Constructing God's Community:

Umayyad Religious Monumentation in Bilad al-Sham,

640-743 CE

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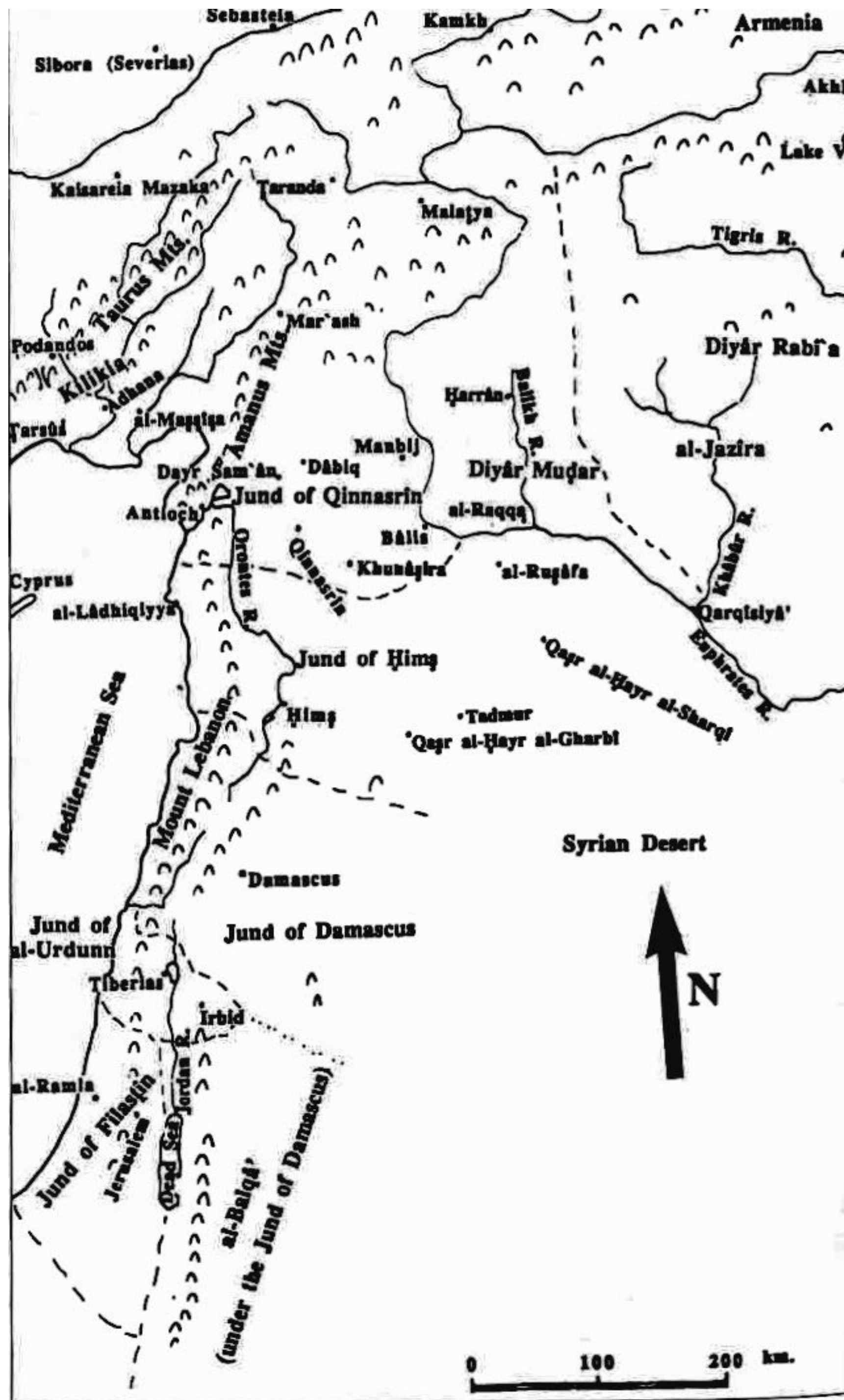

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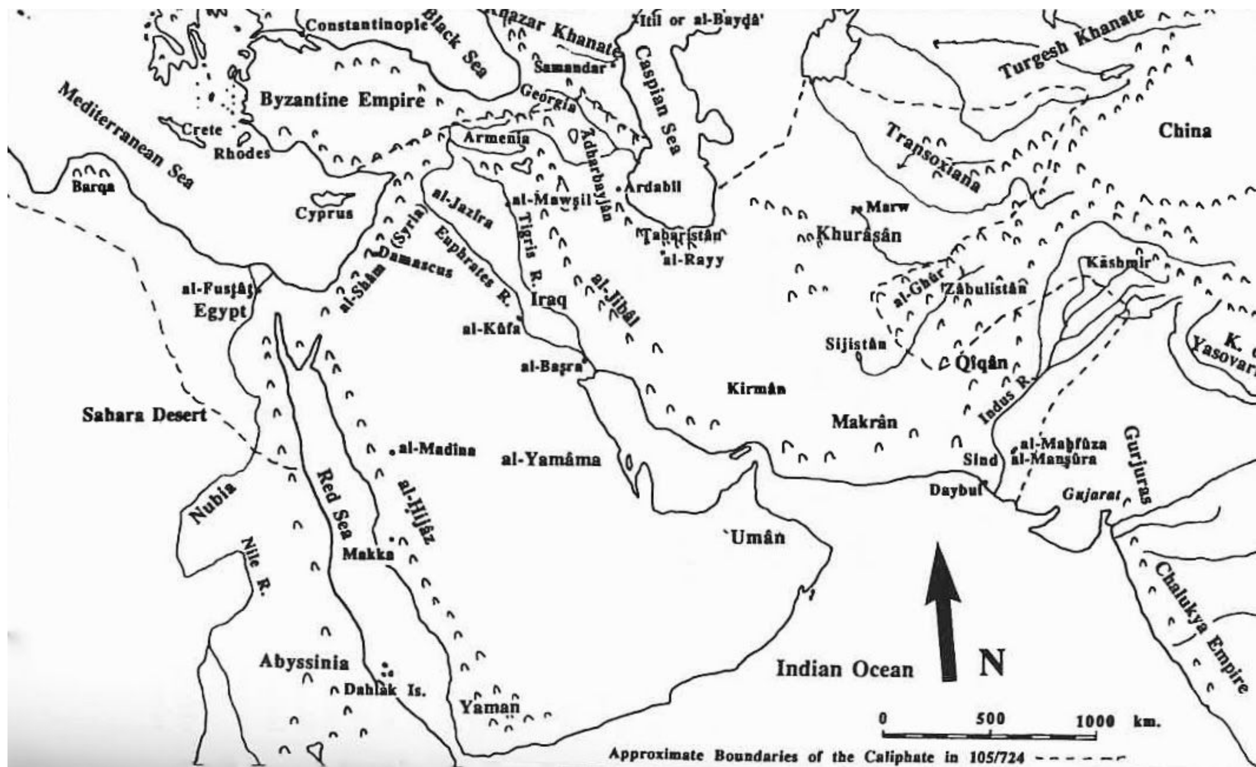

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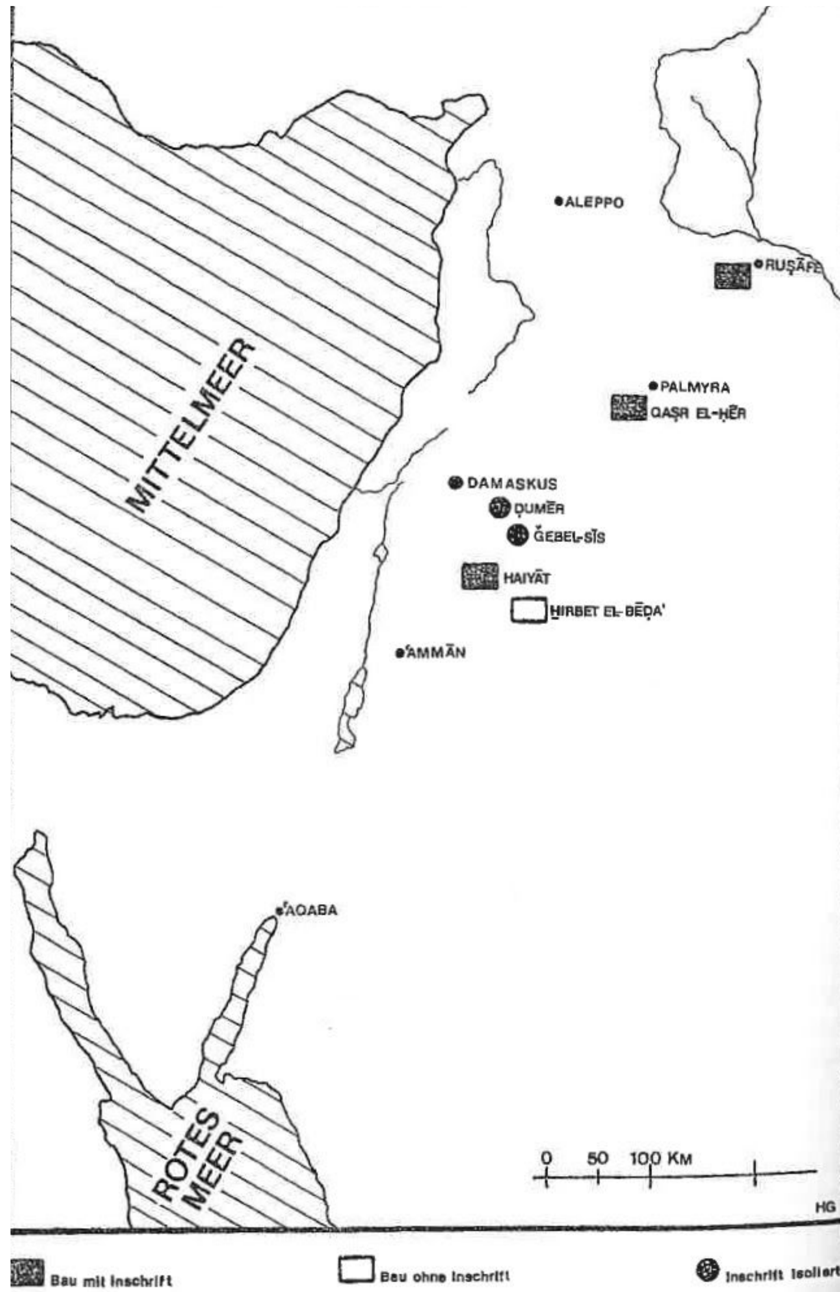

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Note on Conventions

Because this thesis addresses itself to a non-specialist audience, certain accommodations have been made. Dates are based on the Julian, rather than Islamic, calendar. All dates referenced are in the Common Era (CE) unless otherwise specified. Transliteration follows the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (*IJMES*), including the recommended exceptions. Accordingly, diacritical marks and italics are used only with technical terms. In those cases where the *IJMES*'s recommended exceptions overlap with words germane to this thesis as technical terms (e.g. *miḥrāb* and *masjid*), I have opted to retain diacritics and italics. For consistency, Arabic place names are used whenever possible, as opposed to Greek, Latin, or Hebrew alternatives. The main exceptions to this are Damascus (Dimashq), Jerusalem (al-Quds), Tiberias (Tabariyya), and Palmyra (Tadmur), to which the secondary sources cited herein consistently refer by their Grecophone or Anglophone names. Definite articles have been dropped except when sources consistently include them in place names (e.g. al-Massisa, al-ʾAqsa). Likewise, the sun letter/moon letter distinction is not made (thus, al-Sham is not written ash-Sham).

As regards sources, much of the material for this thesis comes from archaeological and architectural texts technically considered secondary. As such, while qualitative and quantitative data from these sources is treated throughout the thesis as primary source material, the sources themselves are listed in the bibliography as secondary sources. All primary source texts are translated into English, except when they are cited from a foreign language secondary source and an original copy of the primary source could not be found. Finally, due to the Covid-19 outbreak,

the closure of the Interlibrary Loan system significantly hampered my ability to acquire complete, original copies of a handful of primary sources cited herein. They are therefore quoted from other texts, or cited in translated editions.

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Chronology

633/34: The Muslim conquest of Bilad al-Sham begins under the second Rashidun caliph, ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab.

640: Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan is appointed governor of Bilad al-Sham.

644: ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan becomes caliph.

661: Muʿawiya becomes caliph following his victory in the first *fitna*.

680: Muʿawiya dies and the second *fitna* begins.

685: ʿAbd al-Malik becomes caliph.

692: ʿAbd al-Malik begins construction on the Dome of the Rock. The second *fitna* ends shortly thereafter.

705: ʿAbd al-Malik dies and is succeeded by his son al-Walid.

