

**The Smithsonian Institution
Regents of the University of Michigan**

The Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem

Author(s): Oleg Grabar

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 3 (1959), pp. 33-62

Published by: Freer Gallery of Art, [The Smithsonian Institution](#) and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4629098>

Accessed: 16/02/2013 15:14

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



The Smithsonian Institution and Regents of the University of Michigan are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Ars Orientalis*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

THE Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem

By Oleg Grabar

IT IS A COMMONPLACE OF CLASSICAL ISLAMIC religious writing that the Prophet himself considered Mekkah, Madinah, and Jerusalem as the three holiest places of the faith. All three centers were places of pilgrimage and in them liturgical requirements, sacred memories, and traditions acquired a monumental expression.¹ Medieval writers and modern scholars and travelers have often described the religious topography of the Muslim holy places and the significance of the numerous structures erected on these sacred spots. But the problem is not only one of description and identification. The question must also be raised whether the current identifications of holy places and their present architectural expression date from the earliest times of Islam, and, if not, when and why these identifications were made and the monuments built. In other words the major sanctuaries of Islam must be considered in their historical context. For the mosque of Madinah, for instance, we possess the masterly study by J. Sauvaget, who succeeded, on the basis of texts and a limited archeological

documentation, in reconstructing in detail the nature of this central monument of Islamic religious architecture in the Umayyad period.

In the case of Jerusalem, the problem presents itself differently. First, in dealing with the Ḥaram al-Sharīf, we are not dealing with a new holy area, as in Madinah, but with one of the most ancient sacred spots on earth. Second, in Jerusalem, the monuments themselves are better known. The Dome of the Rock is still essentially the Umayyad building. The Aqsā mosque, to be sure, has undergone numerous reconstructions, but recent studies by K. A. C. Creswell, J. Sauvaget, and especially R. W. Hamilton, have given us a good idea of the nature of the Umayyad mosque. The problem, therefore, is neither reconstruction nor dating, but essentially interpretation: if we consider the long tradition of Mount Moriah as a sacred place, what was its significance in the eyes of the Muslims? The *faḍā'il* or religious guidebooks for pilgrims of later times provide us with an answer for the period which followed the Crusades, but it may be questioned whether all the complex traditions reported about the Ḥaram at that time had already been formulated when the area was taken over by the Arabs. Through its location, through its inscription, and through its mosaics, the Dome of the Rock itself provides us with three strictly contemporary documents, which have not so far been fully exploited in an attempt to define the meaning of the structure at the time of its construction. The Dome of the Rock is especially important in being not only the earliest remaining monument of Islam, but, in all likelihood, the earliest major construction built by the new masters of the Near East. The first

¹ Among the Muslim holy places Jerusalem occupies in general a slightly less important place than the two Arabian sanctuaries. The Palestinian city was more important in Umayyad, Ayyūbid, and Mamlūk times than under the 'Abbāsids or the Fātimids, although both of the latter dynasties took great care in repairing damaged monuments on the Ḥaram. At times, also, it seems to have had a local importance rather than an ecumenical one; see Nāṣir-i Khusrow, tr. G. LeStrange in *Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society* (hereafter PPTS), vol. 4, London, 1896, p. 23. Or else its importance was only emphasized by specific religious, and especially mystical, groups; see the remarks at the end of S. D. Goitein, *The historical background of the erection of the Dome of the Rock*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (hereafter JAOS), vol. 70 (1950), pp. 104-108.

mosques in Kūfah, Baṣrah, Fuṣṭāṭ, and Jerusalem were certainly not very imposing structures; little is known about Mu'āwiyah's secular constructions in Damascus, but it is not likely that they were done on a very lavish scale. The Dome of the Rock, on the other hand, has remained to this day one of the most remarkable architectural and artistic achievements of Islam. It is therefore important to attempt to understand its meaning to those who lived when it was built.

Discussion of the meaning of Jerusalem, and especially of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf, in medieval times is greatly simplified since most of the geographical and descriptive texts dealing with the city have been gathered by Father Marmarji,² and since many of them have been translated into English by G. LeStrange,³ into German by Gildmeister,⁴ into Russian by Miednikov,⁵ and into French by Father Marmarji.⁶ Furthermore, the inscriptions found on the Ḥaram have been published and analyzed by Max van Berchem in the second series of his *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*.⁷ But, except for Miednikov, whose conclusions have been summarized and by and large accepted by Caetani in his *Annali dell' Islam*, and to a certain extent by van Berchem, these authors have dealt

largely with purely descriptive texts, for the most part taken from geographers, and have only too rarely tried to set the building up of the Ḥaram area by the Muslims within the historical circumstances of the time.

The Dome of the Rock is dated in the year 72 A.H./A.D. 691–692 and there is some evidence that it was begun in 69.⁸ It has been described many times and its location (on a platform to the north of the center of the vast artificial esplanade of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf; *fig. 1*), as well as its plan (an octagonal structure consisting of two octagonal ambulatories and a circular area within which lies the Rock; *fig. 2*), is familiar to all travelers to Palestine and to all students of Muslim archeology. K. A. C. Creswell and Mademoiselle van Berchem have dealt in great detail with the character and the origins of the building and of its mosaics,⁹ and Creswell has analyzed the purpose of the building, but only briefly and, as will be shown, incompletely. In this study, as far as possible, only texts earlier than the Crusades will be used, for the Crusades superimposed over the earlier Jewish and Muslim traditions a whole series of more or less artificial Christian ones which confuse all problems connected with the Ḥaram and often prevent certain identifications. As Max van Berchem has shown in a number of cases,¹⁰ the conscious attempt by Saladin to reconvert all buildings to their ancient usage was not always successful and has at times led to extraordinary misunderstandings.¹¹ It is also quite certain that the numerous legends and

² A. S. Marmarji, *Buldāniyah Filasṭīn al-'arabiyyah*, Beirut, 1948, pp. 30–42, 243–301.

³ G. LeStrange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, London, 1890, pp. 83–223.

⁴ J. Gildmeister, *Die arabischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Harambauten*, Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins (hereafter ZDPV), vol. 13 (1890), pp. 1–24.

⁵ N. A. Miednikov, *Palestina ot zavoevaniya arabami do kristovyykh pohodov*, Pravoslavnyj Palestinskij Sbornik, vols. 16 and 17 (1897).

⁶ A. S. Marmarji, *Textes géographiques sur la Palestine*, Paris, 1951.

⁷ Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum II Syrie du Sud*, 3 vols., Cairo, 1922–23, 1927.

⁸ G. LeStrange quotes an unpublished fragment of Šibt al-Jawzi to that effect, *Description of the Noble Sanctuary*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (hereafter JRAS), n.s., vol. 19 (1887), p. 280.

⁹ K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim architecture*, vol. I, Oxford, 1932, pp. 42–94 and 151–228.

¹⁰ M. van Berchem, vol. 2, pp. 23–31, 37 ff.

¹¹ See, for instance, G. LeStrange, in JRAS, vol. 19 (1887), pp. 260–261.

traditions which are associated with the Haram in the group of *fadā'il* of the Mamlūk period were not introduced in the Umayyad period.¹² The comparative simplicity of the legends accepted even in Ayyūbid times is now fully shown by the published and translated *K. al-Ziyārāt* of al-Harawī.^{12a} Except in a few cases it is almost impossible to determine exactly when a specific tradition or identification of a holy place with a sacred event became sufficiently common to be accepted and propagated by the spiritual Baedekers of a given time, but in the early period of Islam the religious system and the spiritual life of the faithful were yet too simple—or too disorganized—to allow for as definitive and complete a system of religious-topographical associations as appears in later writing. More often than not later traditions tend to confuse rather than clarify the essential issue of the purpose and origin of the Umayyad structure.

As far as the Umayyad Dome of the Rock is concerned, two explanations are generally given for its construction. The first has the apparent merit of agreeing quite well with the historical circumstances of the years 66–72 A.H., and it has been adopted by Creswell after having been introduced by Goldziher. This interpretation is based on texts of al-Ya'qūbī (260 A.H./A.D. 874),¹³ a shi'ite brought up in Baghdad who had traveled widely throughout the empire, and Eutychius (d. 328 A.H./A.D. 940),¹⁴ a melkite priest from Alexandria. It is also found in other

¹² Two of these late *fadā'il* have been recently translated by C. D. Matthews, *Palestine-Mohammedan Holy Land* in *Yale Oriental Series*, vol. 24, New Haven, 1949, with important notes.

^{12a} Al-Harawī, *Guide des Lieux de Pèlerinage*, tr. J. Sourdél-Thomine, Damascus, 1957, p. 62 ff.

¹³ al-Ya'qūbī, *Historiae*, ed. T. Houtsma, Leyden, 1883, vol. 2, p. 311.

¹⁴ Eutychius ibn al-Batriq, *Annales*, ed. L. Cheikho et al., in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, ser. 3, vol. 7, Paris, 1909, p. 39 ff.

authors before the Crusades such as al-Muhallabī¹⁵ and Ibn 'Abd Rabbih,¹⁶ but there are indications (a series of errors with respect to attributions and dates about which more will be said below) which suggest that in reality we are dealing with one major tradition, or possibly two, which have been passed on through specific historiographic channels. All these authors claim that the reason for building a sanctuary in Jerusalem was that, since Ibn al-Zubayr was in possession of Mekkah, 'Abd al-Malik wanted to divert pilgrims from the Ḥijāz by establishing the Palestinian city as the religious center of Islam. And it has been asserted that the plan of the Dome of the Rock, with two ambulatories around the Rock itself, originated with the liturgical requirements of the *ṭawāf*.¹⁷

This interpretation of the Muslim sanctuary has been very recently criticized by S. D. Goitein in a brief communication on the background of the Dome of the Rock.¹⁸ His argument is partly negative. He points out that the statements of al-Ya'qūbī and Eutychius are unique in the annals of early Muslim historiography and that as momentous an attempt as that of changing the site of the *hajj* could not have been overlooked by such careful historians as al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhuri, and especially not by a local patriot like al-Maqdisī. Furthermore it would have been

¹⁵ Quoted by Abū al-Fidā, *Geography*, tr. M. Reinaud and S. Guyard, Paris, 1848–83, vol. 2, p. 4; cf. also Gildmeister in *ZDPV*, vol. 13, p. 8.

¹⁶ Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd*, ed. M. S. al-'Ariyān, Cairo, 1940, vol. 7, pp. 299–300; this text is one of the earliest ones to include the more or less complete hagiography of Jerusalem as it will appear in later traditions.

¹⁷ Creswell, p. 43, n. 1; I. Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, Halle, 1889–90, vol. 2, pp. 35–37.

¹⁸ S. D. Goitein, *op. cit.* See also J. W. Hirschberg, *The sources of Moslem traditions concerning Jerusalem*, *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, vol. 18 (1953), p. 318 ff.

politically unsound for 'Abd al-Malik to have "marked himself as Kāfir, against whom the Jihād was obligatory." The theologians of his entourage were not likely to have approved of it. Al-Ya'qūbī does say that 'Abd al-Malik leaned on the testimony of al-Zuhri to justify his decision, but the statement is hardly creditable, since al-Zuhri was barely 20 years old at the time.¹⁹ An important point of Goitein's article is to have brought attention to the unfortunately still largely unpublished *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* of al-Balādhuri. In the description found there of al-Ḥajjāj's operations around Mekkah, it is made clear that the Syrian forces considered Mekkah as the center for pilgrimage. Before starting for Mekkah the soldiers are told that they must be ready for the pilgrimage; during the fighting al-Ḥajjāj requests permission for his troops to make the *ṭawāf*; and there appears to have been a fairly constant stream of people going on pilgrimage in spite of the fighting.²⁰ It may also be pointed out that al-Ḥajjāj would not have taken such pains to restore the Ka'bah to its original shape, had it been replaced in the mind of the Umayyads by the new building in Jerusalem. And a statement in Ṭabarī to the effect that in 68 A.H. at least four different groups went on pilgrimage shows beyond doubt that, at that time at least, the bitter factional strifes between Muslims were held somewhat in abeyance during the pilgrimage.²¹

¹⁹ J. Horowitz, *The earliest biographies of the Prophet and their authors*, Islamic Culture, vol. 2 (1928), p. 38 ff.; cf. also al-Zuhri in *Encyclopedia of Islam*. For doubts about al-Zuhri's relationship with 'Abd al-Malik, see now A. A. Duri, *Al-Zuhri, a study on the beginnings of history writing in Islam*, Bull. School of Oriental and African Studies, vol. 19 (1956), pp. 10-11.

²⁰ Balādhuri, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, vol. 5, ed. S. D. Goitein, Jerusalem, 1936, p. 355 ff., esp. pp. 358, 360, 362, 373.

²¹ Ṭabarī, *Annales*, ed. M. de Goeje et al., Leyden, 1879-1901, vol. 2, pp. 781-783.

Goitein also shows that the accounts of al-Ya'qūbī and of Eutychius contain errors which indicate that they were highly partisan in their opposition to the Umayyads and not always in full control of the facts. Eutychius and al-Muhallabī attribute to al-Walid, 'Abd al-Malik's successor, an attempt to divert the pilgrimage to Jerusalem,²² while al-Ya'qūbī adds that the practice of having the *hajj* in the Palestinian city continued throughout the Umayyad period. Finally it is doubtful whether the comparatively small area of the Dome of the Rock could have been conveniently used for the long and complex ceremony of the *ṭawāf*;²³ and it may be argued that, had 'Abd al-Malik wanted to replace Mekkah, he would have chosen a type of structure closer in plan to the Ka'bah than the Dome of the Rock, since the sacramental and inalterable character of the Mekkan sanctuary is fully apparent in its several reconstructions and, in particular, in that of al-Ḥajjāj.²⁴

The second explanation for the Dome of the Rock was destined to become the one that was, and still is, generally accepted by the faithful. It is connected with the complex problem of the exegesis of *sūrah* 17, verse 1, of the Koran: "Glorified be He Who carried His servant [*i. e.*, Muḥammad] by night from the *masjid al-ḥarām* (*i. e.*, Mekkah) to the *masjid al-aqṣā* [*i. e.*, the farthest place of worship]." As early as the first part of the second century, the biographer of the Prophet, Ibn Ishāq, connected this Night-Journey (*isrā'*)

²² Cf. below for a possible interpretation of Eutychius' error.

²³ Goitein has suggested that the pilgrims from Syria mentioned by Nāsir-i Khusrow did not in fact accomplish the regular *hajj*, but only the *wuqūf*, a practice which was observed in many provincial cities.

²⁴ On all these problems cf. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Le pèlerinage à la Mekke*, Paris, 1923, p. 49, and *Encyclopedia of Islam* articles on Ka'bah, Mekkah, etc.

with the no less complex Ascension (*mi'raj*) of Muḥammad, and claimed that the *masjid al-aqṣā* was in fact in Jerusalem and that it is from Jerusalem that the Prophet ascended into heaven.²⁵ Al-Ya'qūbī mentions in his account the fact that the Rock in the Ḥaram al-Sharīf is "the rock on which it is said that the Messenger of God put his foot when he ascended into heaven."²⁶ Furthermore all the geographers describing the area mention a great number of *qubbahs*, *maqāms*, *mihrābs*, etc. . . . connected with the events of Muḥammad's Ascension. It might thus be suggested that the Dome of the Rock was built as a sort of *martyrium* to a specific incident of Muḥammad's life.²⁷ The arguments could be further strengthened by the fact that, without doubt, the architecture of the Dome of the Rock follows in the tradition of the great Christian *martyria* and is closely related to the architecture of the Christian sanctuaries in Jerusalem, one of which commemorated the Ascension of Christ.

But, just like the first one, this explanation leads to more problems than it solves. A. A. Bevan has shown that among early traditionists there are many who do not accept the identification of the *masjid al-aqṣā*, and among them are to be found such great names as al-Bukhārī and Ṭabari.²⁸ Both Ibn Ishāq and

²⁵ Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, *Kitāb rusūl allāh*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen, 1859, p. 263 ff., tr. by A. Guillaume, London, 1955, p. 181 ff.

