, 9132, 9163, 9173, 9135, 9161; Mundhiri—*Tarhib* (Beirut 1968) II, p. 214; see San'āni-*Musannaf* v, no. 916, see *Kanz al-Ummal* XIII, p. 233 (no. 1306), Ibn Hanbal II, p. 239; Mundhiri II, p. 214; M. F. Abdul Baqi, *Lu'lu'* II, pp. 97–98 (no. 881).

<sup>52</sup>See San'āni-*Musannaf* v, no. 9164, see also nos. 9166, 9167 (from *Sha'bi*) and pp. 133–134, and no. 9140 (from *Atā'*), Waqidi, *Maghazi*, p. 866.

<sup>53</sup>Traditions which give equal merit to prayers in the mosque of Medina and al-Aqsa: Ibn Hanbal II, pp. 275, 278 (from 'ATĀ'). See Mundhiri, *Tarhib* II, pp. 215, 218. Traditions that emphasise the merits of B. al-Maqdis and the prayers there: Ibn Hanbal VI, p. 432; Ibn Maja-*Sunan* (Cairo 1348) I, p. 429; *Kanz al-Ummal* XIII, pp. 246–247, and nos. 1330, 1368 and see nos. 1379, 1380.

and 'The House in Ilya'<sup>54</sup>. Still Abbasid and Alid propaganda tried to make use of the sanctity of B. al-Maqdis for their causes<sup>55</sup>. With the fall of the Umayyads, the tradition of travel to the three mosques attained general recognition.

With the advent of the Abbasids, the political importance of B. 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 B. al-Maqdis. It was visited by more than one Caliph during their first period<sup>56</sup>, while the Aqsa was repaired by Mansur and rebuilt by Mahdi and the Dome of the Rock was repaired and embellished by Ma'mun.

The sanctity of B. al-Maqdis grew with time under the Abbasids. This is seen from canonical Hadith collections (Sihāh), books of malāhim, and the growth of qaṣṣaṣ referring to its merits. Histories of cities (provincial centres) came from the 3rd (9th) and 4th (10th) centuries, one of which by Ishaq b. Bishr (106 AH/820–1 AD) was on B. al-Maqdis<sup>58</sup> and in the 5th/11th century three works were written on B. al-Maqdis<sup>59</sup>, the same period as the first book on Damascus<sup>60</sup>. These books differ from normal histories of cities in that they were mainly concerned with their virtues and the sanctity of religious places. They hardly left much to later writings.

Between the 2nd (8th) and 5th (11th) centuries, B. al-Maqdis in Islam was elevated both in tradition and story with the consequence that praying there was said to be like praying in heaven, and further that 'he who prays there will be absolved of all his sins'. 'Praying there is better than a thousand prayers elsewhere'<sup>61</sup>. The city became the place of the second and final hijra. 'The elite of all people shall come to live there one day. On resurrection, the Ka'aba will come with its pilgrims there'<sup>62</sup>.

B. al-Maqdis will have all the faḍā'il (virtues). All Prophets made the Rock their qibla, and the Prophet Muhammad prayed towards it. 'It has been sanctified, then sanctified, and then sanctified, and then sanctified out of seven earths'<sup>63</sup>.

Traditions about al-Mahdi link him now with B. al-Maqdis. Significantly, different Muslim sects expect the

Mahdi to rise in it or to go there—giving the city a unique Islamic position<sup>64</sup>. It became the bastion of Muslims against the Dajjāl (anti-Christ) who will trample the earth (Mecca and Medina excepted), but will be confronted and beaten there<sup>65</sup>.

Stories, especially of the People of the Book, increased from the 2nd (8th) century onwards, especially those about prophets, and much was relevant to B. al-Maqdis<sup>66</sup>. The growing veneration for the city explains the keenness of Sufis<sup>67</sup> and pious men to visit the city or to live there.

Accounts of geographers like Maqdisi and Ibn al-Faqih, and travellers like Nasir Khusrew and Ibn al-Arabi amply show the great sanctity the city enjoyed in the 4th–5th (10th–11th) centuries.

Maqdisi (387 AH/997 AD) states that B. al-Maqdis combined the merits of this world and the next; that it had all the faḍl (virtue) since both Mecca and Medina—who were elevated by the Ka'aba and the prophet—will go there. He says that the plain of al-Sāhira, there, is the place of resurrection<sup>68</sup>. Nasir Khusrew (438 AH/1047 AD) confirms this and adds that thousands from the ends of the world go to al-Quds (the Holy, as people called it then) and stay until they die, so that they will be resurrected there. This belief explains, also, why many of the pious come to live in the city, as N. Khusrew implies<sup>69</sup>. In fact some princes and dignitaries ask that they be buried in B. al-Maqdis<sup>70</sup>.