705/06: al-Walid begins construction on the Great Mosque of Damascus.

707: al-Walid orders ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz (ʿUmar II) to begin construction on the Great Mosque of Medina.

715: al-Walid dies and is succeeded by his brother Sulayman ibn ʿAbd al-Malik.

717: Sulayman dies and is succeeded by his cousin ʿUmar II. Failure of the last Umayyad assault on Constantinople.

720: ʿUmar II dies and is succeeded by his cousin Yazid ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (Yazid II).

724: Yazid II dies and is succeeded by his brother Hisham ibn ʿAbd al-Malik.

743: Hisham ibn ʿAbd al-Malik dies.

750: The Umayyad caliphate falls as a result of the Abbasid revolution.

Glossary

ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwan: The fifth Umayyad caliph (r. 685-705). Builder of the Dome of the Rock.

al-Walid ibn ʿAbd al-Malik: The sixth Umayyad caliph (r. 705-715). Builder of the Great Mosques of Damascus and Medina.

Bilad al-Sham: The epicenter of the Umayyad state, approximately consistent with contemporary Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel.

***Dar al-ʿImara*:** Primary Muslim governmental building, often doubling as a palace.

***Ahl al-Dhimma*:** Non-Muslim monotheists living under Muslim rule.

***Fitna*:** Civil war.

Hisham ibn ʿAbd al-Malik: The tenth Umayyad caliph (r. 724-743).

***Jund* (pl. *Ajnad*):** Governmental district.

***Masjid*:** Mosque.

***Mawāli*:** Non-Arab client and convert to Islam.

***Miḥrāb*:** Muslim prayer niche directed toward Mecca.

Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan: Governor of Bilad al-Sham under the Rashidun (g. 640-661) and the first caliph of the Umayyad empire. (r. 661-680).

***Spolia*:** Old building stone or sculpture repurposed for use in new monuments.

Sulayman ibn ʿAbd al-Malik: Governor of Jund Filastin during the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik. The seventh Umayyad caliph (r. 715-717). Initiator of the Great Mosque of Ramla.

Temenos**:** Land designated and circumscribed for religious purposes.

ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz (ʿUmar II): Governor of Medina during the reign of al-Walid (g. 706-712). The eighth Umayyad caliph (r. 717-720).

ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab (ʿUmar I): The second of the Rashidun caliphs (r. 634-644).

ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan: The third of the Rashidun caliphs and the first member of the Umayyad family to hold the caliphate (r. 644-656).

Yazid ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (Yazid II): The ninth Umayyad caliph (r. 720-724).

Introduction

In the year 692, mere months shy of conclusive victory in a grueling twelve-year civil war known as the second *fitna*, the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwan sent architects to Jerusalem to begin construction on the Dome of the Rock. Protruding imperiously from the top of the former Temple Mount, the octagonal monument was built of limestone and marble, and covered with swirling mosaics of blue, green, and gold, which proclaimed the supremacy of Allah and his Prophet. The Dome at once marked the triumph of the Umayyads, the first imperial dynasty in the history of Islam, and signaled the central role that religious monumentation would have in the Islamic world up to the present day. So powerful was the Dome's impact that it soon became, as it remains today, the defining symbol of the Umayyads and their imperial identity. This emphasis, however, obscures the true complexity of Umayyad religious monumentation over the century-long course of their rule.

In spite of the interruption of the second *fitna*, the Umayyad dynasty had actually begun more than thirty years prior, when Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan prevailed in the very first *fitna*, a five-year-long ordeal, and was proclaimed caliph in 661. Even before that, Muʿawiya had served as the governor of Bilad al-Sham-- roughly present day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel-- since 640, as the appointee of the Rashidun caliphs, who had led the Muslim community in the wake of Muhammad's death. Thus, by the time of Muʿawiya's death in 680, the Umayyad family had already been governing al-Sham for four decades. This was a critical period in the formation of both Muslim and Umayyad identity. As Fred Donner, the eminent historian of early Islam, has explained, it served as a crucial transitionary period between the loose association of

the followers of Muhammad, termed the "Believer" movement by Donner, and the emergence of an entity which could properly be called "Islam".[1]

For all of the importance of these long and formative years, the religious architecture of Muʿawiya's reign, both as governor and as caliph, has been treated by Western scholars as effectively non-existent. In 1979, for instance, the preeminent historian of early Islamic architecture K. A. Creswell argued that, "there is no reason for believing that any mosque was built in Syria until the time of ʿAbd al-Malik or perhaps even [his son] al-Walid".[2] This declaration was made in his enormous, iconic work called *Early Muslim Architecture*-- still the gold standard for studies of the era's architecture-- and has gone almost entirely unchallenged since then. At best, some studies have considered the possibility that Muʿawiya, rather than his successors, initiated construction on an intermediate version of the al-ʾAqsa mosque on the Temple Mount, which served to bridge the gap between the rudimentary conquest-era mosque purportedly built there by ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab (ʿUmar I), the second of the Rashidun caliphs who ruled immediately after Muhammad's death, and the work begun on the Mount by ʿAbd al-Malik in 692.[3]

Because of the length of Muʿawiya's reign as governor and then as caliph, which comprised more than a third of the total time of Umayyad control over Bilad al-Sham, and the vital importance of this period to the formation of the Umayyad identity, the first chapter of this thesis is devoted to a reconsideration of religious monumentation in al-Sham between 640 and

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[1] Fred Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers* (London: Belknap Press, 2010); Donner, "Talking about Islam's origins," in *Bulletin of SOAS* 81, no. 1 (2018).
[2] K. A. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture,* vol. 1, 2 pts. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1979), 17. Henceforth referred to as *EMA*.
[3] Bernard Flusin, "L'esplanade du temple à l'arrivée des Arabes," in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, pt. 1, ed. Jeremy Johns and Julian Raby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Beatrice St. Laurent and Isam Awwad, "The Marwani Musalla in Jerusalem: New Findings," in *Art Faculty Publications* 8 (2013), http://vc.bridgew.edu/art_fac/8.

680. It proceeds from Creswell's claim, revisiting early Muslim historical narratives in order to find evidence for the construction of mosques during this period. It then combines this textual material with recent archaeological discoveries, offering a new understanding of said discoveries in light of the texts. Finally, it places both the texts and the archaeological material in conversation with theories about Muʿawiya's work on al-ʾAqsa, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the project and a broader narrative of how the evolution of mosque construction under Muʿawiya's authority helped to actualize the emergent Umayyad identity.

By the end of the second *fitna*, the importance of religious monumentation was beyond doubt. Already in 684, almost eight years before ʿAbd al-Malik built the Dome of the Rock, his primary rival to the caliphate, a man named Ibn al-Zubayr, had completely renovated the Kaʿba. Ibn al-Zubayr rebuilt Islam's most important shrine from the ground up, expanding the structure and adding marble columns, gilt doors, and mosaics imported from a church in nearby Sanaʿa. A number of sources, both ancient historians and contemporary scholars, actually contend that the Dome of the Rock was conceived as an Umayyad replacement for the Kaʿba during the lengthy stretch in which al-Zubayr controlled the Arabian peninsula.[4] Others argue that it was a more future-oriented project. The second *fitna* had been a brutal but decisive affair, and it left the Umayyad leadership with two imperatives: to unify the empire and to assert their permanence. In response to these needs, they formulated a program which Donner has called "Qurʾanicization".

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[4] Oleg Grabar offers a succinct summary of the medieval sources, namely the works of Yaʿqubi and Eutychius, that advance this claim. See Oleg Grabar, "The Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem," in *Ars Orientalis* 3 (1959); The main contemporary works are: Ignác Goldziher, *Muhammedanishe Studien*, Vol. 2, (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1889-90); Amikam Elad, "Why did ʿAbd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock? A re-examination of the Muslim sources," in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, pt. 1, ed. Jeremy Johns and Julian Raby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Elad, "ʿAbd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock: A Further Examination of the Muslim Sources," in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 35 (2008).

By putting forth this new discourse, which emphasized the centrality of Muhammad and the Qurʾan, the Umayyads legitimized their rule under the banner of an institution which was, for the first time, called “Islam”. According to Donner, the Dome was essential to this program; its inscriptions and visual symbolism displayed the most salient expressions of the doctrine entailed in Qurʾanicization, including the first recorded use of the term “Islam” as the name of the faith of Muhammad’s followers.[5] In general, scholars since the 20th century have seen the Dome as a symbol of the ascendence of Islam and its triumphant inheritence of the Abrahamic tradition.[6] For many reasons, therefore, its construction in 692 set a precedent for the years to come.

After building the Dome, ʿAbd al-Malik continued to rule until his death in 705, when he was succeeded by two of his sons, first al-Walid, who reigned until 715, and then Sulayman, who reigned until 717. This quarter-century marked the height of Umayyad power, and is referred to in this thesis as the early Marwanid period, after the branch of the Umayyad family to which ʿAbd al-Malik and his direct descendants belonged. The era entailed a continuation of the policies and aspirations symbolized by the Dome of the Rock, and saw the early Marwanid caliphs build a series of monumental mosques, most notably in Damascus, Jerusalem, and Medina, which conformed to the architectural standards established by the Dome. A number of scholars have therefore highlighted it as the defining period of Umayyad architecture. In *Early Muslim Architecture*, Creswell designates all Muslim architecture prior to the Dome as “primitive Islam”.[7] Creswell’s contemporary, the French geographer and orientalist Jean

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[5] Fred M. Donner, “Umayyad efforts at legitimation,” in *Umayyad Legacies: Medieval Memories from Syria to Spain*, ed. Antoine Borrut and Paul M. Cobb (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Donner, “Qurʾanicization of Religio-Political Discourse in the Umayyad Period,” in *REMMM* 129 (2011); Donner, “Talking about Islam’s origins.”
[6] S. D. Goitein, “The historical background of the erection of the Dome of the Rock,” in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 70 (1950); Grabar, “The Umayyad Dome of the Rock.”
[7] Creswell, *EMA*, 64-65.

Sauvaget, notes the similarity of subsequent Umayyad architecture to the standards established by the early Marwanids' mosques, writing that any variations are merely details, "to which we refuse to attribute any particular importance".[8] Lastly, Finbar Flood, the noted scholar of Islamic art, has detailed what he terms an "Umayyad visual culture". Flood argues that the visual discourse pioneered and employed in these mosques entailed the manipulation of a broad but coherent set of references intended to convey the articulated religious and imperial aspirations of the Umayyads.[9] Under the early Marwanids, therefore, monumental architecture was thus inextricably tied up in the creation and propagation of the Umayyad identity.

In light of the effectiveness of previous studies on this period, chapter two of this thesis attempts to further extend the characterizations made therein. Building on Flood's work, it continues to elucidate both the mechanisms of this "visual culture" and its main goals. This is accomplished by combining the typical sources related to the most prominent mosques of this period with an incorporation of newer or largely unconsidered archaeological research pertaining to lesser-studied mosques. Such source material in turn allows for a collective consideration of the early Marwanid mosques in new methodological terms, and even for a reevaluation of previous periodizations of particular mosques. Chapter two therefore highlights the importance of the "details" dismissed by Sauvaget as inconsequential, insisting that these minutiae are

[8] Jean Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine: Étude sur les Origines Architecturales de la Mosquée et de la Basilique* (Paris: Vanoest, 1947), 108.

[9] Unlike most other scholars of Umayyad architecture, Flood is careful to note that these architectural tendencies were not continued after Sulayman's death. He observes that this occurs in conjunction with the failures of the Umayyads' imperial aspirations and the pietistic backlash of ʿUmar II's reign. Still, this amounts mostly to an observation of silence, and not a full explanation of the significance of such silence, or more specifically of the ways in which Umayyad architecture diverged from the early Marwanid period after Sulayman's death. Finbarr Barry Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), see especially pages 240-46.

precisely what distinguish the importance of this period and what will make the variations in subsequent Umayyad architecture newly legible.