²⁶ al-Ya'qūbī, *loc. cit.*

²⁷ B. Schrieke, art. *Isrā'* in *Encyclopædia of Islam*, and *Die Himmelsreise Muhammeds*, Der Islam, vol. 7 (1916), attempted to show that the Ascension of the Prophet was a sort of *Initiationshimmelfahrt* for prophethood. On the more general problem of the Ascension, see the recent contributions of G. Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book*, Uppsala, 1950, and *Muhammad, the Apostle of God and his Ascension*, Uppsala, 1951, whose interesting conclusions go far beyond the specific problem of Muḥammad.

²⁸ A. A. Bevan, *Muhammed's Ascension to*

al-Ya'qūbī precede their accounts with expressions which indicate that these are stories which are not necessarily accepted as dogma.²⁹ It was suggested by J. Horovitz that in the early period of Islam there is little justification for assuming that the Koranic expression in any way referred to Jerusalem.³⁰ But, while Horovitz thought that it referred to a place in heaven, A. Guillaume's careful analysis of the earliest texts (al-Wāqidi and al-Azraqī, both in the later second century A.H.) has convincingly shown that the Koranic reference to the *masjid al-aqṣā* applies specifically to al-Ji'rānah, near Mekkah, where there were two sanctuaries (*masjid al-adnā* and *masjid al-aqṣā*), and where Muḥammad sojourned in *dhū al-qa'dah* of the eighth year after the Hijrah.³¹ A. Guillaume also indicates that the concepts of *isrā'* and *mi'raj* were carefully separated by earlier writers and that Ibn Ishāq seems to have been the first one, insofar as our present literary evidence goes, to connect them with each other. A last argument against accepting the association between the Ascension and the Dome of the Rock as dating from the time of the construction is archeological in nature. As has been mentioned, all early writers enumerate a series of holy places on the Ḥaram area, many of which

Heaven, Studien . . . Julius Wellhausen gewidmet, Giessen, 1914. The case of Ṭabari is particularly significant to Bevan, since the medieval writer included the Jerusalem identification in his *Tafsīr*, but dropped it from his later chronicle. See also Ibn Ḥawqal in *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, vol. 2, 2d ed. by J. H. Kramers, Leyden, 1938–39, p. 172, where the *masjid al-aqṣā* seems to be very generally located in Palestine, but not in any specific place.

²⁹ Even in later times traditions were maintained which denied that the Rock was the place whence Muḥammad ascended into heaven; cf. Matthews, pp. 20–21.

³⁰ J. Horovitz, *Muhammeds Himmelfahrt*, Der Islam, vol. 9 (1919).

³¹ A. Guillaume, *Where was al-masjid al-Aqṣā?*, al-Andalus, vol. 18 (1953).

still stand today, most having been rebuilt after Saladin's reconquest of Jerusalem. Next to the Dome of the Rock stood—as it still stands today—the *qubbah al-mi'raj*, the *martyrium* of the Ascension. Had the first and largest of all buildings on the Ḥaram (outside of the congregational mosque on its southern end called al-Aqṣā) been built as a *martyrium* to the Ascension of Muḥammad, there would certainly not have been any need for a second *martyrium*. And the Persian traveler Nāsir-i Khusrow, one of the first to attempt a systematic explanation of all the buildings of the Ḥaram, still considers the Rock under the Dome simply as the place where Muḥammad prayed before ascending into heaven from the place where the *qubbah al-mi'raj* stands.³²

It appears then that the textual evidence is incomplete and cannot provide us with a satisfactory explanation of the purpose for which 'Abd al-Malik built the Dome of the Rock. It is, therefore, necessary to turn to the internal evidence provided by the building itself. The Dome of the Rock can be analyzed from three different points of view: its location, its architecture and decoration, and the inscription (240 meters long) inside the building, which is the only strictly contemporary piece of written evidence we possess. While none of these could alone explain the Dome of the Rock, an analysis of all three points can lead to a much more complex and, at the same time, much more precise explanation than has been offered hitherto of the reasons which led to the erection of the first major monument of the new Islamic civilization.

The first question to be raised is that of the location of the building. More specifically, since it can be shown that the Rock was not considered at the time as the place whence

³² Nāsir-i Khusrow in PPTS, vol. 4, p. 49. Cf. below, p. 61.

Muḥammad ascended into heaven, why was it chosen as the obvious center of the structure? In order to answer this question, we must ask ourselves what significance the Rock had at the time of the Muslim conquest and whether there is any evidence for a Muslim explanation of the Rock at the time of the conquest or between the conquest and the building of the Dome by 'Abd al-Malik.

The exact function of the Rock in the earliest times is still a matter of conjecture. While there is no doubt that the Ḥaram was the site of the Solomonic temple, there is no definite Biblical reference to the Rock. Whether it was "the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (I Chron. 3:1; II Sam. 14:18), whether it was an ancient Canaanite holy place fitted by Solomon into the Jewish Temple, perhaps as a *podium* on which the altar stood,³³ or whether it was the "middle of the court" which was hallowed by Solomon at the consecration of the Temple (I Kings, 8:63–64) cannot be certainly determined.³⁴ The Herodian reconstruction of the Temple is not any clearer, as far as the Rock is concerned. From the *Mishnah Middoth* it would appear that the Rock was only a few inches above the level of the terrace and that it was used as a cornerstone in the Herodian building.³⁵ Nowhere have I been able to find definite evidence for an important liturgical function of the Rock.

But in medieval times Mount Moriah in

³³ H. Schmidt, *Der heilige Fels in Jerusalem*, Tübingen, 1933, p. 47. See also G. Dalman, *Neue Petra-Forschungen*, Leipzig, 1912, p. 111 ff., and esp. p. 137 ff.

³⁴ J. Simons, *Jerusalem in the Old Testament*, Leyden, 1952, p. 344 ff., and esp. p. 381 ff., with full bibliography; A. Parrot, *Le Temple de Jérusalem*, Neuchâtel-Paris, 1954, p. 7 ff.

³⁵ *Mishnah Middoth in The Babylonian Talmud*, Eng. tr. by I. Epstein, London, 1948, chap. III; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 31 ff.; Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 39 ff., where no specific information is given about the Rock.

general and the Rock in particular were endowed in Jewish legend with a complex mythology. Mount Moriah, through its association with the Temple, became the *omphalos* of the earth, where the tomb of Adam was to be found and where the first man was created.³⁶ But another, more specific, tradition was attached to the Rock, that of the sacrifice of Abraham, through a confusion between the land of Moriah (Gen. 22:2) and Mount Moriah.³⁷ It is not possible to say when the confusion first occurred, but it is already found in Josephus in the first century A.D., and it became common throughout Talmudic literature.³⁸ In other words, in the Jewish tradition, the Rock and the area surrounding it acquired mystical significance as the site of the Holy of Holies and became associated with a series of legends involving major figures of the Biblical tradition, especially Abraham and Isaac. The importance accorded to the Ḥaram and to the Rock by the Jews is evidenced in early medieval times by the statement of the Pilgrim of Bordeaux who mentions a *lapis pertusus* "to which the Jews come every year and which they anoint,"³⁹ probably a refer-

³⁶ W. H. Roscher, *Der Omphalosgedanke bei verschiedenen Völkern*, Berichte über die Verhandl. d. Sächs. Gesell. d. Wiss. zu Leipzig, phil.-hist. Kl., vol. 70 (1918), p. 34 ff. with further bibliography. Further references in J. W. Hirschberg, *Sources of Muslim traditions*, p. 321 ff., with, curiously, no mention of Abraham.

³⁷ G. Dalman, *Jerusalem und seine Gelände*, Gütersloh, 1930, p. 125; L. Ginzberg, *The legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia, 1913-38, vol. 1, p. 285, and vol. 5, n. 253 on p. 253. See also the various commentaries on the book of Genesis.

³⁸ Josephus, *Jewish antiquities*, vol. 1, p. 225 ff., and vol. 7, p. 327 ff. H. Danby, *The Mishnah*, London, 1933, p. 196; *The Babylonian Talmud*, tr. under direction of Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein, London, 1933 (and subsequent years), pt. 1, vol. 1 (Zebahim), p. 305; part 2, vol. 7 (Ta'anith), pp. 74 and 77 ff., etc.; see index.

³⁹ Text and tr. in PPTS, vol. 1, London, 1896, pp. 21-22.

ence to the Rock itself which appears here to be thought of as a tangible remnant of the Temple.

During the Roman and Byzantine period, the whole Ḥaram area was left unoccupied,⁴⁰ but, under Christian rule, the Holy City itself witnessed a new and remarkable development. This development took place in the "New Jerusalem," and no Christian sanctuary appears to have been built on the area of the Ḥaram, since the prophecy of the destruction of the Temple had to be fulfilled. There is some evidence in patristic literature that the Jewish associations were accepted by some Christians.⁴¹ But, with the building of the Holy Sepulchre, the *omphalos* of the earth was transferred to another hill of Jerusalem, Golgotha, and together with it were also transferred the associations between Jerusalem and Adam and Jerusalem and Abraham.⁴²

⁴⁰ H. Vincent and F. M. Abel, *Jerusalem II Jerusalem Nouvelle*, Paris, 1926, vol. 1, pp. 16-18. As far as the Roman period is concerned, this is not entirely certain, and there is some evidence that there were Roman monuments on the Ḥaram area.

⁴¹ Simons, p. 383, n. 2; Ginzberg, vol. 5, p. 253.

⁴² The relevant texts are all in the collection of the PPTS, vol. 1, p. 24: "Here (Golgotha) Adam was formed out of the clay; here Abraham offered up Isaac his son as a sacrifice, in the very place where our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified." See also vol. 2, pp. 14-16. On the *omphalos* at Golgotha, see A. Piganiol, *L'Hemispharion et l'Omphalos des Lieux Saints*, Cahiers Archéologiques, vol. 1, 1945; A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, Paris, 1946, vol. 1, p. 253. That the Christian tradition was rather confused, at least in the beginning, is shown by the *Terra Sancta* of Theodosius, where both Golgotha and Mount Moriah are seen as the place where Abraham sacrificed Isaac (in PPTS, vol. 1, pp. 25-26, and vol. 2, p. 10). This association between Abraham and the Holy Sepulchre was maintained after the conquest by the Muslims, since it appears in Arculfus (*ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 10-11) and later in the account of the Russian abbot Daniel (*ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 15-16). It is interesting to note that the abbot considers the Rock to have been the site of Jacob's struggle with the angel (p. 20). The identification with Jacob occurs also in Eutychius and

Such then appears to have been the situation at the time of the Muslim conquest: the Jewish tradition considered the Ḥaram area as the site of the Temple and the place of Abraham's sacrifice and Adam's creation and death, while the Christian tradition had moved the latter two to a new site.

The main features of the chronology of the conquest of Jerusalem are fairly clear and have been fully stated by chroniclers and discussed by scholars.⁴³ That the taking of the Holy City was a major moment in the conquest of Syria is apparent both in the fact that the Christians demanded the presence of 'Umar himself for the signing of the treaty of capitulation and in the fact that 'Umar acquiesced. Once the treaty was signed, 'Umar, accompanied by the patriarch Sophronius, was led through the city. But as this "tour" of the Holy City was endowed by later writers with a series of more or less legendary incidents, it is not very easy to ascertain what happened. There are two points on which most sources, early or late, Muslim or not, seem to agree. First it seems that 'Umar was definitely intent on seeing one specific site in the Holy City. All sources agree on that, and, in later traditions, his quest and the patriarch Sophronius' opposition to it were transformed into a dramatic contest.⁴⁴ Second, the early sources do not refer to the Rock as the main object of 'Umar's quest, but to the Ḥaram area in general, which is seen as the place where the Jewish Temple stood, the *mihrāb Dāwūd* of the Koran (38:20–21), the *naos tôn Ioudaiôn* of Theophanes.⁴⁵ The Greek text only men-

must have been a fairly common Christian tradition after the earlier Jewish associations had been moved to the Holy Sepulchre.

⁴³ L. Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. 3, Milan, 1910, p. 920 ff., with all the texts known to that time.

⁴⁴ LeStrange, *Palestine*, pp. 139–142.

⁴⁵ Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pp. 2408–2409; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, Bonn, 1839, pp. 519–520.

tions 'Umar's interest in the area of the Jewish Temple and adds later that a Muslim sanctuary was built on the place of the Jewish Temple.⁴⁶ The tradition transmitted by Ṭabarī does mention the Rock, but it plays no part in the prayer and recitations (Kor. 38) made by the caliph when he reached the Ḥaram area, and 'Umar rejects the suggestion made to him by Ka'b, a Jewish convert, that the Rock be on the *qiblah* side of the Muslim sanctuary. His reason is that this would be reverting to the Jewish practice. Eutychius also mentions the Rock and implies that Sophronius succeeded in persuading 'Umar to take over the Jewish Temple area in exchange for a treaty which would leave the rest of Jerusalem free of mosques. In his relation of the discovery of the Rock and of the construction of the mosque, he follows a tradition similar to Ṭabarī's, but without naming Ka'b.⁴⁷ Al-Musharraf emphasizes the fact that 'Umar was looking for the place where the Temple of Solomon stood; he does mention the Night Journey of the Prophet, but not the Rock.⁴⁸ Agapius of Manbij, a contemporary of Eutychius, does not mention either Rock or Ascension, but simply states that 'Umar ordered the building of a mosque on the site of the Jewish Temple.⁴⁹

Whenever it is mentioned in these texts, the Rock, together with the whole Ḥaram

⁴⁶ Theophanes, p. 524. The Bonn text is not very explicit, since it simply talks about a *naos*. The de Boor edition (vol. 1, p. 342) has an addition which specifies that we are dealing with a mosque on the site of the Jewish Temple. It is the more likely interpretation of the text, and LeStrange's translation, *Palestine*, p. 91, is incorrect.

⁴⁷ Eutychius, vol. 2, pp. 17–18.

⁴⁸ Cf. R. Hartmann, *Die Geschichte des Aḳṣa-Moschee in Jerusalem*, ZDPV, vol. 32 (1909), p. 194, n. 1.

⁴⁹ Agapius of Manbij, *K. al-'Unvan*, ed. A. A. Vasiliev, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. 8, Paris, 1912, p. 475.

area, appears as the symbol of the Jewish Temple. But the Rock itself is not taken into any particular consideration by 'Umar. It may be, as is suggested by Eutychius, that 'Umar was merely looking for a large area on which to build a mosque and that Sophronius used the Jewish background of the Ḥaram to try to persuade the caliph to build the mosque in the empty space of the Ḥaram. But it is perhaps more likely in the face of the enormous impact of Jewish traditions on early Islam, and specifically on 'Umar at the time of the conquest of Jerusalem,⁵⁰ that 'Umar was genuinely interested in reviving the ancient Jewish holy site, inasmuch as it had been the first Muslim *qiblah*.⁵¹ At any rate, the Mus-

⁵⁰ See, for instance, 'Umar's several conversations with Ka'b and other Jews in Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 240 ff. On Ka'b and the other major transmitters of Jewish lore into Islam, see M. Lidzbarski, *De Prophetis, quae dicuntur, legendis Arabicis*, Leipzig, 1893. All this makes rather suspect the statement in Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 2405, that the treaty between 'Umar and Sophronius contained a prohibition for Jews to live in Jerusalem. See also Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, tr. J.-B. Chabot, vol. 2, Paris, 1901, p. 425. De Goeje, *Mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie*, Leyden, 1900, p. 155, explains it as a "concession faite aux Chrétiens, dont la disposition envers les Juifs était tout autre que bienveillante." But there is no evidence that 'Umar would agree to discriminate against the Jews. It was not so in Alexandria, where the Jews were specifically permitted to remain in the city (R. H. Charles, *The Chronicle of John of Nikiou*, London, 1916, p. 194). And in many instances, the Jews actually helped the invading Muslims (Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 2579; Balādhuri, *Futūh*, ed. M. de Goeje, Leyden, 1866, p. 167). De Goeje had admitted that parts of this treaty should be considered as later interpolations, although there is no reason to doubt the whole text; it may be advanced that the statement on the Jews is one such interpolation. For a more negative attitude, see Caetani, *Annali*, vol. 4, p. 299 ff.