Khusrew also reported that people—unable to go on pilgrimage—come to B. al-Maqdis, make their sacrifices and perform the rituals of 'Arafa, and that about 20,000 come there in some years<sup>71</sup>. Qalqashandi indicates that the visit to the Dome of the Rock on the day of 'Arafa started earlier<sup>72</sup>. Late in the 5th (11th) century Tartūshi c. 470 AH (1077 AD) saw crowds from neighbouring districts perform the 'Arafa rituals by the mosque, and refers to their belief that four such visits equal a pilgrimage and condemns this bid'a (innovation)<sup>73</sup>. He also refers to special prayers in the Aqsa at mid Sha'ban (since 448 AH/1056 AD) and Rajab (since 480 AH/1087 AD)<sup>74</sup>. These innovations were probably local.

The 5th (11th) century was a period of much cultural

<sup>54</sup>See Farazdaq, *Diwan* II, pp. 32, 72, cf. Aghani (Bulaq) XIX, p. 59.

<sup>55</sup>See Wasiti, *Fadā'il*, p. 54 and Ibn Abd Rabbibi, *Iqd* IV, p. 386 (both from Zuhri), cf. Suyuti, *Ithaf*, pp. 506, 496.

<sup>56</sup>Al-Mansur visited twice in 141 AH (718 AD) and 154 AH (771 AD), Tabari III, p. 372; Baladhuri, *Futuh*, p. 233; Azdi-*Tarikh al-Mawsil* II, p. 318; Kindi *Wulat*, p. 218. Mahdi visited in 163 AH (780 AD), Azdi, op. cit. II, p. 243–244, Tabari III, p. 500.

<sup>57</sup>See Maqdisi 'Ahsan al-Taqasim, p. 168–169; Yaqut, *Buldan* IV, pp. 596, 597; Creswell, op. cit., p. 374; Isr. Exploration Society, *Jerusalem Revealed*, p. 93.

<sup>58</sup>See *Kesf El-Zunun* (Istanbul 1971) II, p. 1240.

<sup>59</sup>*Rabā'ī, Fadā'il Dimashq*, ed. Munajjid, Damascus, 1950.

<sup>60</sup>Wasiti, *Fadail al-Bait al-Muqaddas*, ed. A. Hassun, Jerusalem 1979; Maqdisi, *Abu'l-Ma'ali al-Musharraf b. al-Murajja*, Ms. Tubingen 27. Al-Rumaili wrote on the history and Fadā'il of B. al-Maqdis, but was killed by the Franks and his work was lost, *al-Uns al-Jalil* I, pp. 298–299, see E. Sivan 'The beginnings of Fadā'il al-Quds Literature', in *Israel Oriental Studies* I, 1971, pp. 263 ff.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibn al-Faqih, Buldan*, pp. 94, 95.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid*, p. 94, *Nu'aim b. Hammad, Fitan* (MS), fols. 134a, 135a; Wasiti, op. cit., pp. 121–122. See also *Kanz al-Ummal* XIII, nos 1381, 1382.

<sup>63</sup>Wasiti (from Zuhri), p. 51.

<sup>64</sup>*Nu'aim b. Hammād, Fitan*, pp. 49a ff., 56a, 59a, 49b, 57a; *Wathima, Bad'al-Khalq*, pp. 297–298.

<sup>65</sup>*Nu'aim b. Hammād*, op. cit., folios 44b, 48a.

<sup>66</sup>See for example *Wathima Bad' al-Khalq wa qisas al-Anbiya*, ed. R. G. Khoury, Wiesbaden 1978.

<sup>67</sup>Like Ibrahim b. Adham, Rabia al-Adawiyya, Bishr al-Hafi, Dhu'l-Nun al-Misri, Yazid al-Bistami and al-Sari al-Saqati. See Maqdisi, *Taqasim*, p. 167, N. Khusrew, op. cit., p. 21; *Muthir al-Gharam*, pp. 65–67, Ibn Arabi-Ribla (ed. I, Abbas) in *al-Abhath* XXI, 1968, p. 83.

<sup>68</sup>Maqdisi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, pp. 166–167, 172.

<sup>69</sup>N. Khusrew, pp. 20, 28.

<sup>70</sup>See Kindi, *Wulat*, p. 296; Ibn Qalanisi, *Dhail Tarikh Dimashq*, p. 79.

<sup>71</sup>N. Khusrew, op. cit. pp. 19–20.

<sup>72</sup>*Qalqashandi-ināfa* I, p. 129.

<sup>73</sup>*Tartūshi—Kitāb al-Hawādith* (ed. M. Tālbi) pp. 116–17.

<sup>74</sup>*ibid* pp. 121–2.

activity in B. al-Maqdis; scholars from Muslim countries, East and West, came to visit it. Great figures like Tartūshi, Ibn al-Arabi and Ghazāli, among others can be mentioned<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>75</sup>See *ibn al-'Arabī- Riḥla*, op. cit. pp. 81–83; *Mujīral-Dīn al-'Ulaymī—al Uns al-Jalīl*, 1 pp. 247–9, 300–302.

All this shows that veneration for B. al-Maqdis continued to grow deeper in Muslim thought and convictions.

The Crusades probably added a new dimension to the significance of B. al-Maqdis. But, it was the great sanctity the city attained by the 5th (11th) century that made it the symbol for the Jihad against the invaders.