Following Sulayman's death, the caliphate passed controversially into the hands of his cousin, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz (ʿUmar II). ʿUmar II was known as an iconoclast, and during his short reign (717-720), he reversed many of the long-standing policies established by the Umayyads, in particular those originating during the era of the early Marwanids. Many early Muslim historians sought, for reasons of political or sectarian affiliation, to discredit the Umayyads, and thus have portrayed ʿUmar II as the only pious leader of the Umayyad caliphate, and notoriously opposed to the supposedly ostentatious tendencies of the early Marwanids. As a result, they have emphasized instances of his avoidance or even repudiation of the "Umayyad visual culture", and the associated identity, rather than any participation in it. Contemporary scholarship, in the rare case that it attributes any significance to this brief period, has treated it as a moment of architectural silence sandwiched between two periods of prolific construction of Umayyad imperial mosques. At best, ʿUmar II is noted for his attempts to denude the Great Mosque of Damascus, his supposedly dubious association with the "so-called 'ʿ[U]mar Mosque' of B[u]sra", or his reduction of the size of the White Mosque of Ramla, though even these instances are often ignored.[10]

[10] Ibid, 219, 242-43; The mosque bears an inscription dating it to 102 AH (720/21 CE), the beginning of the first year of Yazid's reign. Creswell concedes only with trepidation that the Busra mosque "*may* have been begun by ʿUmar before his death" (Creswell's emphasis), but attributes the majority of its construction to Yazid II. Creswell, *EMA*, 490; The most recent and comprehensive study of the Ramla mosque, carried out by Myriam Rosen-Ayalon in 2006, neglects to mention that ʿUmar II had any role in the construction of the mosque, despite multiple references to it in Muslim historical sources. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, "The White Mosque of Ramla: Retracing its History," in *Israel Exploration Journal* 56, no. 1 (2006). Similarly, Creswell describes the building of the White Mosque, even quoting the passage in Baladhuri in which ʿUmar II's participation in its construction is described, but truncates the quotation without any mention of ʿUmar II's involvement. Creswell, *EMA*, 482.

In response to such portrayals of ʿUmar II's brief reign, chapter three first returns to familiar textual materials in an effort to correct scholarly oversight. It illuminates positive, concrete evidence of mosque construction during ʿUmar II's reign, and compares this evidence with other instances of ʿUmar II's involvement in mosque construction in order to better characterize his building habits during this period. Chapter three also revisits known archaeological and architectural material for the Busra mosque, taking a comparative approach as a means of better understanding its periodization. Finally, and most importantly, this chapter is predicated on the notion that not all silences are equal; it foregrounds the impact of cultivated, conscious silences and diminutions as a means of consciously expressing ideology and policy, as opposed to merely incidental silences stemming from gaps in the historical record. By emphasizing the extent to which the apparent silence of ʿUmar II's period was intentionally cultivated, chapter three endeavors to underscore the ways in which mosque construction during this period was expressive of ʿUmar II's conception of the Umayyad identity.

When ʿUmar II died in 720, the caliphate returned to the hands of ʿAbd al-Malik's sons. First Yazid ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (Yazid II) ruled, before dying in 724, and was then replaced by his brother Hisham ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, who continued to rule until his death in 743. Under the authority of these two caliphs, the Umayyad empire nominally returned to the policies of the early Marwanids. Over the course of their rule, however, the empire began to disintegrate, and by the time of Hisham's death, it would be irreparably unstable, culminating seven years later in the collapse of the dynasty and the victory of the Abbasids, who established a new caliphate. During their reign, Yazid II and especially Hisham were known for their imperious high-handedness, and over the course of their quarter-century of power, the Umayyad leadership

professed an increasingly exclusivist vision of religio-political authority.[11] In tandem with this, the notion of the Arab ethne emerged as means of reinforcing the notion that the Umayyads belonged to a uniquely privileged identity, and thus were transcendent in their right to rule.[12]

Aside from the era of the early Marwanids, the rule of Yazid II and Hisham is the best-known period of Umayyad mosque construction, with recent archaeological work having uncovered as many mosques from the latter period as from the former. The crux of this scholarship has been the sheer homogeneity of these structures. Alan Walmsley and Kristof Damgaard in particular have pointed to the mosques' remarkable architectural uniformity, attributing the genesis of their common archetype based on the Great Mosque of Damascus.[13] In general, the mosques of Yazid II and Hisham, much like their religio-political ethos, have been seen as an extension, if perhaps diminished in scale, of early Marwanid practices. Chapter four of this thesis, however, challenges this conception. It sets archaeological evidence for the mosques of Yazid II and Hisham in conversation with the early Marwanids' standards of mosque construction, as discussed in chapter two, and focuses on the significance of the variations and "details" written off by Sauvaget. It further expands the methodological considerations of these mosques, too, by incorporating wider considerations of geography and decoration in addition to basic architectural features. And, critically, chapter four continues to center the notion of meaningful silences. It emphasizes the idea that, as the philosopher Slavoj Zizek has noted, there is a significant difference between "coffee without cream" and "coffee without milk"-- "what

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[11] Wadad al-Qadi,"The Religious Foundation of Late Umayyad Ideology and Practice," in *Saber religioso y poder político en el Islam: actas del simposio internacional, Granada, 15-18 octubre 1991* (Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1994).
[12] Peter Webb, *Imagining the Arabs* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).
[13] Alan Walmsley and Kristofer Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash in Jordan and its Relationship to Early Mosques," in *Antiquity* 79 (2005).

you don't get is part of the identity of what you do get"-- and therefore insists on interrogating the unique and specific ways in which the mosques of Yazid II and Hisham deviated from the practices of the early Marwanids, and how that reflected the shifts in the Umayyad identity during this period.[14]

Ultimately, this thesis should be seen as a reconsideration of religious monumentation during the Umayyad period, and the relationship of that monumentation to the Umayyad identity. By incorporating new source material and new methodological considerations, it reevaluates the mosques of this period with an eye toward the changing historical contexts in which they were constructed. The thesis, of course, remains subject to some limitations; for the lack of source material, it remains restricted to Bilad al-Sham, the beating heart of the Umayyad empire, and is moreover necessarily a study of the Umayyad elite. It also must contend with bias, both in the benign but impactful sense of the uneven historical record, and in the more pointed sense of sorting through the prejudices and retrojections of Muslim and non-Muslim historical texts alike. It should therefore be read in full awareness of those limitations, and by no means as a totalizing picture of the Umayyad era. Yet by foregrounding the notion that, "Architectural meaning depends on a construction of difference within the familiar," it emphasizes the subtleties of both continuity and rupture across the monumentation of the Umayyad period, in an effort to make the Umayyad mosques speak anew.[15]

[14] "Slavoj Žižek on coffee - from his IQ2 talk," YouTube video, 2:17, from a speech at Intelligence Squared, posted by Intelligence Squared, July 5, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WHdAKfcNnA/.
[15] Annabel Wharton, *Refiguring the Post Classical City: Dura Europos, Jerash, Jerusalem and Ravenna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), quoted in Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, 184.

Chapter One: Entrenchment and Unification, 640-680

Hegemonizing the mosque

The Muslim conquest of Bilad al-Sham began in 633 under the first of the Rashidun caliphs, Abu Bakr (c. 573-634), and was completed by his successor, ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab (ʿUmar I, c. 584-644), in 640. When the first two appointed Muslim governors of al-Sham died in short succession, ʿUmar I turned to the the second deceased governor's brother, a young general named Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan (c. 600-680), and entrusted him with the leadership of Bilad al-Sham. By this time, the Muslims had fully evicted the Byzantine armies from the region. Constantinople's forces were far from vanquished, however, and posed a constant threat of invasion by way of Cappadocia and the Mediterranean sea. As a result, both ʿUmar I and his immediate successor ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan (r. 644-656), made it clear to Muʿawiya that the Muslims' foremost priority was to entrench themselves in the land. Baladhuri, the 9th century Muslim historian, writes in his history of the Muslim conquests that in this early period, fortification of the captured towns of the coastal region was carried out on a strictly ad hoc basis. Towns were not actively garrisoned, but instead Muslim forces would arrive to them en masse only in the event of a local revolt. When Muʿawiya wrote to ʿUmar I and explained this situation, the caliph, "wrote back ordering that garrisons be stationed in [the coastal towns of al-Sham],

that watchmen be posted on their towers and that means be taken for lighting the fire on the towers to announce the approach of the enemy".[16] Following ʿUmar I's orders, Muʿawiya set out to fortify al-Sham. Along the coast at Askalon, he established garrisons of cavalry and put the city under the authority of a military guard.[17] He repaired Tyre and Acre, centralizing the region's naval yards in the latter.[18] In the north, near Hims, he built forts at the towns of Jabalah, Antartus, Marakiyah, and Bulunyas.[19] Upon ʿUmar I's death, ʿUthman reaffirmed this policy, further ordering Muʿawiya to offer land and houses to Muslim soldiers willing to settle in the littoral for the purpose of its defense.[20] By these means, Muʿawiya effectively ensured the Muslims' hold on al-Sham; following his fortification of the coastline, the region would remain almost exclusively in Muslim hands for the next thirteen hundred years.

As an extension of ʿUmar I's previous efforts to fortify the Shami coast, ʿUthman wrote to Muʿawiya with an unprecedented command. The caliph ordered the governor to "establish new mosques" in the littoral cities and to furthermore "enlarge those that had been established before [ʿUthman's] caliphate".[21] Prior to this point, the Muslim conquerors had, like with the garrisons, established mosques only as needed. Upon conquering a town, they would often requisition a prayer space as part of the conquest treaties which governed the surrender of every city and town. Such was the conquest of Tiberias, as reported by Baladhuri: "Shurahbil ibn-Hasanah [the Muslim general] took Tiberias by capitulation after a siege of some days. He guaranteed for the inhabitants the safety of their lives, possessions, children, churches, and

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[16] ʻAhmad ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri, *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan* (Cairo: Shurkah Tabaa al-kitab al-Arabiyyah, 1901), 134-35; Trans. Philip K. Hitti as *The Origins of the Islamic State* (Beirut: Khayats, 1966), 196.
[17] Ibid, 149; trans., 219.
[18] Ibid, 123; trans., 180.
[19] Ibid, 139-40; trans., 204-5.
[20] Ibid, 134; trans., 196.
[21] Ibid, 134; trans., 196.

houses with the exception of what they should evacuate and desert, setting aside a special spot for a Muslim mosque."[22] Within al-Sham, Baladhuri explicitly reports similar arrangements made by the Muslim conquerors throughout Jund al-Urdun, at Hims, and at Qinnasrin.[23] In other cases, no explicit mention is made of a surrender agreement, but Baladhuri does report that the conquering armies built a mosque. At Ladhiqiyya, for example, the historian writes that "The Moslems, following the order of [the general] ʿUbadah, erected in al-Ladhikiyah a [congregational] mosque that was later enlarged".[24] These cases are particularly telling because they suggest that when, where, and how these mosques were constructed depended on the decision of the conquering military leader, rather than on a broad policy pertinent to the entire caliphate. Moreover, many of these mosques had originally been built in haste, as the newly arrived conquering armies scrambled to accommodate their five-times-daily prayer schedule. Upon conquering Aleppo, for instance, the Muslims simply erected crude walls along the main colonnaded avenue, transforming the street into a functional prayer space. Accordingly, the orientalist and geographer Jean Sauvaget contends that these early mosques were habitually rudimentary in form.[25] ʿUthman's order to Muʿawiya therefore at once wrought the ends of the piecemeal nature of mosque founding in al-Sham and the primitive physical form of the mosques themselves.

Prior to the Rashidun caliphate, in the earliest days of Muhammad's preaching, the mosque had stood out as an un-hegemonic space. The idea itself was not endemic to Islam. The term *masjid*, Arabic for mosque, dated back as far as the 5th century BCE. It simply meant

[22] Ibid, 122-23; trans., 179.
[23] Ibid, 123, 137-38, 152; trans., 178-79, 201, 224.
[24] Ibid, 139; trans., 204.
[25] Jean Sauvaget, *Alep: Essai sur le développement d'une grande ville syrienne, des origins au milieu du XIXe siècle*, (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1941), 74-75.

"prayer space", and, far from having an association with particular religious establishments, belonged to a lexicon common to all of the major semitic languages at the time.[26] Accordingly, the Qurʾanic conception of the mosque was quite vague, sometimes being applied to specific places like Masjid al-ʾAqsa (literally, "the farthest mosque", interpreted by Muslims beginning in the late 7th century as a reference to the Noble Sanctuary in Jerusalem, hence the mosque there being known as al-ʾAqsa) and other times simply referring to pre-Islamic holy spaces.[27] In Mecca, in fact, the nascent Islamic community had no designated place of worship. The Prophet's own teachings made clear that a mosque was not required for worship, saying, "And wherever you are when the time for prayer comes, then pray, for it is a *Masjid*".[28] In Medina, when Muhammad convened his community for prayer, he did so in the simple, walled-off courtyard that surronded his house (see Figure 1). Though Muhammad and his followers prayed and preached there, the Medinan mosque was hardly a space for the exercise of institutionalized religio-political power. Inside its walls, the weary rested, the spurned argued, the poor sheltered, and the wounded recovered. Occasionally, local racers even rode camels there for sport.[29] As a whole, therefore, the earliest spaces used as mosques were far more utilitarian than hegemonic.