⁵¹ It may be wondered whether the Muslims would have actually taken over the Ḥaram area simply because it had been the first *qiblah*, since it is in opposition to the Jews that Muḥammad changed the direction of prayer (Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pp. 1680-

lims took over the Ḥaram area with a definite knowledge and consciousness of its implication in the Jewish tradition as the site of the Temple.

But the later chroniclers are very clear in pointing out that the caliph withstood pressures to transform the site into a major center of Muslim worship. This fact in itself has important implications. It shows, on the one hand, that 'Umar was subject to many pressures from Jewish and Christian groups to take up their religious quarrels. The caliph wisely remained aloof from these and thereby emphasized the unique character of the new faith in the face of the two older ones. But, at the same time, in building anew on the Temple area, even though in primitive fashion, the Muslims committed a political act:⁵² tak-

1681). The need for a large area and 'Umar's desire not to take churches away from the Christians were probably more important arguments.

⁵² It is, of course, often difficult to distinguish between political and religious acts in the Middle Ages. And yet, in the prophecies related by Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 2409, to the effect that the conquest of Jerusalem was a victory over the *Rūm* and that it was a revenge of the *banū Isrā'īl* who had been oppressed by the *Rūm*, one can see more than a mere statement of the new consecration of a holy spot, rather a sense of victory over an alien power. It is interesting also to compare the images of Sophronius as given by Eutychius and Theophanes. To Eutychius, a Christian who was living under the rule of Islam, the speaker for a minority under alien domination, Sophronius appears as a shrewd politician who had succeeded in baiting the mighty conqueror away from the Christian sanctuaries. To Theophanes, living in the security of the capital of the Christian empire, the patriarch of Jerusalem was a broken man, who had to submit to the tragedy which befell him and his city, but who remained aloof and contemptuous of the heretical barbarian; cf. below, n. 127. These two attitudes could easily find parallels in recent times, when conquests and foreign occupations have led men of the same nations, but in different places, to varying interpretations of the same events.

ing possession for the new faith of one of the most sacred spots on earth and altering the pattern imposed on that spot by the Christian domination, without restoring it to its Jewish splendor. But, in all these undertakings the Rock itself played but a minor part.

Some sixty years after the conquest of Jerusalem, however, the Rock will become the center of the whole area. The question is what occurred between the time of 'Umar and the reign of 'Abd al-Malik. The texts, so far as I have been able to ascertain, are silent on this score and we will have to turn to other sources to find a solution. If we consider only the location of the building and the traditions which were associated with it, two possible solutions can be envisaged, since neither the Ascension of Muḥammad nor the imitation of the Ka'bah can be accepted. One would be that 'Abd al-Malik decided to commemorate the Jewish Temple, and therefore built a *ciborium* over what was thought to be the only tangible remnant of the structure. There is no evidence for this, nor is it likely that 'Abd al-Malik had such an idea in mind at a time when the Islamic state was fairly well settled. A second reason might be that the Muslims had brought back to the Rock and to Mount Moriah in general the localization of some biblical event of significance to them, for instance the sacrifice of Abraham. As such the hypothesis is not impossible. The importance of the "Friend of God" (*khalīl Allah*) in the Koran is well known and it is equally well known that Abraham was considered as the ancestor of the Arabs.⁵³ In later times the

⁵³ On all these problems see art. *Ibrāhīm* in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, also art. *Ka'bah*, both by A. J. Wensinck, who reflected Snouck Hurgronje's ideas on the development of the Abraham concept in the Koran. Recently these ideas have been challenged in part by G. H. Bousquet, *La légende Coranique d'Abraham*, *Revue Africaine* (1951), pp. 273–288 (cf. *Abstracta Islamica*, *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 1952, p. 156).

major events of his later life were associated with Mekkah or the neighborhood of Mekkah;⁵⁴ and it is interesting to note that the life of Adam was also transferred to the Holy City of Arabia, just as Abraham and Adam had moved together from Mount Moriah to the Golgotha in Jerusalem. But is there any definite evidence about the localization of the sacrifice of Abraham in the early Islamic period?

Our only almost contemporary source is John of Damascus. In his account of heresies, he has several extremely interesting pages on Islam. As far as Abraham is concerned, he relates that the Black Stone in Mekkah was supposed to have been either the place where Abraham had intercourse with Agar or the place where he tied his camel when he was about to sacrifice Isaac.⁵⁵ Neither one of these

And Professor A. Guillaume has informed me that he will bring out a series of documents which will shed a new light on the origins of Muḥammad's view of Abraham. R. Blachère, in his translation of the Koran, gives a complete index and full bibliographical references on all passages concerned with Abraham. For later interpretations, see the major chroniclers and traditionists. For Abraham as related in one way or another to the whole of mankind, see the interesting text in Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, ed. F. Sachau and others, vol. 1, Leyden, 1905, p. 22. Balādhuri, *Anṣāb al-Ashraf*, ed. W. Ahlwardt, *Anonyme Arabische Chronik*, Greisswald, 1883, pp. 254–255, relates an interesting story going back to al-Mada'ini, in which the descendance from Abraham through Ismā'il and the cousinage with Ishāq are understood as meaning that to the Arabs belong both *mulk* (kingship) and *nubuwwah* (prophethood).

⁵⁴ Cf. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, p. 238 ff., and *passim*.

⁵⁵ John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus*, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* (hereafter PG), vol. 94 (Paris, 1864), cols. 767–768. Cf. C. H. Becker, *Christliche Polemik und Islamische Dogmenbildung*, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, vol. 26 (1912), p. 179 ff., who seems to have been the first one to point to the importance of John of Damascus for early Islam. The relationship between Abraham and the Ka'bah is also known

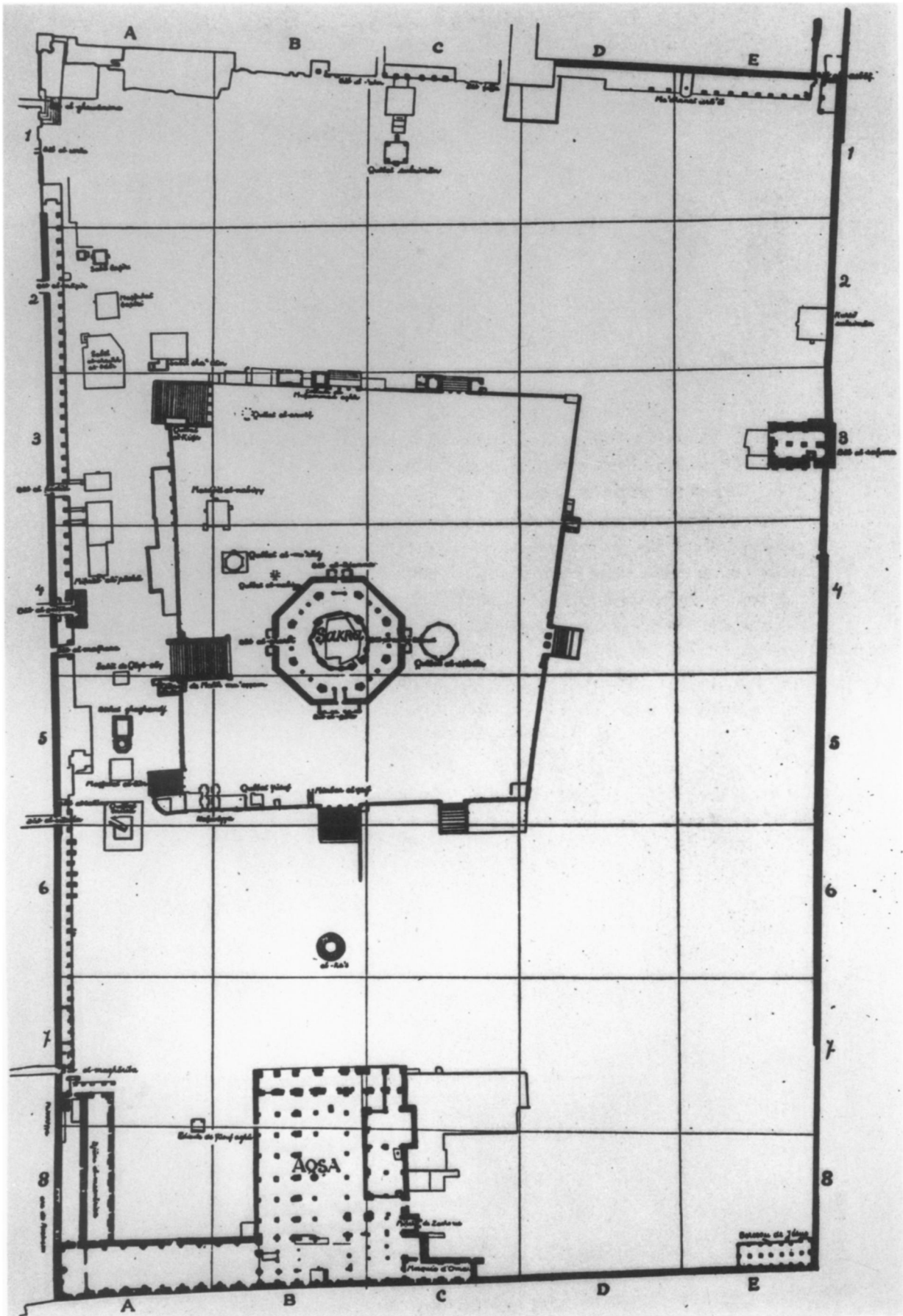


FIG. 1—PLAN OF THE HARAM AL-SHARIF. (After van Berchem.)

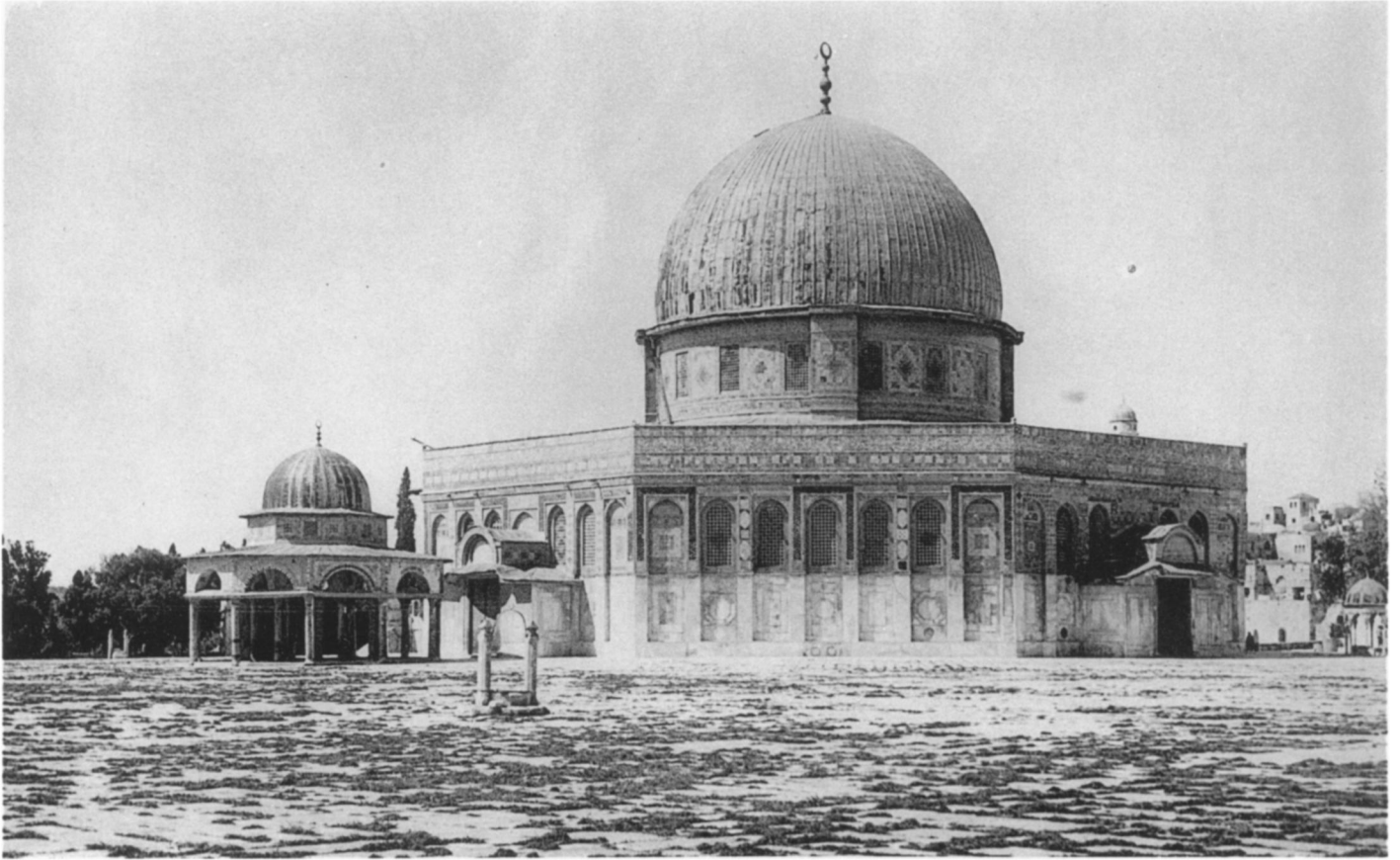


FIG. 2—THE DOME OF THE ROCK: GENERAL VIEW.

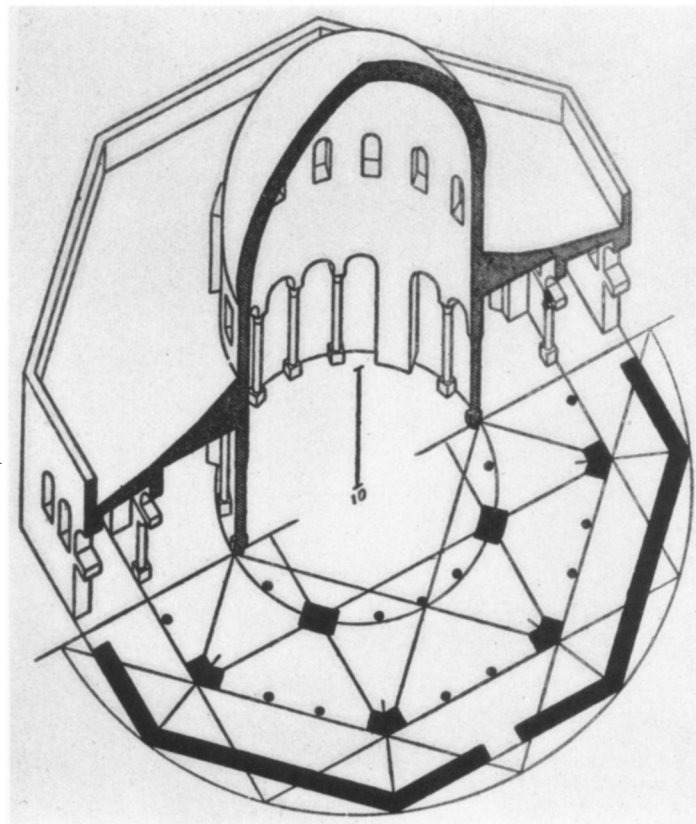


FIG. 3—THE DOME OF THE ROCK: PLAN AND ELEVATION.



FIG. 4—THE DOME OF THE ROCK: MOSAIC ON THE DRUM. (After Creswell.)

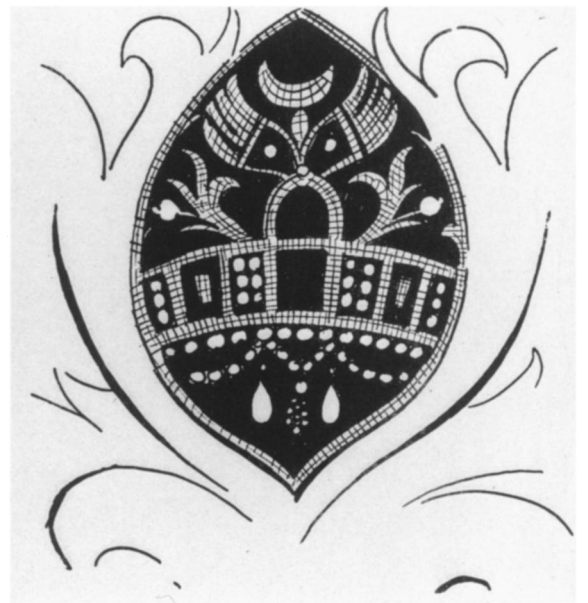


FIG. 5—THE DOME OF THE ROCK: MOSAIC ON OCTAGON. (After Creswell.)