With the advent of the conquest, the construction and use of the *masjid* began to take on a different tone. After Muhammad's death in 632, leadership of the Muslim world passed to the Rashidun caliphs. Four years later, under the leadership of ʿUmar I, the generals of the

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[26] *The Encyclopaedia of Islam: A Dictionary of the Geography, Ethnography and Biography of the Muhammadan Peoples*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, A. J. Wensinck, E. Lévi-Provençal, H. A. R. Gibb, and W. Heffening, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1936), s.v. "Masdjid", 315.
[27] Izhak Hasson, "The Muslim View of Jerusalem," in *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period 638-1099*, ed. Joshua Prawer and Haggai Ben-Shammai (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 353.
[28] Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, ed. Hafiz Abu Tahir Zubair ʿAli Zaʾi, trans. Nasiruddin al-Khattab, (Riyadh, Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 2007), 5:1, 15.
[29] *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* vol. 3, s.v. "Masdjid," 317.

caliphate's advancing armies erected a large mosque in Basra, at that time one of the two main Muslim army camps in Iraq. Though reportedly comprising no more than fenced-off square of packed earth, the Basra mosque represented the first instance of explicit caliphal construction and oversight of a space of Muslim prayer. Because the caliphate embodied all three religious, military, and political hegemony, this transformed the discursive nature of the *masjid*. It now became a vehicle meant to facilitate the expansion of Muslim control over conquered lands, and in particular for the realization of the aims of the Rashidun caliphs and their generals. Standing inside the Basra mosque, the leaders of the caliphate now not only stood in religious solidarity with their forces but wielded military and political authority over them. Similar constructions built subsequently at Kufa, Iraq and Fustat, Egypt-- two more main military camps-- reinforced the image of the mosque's transformation from an egalitarian space for communal gathering to a nexus for the exercise of caliphal power.[30] This was particularly significant because of Muhammad's precedent, and also because Islam's Abrahamic peers at that time, Rabbinic Judaism and Byzantine Eastern Christianity, never elaborated such a clear connection between imperial power and their own sacred spaces. Throughout Antiquity and the Medieval period, churches and monasteries, even of the Eastern Orthodox variety, acted "as hotbeds of opposition to imperial policies".[31] Under Sasanian rule, both the Rabbinic establishment and the imperially-appointed Exilarch struggled to assert their control over regional practices in synagogues that contravened orthopraxy.[32] Many mosques, on the other hand, would now be

[30] Ibid, 318-19.
[31] Jonathan Harris, "The Institutional Setting: The Court, Schools, Church, and Monasteries," in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, ed. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 34, and see generally 30-34.
[32] Geoffrey Herman, *A Prince Without a Kingdom: The Exilarch in the Sasanian Era* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 182-185.

built as sites amenable to the wishes of the caliphate. In the years immediately following Muhammad's death, therefore, the institution of caliphal mosques in Iraq and Egypt represented a novelly hegemonic encroachment upon an ostensibly non-hierarchical space.

Nevertheless, even following the diffusion of other caliphal mosques modeled after those at Basra, Kufa, and Fustat, the mosque in the first decades of the Islamic conquest continued to be a predominantly non-governmental or even anti-governmental institution. Ibn Khayyat (c. 776-855), a native of Basra and one of the first Islamic historians, reports an incident which occurred in Iraq some time between 665 and 673, after Muʿawiya had already become caliph. One evening in Basra, during the month of Ramadan, writes Ibn Khayyat, the anti-Umayyad Kharijite rebels Qurayb and Zahhaf assembled a group of about seventy men. They "separated in the mosques of [the tribe of] al-Azd" and proceeded to the mosque of the Banu Dubayʿa. While on their way there, the rebels encountered and murdered a Dubayʿaite named Ruʾba ibn al-Mukhabbal, after which they departed for the mosque of the Banu Qutayʿa. They entered the mosque shouting "Judgement belongs to God alone", the slogan of the Kharijites, and then massacred the Qutayʿaites. Qurayb, Zahhaf, and their men then proceeded to the mosque of the Maʿawil, "and killed everyone in it", before they were finally caught and executed by Umayyad authorities.[33] This brief narrative is interesting for two reasons. The first is that, despite it being Ramadan, and despite the events taking place in Basra, where the caliphal mosque had just been rebuilt and expanded in 665, even the Muslims mentioned as loyal to the caliphate are depicted as praying in their own tribal mosques.[34] This suggests that, at this time, the tribal mosque

[33] Khalifa ibn Khayyat, *Tarikh Khalifah ibn Khayyat*, trans. Carl Wurtzel, prep. Robert G. Hoyland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 76-78, see note 241.

[34] This loyalty to the Umayyads is not mere supposition. In one account of the events, the murdered Dubayʿaite is a sheikh named Habkan, who is identified by the rebels after he mistakes one of them for the Basran chief of police and greets him with friendliness. The inclusion of this account without comment suggests that the Umayyad

outweighed the caliphal mosque in importance and superseded the authority of the caliphate. Secondly, these mosques were seen as spaces for the exercise in subversive political power by the rebels, and for the machinations of rival tribes who were, at that time, attempting to gain control over Basra.[35] Similarly, nomadic Nabatean groups in the Negev region of southern Bilad al-Sham built a profusion of small, open-air mosques from the 7th and 8th centuries onward, sites which enabled Muslim worship outside the authority of the caliphate. Notably, a number of these mosques evidence a continuation of the pre-Islamic, polytheistic Nabatean stele-cult.[36] This essentially syncretic practice would have been fundamentally at odds with the fervent opposition to idolatry present in early caliphal Islam, and these mosques, marginal though they may be, were another instance of a Muslim sacred space that existed beyond the authority of the caliphate. Non-caliphal mosques, therefore, significantly outnumbered the official caliphal spaces being established during the conquest. Evidently, these spaces enabled and even encouraged practices which ran counter to the ideology of the caliphate.

Given the preponderance of non-caliphal mosques, ʿUthman's order to Muʿawiya takes on new significance. By creating permanent congregational mosques officially sanctioned by the caliphate, and modifying those built earlier during the conquest, Muʿawiya was actively extending the hegemony of the caliphate in Bilad al-Sham into the socio-religious sphere of Muslim life.[37] Stepping beyond the boundaries of mere conquest and fortification, ʿUthman and

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loyalties of the Dubayʿaites were well-known. Ibid, 78; For the reconstruction of the Basra mosque, see Creswell, *EMA*, 44-45.

[35] Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, s.v. "Basra until the Mongol conquest," by Katherine H. Lang and Charles Pellat, accessed April 18, 2020, https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/basra-until-the-mongol-conquest-COM_23869?s.num=5&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=al+azd+.

[36] Gideon Avni, "Early Mosques in the Negev Highlands: New Archaeological Evidence on Islamic Penetration of Southern Palestine," in *BASOR* 294 (1994), 95.

[37] Throughout this thesis, I attempt to distinguish between "congregational mosques" ("*masjid jamiʿa*", such as in Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 172) and "imperial mosques". The former term appears with frequency in sources as a

Muʿawiya's campaign of mosque construction asserted control over the potentially disparate social and religious practices of the newly-arrived Muslim population. This was an unprecedented level of control, and, in conjunction with Muʿawiya's infrastructural improvements, marked the caliphate's transition from occupying power to government.

Architectures of belonging

For more than twenty years, Muʿawiya capably continued to serve the Rashidun caliphs as governor of Bilad al-Sham. During this time he started to extend the earliest physical manifestations of Muslim hegemony over the land. In parallel to his strengthening of the caliphate's defenses, he set about repairing and improving the regional infrastructure. He developed the major roads, shoring them up and adding official caliphal mile markers.[38] He restored public structures like the baths at Hammat Gader, immediately southeast of Lake Tiberias.[39] And, critically, he was the impetus behind the first physical manifestations of Muslim administration in al-Sham. In Damascus, he confiscated what had once been the Byzantine governor's palace, building in its place a palace with a massive green dome.[40] In Jerusalem, immediately south of the former Temple Mount, he built a large administrative complex in an Arabian architectural style (see Figures 2 and 3).[41] Collectively, these works represented the first

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reference to a city or town's main mosque, typically used for the Friday prayers. The Muslim sources, however, often apply this term without regard for the origin of the mosque, or its monumentality. Many of these "congregational mosques" are explicitly referred to as small, and were not built by the caliphate. I therefore use "imperial mosque" to distinguish substantial mosques built by the caliphate.

[38] Creswell, *EMA*, 115.

[39] Judith Green and Yoram Tsafrir, "Greek Inscriptions from Hammat Gader: A Poem by the Empress Eudocia and Two Building Inscriptions," in *Israel Exploration Journal* 32, No. ⅔ (1982), 94-96.

[40] Ross Burns, *Damascus: A History (*New York: Routledge, 2005), 109.

[41] Meir Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple: The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem*, trans. Ina Friedman, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Jerusalem, 1982), 273-76.

concerted Muslim effort to transform the topography of Bilad al-Sham. Yet in spite of Muʿawiya's efforts to assert a Muslim presence in al-Sham, he still faced a daunting obstacle: the land's long history. Aside from occasional local uprisings, and the brief interlude of Sassanian rule during the early 7th century, Bilad al-Sham had existed under dominant Graeco-Roman influence for more than six centuries. In ways governmental, cultural, and geographic, it reflected these sensibilities. Greek was the era's language of culture, and Orthodox Byzantine Christianity the privileged faith. In government, al-Sham was divided according to the military districts established centuries prior by the Romans, and its laws reflected the Justinianic code of the 6th century.[42] In place of this long-entrenched system, Muʿawiya and the other recently-arrived Muslims hoped to establish themselves.

Nothing in al-Sham more viscerally manifested the Graeco-Roman influence than the urban fabric. Colonnaded streets, aqueducts, theatres, agoras, and other hallmarks of Hellenic architecture filled al-Sham. Regional rivalry amongst local elites and in between cities themselves lead to the monumentalization of the urban fabric.[43] This produced a landscape of

[42] Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: From Surrender to Coexistence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 113-125; Sydney Griffith, "The Mansur Family and Saint John of Damascus: Christians and Muslims in Umayyad Times," in *Christians and Others in the Umayyad State*, ed. Antoine Borrut and Fred M. Donner (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2016), 31; John Haldon, "Seventh-Century Continuities: The *Ajnad* and the 'Thematic Myth'," in *The Byzantine and Early Islam Near East: Volume 3, States, Resources and Armies,* ed. Averil Cameron (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995), 379-424.

[43] Much ink has been spilled on the subject of the supposed "decline" of the conurbations of the Middle East after the Muslim conquest. While early geographers such as Sauvaget were often inclined to ascribe fault to the Muslim conquerors for the apparent decay of the grid-like Hellenic systems, Hugh Kennedy has pointed toward a greater degree of continuity between the late Byzantine and early Islamic periods, and argued that this "decline" actually began some time in the 6th century. More recently, however, and based on a much wider set of information, Gideon Avni has demonstrated that cities such as Qaysaria, Jerash, and Jerusalem evidence no such trend until the 8th, 9th, or even 10th centuries. This accords with the presence of monumental churches functioning in every city studied in this thesis (with the obvious exception of Ramla). Finally, Alan Walmsley has pointed out that the Christian communities of Bilad al-Sham continued not just to refurbish but even to embellish monumental churches well into the 8th century, "with both figurative and geometric decorative programmes continuing from established Byzantine traditions". The ongoing dominance of the Graeco-Roman urban aesthetic, therefore, should not be easily dismissed. Hugh Kennedy, "From Polis to Madina: Urban Change in Late Antique and Early Islamic Syria," in *Past & Present* 106 (Feb. 1985); Gideon Avni, "From Polis to Madina Revisited: Urban Change in Byzantine and Early Islamic

highly visible, architecturally consistent structures signaling the grandeur of their locale.[44] Most notable among these buildings were their sacred spaces; first the temple and then the church became the dominant landmarks of Graeco-Roman al-Sham.

At least as early as the Hellenistic era (ca. 323-31 BCE), sacralized spaces were employed in the Middle East and Mediterranean as expressions of imperial power. The construction, sacralization, appropriation, desacralization, and destruction of these spaces served to articulate various aspects of empire. In Roman hands, this practice achieved new heights of potency, as the sheer totality of their imperial hegemony and architectural mastery allowed the empire to utilize religious space as never before. For nearly four centuries, the Romans constructed massive temples to their gods as symbols of their imperial dominance over a conquered populace (see Figures 4-7).[45] These constructions took on a double significance, as they often assimilated the pre-existing structures, thus expressing the incorporation of the local cult into the permanence and might of the Roman pantheon.[46]

Following Constantine's conversion to Christianity, these pagan temples ceased to be viable expressions of the imperial ethos, and were replaced instead by churches. From the 5th century onward, the monumental church became one of the primary articulations of power in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Replacing or destroying the pagan temples of old, Christians competed to construct the most awe-inspiring physical expressions of their devotion to Christ

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Palestine," in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 21, no. 3 (July 2011); Alan Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria: An Archaeological Assessment* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 2007), 125, see generally 123-26.
[44] Kevin Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East* (London, British Museum Press, 2003), 223, 239.
[45] See Beatrice Caseau, "Sacred Landscapes", in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Neoclassical World*, ed. G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 21-59.
[46] Ibid, 25-26.