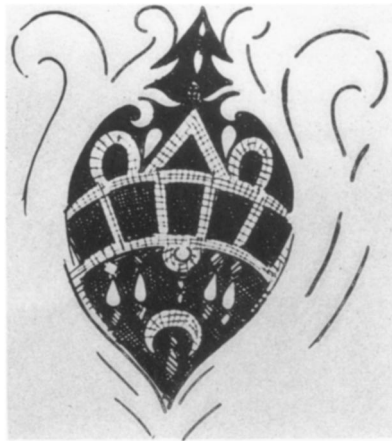


FIG. 6.

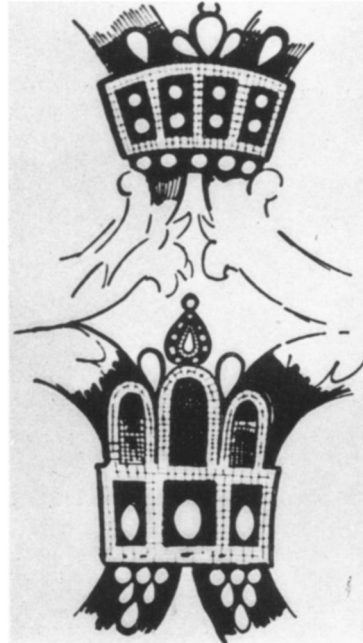


FIG. 7.

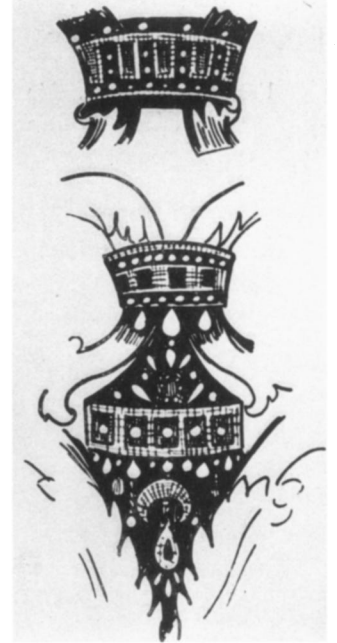


FIG. 8.



FIG. 9.



FIG. 10.

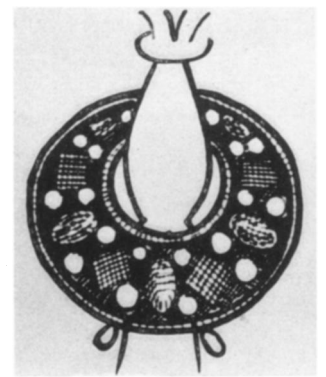


FIG. 11.

FIGS. 6-11—THE DOME OF THE ROCK: MOSAICS ON OCTAGON. (After Creswell.)



FIG. 12—VENICE: MARCIANA, GR. 1.
(After Weitzmann.)

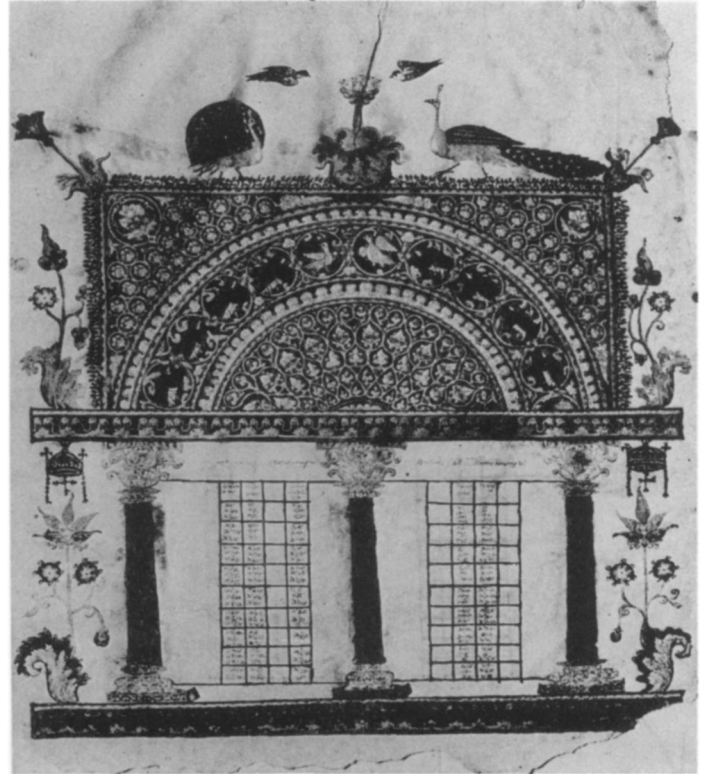


FIG. 13—TREBIZOND GOSPEL, CANON TABLE.
(After Der Nersessian.)



FIG. 14—POLA CASKET. (Courtesy K. Weitzmann.)

stories is a common Muslim interpretation of the Ka'bah and it may be wondered whether this text does not reflect a calumnious Christian tradition. On the other hand the insistence with which John of Damascus "disproves" that the sacrifice of Abraham took place in Mekkah should be construed as indicating that the idea was fairly common at the time in Muslim circles. In the Muslim tradition itself the problem is complicated by uncertainty whether Isaac or Ismā'il was the object of the sacrifice.⁵⁶ Ṭabarī, after a lengthy consideration of the problem, leans toward Isaac, both in his history and in his *tafsīr*; so do al-Kisā'i⁵⁷ and Ibn Qutaybah.⁵⁸ It seems true that in the early period the official Muslim tradition tended to consider Isaac as the *dhabih*.⁵⁹ Ṭabarī does not try to give a

to an anonymous Syriac chronicler (ca. A.D. 680), but he does not refer to the sacrifice of Isaac, ed. and tr. I. Guidi, in *Corp. Script. Christ. Orient.*, ser. 3, vol. 4, Paris, 1903, pp. 31-32; Th. Nöldike, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik*, Wien. Akad. d. Wiss. Sitzungb. d. phil.-hist. Kl., vol. 127 (1893), p. 46. See also A. Jeffery, *Ghevond's text of the correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III*, Harvard Theological Review, vol. 37 (1944), p. 310. The possibility of a Christian tradition setting Abraham in Mekkah is mentioned with further references in M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Mahomet*, Paris, 1957, p. 387.

⁵⁶ See Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 290 ff., for an enumeration of the different traditions on the subject. Similar enumerations are also to be found in the other major chroniclers and in Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*, Cairo, 1321 A.H., vol. 23, p. 44 ff. (commentary on Koran 37: 101 ff.). It may be added that in a later tradition the sacrifice was even moved to Damascus, Ibn 'Asākir, *Al-tā'rikh al-kabīr*, Damascus, 1329, I, pp. 232-233. The tradition is uncommon but points to the importance of the Abrahamic legend in Islam.

⁵⁷ al-Kisā'i, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. I. Eisenberg, Leyden, 1923, p. 150 ff.

⁵⁸ Ibn Qutaybah, *K. al-Ma'ārif*, ed. R. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen, 1850, pp. 18-19.

⁵⁹ I. Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung*, Leyden, 1952, p. 79 ff.

specific place for the event, but he does bring out one tradition which maintains that the sacrifice took place two *mīls* from Jerusalem at a place called Quṭṭ or Qaṭṭ.⁶⁰ Al-Ya'qūbī, as usual, relates the standard hagiographical tradition and puts the event at Minā. But he acknowledges that the People of the Book set the sacrifice in the "land of the Amorites in Syria."⁶¹ Al-Kisā'i relates that the dream of Abraham took place in Jerusalem, but omits any specific mention of the place of sacrifice.⁶² Many other writers have omitted any reference to the location. In other words, as far as one can gather, it is impossible to say that the sacrifice of Abraham was, in early Islamic times, definitely connected with any one specific place, whether around Mekkah or Jerusalem. Both identifications were made and the tradition is obviously uncertain, but the majority of the early traditionists and chroniclers have tended to think of Isaac as the sacrificed one and hence of Palestine as the place of sacrifice. The evidence of John of Damascus can be explained through the common polemical device of attacking the opponent's position, even when it is uncertain, in its weakest side. Furthermore there are indications, in the known descriptions of Jerusalem, that certain places on the Ḥaram were definitely associated with Abraham.⁶³ And one writer, Nāṣir-i Khusrow, some 50 years before the Crusades, recorded that the footprints on the Rock were those left by Isaac when, together with his father, he came to the Temple area.⁶⁴ Thus even in

⁶⁰ Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 273; that Abraham had lived in Palestine and had built a *masjid* there is not doubted; *ibid.*, pp. 271 and 347-348. This is accepted by other writers.

⁶¹ Ya'qūbī, vol. 1, pp. 25-26.

⁶² al-Kisā'i, p. 150.

⁶³ For instance Maqdisi in *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, vol. 3, Leyden, 1906, p. 170, a gate of Abraham.

⁶⁴ In PPTS, vol. 4, p. 47.

the eleventh century there still was a lingering memory in Muslim circles of a relationship between Abraham and the Rock.

It is not possible, with the evidence in our possession, to prove that the early Muslims considered Jerusalem as the place of sacrifice; but, since the Muslim knowledge of Jewish traditions was mostly derived from Talmudic and other para-Biblical sources,⁶⁵ and since a great number of Jews were converted to Islam in the first decades of the new religion, it is very likely that the early Muslims did know of the association between the Rock and Abraham's sacrifice.⁶⁶

One might suggest then that 'Abd al-Malik, in accord with his well-known policies, would have "islamized" the holy place and chosen the one symbol associated with it which was equally holy to Jews and Muslims, that of Abraham. It was a symbol which would, in Muslim eyes, emphasize the superiority of Islam, since in the Koran Abraham is neither a Christian nor a Jew, but a *ḥanif* (Kor. 3: 58 ff.) and the first Muslim.⁶⁷ This suggestion finds support in one interesting feature of the Christian polemic against the Muslims. John of Damascus and others after him always insist on the fact that the new masters of the Near East are Ishmaelites, that is, outcasts;

⁶⁵ Cf., for instance, all the examples given by C. C. Torrey, *The Jewish foundations of Islam*, New York, 1933, esp. p. 82 ff., on Abraham. See also D. Sidersky, *Les origines des légendes musulmanes*, Paris, 1933, pp. 31–54, esp. pp. 48–49, where, however, the author claims that Ismā'il alone was sacrificed; and J. Finkel, *Old Israelitish traditions in the Koran*, Proc. Amer. Acad. for Jewish Res., 1930–31.

⁶⁶ A physical relationship could be established between the *maqām Ibrāhīm* in Mekkah, the stone on which Abraham stood while building the Ka'bah and which bore his footprints, and the Rock in Jerusalem which also has footprints.

⁶⁷ Torrey, p. 102. See also the interesting comments of G. Widengren, *Muhammad*, p. 133 ff., who may, however, have been too strongly influenced by the possible impact of Gnostic doctrines.

and it is with this implication that the old term *Sarakenoi* is explained as meaning "empty (because of or away from?) of Sarah" (*ek tes Sarras kenous*) and that the Arabs are often also called *Agarenoi*, obviously in a pejorative sense.⁶⁸ It is true that already Jerome, for instance, when writing about nomadic incursions in Palestine and elsewhere, mentions the posterity of Abraham,⁶⁹ but his terms are very vague; and, while of course the term Ishmaelites goes back to Biblical times, there seems to appear in Christian writing with the arrival of the Muslims a new and greater emphasis on the sons of Agar.⁷⁰ Whether this

⁶⁸ John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus*, col. 763. See also the Homily to the Virgin in PG, vol. 96, cols. 657–658; for the term "sons of Agar" see also Michel le Syrien, vol. 2, p. 450, and other Greek or Syriac sources.

⁶⁹ See the reference in A. A. Vasiliev, *Arabs and the Byzantine empire*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vols. 9–10 (1956), pp. 308–309. For the origin of the word, see B. Moritz' article *Saraka* in Pauly-Wissowa, *Handbuch der Altertumwissenschaft*.

⁷⁰ Professor Ihor Sevcenko, of Columbia University, has pointed out to me another Greek source, probably to be dated in the seventies of the seventh century, which introduces the concept of the Ishmaelites as forerunners of the Anti-Christ and as enemies of the true faith. The source is the body of prophecies attributed to Methodius of Patara, E. Sackur, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*, Halle, 1848, pp. 1–96. On p. 68 the invaders against whom Gideon fought are called "sons of Umee" originally from Ethrib. The editor points out, p. 25, that we are probably dealing with a veiled reference to the Umayyads. Through Methodius of Patara the concept of the Ishmaelites was carried over to other "barbarian" invaders, even though the term was misunderstood; see, for instance, *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, Cambridge, 1953, p. 184; and the references in Sackur. See also S. H. Cross, *The earliest allusion to the Revelations of Pseudo-Methodius*, *Speculum*, vol. 4 (1929), p. 329 ff. For other texts pertaining to this problem and a different interpretation, see M. B. Ogle, *Petrus Comestor*, *Speculum*, vol. 21 (1946), p. 312 ff. But for Methodius and eschato-

new emphasis on the posterity of Abraham in Greek and Syriac writers was the result of Arab claims to descent from Abraham (and the resulting building up of Ismā'il) or whether it derived solely from a Christian attempt to show contempt for the new masters of the Near East is difficult to say. But granting Abraham's importance in early Islamic thought and in the traditions associated with the Rock, 'Abd al-Malik's building would have had an essentially polemic and political significance, as a memorial to the Muslim ancestor of the three monotheistic faiths.

But the problem of Abraham in early Islamic times can also be discussed in a purely Muslim context. It will be recalled that one of the most interesting acts of Ibn al-Zubayr in Makkah was his rebuilding of the Ka'bah, after it had been destroyed during the first Umayyad siege. The important point is that he reconstructed it not as it had been built in Muḥammad's youth and with the Prophet's participation, but differently. A later well-known tradition transmitted by 'Ayshah says that he built it as the Prophet said it was in the time of Abraham.⁷¹ Al-Ḥajjāj, on the other hand, rebuilt the Ka'bah as it had been at the time of the Prophet. This curious attempt by Ibn al-Zubayr to use the prestige

logical themes connected with historical events, see now A. Abel, *Changements politiques et littérature eschatologique*, *Studia Islamica*, II (1954), p. 26 ff. and p. 37. An added argument for a specific meaning of the word "Saracen" can be derived from a passage in Mas'ūdī, *K. al-Tanbih*, ed. M. de Goeje, in *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, vol. 8 (Leyden, 1894), p. 168, whereby, in the early part of the ninth century the emperor Nicephorus was supposed to have forbidden the use of the word "Saracen," since it was thought to be injurious.