(see Figures 8-11).[47] As sectarian conflict proliferated, so, too, did the churches. By the 7th century, al-Sham, as the birthplace of Christianity, was filled to bursting with monumental churches. Many of the region's cities literally had more churches than their populations could use.[48] Fifteen were found in each of the central Jordanian cities of Jarash and Umm al-Jimal, while Palestinian Qaysaria had ten.[49] To the north, the metropolitan Aleppo claimed dozens of churches within its walled compound alone.[50] By this process of church building, Bilad al-Sham was fully converted to a Christianized landscape. In comparison to this dynamic, the newly-arrived Muslims had little presence in al-Sham's urban fabric. Those of their ostensible predecessors, the Arabians, who had been settled in al-Sham prior to the Muslim conquest,[51] had consciously embraced the Graeco-Roman architectural tradition, in particular by constructing churches and monasteries.[52] As a result, the Muslim Arabians who arrived in Bilad al-Sham as conquerors in the 630s found themselves in a homogenous landscape which overwhelmingly favored their primary religious and political rivals.

The Muslims' initial conquest of Bilad al-Sham left many of them awestruck by the grandiosity of the buildings which they encountered. Echos of this awe pervade the works of the

[47] Ibid, 29-39; see Frank R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization: C. 370-529* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), chapter 2, esp. 98-123.
[48] Bethany J. Walker, "Islamization of central Jordan in the 7th-9th centuries," in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 40 (2013), 151.
[49] Caseau, "Sacred Landscapes," 39. Walker, "Islamization of central Jordan in the 7th-9th centuries," 151.
[50] Sauvaget, *Alep*, 58.
[51] Throughout this thesis, I draw on Webb and Donner in emphasizing the importance of avoiding retrojection when referring to terms of identity which did not yet exist. Here and later on, I attempt to distinguish between "Arabian" and "Arab". The former are groups of people who migrated out of the Arabian peninsula prior to the Muslims conquests while retaining the cultural hallmarks of that region, such as the Ghassanids and the Lakhimids, but who never would have referred to themselves as "Arabs" because the concept of that unified ethnic identity based on shared geography and language did not yet exist. "Arab", as both Webb and Donner have shown, entailed the emergence of a much more articulated and perhaps imagined community following an ethnogenesis which took place in the late 7th/early 8th centuries. See Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*; Donner, "Talking about Islam's origins".
[52] Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century,* vol. 2, pt. 1 (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 141-219.

later historians. More than two hundred years after the conquest, the Muslim historian Masʿudi described the Church of St. Helena at Hims, built by the Roman empress Helena during the early 4th century, as “one of the wonders of the world”.[53] Likewise, the ancient cathedral church of al-Ruha was equally held in high esteem by various early 10th century historians.[54] If these cosmopolitan historians were so impressed by the churches of al-Sham, one can only imagine the effect such structures would have had on the Muslim conquerors, who had just arrived from the substantially less urbanized Arabian peninsula. An anecdote told by the historian al-ʿIlwami illustrates Muʿawiya’s sensitivity to this matter. According to ʿIlwami, the caliph was visited by an envoy from the Byzantine emperor. Muʿawiya asked the envoy what he thought of the newly constructed caliphal palace in Damascus, apparently built of crude bricks. The envoy replied, “La partie supérieure … est bonne par les oiseaux, et le bas par les rats”. In response to this dismissive barb, Muʿawiya tore the building down and had it rebuilt in stone.[55] Simply, nothing in the fledgling Muslim architectural tradition, which had to that point emphasized humble functionality, had prepared the conquerors to compete with the massive, gilded Christian edifices which they encountered. For some years after his arrival to al-Sham, Muʿawiya would have looked out over a landscape in which he and his community had no space which was distinctly their own.

[53] Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Masʿudi, *Muruj adh dahab wa-Ma’adin al-Jawhar*, vol. 2, ed. C. Barbier de Meynard and P. de Courteille (Paris: La Société Asiatique, 1861-77), 312, quoted in Guy LeStrange, *Palestine Under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from AD 650 to 1500* (London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1890), 353.
[54] Mattia Guidetti, “The Byzantine Heritage in the Dar al-Islam: Churches and Mosques in al-Ruha Between the Sixth and Twelfth Centuries,” in *Muqarnas* 26 (2009): 8.
[55] ʿAbd al-Basit al-ʿIlwami, “Descriptions de Damas,” in *Journal Asiatique* 9, vol. 7 (May-June 1896), trans. H. Sauvaire, 393-394.

In his four decades in Bilad al-Sham, Muʿawiya necessarily traveled the region extensively. Though he held court in Damascus, he took trips to major cities such as Jerusalem, sailed from port cities like Acre, or decamped to estates in the countryside in order to escape the summer heat.[56] In this time he would have had ample opportunity to gaze upon the opulent, storied structures which surrounded him, to absorb their lessons and to compare them to his own creations. Eventually his awareness of how the rudimentary Muslim structures compared to their peers must have proven decisive, for in the major Palestinian city of Tiberias, Muʿawiya built a mosque of unprecedented design.[57]

Almost nothing is known about the architectural trappings of the earliest caliphal mosques in al-Sham. Despite the significance of these buildings, neither archaeological remains nor literary sources attest to the appearance of the mosques ordered by ʿUthman. Still, this silence is telling, as many, if not most, of the substantial imperial mosques built in the lands under Muslim control during the first two Islamic centuries were recorded in written sources.[58] Those of exceptional architectural achievement, such as the Great Mosque of Damascus or the White Mosque of Ramla, were even lauded at length by geographers such as al-Muqaddasi (945-991) and Nasir i-Khusrau (1004-1088).[59] When such significant mosques were later subject to desecration or destruction, the historians typically noted it. The 10th century historian Ibn

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[56] Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 123; trans., 180; R. Stephen Humphreys, *Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan: From Arabia to Empire* (Oneworld: Oxford, 2006), 62.
[57] See Katia Cytryn-Silverman, "Tiberias' Houses of Worship in Context," in *Arise, Walk Through the Land: Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Land of Israel*, ed. Joseph Patrich, Orit Peleg-Barkat, and Erez Ben-Yosef (Jerusalem: The Israel Exploration Society, 2016); Cytryn-Silverman, "Excavations at Tiberias (Spring and Autumn 2009): Remains of a District Capital," in *Proceedings of the 7th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Volume 2*, ed. Roger Matthews and John Curtis (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012); Cytryn-Silverman, "The Umayyad Mosque of Tiberias," in *Muqarnas* 26 (2009).
[58] See, for example, Andrew Peterson, *The Towns of Palestine under Muslim Rule, AD 600-1600* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005), 25-35, 51-102; Shick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule*, chapter 7.
[59] See, for example, LeStrange, *Palestine Under the Moslems*, 122-123.

Hawqal, for example, lamented the Byzantines' destruction of the Great Mosque of Aleppo in 961.[60] The fact that none of the major historians either explicitly note the construction of any of these earliest mosques nor mourn their destruction implies that the mosques were literally unremarkable. This is especially noteworthy since the same sources, particularly Baladhuri and Tabari, describe in detail the contemporaneous construction of caliphal mosques in sites like Basra, Kufa, and Medina.[61] Similarly, given the frequency with which insubstantial mosques from this period, like those at ʿAnjar, Amman, or even the desert mosques of the Negev, have lasted to the present day at least in the form of ruins and occasionally in their entirety, it is unlikely that, had these littoral mosques been deemed architecturally noteworthy by those who used them, not a single one of them would have been similarly preserved. Thus, given the frequent preservation of mid-7th century non-Shami mosques in either archaeological or textual sources, and sometimes both, the persistent absence of contemporaneous Shami mosques from both the archaeological and the textual records demonstrates their insignificant presence in the landscape of Bilad al-Sham.

In a sense much broader than architecture alone, Muʿawiya must have been keenly aware of the culturally subordinate position of the newly-arrived Muslims. Especially in comparison to the Christian communities of Syria and Palestine, the Muslims lacked numbers, cultural history, and political experience. Muslims were not only at a disadvantage in the urban fabric, but were severely outnumbered by the Christians, and also at a fundamental governmental disadvantage; while the Muslim polity had begun to assemble itself only a few decades prior, al-Sham had been

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[60] LeStrange, *Palestine Under the Moslems*, 360.

[61] Baladhuri alone speaks indirectly of Muʿawiya's mosque at Qaysaria, writing only that ʿAbd al-Malik repaired it after a Byzantine attack around 685, some forty years after ʿUmar I first ordered Muʿawiya to build the mosques. Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 150; trans., 220; Creswell, *EMA,* 22-28.

governed almost unceasingly by Christian Rome and then Constantinople for nearly four centuries.[62] The Christians were therefore better-equipped to deal in diplomacy with the local Patriarchates, through whom most of the political power in al-Sham was wielded, and with powerful foreign entities like the Byzantine empire. They knew the geography of al-Sham and of its natural resources. And, importantly, they understood the inner workings of Byzantine bureaucracy, a system which was in large part directly taken up by the first Muslim governments of al-Sham and only gradually begun to be modified more than half a century later.[63] Even the official court poet was a Christian named al-Akhtal, first recruited by Muʿawiya to write invective against a rival tribe. When, during ʿAbd al-Malik's reign, a man once questioned how it was possible that the caliphs employed "a Christian infidel who composed invective against Muslims", he was told that the poet's talent was so great that "al-Akhtal could come clad in a silken gown and a silken girdle, wearing around his neck a golden chain from which hung a golden cross, and with [religiously forbidden] wine dropping from his beard, and thus present himself, without asking permission, before ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwan!"[64] As a result of this disparity, Muʿawiya's government was, from its very beginning in 640, notably dependent upon the expertise and service of the Christian majority. His advisors were mostly Christian, as were members of his personal entourage, and Yaʿqubi even reports that Muʿawiya was the first caliph to make use of Christian administrators as part of his government, suggesting that he was keenly

[62] See Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism In Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), chapters 4 and 5.
[63] Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire,* 113-20; Muriel Debié, "Christians in the Service of the Caliph: Through the Looking Glass of Communal Identities," in *Christians and Others in the Umayyad State*, ed. Antoine Borrut and Fred Donner, 54-55, 60-65.
[64] Abu al-Faraj Al-Isbahani, *Al-Aghani*, vol. 8, ed. Ibrahim al-Abyari (Cairo: Dar al-Sha'b, 1969-1979), 3045, quoted in Suzanne Pickney Stetkevych, "Al-Akhtal at the Court of ʿAbd al-Malik," in *Christians and Others in the Umayyad State*, ed. Antoine Borrut and Fred Donner, 132.

aware of the exigencies of governance in al-Sham.[65] For Muʿawiya, therefore, his administration was as beholden to its Christian context as was his architecture.

Out of the context of this Christian backdrop, Muʿawiya's mosque at Tiberias emerged as one of the first assertions that the Muslim empire stood on relatively equal footing with the rest of al-Sham's cultural millieu. Though its exact dating remains ambiguous, it was necessarily built during either Muʿawiya's governorship or his caliphate.[66] This makes it the earliest mosque in al-Sham of which any physical traces remain, suggesting an unprecedented emphasis on the quality and durability of caliphal mosques. This contrasts with the first Kufa mosque, for instance, built in 638, the boundaries of which Tabari says were simply delineated by naked ditches in the soil rather than walls.[67] The actual construction of the Tiberias mosque is also suggestive; though its builders made use of *spolia* columns and reused the remains of an old Roman wall, the mosque's foundations were cast into a deep fill, a technique unknown in Palestine until after the Muslim conquest.[68] Muslims would no longer pray in improvised, temporary spaces, but in structures which insisted on their own permanence, and which moreover made use of their own building techniques. Yet at the same time, the Tiberias mosque did not announce a radical ideological or cultural change, but rather an explicit continuity with

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[65] Griffith, "The Mansur Family and St. John of Damascus," 31.
[66] The terminus post quem for the mosque's construction must be dated to 644 at the earliest, the first possible date for ʿUthman's order to Muʿawiya, as Muʿawiya would either have expanded the conquest-era structure built by Shurahbil (see above) or built an entirely new mosque. Because the original structure is not of a Damascene style, the terminus ante quem must predate the early Marwanids, who, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, were the first to use this style, and did so in all of their mosques in al-Sham. Moreover, the construction of an early Marwanid structure on top of the original structure makes it unlikely that a rudimentary mosque would have been built after the second *fitna* and then replaced by a monumental mosque only two decades later. Finally, given the Umayyads' military weakness and architectural silence during the second *fitna* (the Byzantines even captured parts of the Palestinian coastline and destroyed at least one of the imperial mosques. See above, note 61), Muʿawiya is the only caliph who reigned between 644 and 692 to whom this mosque is attributable.
[67] Abu Jaʿfar Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 1, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1879-1901), 2489; trans. Gautier H. A. Juynboll, vol. 13 (Albany: State University of New York Press), 69.
[68] Cytryn-Silverman, "Excavations at Tiberias (Spring and Autumn 2009)," 207.

the Shami past. For while the early mosques at Kufa, Basra, and Fustat employed square, peristyle designs typical of Mesopotamia and the Hijaz, the Tiberias mosque employed the ubiquitous rectangular, hypostyle design so common to Graeco-Roman templonic architecture (see Figures 5, 12-14).[69] Notably, it did not even have a clearly-constructed *miḥrāb*. These structures were prayer niches first instituted in mosques as early as 642 and were, along with an orientation toward Mecca, the most important architectural feature of any mosque.[70] These differences carry profound significance, as they depart from what more or less contemporaneously became the standard for mosque building throughout the Islamic world.[71] Instead, by means of the mosque's builders' attempt at permanence and adoption of a distinctly Shami architectural vocabulary, they signal a sense of belonging in the landscape of al-Sham.