⁷¹ Al-Azraqī, K. *Akhbar Makkah*, in F. Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, vol. 1, Leipzig, 1858, pp. 114–115 and passim, pp. 115–148, where the story is repeated several times; Ṭabarī, vol. 2, p. 592 ff.; Gaudefroy-Demombynes, p. 29 ff.

of Abraham to justify his building may be brought into relation with another tradition reported by al-Azraqī. The Mekkans were apparently attempting to disprove the contention that Jerusalem was "greater than the Ka'bah, because it (Jerusalem) was the place to which Prophets emigrate (*mahājar al-anbiyā'*) and because it is the Holy Land."⁷² Within the Muslim *koiné*, therefore, it may be suggested that 'Abd al-Malik, while "islamizing" the Jewish holy place, was also asserting a certain preeminence of Palestine and Jerusalem over Mekkah, not actually as a replacement of the Ka'bah, but rather as a symbol of his opposition to the old-fashioned Mekkan aristocracy represented by Ibn al-Zubayr.⁷³ The symbol was chosen from the religious lore which had not yet been definitely localized, but which was important to the new faith as well as in the beliefs of the older People of the Book. It was not, however, infringing—as any change of center for the pilgrimage would have done—on the very foundations of Islam.⁷⁴ The opposition be-

⁷² Al-Azraqī, pp. 39–40, where the statement about Jerusalem is attributed to the Jews; *ibid.*, p. 41, where it is related that the earth of Ṭā'if had been brought from Syria. The statement about the prophets should be related to Ibn Ḥawqal, p. 161, where Jerusalem is mentioned as the city of the prophets, and Iṣṭakhri, in *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, vol. 1, pp. 56–57, where Jerusalem is described as having a *mihṛāb* for every prophet. For Mekkan claims see Azraqī, p. 39, where it is said that 70 prophets were buried in Mekkah. A curious point about the text of Ibn Ḥawqal is that the Rock of Jerusalem is referred to as the Rock of Moses, probably because the tradition has it that it was Moses who made the Rock into a *qiblah*, Nāṣir-i Khusrow, p. 27, unless we meet with a confusion with another Rock of Moses which has been set any place from Antioch to Persia (Maqdisī, pp. 19, 46, 151; Iṣṭakhri, p. 62).

⁷³ See H. A. R. Gibb, art. '*Abd allāh ibn az-Zubayr*' in the new edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

⁷⁴ Goldziher, Wellhausen, and Nöldeke gave a great deal of importance to the statement in a later

tween Jerusalem and Mekkah and 'Abd al-Malik's involvement in it may have given rise to the tradition transmitted by al-Ya'qūbī and others about the *hajj* and Jerusalem. What had been a religious-political act entailing an unsettled point of religious lore would have been transformed by them into a religious-political act of impiety intended to strike at the very foundation of one of the "pillars of Islam." Thus did the propaganda machine of the shi'ite and 'Abbāsīd opposition attempt to show the Umayyads as enemies of the faith.

Thus, from the consideration of the location of the Dome of the Rock, it would appear that, at the time of the conquest, the main association was between the Jewish Temple and the Ḥaram area, but that this association does not in itself explain the building of the Dome of the Rock. It is only through the person of Abraham⁷⁵ that the ancient symbolism of the Rock could have been adapted to the new faith, since no strictly Muslim sym-

Syriac source that Mu'āwiyah was made king in Jerusalem and then prayed in various Christian sanctuaries; Th. Nöldeke, *Zur Geschichte der Araber . . . aus syrischen Quellen*, Zeitschr. Deutsch. Morgen. Gesell., vol. 29 (1875), p. 95, or *Corp. Script. Christ. Orient.*, ser. 3, vol. 4, Paris, 1903-5, p. 55; J. Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich*, Berlin, 1902, p. 136 ff. The story seems little reliable as such, especially in its implication of a kind of pilgrimage to Christian sanctuaries, but, if one recalls the dislike of the Umayyads for Madīnah, the first capital of the Muslim state, this Syriac source may indeed reflect some specific relation between the Umayyads and Jerusalem. See, for instance, al-Isfahānī, *K. al-Aghānī*, Būlāq, 1868, vol. 19, p. 90, where Khālid al-Qaṣrī is said to have been ready to move the Ka'bah to Jerusalem, if the caliph so ordered. In itself that type of statement is not very trustworthy, since it appears to be a literary image, but it may reflect the very same tradition which is more completely expressed in Ya'qūbī.

⁷⁵ In theory the person of Adam could also have been used as a connection between Mekkah and Jerusalem, since his life is described in both places. However, to my knowledge, there is no evidence to that effect.

bol seems to have been connected with it at so early a date. In itself this hypothesis cannot be more than a suggestion. There is no clear-cut indication of Abraham's association with the Rock of Jerusalem at the time of 'Abd al-Malik. Furthermore the question remains whether the monument should be understood within a strictly Muslim context or within the wider context of the relationship between the new state and faith and the older religions of the Near East. For clarification we must turn now to the other two documents in our possession.

The second contemporary evidence we can use for understanding the Umayyad Dome of the Rock is in the building itself, its decoration and its architecture. These two features have been painstakingly analyzed by K. A. C. Creswell and Marguerite van Berchem. But circumstances did not permit the latter to complete a thorough examination of the mosaics, so that, so far, there is no exhaustive publication of all the mosaics with a definitive statement concerning which parts of the decoration are without doubt Umayyad. As far as the architecture is concerned, the question is fairly clearly resolved: the Dome is a *ciborium* or "reliquary"⁷⁶ above a sacred place, on a model which was fairly common among Christian *martyria* throughout the Christian empire, and which was strikingly represented by the great churches of Jerusalem itself.⁷⁷ In other words,

⁷⁶ The expression was first used by R. Hartmann, *Der Felsendom in Jerusalem*, Strasbourg, 1909, p. 21 ff., and has been accepted by Max van Berchem, p. 234. See also Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *L'Hémisphère, abside ou ciborium*, Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale, vol. 3 (Paris, 1899), pp. 88-90.

⁷⁷ Creswell, vol. 1, p. 70 ff. It must be added, however, that the excavations carried out by Crowfoot and Detweiler at Buṣra have compelled a reconstruction of the cathedral which makes it architecturally less immediately related to the Dome of the Rock; cf. J. W. Crowfoot, *Churches at Bosra and Samaria-*

the architecture confirms the symbolic quality of *place of commemoration* of the Dome of the Rock, but it does not provide us with any more specific clue with respect to its meaning at the time of 'Abd al-Malik.

As far as the mosaics are concerned, most of the decorative themes consist of vegetal motives interspersed with vases, cornucopias, and what have been called "jewels."⁷⁸ All these elements, except the "jewels," are common enough and their significance in late seventh-century art has been analyzed more than once. But the "jewels" present a peculiarity which may help to explain the meaning of the structure. It must be pointed out first that we will not be dealing here with the gems and mother-of-pearl fragments set on tree trunks, fruits, rosettes, and cornucopias, which belong to a purely decorative scheme. We are only concerned with jewels that are worn, such as crowns, bracelets, earrings, necklaces, and breastplates.⁷⁹ We shall not try to

Sebaste, British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, Supplementary Papers No. 4 (London, 1937), p. 7 ff. Recently P. Verzone, *Le Chiese di Herapolis*, Cahiers Archéologiques, vol. 8 (1956), p. 45 ff., has brought to light another very close model of the Dome of the Rock. For the formation of the type see A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, vol. 1, pp. 141 ff., and 345 ff. and passim. For domical constructions see E. B. Smith, *The Dome*, Princeton, 1950, p. 10 ff., whose conclusions, however, on Islamic domes, pp. 41-43, should be revised.

⁷⁸ In Creswell, vol. 1, p. 196 ff. That the vegetal elements in the Dome of the Rock (just as probably the landscapes of Damascus) should be interpreted as Muslim parallels to Christian iconographies of paradise (whether interpreted as such by the Muslims or simply taken over) has been shown by A. Grabar, *L'Iconoclasse byzantin*, Paris, 1957, p. 62 ff.

⁷⁹ Some of the crowns have been quite recently analyzed briefly by J. Deer, *Mittelalterliche Frauenkrone in Ost und West*, in P. E. Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik (Schriften der Monumenta Germanica Historica, vol. 13, 1 and 2, Stuttgart, 1954-55)*, II, p. 423 ff. J. Deer announces there that he is planning on pursuing the subject of

solve all the problems connected with these jewels, inasmuch as J. Deer has announced that he is preparing a special study of their importance for our knowledge of medieval and especially Byzantine royal ornament. We shall restrict ourselves here to a few remarks which bear directly on the problem of the significance of the Dome of the Rock.

Mademoiselle van Berchem has already noted that the jewel decoration does not appear uniformly throughout the building, but almost exclusively on the *inner face of the octagonal colonnade*.⁸⁰ The reason for that, it has been suggested, is that the decoration will appear more brilliantly when seen against the light.⁸¹ It can be pointed out, however, that the difference between this part of the mosaic decoration and the rest of it does not lie in the usage of a jewel-like effect, but in the type of jewels used. Had the intended effect been purely formal, gems and mother-of-pearl, as used elsewhere in the building, would have served equally well here. It may rather be suggested that these actual crowns, bracelets, and other jeweled ornaments were *meant* to be shown as surrounding the central holy place toward which they face, and that it is in this sense that they contrast with the purely decorative gemlike fragments seen throughout the building.

the type of "jewels" found in the Dome of the Rock in a forthcoming work.

⁸⁰ The wing motifs found on the drum (*fig. 4*) do not really belong to the category of actual jewels, as can be seen by comparing to them *fig. 5*, which occurs on the inner face of the octagon and which is a crown. It is certain, however, that the decoration of the drum has been redone and it may be that the later artists misunderstood the crown motif, which was there originally, and transformed it into a purely decorative one of wings. The existence of crowns on the drum of the building would agree with the proposed explanation of the decorative theme in the Dome of the Rock.

⁸¹ Marguerite van Berchem, pp. 196-197.

A second point to be made about these jewels is that, although in most cases they have been adapted to the vegetal basis of the decorative scheme, they are identifiable. There are crowns, some of which were discussed by J. Deer, either diadems with hanging and encrusted precious stones, in many cases topped with triangular, oval, or arched forms (figs. 6–8), or diadems surmounted by wings and a crescent (fig. 4). There is also a variety of breastplates, necklaces, pins, and earrings (figs. 9–11), almost all of which are set with precious stones either as incrustations or as hangings. These ornaments can all be identified either as royal or imperial ornaments of the Byzantine and Persian princes, with the former largely predominant, or as the ornaments worn by Christ, the Virgin, and saints in the religious art of Byzantium.⁸² Recent studies, in particular those of A. Grabar, J. Deer, and P. E. Schramm, have shown that these were all, in varying degrees and in different ways, symbols of holiness, power, and sovereignty in the official art of the Byzantine

⁸² It is in fact in images dealing with religious matters—of which we have a larger number—that we can find most of our parallels with the jewels of the Dome of the Rock. The monuments of Ravenna and of Rome provide us with the best repertory of jewels and crowns. See Marguerite van Berchem and E. Clouzot, *Mosaïques Chrétiennes du IV^{me} au X^{me} siècle*, Geneva, 1924, figs. 275 (Orans in Florence), 50 (Annunciation Mary in Santa Maria Maggiore), 144 and following (San Apollinario Nuovo), 197 and following (San Vitale); W. de Gruneisen, *Sainte Marie Antique*, Rome, 1911, figs. 77, 105. For royal examples see R. Delbrück, *Die Consulardiptychen*, Berlin, 1926, pls. 16, 22, 32, 38; W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Imperial Byzantine coins in the British Museum*, London, 1908, vol. 1, pls. XXIII ff.; A. Pasini, *Il tesoro di San Marco*, Venice, 1885, pl. L, 1. All these examples which occur on coins, seals, consular diptychs, silver plates, mosaics, and paintings are no later than the eighth century. For other examples see the studies devoted to the subject of crowns by J. Deer, which are enumerated in Schramm, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 379–380.

and Persian empires.⁸³ In other words, the decoration of the Dome of the Rock witnesses a *conscious* (because of its position) use by the decorators of this Islamic sanctuary of representations of symbols belonging to the subdued or to the still active enemies of the Muslim state.

What can the significance of such a theme be in the decoration of an early Muslim holy place? We must ask ourselves first whether

⁸³ Schramm et al., *Herrschaftszeichen*, passim. See also J. Deer, *Der Ursprung der Kaiserkrone*, Schweizer Beiträge zur Allgemeine Geschichte, vol. 8 (1950), pp. 51–87. For Sasanian crowns, see K. Erdmann, *Die Entwicklung der sassanidische Krone*, Ars Islamica, vol. 15–16 (1951). It is interesting to compare the representations of crowns on the Dome of the Rock with the later ones at Quşayr ‘Amrah, A. Musil, *Quşeyr ‘Amra*, Vienna, 1907, vol. 2, pl. XXVI. In the Umayyad bath, the Sasanian crown is, on the whole, quite similar to that of the sanctuary, comprising a row of pearls, a diadem, wings, a stand, and a crescent. The Byzantine crown, however, is different and, to the extent to which it is visible, it belongs to a variety of the “helmet” type (cf. Deer in Schweizer Beiträge) rather than to the “open” crown type which is characteristic of the Dome of the Rock. The Umayyads obviously used two different traditions as models. In Quşayr ‘Amrah we meet with a strictly imperial tradition, whose characteristic was, as was shown by Deer, the “helmet” type with additions and variations. In Jerusalem the tradition was different. Deer, in Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen*, suggested that most of the Dome of the Rock crowns were actually crowns of women, which were usually open. Although the problem goes beyond the scope of our study, it may be wondered whether the Byzantine emperor wore “helmet” crowns in all his functions. Furthermore, votive crowns were generally open and it may be wondered whether they should be considered as women’s crowns; cf. Schramm, vol. 2, p. 377 ff., and below. It is important to remember also that votive crowns and jewels, just as the crowns and other jewels worn by Christ, the Virgin, and saints (cf. the preceding note), belong to the same typological and, in many ways, ideological repertory as the insignia worn by princes. The open crown was common in the west, A. Boinet, *La miniature Carolingienne*, Paris, 1913, pl. 131, for instance.

there is any evidence in other places for the practice of hanging crowns or for representations of crowns and jewels in sanctuaries. The representational evidence is limited. A group of Gospels, mostly Armenian and Ethiopian, but certainly harking back to early Christian and Byzantine models, show, in the pages devoted to the representation of canon tables, structures, *ciboria* or *tholoi*, at times with hanging curtains between the columns. In a number of cases hanging crowns also appear between the columns or on the side (figs. 12–13).⁸⁴ Professor Nordenfalk has suggested that these *tholoi* represented the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.⁸⁵ The well-known Pola casket (fig. 14) shows such a crown in the sanctuary of St. Peter's in Rome.⁸⁶ Crowns are also shown hanging over the hands of the bishops of Ravenna in San Apollinario in Classe⁸⁷ and over the head of an emperor on an ivory.⁸⁸ All these crowns, in a number of

cases difficult to distinguish from lamps with holy oil, serve to emphasize the greatness or sanctity of either person or place. Actual crowns and jewels have also survived to this day. The unique group of Visigothic crowns discovered in Spain,⁸⁹ many of which bear such a remarkable resemblance to the crowns of the Dome of the Rock, are among our best examples.⁹⁰ A number of texts have also preserved for us evidence for this practice of hanging votive crowns. In Christian Egypt, the builders of a church hung a crown over the altar of the church opposite a gold and silver cross in the center of the edifice.⁹¹ In Constantinople emperors are known to have ordered crowns to be suspended over or around the holiest spot in the sanctuary of Hagia Sophia.⁹² Although less precise, similar prac-

tation of the palace of Theodoric and on certain Carolingian miniatures. It must also be added that the Byzantines were not the only ones to have hanging crowns in royal palaces. It was a common Sasanian practice, as can be seen through the well-known example of the crown of Ctesiphon (A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, Copenhagen, 1944, p. 397) and through numerous incidents in the *Shāh-nāmah*. All references to crowns in the latter work have been conveniently gathered by K. H. Hansen, *Die Krone in Shāh-nāme*, *Der Islam*, vol. 31 (1953).

⁸⁹ H. Schlunk, *Arte Visigodi* in *Ars Hispaniae*, vol. 2, Madrid, 1947, pl. 328 and following p. 311 ff. These crowns are often discussed in passing in Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen*; see especially vol. 1, p. 134, vol. 2, pp. 377–379. For other examples of insignia and jewels, many of which were probably used in the same fashion, see, for instance, *Walters Art Gallery early Christian and Byzantine art*, Baltimore, 1947, pl. 57 and following; and *Berlin, Staatliche Museum, Kunst der Spätantike im Mittelmeerraum*, Berlin, 1939, pl. 14 and following.

⁹⁰ Both in type and in their probable usage these have been related to Byzantine examples, Schlunk, p. 313.

⁹¹ U. Monneret de Villard, *Les Couvents près de Sohag*, Milan, 1925, vol. 1, p. 23.

⁹² See the references in E. H. Swift, *Hagia Sophia*, New York, 1940, p. 198.

⁸⁴ C. Nordenfalk, *Die Spätantike Kanontafel*, Göteborg, 1938, pls. 24, 33, 39, fig. 2 in the text, p. 104. Armenian examples are also illustrated in S. Der Nersessian, *Armenia and the Byzantine Empire*, Cambridge, 1945, pl. 21, 1; and K. Weitzmann, *Die armenische Buchmalerei des 10. und beginnenden 11. Jahrhunderts*, Bamberg, 1933, pl. 9, No. 37. Also K. Weitzmann, *Byzantinische Buchmalerei des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1935, pl. 17, No. 92, for the Greek example from the Marciana Library. Other Greek examples occur on an unpublished Gospelbook in the Greek patriarchate in Jerusalem.

⁸⁵ Nordenfalk, pp. 103–108, where, however, the author describes as a lamp what, on the Marciana Gospelbook, appears rather to be a crown with a hanging in the shape of a cross.

⁸⁶ It has been illustrated many times. Cf. B. M. Apolloni Ghetti et al., *Esplorazione sotto la Confezione di San Pietro*, Rome, 1951, figs. 118, 121, pl. H.

⁸⁷ Marguerite van Berchem-Etienne Clouzot, *op. cit.*, figs. 203–206.

⁸⁸ Delbrück, *Consulardiptychen*, pl. 22. The usage of such crowns in the imperial tradition goes back to the ancient practice of giving a crown of laurels, but jeweled crowns are in evidence in Ravenna's represen-

tices seem to have been common in the Mazdean world as well.^{92a} In all these cases we are dealing with an emphasis on the holiness of a sanctuary—or, as in the cases of Ravenna and the Visigoths, of a personage—through suspending around it or over it royal insignia. This explanation might be offered for the use of the decorative theme in the Dome of the Rock. It could be argued that, perhaps under the impact of the Christian sanctuaries of Jerusalem, and in particular the Holy Sepulchre,⁹³ the Dome of the Rock was decorated with votive crowns to emphasize the holiness of the place.

Yet such an explanation would lead to difficulties. It would not explain the inclusion of a Persian crown within the decorative scheme. Moreover, this explanation, while agreeing with the purely formal aspect of the decoration, agrees perhaps less well with the historical and cultural milieu of the Umayyads and of Islam. It is no doubt true that the early Muslim civilization owed most of its ideas and a great deal of its art to the cultures which preceded it in the conquered areas; but it would be a mistake to consider that the imitation and copying which took place were absolutely blind. It should be possible to explain an early Islamic monument in Muslim terms. In other words, we must ask ourselves whether there is any evidence in the early Islamic period for the use of crowns and other royal objects in religious buildings and, if so, for what purposes. Were they really *ex-votos*? Or did they have a different significance? An essential piece of evidence is provided by the list of objects sent to Makkah and kept there in

^{92a} See references in K. Erdmann, *Das Iranische Feuerheiligtum*, Leipzig, 1941, p. 38.

⁹³ That imperial crowns, both male and female, were found in the Holy Sepulchre is ascertained by Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium*, ed. Geyer, Vienna, 1898, p. 171.

the Ka'bah.⁹⁴ This list can be made up from different authors, especially from al-Azraqi,⁹⁵ whose early date is of particular significance to us.

In older times the Mekkan sanctuary had had paintings and sculptures, which were destroyed on the Prophet's order, as a well-known story tells. Apparently until the time of Ibn al-Zubayr the shrine also kept the two horns of the ram which had been sacrificed by Abraham and other prophets.⁹⁶ When he destroyed the Ka'bah, Ibn al-Zubayr tried to reach for them, but they crumbled in his hands. In Islamic times a new series of objects was brought into the Temple. 'Umar hung there two crescent-shaped ornaments taken from the capital city of the Persians. Yazid I gave two ruby-encrusted crescents, belonging to a Damascene church, together with two cups.⁹⁷ 'Abd al-Malik sent two necklaces (*shamsatayn*) and two glass cups. Al-Walid I also sent two cups, while al-Walid II sent a throne and two crescent-shaped ornaments with an inscription.⁹⁸ Al-Saffāh sent a green dish, while al-Manšūr had a glass cup of an ancient Egyptian type⁹⁹ hung in the shrine. Hārūn al-Rashīd

⁹⁴ In a recently published posthumous article M. Aga-Oglu has gathered much of this information, although in a totally different connection; M. Aga-Oglu, *Remarks on the character of Islamic art*, The Art Bulletin, vol. 36 (1954), p. 182.

⁹⁵ Al-Azraqi, *K. Akhbar Makkah*, in F. Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, vol. 1, Leipzig, 1858, p. 155 ff.

⁹⁶ Cf. above.

⁹⁷ Al-Birūni, *K. al-Jamāhir*, ed. F. Krenkow, Heyderabad, 1936, p. 67. This text was unavailable to me and I owe the reference to the article by Aga-Oglu.

⁹⁸ The inscription is supposedly dated in 101/719–720; E. Combe, J. Sauvaget, and G. Wiet, *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, Cairo, 1931 (and subsequent years), No. 101. The date is, of course, impossible. Either the name of the caliph or the date were misread by the chronicler.

⁹⁹ Thus (altägyptisch) does C. J. Lamm, *Mittel-*

put there two gilded and bejeweled cases (*qaṣbatayn*) containing the celebrated oaths of allegiance of his two sons to the complex system he had established.¹⁰⁰ Al-Ma'mūn sent rubies attached to a golden chain, while al-Mutawakkil had a necklace of gold with precious stones, rubies, and topazes hung on a chain of gold. At a later date, the agreement between al-Muwaffaq and al-Mu'tamid about the division of the empire was also sent to the Ka'bah.¹⁰¹ But the most important group of objects from our point of view is that which was sent by al-Ma'mūn.

The text of al-Azraqī is somewhat confused on this score. This is not the place to define the exact historical circumstances involved, but it would seem that two more or less contemporary sets of events were mixed up by the chronicler. First, an unnamed king of Tibet had an idol of gold with a crown of gold and jewels set on a baldachin throne of silver covered with a cloth with tassels in the shape of spheres. When this king became a Muslim, he gave the throne and the idol to

alterliche Glaser, Berlin, 1930, p. 490, translate the word *fara'ūniyah*.

¹⁰⁰ This succession has been described by F. Gabrieli, *La successione di Hārūn al-Rashīd*, Rivista degli Studi Orientali, vol. 11, 1928. The Ṭabarī texts on the subject have been translated by the same scholar, *Documenti relativi al califfato di al-Amin*, Rend. della R. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, ser. 6, vol. 3 (1927), p. 191 ff. Although well known in its modalities this partial division of the empire has not been fully analyzed from the point of view of religious-political ceremonies (see, for instance, Azraqī, p. 160 ff.) or of feudal institutions (a comparison with the almost contemporary Carolingian divisions of an empire may be quite fruitful). For a discussion of the formulas used in the inscriptions made on that occasion see A. I. Mihailova, *K oformleniiu gosudarstvennyh aktov vremeni Abbasidov*, Epigrafika Vostoka, vol. 7 (1953).

¹⁰¹ Ibn al-Dāyah, *Sirah Ahmad ibn Ṭūlūn in Fragmente aus dem Mughrib*, ed. K. Vollers, Berlin, 1894, p. 19.

the Ka'bah. They were sent to Mekkah in 201 A.H. and exhibited at the time of the pilgrimage with an inscription¹⁰² emphasizing the fact that the throne was given as a gift to the Ka'bah as a token of the king's submission to Islam.¹⁰³ In 202, during a revolt, the throne was destroyed,¹⁰⁴ but the crown remained in the Ka'bah certainly until the time of al-Azraqī. Second, the Mekkah sanctuary also acquired the spoils of the Kābūl-shāh, who submitted and became converted in 199. His crown seems to have been taken to Mekkah immediately, as is ascertained by an inscription of that date.¹⁰⁵ The throne was kept for a while in the treasury (*bayt al-māl*) of the Orient, but then was also moved to Mekkah in 200.¹⁰⁶ The inscriptions which were put up together with these two objects are quite revealing in showing the extent to which the nature of an inscription in a religious sanctuary is related to the circumstances of the time. They emphasize, on the one hand, the victory of the "righteous" prince al-Ma'mūn over his perjured brother and, on the other hand, the victory of the "Commander of the Faithful" over the unbelievers.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² *Répertoire*, No. 119.

¹⁰³ See B. Spuler, *Iran in früh-islamischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden, 1952, p. 55, and the bibl. references in n. 4. A. I. Mihailova, *Novye epigraficheskie dannye dlia istorii Srednei Azii IX v.*, Epigrafika Vostoka, vol. 5, 1951, who discusses this whole group of inscriptions, doubts (p. 18) the veracity of the story on the grounds that, aside from al-Azraqī, we only have the testimony of al-Ya'qūbī (vol. 2, p. 550) about the conversion of a Tibetan king. But both authorities are quite early and, while certain features may very well have been invented, the fairly precise statement of al-Azraqī certainly refers to an event which did take place.

¹⁰⁴ See also al-Ya'qūbī, vol. 2, p. 550, where several thrones are implied. The gold and silver of the throne or thrones were used to strike coins.

¹⁰⁵ *Répertoire*, No. 100.

¹⁰⁶ *Répertoire*, No. 116.

¹⁰⁷ The difference in mood between the two in-

All these objects found in the Ka'bah can be divided into three categories. Some were merely expensive gifts whose purpose was to emphasize the holiness of the place and the piety of the donors. Just as in Byzantium, there was, in this category, a preponderance of royal jewels. Another category of objects need not concern us here: the statements of oaths were put in the sanctuary not to enhance the sanctuary's holiness, but to acquire holiness and sacredness from it. But there was also a third category of objects, from 'Umar's gift, acquired in the palace of the Persian kings, to the throne and crown of Kābūl-shāh. Such objects had an uplifting value to the beholders, used as they were to symbolize the unbeliever's submission to Islam through the display of the *Herrschaftszeichen* of the unbelieving prince in the chief sanctuary of Islam.

If we return now to the mosaics of the Dome of the Rock, two possibilities are open. One can argue, first, that the crowns and jewels reflect an artistic theme of Byzantine origin which, also in an Islamic context, used royal symbols in a religious sanctuary to emphasize the sanctuary's holiness. But one can also suggest that the choice of Byzantine and

scriptions is apparent in the following quotations: 1, From the 199 inscription dealing mostly with the victory over al-Amin: ". . . he [the *imām*] was obeyed, because he himself held on forcefully to his obedience to God; he was sustained in his work for the Book of God and the revival (*ihyā'*) of the way (*sunnah*) of the messenger of God, and he was delivered of his oath to the one who was cast off (*al-makhlū'*), because of [the latter's] betrayal, perjury, and alteration [of the pact]." 2, From the 200 inscription: "May whoever reads these lines contribute to the glorification of Islam and the abasement of polytheism, through word and through act, for the strengthening of the faith is imposed on men, as is prescribed by the *imams*, and [also] whoever desires asceticism, the holy war, the gates of piety, and a contribution to all that is earned by Islam in this glory and these splendors."

Sasanian royal symbols was dictated by the desire to demonstrate that the "unbelievers" had been defeated and brought into the fold of the true faith. Thus, in the case of the mosaic decoration, just as in the problem of the choice of the location of the building, one can present at the same time an explanation of the Dome of the Rock which would be purely religious and self-sufficient in Islamic terms alone (even though it may reflect practices found in other civilizations) and an explanation which brings up the relationship of the non-Muslims to the new faith. The third document in our possession, the inscription, will give us a definite answer.

The Dome of the Rock is unusually rich in inscriptions,¹⁰⁸ of which three are Umayyad.¹⁰⁹ The major one, 240 meters in length, is found above the arches of the inner octagonal arcade, on both sides. With the exception of the well-known place where al-Ma'mūn substituted his name for that of 'Abd al-Malik, this inscription is throughout contemporary with the building. The other two inscriptions are on copper plaques on the eastern and northern gates. They, too, have been tampered with by the 'Abbāsīd prince, but Max van Berchem has shown that they should be considered as Umayyad.

The content of the inscriptions is almost exclusively religious, the exception being the part that gives the name of the builder and the date, and to a large extent it consists of Koranic quotations. The importance of this earliest Koranic inscription we have lies in the choice of the passages and in the accompanying prayers and praises. That Koranic excerpts were used in Islamic times to emphasize or even to indicate the purpose of a structure can easily be shown by a few examples. For in-

¹⁰⁸ Max van Berchem, *Matériaux*, pp. 223-371.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 228-255; *Répertoire*, Nos. 9-11.

stance, the Nilometer of Rawḍah contains Koranic inscriptions from the 'Abbāsid period, which refer to the importance of water as a life-bringing element (42: 27-28; 14: 37; 16: 10-11, and so on).¹¹⁰ In the mosque of al-Ḥākīm a passage was chosen which refers to an *imām* (28: 4).¹¹¹ Much later the hospital of Nūr al-Din in Damascus contained various quotations dealing with the art of healing (10: 59; 16: 71; 26: 78-80).¹¹² Most mosques generally contain in some obvious place 9: 18, which specifies the duties of those entering sanctuaries. It is thus perfectly legitimate to infer from the tenor of a Koranic inscription the purpose and the significance of a building. Often, as in the Dome of the Rock, these inscriptions can in fact be read only with difficulty. However, Max van Berchem has shown in numerous instances that the significance of inscriptions was essentially symbolic and this is particularly evident in the Dome of the Rock, since otherwise there would have been no reason for al-Ma'mūn to replace 'Abd al-Malik's name with his own.¹¹³

The inscription in the interior of the building can be divided into six unequal parts, each of which begins with the *basmalah*. Each of these parts contains a Koranic passage, except for the one that has the date. The first part has *sūrah* 112: "Say: He is God, the One; God the Eternal; He has not begotten nor was He begotten; and there is none comparable to Him." The second part contains *sūrah* 33: 54: "Verily God and His angels bless the Prophet; O ye who believe, bless him and salute him with a worthy salutation." The third passage is from *sūrah* 17: verse 111.

¹¹⁰ Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un CIA: I, Egypte*, Paris, 1903, p. 19 ff.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

¹¹² E. Herzfeld, *Damascus, studies in architecture I*, *Ars Islamica*, vol. 9 (1942), p. 5.

¹¹³ M. van Berchem, *Matériaux, Syrie du Sud*, p. 235 ff.

This is the *sūrah* of the Night Journey, but the quoted passage is not connected with the *isrā'* of the Prophet, a further argument against the belief that at the time of 'Abd al-Malik the Rock of Jerusalem was already identified with the place of the Night Journey whence Muḥammad ascended into heaven. Verse 111 goes as follows: "And say: praise be to God, Who has not taken unto Himself a son, and Who has no partner in Sovereignty, nor has He any protector on account of weakness."¹¹⁴ The fourth quotation, 64: 1 and 57: 2, is a simple statement of the absolute power of God: "All in heaven and on the earth glorify God; to Him is the Kingdom; to Him is praise; He has power over all things." The last part is the longest and contains several Koranic passages. First 64: 1, 67: 2, and 33: 54 are repeated. They are followed by 4: 169-171: "O ye People of the Book, overstep not bounds in your religion; and of God speak only truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God, and His Word which he conveyed into Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him. Believe therefore in God and his apostles, and say not 'Three.' It will be better for you. God is only one God. Far be it from His glory that He should have a son. His is whatever is in the heavens, and whatever is on the earth. And God is a sufficient Guardian. The Messiah does not disdain being a servant of God, nor do the Angels who are near Him. And all who disdain His service and are filled with pride, God will gather them all to Himself." This quotation is followed by a most remarkable invitation to prayer: "Pray for your Prophet and your servant, Jesus, son of Mary."¹¹⁵ But this is

¹¹⁴ This last sentence is still fairly obscure, as can be seen from the varying translations by Pickthall, Palmer, and Blachère, but the reference to Christ is unmistakable.