Mosques of congregation

Since arriving in Jerusalem in 638, the Muslim conquerors had been fascinated by the city, and by the Temple Mount in particular. In or around the year 639, ʿUmar I cleared away the debris that littered the *temenos* and built a simple mosque (al-ʾAqsa I) which continued in use for roughly two decades, and a wealth of traditions began to grow up around the site.[72] ʿUmar I's

[69] Ibid.
[70] Estelle Whelan, "The Origins of the Mihrab Mujawwaf: A Reinterpretation," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18, no. 2 (May 1986), 210.
[71] Johns argues that already in 638, at least six years before the construction of the Tiberias mosque, Tabari claims that ʿUmar I had declared that all congregational mosques throughout the empire should be built following the manner of the Kufa mosque, which was peristyle and made with marble columns, though apparently lacked walls. This would make the Tiberias mosque that much more anomalous. The account of Tabari, however, is the only evidence for this, and is far from definitive; he only writes that, "In the same manner other mosques were laid out, except the Masjid al-Haram; in those days they did not try to emulate that out of respect for its holiness." Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 1, 2489; trans. Gautier H. A. Juynboll, vol. 13, 69.
[72] Bernard Flusin, "L'esplanade du temple à l'arrivée des Arabes," 29.

mosque, however, was regarded as crude and functional, and toward the end of his time as governor of al-Sham, Muʿawiya developed a much grander vision for the site. He tore down ʿUmar I's structure and in its place built himself a large mosque (al-ʾAqsa II) on the southern end of al-Haram al-Sharif.[73]

In 661, having governed Bilad al-Sham for two decades, Muʿawiya officially became caliph of the Muslim world. His enthronement marked what is today considered the beginning of the Umayyad caliphate (though his supporters would not have seen it that way at the time, but rather as a continuity with the Rashidun), and he himself recognized it as an auspicious and significant moment. Accordingly, early in 661, he convened the Muslim leadership in Jerusalem and gathered them at the newly-rennovated Haram.[74] According to the 7th century Syriac Christian history known as the Maronite Chronicle,

> … many Arabs gathered at Jerusalem and made Muʿawiya king and he went up and sat down on Golgotha; he prayed there, and went to Gethsemane and went down to the tomb of the blessed Mary to pray in it. … In July of the same year the emirs and many Arabs gathered and proffered their right hand to Muʿawiya. Then an order went out that he should be proclaimed king in all the villages and cities of his dominion and that they should make acclamations and invocations to him. He also minted gold and silver, but it was not accepted because it had no cross on it. Furthermore, Muʿawiya did not wear a crown like other kings in the world. He placed his throne in Damascus and refused to go to Muhammad's throne.[75]

Plainly, these accounts raise significant questions. After a lengthy stint as a loyal Muslim governor, Muʿawiya's first ceremony as caliph apparently rejected the city of the Prophet and instead specifically embraced the sites in Jerusalem most holy to the Christians and the Jews.

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[73] Ibid; Al-Maqdisi, *Kitab al-Bad' wa'l-ta'rikh*, vol. 4, ed. and trans. C. Huart as *Le livre de la création et de l'histoire* (Paris, 1899-1913, repr. 1975), 87.
[74] Al-Maqdisi, *Kitab al-Bad' wa'l-ta'rikh*, vol. 4, 87.
[75] Andrew Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), 31-32.

As numerous contemporary scholars have noted, the early days of Islam's development are shrouded in ambiguity.[76] Virtually all textual evidence from the first two centuries is tinged either by polemic or retrojectionism. Even those sources relatively free of such bias evoke a baffling history of early Islam, mainly because nowhere in them are any Muslims to be found. While Muhammad and his followers are undoubtedly the focus of the narrative, they are never given the religious appelative "Muslim". Though the term did appear in a generically adjectival form referring to the specific act of submitting to Allah, Muhammad's followers in this period were far more likely to be referred to as *muhajirin*, immigrants, or *muʾminin*, believers.[77] The significance of this terminological discontinuity is amplified by two parallel doctrinal discontinuities. First, very few sources from this period make any reference to Muhammad, ostensibly a central figure in any iteration of Islam, and second, the Qurʾan, the actual source of normative Islamic doctrine, did not take shape until near the end of the 7th century.[78] Even the Arab ethne, supposedly a prerequisite for Muslim identity in the earliest days, was strikingly absent from the caliphate's discourse during Muʿawiya's time; in fact, it had been three centuries since the term was used to refer to people of Arabian origin, and when it did gradually begin to reappear in the mid-7th century, it came from grecophone sources writing about the conquering "Arabes" (*Αραβας*) or referring to the "year of the Arabs". Not until nearly the 8th century did writers begin to use the term as a self-identifier, and even then it appeared as a reference to one's native language, not one's place of origin.[79] In the absence of religious or ethnic criteria,

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[76] See, for example, Michael Cook and Patricia Crone, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Donner, Talking about Islam's origins"; Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*.
[77] See especially Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers.*
[78] Patricia Crone and Martin Hind, *God's Caliph* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 24-25; Estelle Whelan, "Forgotten Witness: Evidence for the Early Codification of the Qurʾan," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118, 1 (1998).
[79] See Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, 110-156.

therefore, the actual boundaries of Muʿawiya's community seem nebulous at best. This was, however, no accident.

By all accounts, Muʿawiya was an astute and capable statesman; it is a testament to his unique abilities that the empire which he held together for twenty years collapsed almost immediately following his death in 680. Critically, the basis of his diplomacy was a conscious and cultivated egalitarianism. He was recognized for balancing the competing interests of his empire in order to satisfy as many of his constituents as possible.[80] The 9th century Syriac Christian history of Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, a text on the whole fairly hostile to the Muslims, described him as "an honourable man whose tolerance and humanity seemed unlimited", while the Syrian monk John bar Penkaye, writing in 687, said that "justice flourished in his time and there was great peace in the regions under his control; he allowed everyone to live as they wanted".[81] In general, Muslim and Christian sources alike remember him for his patience, people skills, and strategic thinking.[82] Far from encouraging strife or rigid division, he sought to unify the disparate components of his empire.

Muʿawiya's political acumen was in many respects born of sheer necessity. In his early days as governor under the last three of the Rashidun caliphs, he had managed al-Sham's populace. This included bickering Christians of various stripes, the nascent Muslim community, Jews adjusting to life without the yoke of an oppressive Church, Samaritans striving to maintain a declining population, and a number of other ethnic and religious interest groups. Following his accession to the caliphate, Muʿawiya faced further challenges; beyond the expanded ethnoreligious scope entailed in governing the entirety of the lands conquered by the Muslims,

[80] Humphreys, *Muʿawiya ibn Abi Suyfan*, 120.
[81] Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, 186; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 156.
[82] Humphreys, *Muʿawiya ibn Abi Sufyan*, 116-20.

Muʿawiya now had to contend with internal fracture. Following the controversial appointment of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (r. 656-661) as the fourth of the Rashidun caliphs, which had resulted from the assassination of ʿUthman, Muʿawiya and his followers launched the first *fitna* in order to avenge ʿUthman's death and restore what they considered the proper caliphal succession. Only after ʿAli's convenient assassination by another revolutionary group and the capitulation of his son and successor Hasan (624-670) did Muʿawiya take his place as the ruler of the young and scarred empire, which was now deeply in need of reunification.

As caliph, none of Muʿawiya's policies better encapsulated nor more effectively realized his unifying aims than did his pluralistic religious attitude. On the most basic level, he took care not to forcefully repress other faiths. Christian sources remember him as a bringer of peace and security for their communities after decades of war, and even sites of imperial power countenanced an abundance of Christian symbols.[83] The official inscription at Hamat Gader, for instance, which bore Muʿawiya's name and declared him "Commander of the Faithful", commences with an inscribed cross (see Figure 15).[84] More substantially, however, his behavior suggests an active, pluralistic facilitation of monotheistic practice. He was known to pray in churches throughout al-Sham. In the year 660 he was invited to preside over a doctrinal dispute between the Maronite and Jacobite bishops, a case in which his decision apparently was considered binding.[85] And, in a move shockingly out of step with later Islamic doctrine, he was remembered for having given substantial resources for the reconstruction of the Church of

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[83] Ibid, 126; Robert Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule: A Historical and Archaeological Study* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995), 164.
[84] Green and Tsafrir, "Greek Inscriptions from Hammat Gader", 95.
[85] Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles,* 30.

Edessa, a decision which a number of his governors apparently repeated in their own cities.[86] He embraced, in short, a policy of conscious and active pluralism.

In tandem with Muʿawiya's other policies, the construction of al-ʾAqsa II served to emphasize and perpetuate the same message of pluralism and imperial situation. By virtue of its positioning on the Haram, one of the most visible sites in Jerusalem, it inherently associated itself with the city's most visible sites: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Nea Church (see Figures 24-25).[87] It was also built over and even incorporated the then-extant architectural remains of the Jewish Temple.[88] The discursive impact of this positioning was not lost on those who saw the mosque at this time. Although al-ʾAqsa II did not achieve the same notoriety as later Umayyad mosques, it still turned many heads, with some who saw it even convinced that the Muslims were Satan's helpers, come to aid the Jews in rebuilding the Temple.[89] Furthermore, the novel grandiosity of the site served to underscore the notion that Muʿawiya was asserting the presence and participation of his community in the broader fabric of al-Sham. Al-ʾAqsa II was by far the biggest mosque built to that point in Bilad al-Sham. Arculf reports that it was large enough to hold some 3,000 people. If true, this would have made al-ʾAqsa II more than ten times as large as Muʿawiya's mosque at Tiberias, which would have held about 250 people, and easily as large as any mosque built by the Umayyads at any point before their fall in 750.[90] Even when

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[86] Suleiman Bashear, "Qibla Musharriqa and Early Muslim Prayer in Churches," in *The Muslim World* 81, 3-4 (1991), 267; Andrew Marsham, "The Architecture of Allegiance in Early islamic Late Antiquity: The Accession of Muʿawiya in Jerusalem, ca. 661 CE," in *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alexander Beihammer, Stavroula Constantiou, and Maria Parani (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 105; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 508.
[87] Oleg Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 104.
[88] Andreas Kaplony, *The Haram of Jerusalem 324-1099* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), 29; Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 50.
[89] See Flusin, "L'esplanade du temple à l'arrivée des Arabes," 30.
[90] I base this number on Kristofer Damgaard and Alan Walmsley's estimate for the Jarash mosque of the late Umayyad period, which, measuring about 1700m^2, they contend could have held some 450 people. In comparison, the Tiberias mosque measured some 1,000m^2 and ought, therefore, to be able to hold about 58.8% as many people as

the oft-challenged Arculf narrative is viewed with an appropriate amount of skepticism, the vast disparity between these two numbers makes it clear that, regardless of its precise dimensions, al-ʾAqsa II was a substantially large building. Lastly, even though Arculf states that the mosque was "uili fabricati", of a simple or crude style, historian Bernard Flusin argues this likely just suggests the superficiality of Arculf's observations.[91] In fact, the involvement of an archdeacon named Johannes, a marble decoration specialist, in the mosque's construction makes it clear that significant and unprecedented effort was dedicated to the overall aesthetics of the mosque.[92] As a result, al-ʾAqsa II did not just symbolically situate itself in the religious traditions of al-Sham, but architecturally justified such a status by demonstrating its capability of competing in form with the other monuments of Bilad al-Sham. What Muʿawiya achieved at the Haram al-Sharif, therefore, was a significant innovation in his empire's architectural discourse, and a clear message that his community was both pluralistic and imperial.