¹¹⁵ This expression might be compared to the expressions found on early coins: *Muḥammad rusūl*

followed by 19:34–37: “And the peace of God was on me (Mary) the day I was born, and will be the day I shall die, and the day I shall be raised to life. This is Jesus, the son of Mary; this is a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt. It beseems not God to beget a son. Glory be to Him. When he decrees a thing, He only says to it ‘Be,’ and it is. And verily God is my Lord and your Lord; adore Him then. This is the right way.” And the inscription ends with the exhortation and threat of 3:16–17: “God witnesses that there is no God but He: and the angels, and men endued with knowledge, established in righteousness, proclaim there is no God but He, the Mighty, the Wise. The true religion with God is Islam; and they to whom the Scriptures had been given, differed not until after the knowledge had come to them, and through mutual jealousy. But, as for him who shall not believe in the signs of God, God will be prompt to reckon with him.”¹¹⁶

The two inscriptions on the gates are not as explicit. The one on the east gate bears a number of common Koranic statements dealing with the faith (2:256; 2:111; 24:35, 112; 3:25; 6:12; 7:155) and a long prayer for the Prophet and his people. The inscription on the north gate is more important since it contains two significant passages. First it has 9:33 (or 61:9): “He it is who has sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, so that he may cause it to prevail over all religion, however much the idolaters may hate it.” This is the so-called “prophetic mission” which has become the standard inscription on all Muslim coins. But, while it is true that it has become a perfectly

Allāh wa ‘abduhu or *Muḥammad ‘abd Allāh wa rusūluhu*. See J. Walker, *Arab-Byzantine coins*, London, 1956, p. LXVII.

¹¹⁶ The last few words are missing on the inscription, probably because the artist miscalculated the space he had at his disposal.

commonplace one, its monumental usage is rarer and this is its first known example. And second, this inscription contains an abridged form of 2:130 (or part of 3:78), which comes after an enumeration of the prophets: “We believe in God, in that which was passed down to Muḥammad (this is not Koranic) and *in that which the Prophets received from their Lord. And we make no distinction between any of them and unto Him we have surrendered.*”

These quotations emphasize three basic points. First the fundamental principles of Islam are forcefully asserted, as they will be in many later inscriptions. Then all three inscriptions point out the special position of the prophet Muḥammad and the importance and universality of his mission. Finally the Koranic quotations define the position of Jesus and other prophets in the theology of the new faith, with by far the greatest emphasis on Jesus and Mary (no Old Testament prophet is mentioned by name).¹¹⁷ The main inscription ends with an exhortation, mingled with the threat of divine punishment, pointing to Islam as the final revelation and directed to the Christians and the Jews (“O ye people of the Book”). These quotations do not, for the most part, belong to the usual cycle of Koranic inscriptions on monuments. Just as the Dome of the Rock is a monument without immediate parallel in Islamic architecture, so is its inscription unique. Moreover it must be realized that even those quotations which will become commonplace were used here, if not for the first time, at any rate at a time when they had

¹¹⁷ This point had already been made by M. de Vogüé, *Le Temple de Jérusalem*, Paris, 1864, p. 89. Max van Berchem, p. 251, n. 4, has denied that most of the quotations deal with Jesus. While it is, of course, true that the inscriptions on the doors are not overly explicit, the main inscription inside the building is quite unique for its emphasis on the relations between Islam and Christianity.

not yet become standard. Through these quotations the inscription has a double implication. On the one hand it has a missionary character; it is an invitation, a rather impatient one, to "submit" to the new and final faith,¹¹⁸ which accepts Christ and the Hebrew prophets among its forerunners. At the same time it is an assertion of the superiority and of the strength of the new faith and of the state based on it.

The inscription also had a meaning from the point of view of the Muslims alone. For it can be used to clarify the often quoted statement of al-Maḡdisī on the reason for the building of the Dome of the Rock. One day al-Maḡdisī asked his uncle why al-Walid spent so much money on the building of the mosque of Damascus. The uncle answered: "O my little son, thou hast 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 there the beautiful churches still belonging to them, so enchantingly fair, and so renowned for their splendor, as are the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the churches of Lydda and Edessa. So he sought to build for the Muslims a mosque that should be unique and a wonder to the world. And in like manner is it not evident that 'Abd al-Malik, seeing the greatness of the *martyrium* (*qubbah*) of the Holy Sepulchre and its magnificence was moved lest it should dazzle the minds of the Muslims and

¹¹⁸ Goitein has also pointed this out, in *JAOS*, vol. 70 (1950), p. 106. At a slightly later date, John of Damascus, *Homily on the Holy Sabat*, in *PG*, vol. 96, cols. 641–642, reflects Muslim missionary work: "Whoever does not confess that Christ is the Son of God and God is an Antichrist. If somebody says that Christ is a servant (*doūlos*), let us close our ears in the knowledge that he is a liar and that he does not possess the truth." The reference to the Muslim view of Christ is unmistakable.

hence erected above the Rock the Dome which is now seen there."¹¹⁹

It is indeed very likely that the sophisticated Christian milieu of Jerusalem had tried to win to its faith the rather uncouth invaders. And it is a well-known fact that eastern Christianity had always liked to use the emotional impact of music and the visual arts to convert "barbarians."¹²⁰ That such attempts may have been effective with the Arabs is shown in the very interesting, although little studied, group of accounts dealing with the more or less legendary trips of Arabs to the Byzantine court in early Islamic times, or sometimes even before Islam.¹²¹ In most cases the "highlights" of the "guided tours" to which they submitted was a visit either to a church where a definite impact was made by the religious representations or to a court reception with similar results. In the pious accounts of later times the Muslim always leaves impressed but unpersuaded by the pageantry displayed. One

¹¹⁹ Al-Maḡdisī, p. 159; LeStrange, *Palestine*, pp. 117–118.

¹²⁰ For a later example see *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, tr. S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, Cambridge, 1953, pp. 110–111. See also the Arabic traditions mentioned below.

¹²¹ See, for instance, al-Dinawari, *K. al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. V. Guirgass, Leyden, 1888, pp. 21–22; al-Isfahānī, *K. al-Aghānī*, Būlāq, 1868, vol. 14, pp. 5–8; ibn al-Fakih, *K. al-Buldān*, in *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, vol. 5, p. 141 ff. There is a whole body of such stories which should be sorted out. Often these stories are connected with the stories dealing with Muḡammad's missions (cf. below), but some have already acquired a literary flavor suggesting that we are in fact dealing with a theme which was not merely historical. For legends and history, see R. Goossens, *Autour de Diginis Akritas*, Byzantion, vol. 7 (1932), pp. 303–316; M. Canard, *Delhemma*, *ibid.*, vol. 10 (1935), pp. 283–300; H. Grégoire and R. Goossens, *Byzantinische Epos und arabischer Ritterroman*, *Zeitschr. Deutsch. Morgen. Gesell.*, n.f., vol. 13 (1934), pp. 213–232; and especially M. Canard, *Les aventures d'un prisonnier arabe*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 10 (1955–56).

may wonder, however, whether such was always the case and whether the later stories should not be considered, at least in part, as moral stories intended to ward off defections. That the danger of defections existed is clearly implied in Maqdisi's story. From a Muslim point of view, therefore, the Dome of the Rock was an answer to the attraction of Christianity, and its inscription provided the faithful with arguments to be used against Christian positions.

A priori, as we have seen, two major themes must be present in the construction of the Dome of the Rock. First, the building of a sanctuary on Mount Moriah must be understandable—and must have been understood—in terms of the body of beliefs which had been associated with that ancient holy spot, since Islam was not meant as a totally new faith, but as the continuation and final statement of the faith of the *People of the Book*. In other words, the Dome of the Rock must have had a significance in relation to Jewish and Christian beliefs. Second, the first major Muslim piece of architecture had to be meaningful to the follower of the new faith. These two themes recur in the analysis of all the three types of evidence provided by the building itself. Its location can be explained as an attempt to emphasize an event of the life of Abraham either in order to point to the Muslim character of a personage equally holy to Christians and Jews or in order to strengthen the sacredness of Palestine against Mekkan claims. The royal symbols in the mosaics could be understood as simply votive or an expression of the defeat of the Byzantine and Persian empires by the Muslims. Finally the inscriptions are at the same time a statement of Muslim unitarianism and a proclamation to Christians and Jews, especially to the former, of the final truth of Islam.

But in the inscriptions the latter theme is preponderant and it is in the inscription, with its magical and symbolic significance—far greater than that of representational art in Islam from the very inception of the new faith¹²²—that we find the main idea involved

¹²² Cf. references to Max van Berchem, above, n. 113. This point poses again the question of the formation of Muslim iconoclasm. The earliest definite evidence from a literary source derives from the complicated body of documents known as the "edict of Yazid," which has been recently analyzed by A. A. Vasiliev, *The iconoclastic edict of the caliph Yazid II, A.D. 721*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vols. 9–10 (1956). But the archeological evidence of the Dome of the Rock and of the mosque of Damascus shows that, even before the time of Yazid, it was fully accepted that a Muslim religious building did not admit of representations of living beings. There was thus a definite distinction in Umayyad times between an imperial art which permitted images and a religious art which did not. It is unlikely, however, that Muslim theology in the second half of the first century of the Hegira had already made all the conclusions which will be drawn later from the concept of God as the only Creator. It may be that the simple incident of the destruction of idols by Muhammad in Mekkah created a precedent which was followed without being fully rationalized. The conscious destruction of religious representations in Central Asia by the Arab conquerors, which is evidenced both in literary sources and by archeological documents, seems to have been the result of an opposition to idols rather than to representations. It may also be suggested that the Muslim opposition to religious images was connected with the tremendous importance of images in Christianity and that we are in fact dealing with a reaction against means of conversion and teaching with which the Muslims could not compete. The whole question of the origins of Muslim opposition to religious images is far from being solved, but a solution should not mean, as it has at times, the attribution to early Islam of the systems of thought and conclusions characteristic of a later period, but rather an understanding of the problem within its historical context. On the question of the work of art as a symbol of sovereignty, it may be interesting to relate the following story told by Euty chius, ed. L. Cheikho, vol. 2, pp. 19–20. At the time of the conquest, we are told, the Arab forces under Abū 'Ubaydah signed an armistice for one year

in the erection of the Dome of the Rock. What the inscription implies is a forceful assertion of the power and of the strength of the new faith and of the state based on it. It exemplifies the realization by the Umayyad leadership of its own position with respect to the traditional heir of the Roman empire. In what was in the seventh century the Christian city *par excellence* 'Abd al-Malik wanted to affirm the superiority and the victory of Islam. This affirmation, to which was joined a missionary invitation to accept the new faith, had its expression both in the inscription and in the Byzantine and Persian crowns and jewels hanging around the sacred Rock. But its most

with the Christians of Qinnasrin whereby a frontier would be established between Christian and Muslim possessions, in order to allow those Christians who so desired to leave Syria and follow Heraclius into Anatolia. The frontier was defined by a pillar or column (*'amūd*), beyond which the Muslims were not to go. On this column the Christians painted a portrait of Heraclius seated in majesty (*jālis fī mulkihi*), with the agreement of Abū 'Ubaydah. But one day, while practicing horsemanship, a certain Arab accidentally planted the point of his spear in the eye of the image and put its eye out. The chief of the Christians (*al-baṭriq, patricius*) immediately came accusing the Muslims of betraying the truce. When asked by Abū 'Ubaydah what he would like in return, he said: "We will not be satisfied until the eyes of your king are put out." Abū 'Ubaydah suggested having his own image mutilated, but to no avail, since the Christians insisted on having a likeness of the Muslim's great king (*malikukum al-akbar*). Finally Abū 'Ubaydah agreed. The Christians made an image of 'Umar, whose eye was then put out by one of his men. Then the *baṭriq* said: "You have treated us equitably." Here again the important point is not whether or not the event actually took place, although, even if arranged, it is not inconceivable during the "free for all" period of the conquest. The story may have been simply invented in order to satisfy, in one small instance, the vanity of the Christians defeated by the great caliph. But the essential point of this account is in showing once again the significance of a work of art as a magic symbol of state and sovereignty through the actual identification of emperor and image.

immediately striking expression was the appropriation for Islam of the ancient site of Mount Moriah. Thereby the Christian prophecy was voided and the Jewish mount rehabilitated. But it was no longer a Jewish sanctuary; it was a sanctuary dedicated to the victorious faith. Thus the building of the Dome of the Rock implies, on the part of 'Abd al-Malik, what might be called a *prise de possession* of a hallowed area, in the same sense that, as Max van Berchem has shown, the substitution of al-Ma'mūn's name for that of 'Abd al-Malik in the inscription was not the act of a counterfeiter or a vainglorious prince but had a political aim: "détourner à son profit le prestige religieux et politique attaché aux créations de ses prédécesseurs."¹²³ In meaning, therefore, the Dome of the Rock should not so much be related to the monuments whose form it took over, but to the more general practice of setting up a symbol of the conquering power or faith within the conquered land. Such were the *tropaia* of the Roman empire.¹²⁴ Such were, in a different way, the inscriptions in the Christian basilica of Bethlehem.¹²⁵ Such were the well-known inscriptions of the Nahr al-Kalb north of Beyrouth. Such was probably the meaning of many an Assyrian sculpture, whose brutality was really meant to strike fear in the heart of the subdued. And even today such commemorative inscriptions or monuments are not

¹²³ Max van Berchem, p. 238. It may be added here that, of all later Muslim caliphs, al-Ma'mūn was probably one of the most likely to understand the symbols involved in the Dome of the Rock, since, it will be recalled, he was responsible for the inscriptions on the treasure of Kābūl-shāh, above.

¹²⁴ See, for instance, the monument of La Turbie in southern France, J. Formigé, *Le Trophée des Alpes*, Paris, 1949.

¹²⁵ See the content of the inscriptions in H. Stern, *Les représentations des conciles dans l'église de la Nativité: les inscriptions*, Byzantion, vol. 13 (1938), p. 420 ff., esp. pp. 437-440 and 449 ff.

uncommon within the territory of the conquered peoples. The forms may change according to the time, place, and circumstances, but the monumental expression of an essentially political idea is as ancient as the existence of empires. And in Umayyad Islam this affirmation of victory is bound with a definite missionary spirit.

Two points remain still to be discussed. We must see first in what ways such an interpretation of the Dome of the Rock agrees with the Byzantine-Umayyad relations of the time. Then we must try to find out at what time the Dome of the Rock and the area surrounding it acquired the significance which became prevalent in later times.