In light of Muʿawiya's efforts to transform the Haram into a space which evoked both pluralism and the presence of his empire, the polyvalence of his coronation is firmly in keeping with these policies. Drawing on the multiple religious associations inherent in the charged site, the Haram became both the focal point and the actual focusing mechanism of Muʿawiya's policy. By using it as the site of his coronation, during which he also visited Gethsemane, Golgotha, and Mary's tomb, he incorporated Christian symbolism into a site which already

the Jarash mosque, with some accomodation for differences in layout. Alan Walmsley and Kristofer Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash in Jordan and its Relationship to Early Mosques," 371; Cytryn-Silverman, "Tiberias' Houses of Worship in Context," 207.

[91] Flusin, "L'esplanade du temple à l'arrivée des Arabes," 29.

[92] Flusin writes, "...puisque Jean est 'poseur de marbre', il faut sans doute admettre que cette mosquée avait, à l'origine, tout comme le monastère où nous voyons l'archidiacre sur son échelle, les murs ornés de plaques de marbre; ce qui ne correspond guère à la baraque en bois décrite par Arculfe." The use of marble plaques would moreover resemble the building habits of the early Marwanid caliphs. Ibid.

carried Solomonic associations for the Jews. The presence of the mosque and, of course, of Muslims, rounded out the chorus of religious voices. Through his employment of the former Temple Mount, Muʿawiya was able to co-opt the symbolic vocabulary of Jerusalem and emphasize "the sacred charisma of a monotheist sovereign", achieving the pluralistic image to which he so aspired.[93] In replacing ʿUmar I's crude mosque, Muʿawiya promoted his own vision of pluralism and assured the prominence of the Muslim empire's place in the built fabric of Bilad al-Sham.

Conclusion

The course of Muʿawiya's time as governor of Bilad al-Sham and subsequently as the first Umayyad caliph traces a critical period of evolution in the Islamic polity. A reconsideration of evidence for this period demonstrates that imperial mosques were not only built during this period, but in fact constituted an important facet of the emergent Umayyad identity. Having arrived to the land as conquerors, still at risk of defeat, Muʿawiya and his compariots successfully entrenched themselves and, by study of and interaction with local practices and traditions, developed a means of governing and a set of norms and practices in their imperial religious architecture which served to solidify Muʿawiya's security and power as caliph of the Muslim empire. Through his uniquely astute vision of the imperial mosque, Muʿawiya created a place to both unify and control the disparate constituents of his empire. He asserted direct religious and political control over the Muslim community while engaging with the broader

[93] Marsham, "Architecture of Allegiance," 107.

monotheist community by carefully crafting a set of common references, best embodied in his transformation of the Haram. Yet he would not be the primary beneficiary of the tools which he developed. In the wake of his death, these implements would be taken up by his successors and used to take the Umayyad caliphate to heights of political and discursive power of which even Muʿawiya had not conceived.

Chapter Two: Imperial Aspirations,

692-717

Islam overarching

In the year 692, a Greek monk and ecclesiastic named Anastasious of Sinai was living in Jerusalem. Very late on one particular night, a terrible noise shook him from his sleep. It was the sound, he wrote, "d'un peuple nombreux qui travaillait, remuait, criait et jetait des quantités de déblais par-dessus la muraille" of the Temple Mount. He thought, perhaps, that they were Egyptian laborers. However, when the workers finally were silenced hours later by the ringing of the call to prayer at a nearby monastery, the monk came to different realization. As he would write thirty years later in his account of the incident, "Alors, je compris que ceux qui étaient à l'oeuvre, c'était des démons, tout contents de ces travaux de déblaiement, et y collaborant". For Anastasious, no reason other than the machinations of Satan could possibly explain the renovation of a site which Titus had burned to the ground and which Christ himself had more than six hundred years prior promised would remain "abandoned" and desolate.[94]

As Anastasious would later learn, it was not demons at work on the Temple Mount, but a workforce sent by ʿAbd al-Malik to transform the site. Upon returning from battle in Iraq in late 691, having extirpated all but the final strains of resistance to his rule, ʿAbd al-Malik had issued an order to the architects of the empire. On the Temple Mount, in place of the ruins which covered the Foundation Stone (which had supposedly lain beneath the Holy of Holies in the

[94] Flusin, "L'esplanade du temple à l'arrivée des Arabes," 26.

ancient Temple), he wanted an octagonal dome built, and the entire esplanade transformed into a unified mosque complex.[95] In the course of the following three decades, he and his sons who succeeded him on the throne, al-Walid and Sulayman, would amply realize this vision.[96] Clearing the last of the trash and debris which had accumulated on the Mount since the Temple's destruction, they brought in architects, mosaicists, marble experts, goldsmiths, woodworkers, and a veritable army of manual laborers. Under the direction of these caliphs, this workforce constructed not only the Dome and a massively expanded prayer hall, but also minarets and decorative arches, fountains and ritual baths, thousands of lamps, various reliquaries topped by ornate cupolas, and a treasury meant to hold the riches of the entire empire.[97] Not since the days of Herod's Temple had such a comprehensive and grandiose project been enacted on the Mount (see Figures 16-23). ʿAbd al-Malik was making no secret of his monumental aims.

Long before Orwell's famously cynical maxim, ʿAbd al-Malik recognized that control of his empire's future lay in his ability to rewrite its past. His rivals during the second *fitna* had often couched their arguments against him in pietistic terms, arguing that their superior historical connection to Muhammad and outstanding religious comportment qualified them for the

[95] This thesis accepts the now-normative scholastic view that holds that construction on the Dome of the Rock began, rather than ended, in 692. Sheila Blair's essay, "What is the date of the Dome of the Rock?," coherently outlines the justification for this dating, and concludes, "We can place the Dome of the Rock in a precise historical context: ʿAbd al-Malik ordered it in the second half of 72/first half of 692 on his victorious return from Iraq as part of a major build-up of Damascus and Jerusalem. When ʿAbd al-Malik ordered the Dome of the Rock, Mecca was still in the hands of ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Zubayr." Sheila Blair, "What is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?" in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, pt. I, ed. Jeremy Johns and Julian Raby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 84.

[96] Critically, the Dome of the Rock was considered by the Umayyads to be part and parcel of the entirety of al-ʾAqsa. The entire Haram complex, not just the southern portion with a prayer hall, was presented architecturally, ritually, and linguistically as a mosque. This conception, however, never gained widespread traction, and thus later attitudes toward the Dome and the mosque obscure the original intentions of the Umayyad builders. See Kaplony, *The Haram of Jerusalem*, 33-36.

[97] Ibid, 52-55; Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 122-134; Robert Hillenbrand, "Umayyad Woodwork in the Aqsa Mosque," in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, pt. 2, ed. Jeremy Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 308-10; John Wilkinson, "Column Capitals in the Haram al-Sharif," in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, pt. 1, ed. Jeremy Johns and Julian Raby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 127-28.

caliphate over the Umayyads.[98] From the beginning of his reign, therefore, ʿAbd al-Malik set out to revise the historical narrative surrounding the Umayyads' connection to Islam's origins. Instead of acknowledging his family's fairly late acceptance of Muhammad's mission, he attempted to emphasize a tangible and unbroken connection between the Umayyads' reign and Muhammad's prophethood.

In order to accomplish this legitimation, first ʿAbd al-Malik and then many of his Umayyad successors cultivated a close relationship with the early traditionists and historians of Islam in the 7th and 8th centuries. Some of these scholars were even kept on as members of the imperial retinue.[99] ʿAbd al-Malik specifically corresponded with them, purportedly testing their knowledge of the Qurʾan and Islamic jurisprudence.[100] The traditionist Maʿmar ibn Rashid (d. 770), speaking of a conversation with his teacher ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (d. 741), tells an anecdote which illustrates the central thrust of these policies: "I asked al-Zuhri, 'Who wrote the document on the day of al-Hudaybiya?' He laughed and said, 'It was ʿAli, but if you asked these-- meaning the Banu Umayyad-- they would say ʿUthman'."[101] Accordingly, ʿAbd al-Malik also reproduced and enshrined those historic institutions that he believed lent credence to Umayyad reign. His governors and administrators aided in the conscious propagation of various programs and policies, especially those surrounding payrolls and taxation, which hearkened back to the time of Muhammad. By visibly continuing the administrative policies of Muhammad and the Rashidun, the Umayyads hoped to demonstrate that theirs was the legitimate continuation of those past

[98] Chase F. Robinson, *ʿAbd al-Malik* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 31-48.
[99] Donner, "Umayyad efforts at legitimation," 205-6.
[100] Ibid, 205-6. See notes 51, 55, and 56.
[101] Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, *Kitab fada'il al-sahaba*, ed. W. 'Abbas (Beirut: Muʾassassat al-risala, 1984), note 1002 quoted in Donner, "Umayyad Efforts at Legitimation," 206.

regimes.[102] Yet in spite of ʿAbd al-Malik's constant emphasis on his empire's continuity with an authentic past, no program of his would prove more impactful than his novel vision of Islam.

Qurʾanicization, as Fred Donner has called it, was the process by which the Umayyad leaders, beginning with ʿAbd al-Malik, "legitimate[d] the Umayyad state and government by linking them with the divine revalation and the person of the prophet Muhammad".[103] Under the impulse of ʿAbd al-Malik, the Umayyads reconfigured state aparati in a number of substantial ways. Firstly, they made key alterations to imperial discourse, pivoting toward the use of terminology linked with the Qurʾan.[104] Beginning with ʿAbd al-Malik, the leader of the Muslim community, having previously been called by the non-Qurʾanic term *amir al-muʾminin* (commander of the believers), became *khalifat allah*, "the representative of God", a phrase plucked directly from the Qurʾan.[105] The nominal form of the word *muslim*, as opposed to its formerly adjecively use, became the primary term of identity for those in the community, replacing the previously used terms *muhajir* or *muʾmin*.[106] Simultaneously, the Umayyad leadership propagated a new semiology of state in which Muhammad and the Qurʾan were given unprecedently prominent positions. ʿAbd al-Malik became the first ruler to issue purely epigraphic coins, on which he replaced iconography with the unprecedented inscription combining the *shahada* (the Muslim declaration of faith) and the phrase "Muhammad is the messenger of God".[107] For the first time, government officials began to quote the Qurʾan in

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[102] Donner, "Umayyad Efforts at Legitimation," 207; Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1998), 166-73.
[103] Donner, "Qurʾanicization," 79.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid, 83.
[106] Ibid, 84.
[107] Yehuda Nevo, "Towards a prehistory of Islam," in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17 (1994), 110; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 548.

public settings, and Umayyad officials themselves played a large role in the collection and redaction of the Qurʾan, which reached its standardized form during this period.[108] These shifts in policy and practice marked a wide-ranging and substantial change in the social, political, and ideological currents of the Muslim empire. This was the context in which ʿAbd al-Malik rebuilt the Haram.

Soon after 692, having laid the foundations for the Dome of the Rock, the caliph contracted a workforce of Byzantine-trained mosaicists.[109] They set up shop inside the Dome, assembling a dazzling mosaic of glass and stone and gold (see Figures 22 and 23). In the midst of swirling images of vines and crowns and geometric patterns, they included more than 240 meters of inscriptions written in Kufic script. “There is no God but God”, declared the writing. “Muhammad is the envoy of God.” This version of the *shahada* pioneered on the epigraphic coins of ʿAbd al-Malik, appeared in various iterations more than a dozen times in inscriptions on the inside and outside of the Dome, on the walls and over doorways, intermingling with declarations of the might of God and the truth of monotheism.[110] Then, on the inner face of the Dome, standing out in the midst of a single, uninterrupted inscription: “There is no God but He, the all-mighty, the all-wise. Indeed the religion of God is Islam.” On a building which was prominently stamped twice with the name of ʿAbd al-Malik and his collaborators, here was found the very first time that this community of *muʾminin*, *muhajirin*, and *muslimin* was referred to as the religion of Islam.[111]

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[108] Nevo, “Towards a prehistory of Islam,” 110; Whelan, “Forgotten Witness”; Donner,“Talking about Islam’s origins,” 6.
[109] Blair, “What is the date of the Dome of the Rock?,” 85.
[110] Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 59-61.
[111] Donner, “Talking about Islam’s Origins,” 8.