The years 69–72 were not very favorable for the fortunes of the Umayyad caliphs. They were fighting Muslim forces in Arabia and Iraq. They were paying an enormous tribute to the Byzantines and, furthermore, they had to face the invasion of that odd group of Christian irregulars, the Mardaites, while the Cyprus situation was still unsettled.¹²⁶ However, the interesting point is not in the actual events, but in the psychological climate of Christian-Muslim relations in the latter

¹²⁶ On the relations with the Byzantines see J. Wellhausen, *Die Kämpfe der Araber mit den Römern in den Zeit der Umayyaden*, Nachrichten von d. K. Gesell. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen, 1901, p. 428 ff.; on the Mardaites see art. by H. Lammens in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, with further bibl.; for wars in Asia Minor see E. W. Brooks, *The Arabs in Asia Minor (641–750)*, Journal of Hellenic Studies, vol. 18 (1898), p. 182 ff.; for the Byzantine side see G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford, 1956, p. 116; and for the Cyprus problem, R. J. H. Jenkins, *Cyprus between Byzantium and Islam*, Studies presented to D. M. Robinson, Saint-Louis, 1953, vol. 2, p. 1006 ff. Just recently the psychological aspect of Umayyad relations with the Byzantines has been admirably sketched by H. A. R. Gibb, *Arab-Byzantine relations under the Umayyad caliphate*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 12 (1958), pp. 231–233.

part of the seventh century. The important fact here is that there was a constant ambiguity in these relations, for they were, on the one hand, relations between two faiths and, on the other, between two empires. By the end of the seventh century it appears fairly certain that an important fraction of the Christian population within the Muslim empire—and especially the hierarchy of the church—was in reality a sort of “fifth column” for the Byzantine state,¹²⁷ which was all

¹²⁷ It is in fact in Christian sources that this phenomenon becomes evident, since from a Christian point of view this was a very desirable activity. See the epistle of Sophronius to Sergius in Migne, PG, vol. 87, pt. 3 (Paris, 1865), cols. 3197–3200; cf. also the texts gathered by M. de Goeje, *La conquête de la Syrie*, pp. 174–176. The Sophronius letter was read anew at the sixth ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 680, J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum . . . collectio*, Florence, 1765, vol. 11., cols. 459 and following. The pretext offered by Theodore, the representative of the see of Jerusalem (col. 455), was his desire to know whether the thoughts expressed in it were orthodox. This is a strange pretext at best, since the theological position of Sophronius was always recognized as one of the strongest expressions of orthodoxy in the face of Monothelism. It is much more likely that Theodore wanted to draw the attention of the Council to the situation of the see of Jerusalem and, in a disguised form, to invite intervention. It had, of course, to be done in a disguised form, since there were, at the Council, representatives of other “occupied” areas, who were favorable to Macarius and the heretics on trial (see cols. 618–619) and who might have informed the Umayyads of orthodox activities. The stories dealing with John of Damascus’ betrayal of the caliph to the emperor are probably legendary (PG, vol. 94, cols. 453–456); see the article (*Saint*) *Jean Damascène* in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Paris, 1924. Yet what is unlikely is not the story itself but the fact that John of Damascus would have been plotting with Leo. Theophanes (Bonn ed., p. 559) relates that ‘Abd al-Malik wanted to use the columns of the Gethsemane church for the rebuilding of the Mekkan Temple; various Christian notables requested him not to do so, but suggested instead that they would ask Justinian II’s permission to substitute columns from another church. So it was

the easier, since communications were not interrupted between the two empires, as has recently been shown again.^{127a}

'Abd al-Malik directed himself against the Christian danger no less effectively than against the danger of disaffection in the very ranks of Islam. The Mardaites were taken care of by an expedition¹²⁸ and by a treaty with Byzantium.¹²⁹ A few years later, 'Abd al-Malik changed the coinage¹³⁰ and transformed it into an instrument of opposition to the Byzantine empire. Already the earlier experimental issues had contained symbols of the

done. The point here is not whether the story is true or not but that both the Christians and, curiously enough, 'Abd al-Malik seemed to accept Justinian's sovereignty over Christian buildings in Jerusalem. Theophanes, pp. 641-643, also relates that, under al-Walid II, the archbishop of Damascus had to be exiled for making anti-Muslim speeches; see also p. 632. Other sources, Denys of Tell-Mahre, *Chronicle*, tr. J. B. Chabot, Paris, 1895, p. 10, and Michael the Syrian, tr. J. B. Chabot, p. 475, attribute to 'Abd al-Malik a persecution of the Christians. And the inscriptions of Bethlehem, perhaps slightly later than the Dome of the Rock, while, according to Stern, they did not follow a purely Byzantine tradition, but a local Syrian one, imply a condemnation of heretics which may have been directed against the Maronites, but also against the Muslims, who were considered as heretics (probably Arians, C. Güterbock, *Der Islam im Lichte der byzantinischen Polemik*, Berlin, 1912, p. 6). The unusual lack of representations of living beings does suggest that the mosaics were made with a definite consciousness of the existence of Islam and not exclusively within a Christian world of its own. On this problem and other related ones, see now the texts, images, and commentaries in the second chapter of A. Grabar, *L'Iconoclisme byzantin*, Paris, 1957.

^{127a} H. A. R. Gibb, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 12, p. 221 ff.

¹²⁸ Balādhuri, *Ansāb*, vol. 5, p. 335.

¹²⁹ Theophanes, pp. 558-559.

¹³⁰ Ṭabari, vol. 2, pl. 939, and the other chroniclers. On all questions of coinage, see now J. Walker, *Arab-Byzantine coins*, London, 1956, esp. pp. XXV, XXIX, LVII ff., for expressions showing political concern.

new state,¹³¹ but the new coinage included in a nutshell all the themes of the inscription of the Dome of the Rock: the unitarian affirmation (There is no God but God, One, without associate), the emphasis on Muḥammad (Muḥammad the Apostle of God), and the mission verse from the Koran quoted above. The argument that coinage was an element of ideological warfare is all the more convincing since, around the same time, and probably before the Muslim change of coinage, Justinian II introduced a new Byzantine coinage with a definite Christological emphasis (*servus Christi* in the inscription and an image of Christ with the inscription *rex regnantium*) which had hitherto been absent.¹³² It may be pointed out in passing that it is on problems of Christology that all later discussions between Muslims and Christians will center.¹³³ As to the third Christian element, the Christians of the Muslim empire, 'Abd al-Malik's attitude toward them was a mixture of sternness and persuasion. It is exemplified in the erection of the Dome of the Rock, whose meaning was that the Islamic state was here to stay and that the new faith was simply the

¹³¹ See, for instance, G. C. Miles, *Mihrāb and 'Anazah: a study in early Islamic iconography*, *Archaeologica Orientalia*, in *Memoria Ernest Herzfeld*, New York, 1952, pp. 156-171. Grabar, *Iconoclisme*, p. 67 ff.

¹³² Wroth, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, p. 330 ff.; cf. A. Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin*, Strasbourg, 1936, p. 19, n. 4, where the symbolic elements of Justinian's coinage are emphasized. See also E. Kitzinger, *The cult of images before iconoclasm*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 8 (1954), p. 126, where the change is explained in purely Byzantine terms. This was no doubt so, but it may be suggested that, in the case of Justinian II, just as in the case of 'Abd al-Malik, important changes or decisions had both an internal and an external significance. See the extensive discussion in A. Grabar, *Iconoclisme*, p. 67 ff.

¹³³ Güterbock, *op. cit.*, passim; C. H. Becker, in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, vol. 26, 1912; Jeffery, in *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 37, 1944.

final statement of what was true in Christianity.

One may introduce here yet another document which may have a bearing on the problem. Most Arab chroniclers, when relating the major events of the Prophet's life, relate that Muḥammad had sent a series of embassies to the rulers of the world, and, among them, of course, to Heraclius.¹³⁴ The historical value of many of these stories has been questioned¹³⁵ and there is no doubt that much in their later forms was certainly made up, although the mere fact of Muḥammad's sending messengers is not implausible, especially after his first successes over Jews and pagans, when he began to emphasize the universality of the new faith. One of the stories transmitted by Ṭabarī may have some significance in our investigation. It goes back to al-Zuhri, who claims to have heard it from a Christian bishop *at the time of 'Abd al-Malik*, and, like many other accounts, it says that Heraclius himself was quite convinced of the truth of the Prophet's mission, but that the upper ranks of the church refused to follow him and that he had to submit to them.¹³⁶ Regardless of whether Muḥammad sent messengers, it is extremely improbable, to say the least, that Heraclius would have even considered becoming a Muslim. But it could be suggested that the Umayyads, in order to arouse the Christians against

¹³⁴ There are many versions of the story and some are confused with other similar themes (cf. above, n. 121); see Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 1585 ff.; *Aghāni*, vol. 6, p. 64 ff.; Ibn Sa'ad, *Ṭabaqāt*, ed. E. Sachau, vol. 1, 2, p. 15 ff., etc.; see also M. Hamidullah, *Corpus des Traités et Lettres Diplomatiques*, Paris, 1935, pp. 14–15. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Mahomet*, p. 178 ff.

¹³⁵ C. L. Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, vol. 1, Milan, 1905, p. 725 ff.

¹³⁶ Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 1565; see also pp. 1561–1562 for another tradition transmitted by al-Zuhri to the effect that Heraclius dreamed that "circumcised people" will rule over Jerusalem.

the hierarchy of the church, which was closely tied to the Byzantine empire, and in order to further the aims of conversion which certainly existed among their followers, might have created the fiction that the hero who brought the True Cross back to Jerusalem was ready to become a Muslim. And it is under 'Abd al-Malik and at the time of the construction of the Dome of the Rock that such a story might have been put into circulation.

By itself this account has little significance, but, together with the coins, the inscriptions of the Dome of the Rock, and the Christian activities in the Muslim empire, it contributes to the suggestion of an interesting group of propagandistic activities taking place during the ideological "cold war" between the Christian and Muslim empires at the time of 'Abd al-Malik. All together they created a climate of opinion which certainly influenced the spirit of crusade and the consciousness of a struggle between the two faiths and the two states, which characterized the great Muslim expedition against Constantinople in the years 97–99/715–717.¹³⁷

These facts would, I believe, show that the interpretation here proposed of the Dome of the Rock does agree with the known historical development of Islam and Byzantium in Umayyad times. But this significance could only last so long as the circumstances permitted. Its faint echo is still apparent in Maqdisi, but it may be noted that the Muslim geographer claimed that in the tenth century A.D. Christian and Jews still maintained the upper hand in the affairs of the city;¹³⁸ the building, therefore, still served its original purpose, albeit on a very restricted level.

In the meantime, however, the whole

¹³⁷ M. Canard, *Les expéditions Arabes contre Constantinople dans l'histoire et la légende*, Journal Asiatique, vol. 208 (1926), p. 80 ff.

¹³⁸ al-Maqdisi, *op. cit.*, p. 165 ff.

Ḥaram area underwent considerable change, both in its physical aspect and in its significance. The identification of the *masjid al-aqṣā* with Jerusalem was more generally accepted than before and all the small memorial structures connected with the Ascension of Muḥammad were built. The question is whether one can date the moment when this change took place. The inscriptions are not very helpful. The earliest one to mention the *isrā* of the Prophet and to quote Koran 17:1 is the one which was seen by Harawi and which is dated in 426/1035.¹³⁹ It was in the large congregational mosque at the southern end of the Ḥaram, which is generally called the Aqṣā mosque. Basing himself on that inscription, Max van Berchem suggested that it is there and not on the Rock that the Muslim tradition had first localized the event of the Prophet's life.¹⁴⁰ This is quite possible, inasmuch as Ibn al-Faqīh, one of our earlier sources, mentions that in this mosque there was a black plaque with the inscription *khilqah Muḥammad*,¹⁴¹ and behind the *qiblah* there was another inscription connected with the Prophet. At the same time, the existence of a *qubbah* of the Ascension on the central platform of the Ḥaram would lead one to believe that it is in a more central part of the esplanade that the miraculous event was thought to have taken place. Were both places accepted at the same time? Or was there a difference in meaning between them? Could one

¹³⁹ Max van Berchem, p. 382 ff.; *Guide des Lieux de Pélerinage*, p. 64. It is only after the arrival of the Ottomans that we meet with inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock itself with the theme of the Night Journey.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹⁴¹ It is not clear whether we should understand the word to mean "form (of the name) of Muḥammad" (LeStrange, *Palestine*, p. 100) or "figure de Muḥammad" (Marmarji, *Textes*, p. 211), the former being more likely, unless we are dealing with some imprint on a stone which was associated with the Prophet.

have been more definitely commemorative than the other? The question of localization is still not clear.

As far as dating is concerned, it may be suggested that it was under al-Walid, 'Abd al-Malik's successor, that the identification of the *isrā*' and *mi'raj* with the Ḥaram area was accepted and translated into architecture. Al-Walid was known as a great builder. He built the new mosque at Madīnah, the royal mosque at Damascus, and he restored a great deal in Mekkah.¹⁴² In the case of Madīnah, Sauvaget has shown that the plan of the new mosque depended in many ways on the preceding structure which was like the shrine of the house of the Prophet.¹⁴³ And the Egyptian papyri show that under al-Walid a major mosque was built in Jerusalem. There is little doubt that it is the present Aqṣā mosque which was centered on the previously built sanctuary of the Rock, perhaps in *architectural* imitation of the complex of the Holy Sepulchre, as has been suggested, although the *idea* of adapting a congregational mosque to a formerly built sanctuary is also that of Madīnah.¹⁴⁴ If, then, the Ascension of Muḥammad was supposed to have taken place on the site of the mosque, there is some justification in attributing to al-Walid the monumental recognition of the fact. If, on the other hand, the localization was on the central platform, we can still argue that al-Walid was responsible for it. And this for the following reason.

It will be recalled that two writers, al-Muhallabī, quoted by Abū al-Fidā,¹⁴⁵ and

¹⁴² On all these activities see J. Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine*, Paris, 1947, passim and esp. p. 93 ff.; also Gibb, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹⁴⁴ R. W. Hamilton, *The structural history of the Aqsa Mosque*, London, 1949, p. 74; Sauvaget, pp. 100-101; Creswell, vol. 2, p. 119 ff.; E. Lambert, *Les origines de la mosquée*, *Studia Islamica*, vol. 6 (1956), pp. 14-18.

¹⁴⁵ Text in Gildmeister, *ZDPV*, vol. 13, p. 18.

Euty chius¹⁴⁶ attribute the building of the Dome of the Rock to al-Walid. Al-Muhallabī adds that al-Walid was also responsible for the small *qubbahs* around the Dome of the Rock, while Euty chius claims that the dome of the main sanctuary was taken from a Christian church in Baalbek and brought to the Holy City. The errors of these two writers could be explained if we suppose that al-Walid was indeed responsible for the building of the small mausoleums and consequently for the architectural translation of the Ascension of the Prophet. It may even be that al-Walid did have a small cupola moved from some remote Christian church, while it would of course be unthinkable to imagine the transportation of the dome set over the Rock. Knowing al-Walid to have been the builder of the large congregational mosque and of the small mausoleums, al-Muhallabī and Euty chius would have simply concluded that the building up of the Ḥaram in general was his doing. It may finally be added that all the religious foundations of al-Walid are characterized by their concern with a lavish expression of the power of the Umayyad state and with their emphasis on the places sanctified by Muḥammad. It would have been natural for the builder of the mosque of Madīnah to have used the Ascension of the Prophet as a reason to build a large mosque in Jerusalem.

Be this as it may, we can see that the evidence which can be gathered from the mosaics, the inscriptions, and the location of the Dome of the Rock shows that the first major Muslim attempt at monumental architecture can only be understood in all its complexity and uniqueness when seen in its Umayyad context. Political and religious, directed to the Muslim as well as to the Jew and especially the Christian, symbol of a state and of a mission, the Dome of the Rock reflected the centuries of traditions and beliefs which had accumulated

¹⁴⁶ Euty chius, ed. Cheikho, vol. 2, p. 42.

on Mount Moriah, just as it was intimately tied to the specific historical situation of the time.¹⁴⁷ As a political and immanent structure, the Dome of the Rock soon lost its meaning. But as a religious building it continued the great tradition of the Temple and its significance went far beyond that of a mere *martorium* to a moment of the Prophet's life. It must be seen as the first of a long series of Muslim sanctuaries connected with the lives of Prophets, although it is still to be investigated whether, and, if so, to what extent, both architecturally and conceptually the Dome of the Rock influenced the development of later *qubbahs* and *welis*. Moreover, with the development of mysticism the concept of the Ascension of Muḥammad became one of the richest and most profound themes of Islamic thought and reached even beyond the frontiers of Islam, influencing the spiritual progress of the western world.¹⁴⁸ Thus the Ḥaram area in Jerusalem acquired a sacredness far greater than and much different from the temporal significance that was given to it at the time of its revival by the Umayyads through the building of the Dome of the Rock.

¹⁴⁷ Max van Berchem, p. 252, n. 1, pointed out that the 'Abbāsīd chroniclers were curiously reticent about 'Abd al-Malik's work in Jerusalem, while quite voluble about al-Walid's programs, and suggested that the reason was 'Abd al-Malik's reputed impiety. It might be more likely to consider that the later chroniclers were not fully conscious of the significance of the building in the historical situation of the time.

¹⁴⁸ See lately H. Adolf, *Christendom and Islam in the Middle Ages*, *Speculum*, 32 (1957), pp. 103–115, with an extensive bibliography on the question of the impact of the Muḥammad stories on the West. See also, Americo Castro, *The structure of Spanish history*, Princeton, 1954, p. 130 ff., for an interesting explanation of the formation of the sanctuary of Saint James in Santiago. The apostle is seen as a "counter-Muhammad, and his sanctuary [as a] counter-Ka'bah" (p. 151). Here also the development of a religious center is explained through its relation to a specific historical situation.