ʿAbd al-Malik also emphasized the Dome's connections to Muhammad. Already the Haram was associated with the Prophet. One of the many structures built by ʿAbd al-Malik was Qubbat al-Miʿraj, the Dome of the Ascension, which supposedly marked the spot from which Muhammad rose to heaven during his famous Night Journey.[112] This martyrium served as a physical reminder of one of the most immediate connections between the Prophet, the Haram, and the Marwanids. Under al-Walid this connection was further elaborated. As part of his broad efforts at imperial monumentalization, which included a massive enlargement of the Kaʿba and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, al-Walid placed black stone markers at the various sites remembered by the early Muslims as places where the Prophet had prayed. Finbarr Flood contends that al-Walid placed one of these in the *miḥrāb* within the Dome of the Rock, as a means of commemorating Muhammad and advancing the Umayyad imperial understanding of Islamic history. Flood writes, "The program of al-Walid constituted not just a memorialization but a systematization of the manner in which the Prophet was venerated."[113] Between the prayer stones, the martyrium, and the inscriptions, therefore, these constructions on the Haram served not just to participate in a preexisting Muslim culture and religious tradition, but to actively assert an orthodox vision of that tradition.

The rhetorical flourishes of the Dome of the Rock marked the pièce de résistance of ʿAbd al-Malik's efforts at Qurʾanicization. In one place it brought together all of the primary elements of ʿAbd al-Malik's reforms: architectually, it emphasized the power and granduer of the Umayyad regime; geographically, it laid claim to an ancient site tied to both Muhammad's past specifically and that of Abrahamic monotheism at large; rhetorically, it directly linked an

[112] Grabar, "The Umayyad Dome of the Rock," 38
[113] Finbarr B. Flood, "Light in Stone: The Commemoration of the Prophet in Umayyad Architecture," in *Bayt al-Maqdis* pt. 2, ed. Jeremy Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 357-359.

extraordinarily visible caliphal project to the authority of God, Muhammad, and the Qurʾan. And it did all of this while indubitably stamping ʿAbd al-Malik's name on the project, a symbol so powerful that less than a hundred years later the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun (r. 813-833) felt the need to excise ʿAbd al-Malik's name and replace it with his own, the inscription of which has remained there to this day.[114] ʿAbd al-Malik and his successors' transformation of al-Haram al-Sharif, therefore, was not merely symbolic of a deeper ideological shift. Instead, it was the foremost constitutive nexus for the fomentation and propagation of that shift.

Competing with Christianity

Approaching Jerusalem from its outskirts, a pilgrim in the year 680 would have seen the two soaring domes of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Justinian's Nea Church (see Figures 24 and 25). The once-glorious Mount Moriah, site of the former Jewish Temple, would have lain in a state of conspicuous reserve in comparison to the churches. Though the southern corner of the mount had for decades been in use by Muʿawiya, his mosque still took up only a fraction of the esplanade. As Arculf's account suggests, its presence was more eschatologically notable than physically impressive. Following ʿAbd al-Malik's overhaul of the Haram beginning in 692, however, this unfavorable juxtaposition changed. Now, the Dome was the highest point in Jerusalem. Seen from the older Christian part of the city in the west, it served as the opulent zenith of the visual triangle formed by itself and the two aforementioned churches (see Figure 24).[115] Over the next twenty-five years, similar transformations took place to varying degrees in

[114] Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 59.
[115] Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 105.

Damascus, Aleppo, Tiberias, and Ramla. In direct competition with major churches, the Umayyad caliphs introduced monumental mosques.

Writing in the 10th century, the Palestinian Muslim historian and geographer al-Muqaddasi recounted a conversation he once had with his father's brother. The young Muqaddasi had asked his uncle why the Umayyad caliphs al-Walid and ʿAbd al-Malik had spent so much money and effort on building the mosques of Damascus and al-ʾAqsa. His uncle answered him,

> [al-Walid] saw that Syria was a country settled by the Christians, and he noted there their churches so handsome with their enchanting decorations, renowned far and wide, such as are the Qumama [Church of the Holy Sepulchre], and the churches of Ludd and al-Ruha [Edessa]. So he undertook for the Muslims the building of a mosque that would divert their attention from the churches, and make it one of the wonders of the world. Do you not realize how ʿAbd al-Malik, seeing the greatness of the dome of the Qumama and its splendour, fearing lest it should beguile the hearts of the Muslims, hence erected, above the Rock, the dome you now see there?[116]

In answering his nephew's question, Muqaddasi's uncle pointed to two central forces at work during the Umayyad period. The first was a sense of cultural inadequacy. As has been noted previously (see Chapter 1), Byzantine monumental architecture, especially the churches of Late Antiquity, loomed large in the geographic and cultural awareness of the early Muslims. Even in Kufa, as early as 638, the mosque built by ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab is described by Tabari as having a ceiling "resembling the ceilings in Byzantine churches".[117] Throughout his reign, Muʿawiya in particular demonstrated a clear sensitivity to this dynamic, and thus the explanation offered by Muqaddasi's anecdote, despite being offered nearly three hundred years after the events described, is credible. Muqaddasi's uncle suggested, much as did the trajectory of Muʿawiya's

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[116] Muhammad ibn Ahmad Shams al-Din al-Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-taqasim fi ma'rifat al-aqalim*, trans. Basil Collins as *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions* (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2001), 135-36. Henceforth referred to as *Ahsan al-taqasim*.

[117] Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 1, 2489; trans. Gautier H. A. Juynboll, vol. 13, 69.

religious architecture, that the Umayyads were seeking to create buildings as exceptional as anything the Christians were capable of. The second force, however, was a novel fear dating to ʿAbd al-Malik's time: the conversion of Muslims to Christianity.

During the pre-Marwanid era, practical distinctions between Muslims and non-Muslims were minimal, at least in comparison to the polarized climate of the recent Byzantine period. Monotheists who accepted the conquest of the Muslim armies generally fell under the pluralistic and tolerant auspices of the Rashidun regime, which led what Donner has called the "Believer" movement after its predominant usage of the term *muʾmin*.[118] John Bar Penkaye lamented that in this period, "There was no distinction between pagan and Christian; the faithful was not known from a Jew".[119] Non-Muslims themselves often did not know what to make of the new movement, often considering it a heretical version of Christianity.[120] By the Umayyad era, however, non-Muslim religious leaders began to recognize Islam as something unique and autonomous. Christian apologists and apocryphists evidenced a newfound awareness of a divide between their faith and that of the Muslims.[121] For the first time, they and other religious figures bemoaned the increasing occurance of conversion to Islam and apostasies from Christianity.[122] The Muslims themselves, too, increasingly asserted this distinction. For instance, as religious leaders like the Umayyads finalized the Qurʾan and began to collect the *hadith* (the record of the Prophet's sayings and doings), the first formal Muslim movement of theology and jurisprudence,

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[118] Donner, "Umayyad Efforts at Legitimation," 191.
[119] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it*, 156.
[120] Donner, "Umayyad Efforts at Legitimation," 191-92.
[121] G. J. Reinink, "Ps.-Methodius: a concept of history in response to the rise of Islam," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, ed. A. Cameron and L. I. Conrad (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1992), 185-87; Reinink, "The beginnings of Syriac apologetic literature in response to Islam," in *Oriens Christianus* 77 (1993).
[122] Robert G. Hoyland, *In God's Path: The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 161; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Othes Saw It*, 268.

the Muʿtazilite school, was born and entered into sharp conversation with its Christian peers.[123] By the end of the 7th century, Islam and Christianity stood as two increasingly distinct entities.

Even before it spread out from Jerusalem, the Umayyads' mosque architecture clearly expressed this new distinction. No viewer could miss the obvious contrast drawn between the domed, basilical shape of the Dome of the Rock and the domed basilicas of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Nea Church.[124] In one recorded version of Muqaddasi's survey of the Muslims lands, the geographer wrote that ʿAbd al-Malik made the prayer hall of al-ʾAqsa even more beautiful than the renowned Great Mosque of Damascus would eventually be, "because [al-ʾAqsa] had to stand in comparison with the great church belonging to the Christians, which was in Jerusalem; so they built the mosque more magnificent than that".[125] And in the inscriptions of the Dome of the Rock, ʿAbd al-Malik made this even more clear.[126] In multiple places, God is described as He who "begets no son and who has no associate in power and who has no surrogate".[127] The inscription inside the Dome is more explicit, reading:

> O, People of the Book, do not go beyond the bounds of your religion and do not say about God except the truth. Indeed the messiah Jesus son of Mary was an envoy of God and His word He bestowed on her as well as a spirit from Him. So believe in God and in his envoys and do not say "three" [a reference to the Trinity]; desist, it is better for you. … It is not for God to take a son.[128]

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[123] Griffith, "The Mansur Family and St. John of Damascus," 39-40.
[124] Creswell, *EMA*, 107-09; Josef van Ess, "Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock," in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, pt. 1, ed. Jeremy Johns and Julian Raby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 102.
[125] Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-taqasim*, 168, note h; trans., 142.
[126] The vast majority of al-Sham's population at this time, even the fraction which did speak Arabic, was illiterate. While they might have been awed by the brilliance of the Kufic script, they would not have understood a word of it. This points to a few assumptions about who was being addressed by the inscriptions. First, in the immediate sense, their anti-Trinitarianism must have spoken to literate Arabians still enamored of Christianity, of which, in al-Sham and less than one hundred years after Muhammad's prophecies began, there were likely still quite a few. Second, the inscriptions presuppose a future in which a meaningful portion of the Shami population would be able to read Arabic. The implications of this last point are unclear, but provocative nonetheless.
[127] Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 59.
[128] This verse mirrors Suras 4:171-72 in the Qurʾan. This has serious implications for dating the development of the Qurʾan, and has been dealt with in Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 60-63; Donner, "Talkings about Islam's origins"; Whelan, "Forgotten Witness".

Thus, for the tiny percentage of the Shami population who were not sufficiently swayed by the geography and architecture of the Dome, both of which undermined Christian teleology, the intention of these features was made clear in Dome's inscriptions. Islam had come to supersede Christianity. Still, even the discursive potency of the new al-ʾAqsa could only affect those who visited Jerusalem, and thus, as the caliphs furthered the distinction between Muslim and Christian, they constructed more mosques meant to compete directly with Christian monuments.

In Damascus, in either the year 705 or 706, the newly-enthroned caliph al-Walid demolished the massive and famed Church of Saint John the Baptist, confiscated its ancient *temenos*, and began construction of what would become the Great Mosque of Damascus (see Figure 26). On the site, use of which dated back to pagan times at least four centuries prior, al-Walid built a domed prayer hall some 160 meters long. The roof of the building rested on a complex system of columns and arcades, and the finished building offered a resplendent display of marble, gold, woodwork, and, most famously, ornate and infinitely complex mosaics (see Figures 27-30).[129] To complete the project, al-Walid imported workers from every corner of his empire: Copts, Persians, Moroccans, and even Indians and Greeks. When the mosque was finally completed, its total cost was reportedly multiple times the annual yield of the poll tax collected from the entire empire.[130] In the coming centuries, Muslim geographers and historians invariably counted the Great Mosque of Damascus as among the wonders of the world, sometimes even considering both it and its mosaics as two separate wonders.[131] The 10th century geographer Ibn al-Faqih claimed that even one hundred years passed in the mosque would not be sufficient time

[129] Creswell, *EMA*, 151-205.
[130] As Flood has noted (see below), numbers like this should serve to offer an impression of the magnitude of the project, but not be treated as exact statistics. Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, 1-3.
[131] Ibid, 4-5.

for one to see all of its marvels.[132] In short, the Damascus mosque stood as a profoundly impressive Muslim structure in place of what had previously been a profoundly impressive Christian structure.

Subsequent to the Damascus mosque, al-Walid and Sulayman repeated a similar process in other major cities of Bilad al-Sham. At Aleppo in 715, Sulayman appropriated a large portion of the city's central church complex, building a large mosque over the church's garden.[133] The 12th century historian Ibn Shaddad explains that Sulayman then "embellished [the mosque] so as to compete with the work of his brother al-Walid in the mosque of Damascus".[134] Ibn al-Shihna, the 15th century resident and historian of Aleppo, likewise refers to a chain of transmission dating back to Umayyad times which claimed that, "The Mosque of Aleppo rivalled that of Damascus in its decoration, its marble panelling, and its mosaics".[135] Sauvaget writes that, although nothing remains of the Aleppo mosque, "various sources lead us to attribute to it a layout characteristic of the Umayyad mosques; all things considered, it was nothing more than a replica of the Great Mosque of Damascus, less sumptuous, but of equally ample dimensions".[136] Around the same time, in the very heart of Tiberias, either al-Walid or Sulayman[137] built another

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[132] Ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadhani, *Mukhtasar Kitab al-Buldan*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: 1885), 108.
[133] Mattia Guidetti, "Sacred Topographies in Medieval Syria and its Roots between the Umayyads and Late Antiquity," in *Umayyad Legacies: Medieval Memories from Syria to Spain*, ed. Antoine Borrut and Paul M. Cobb (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 347.
[134] Ibn Shaddad, *al-Aʿlaq al-kathira fi dhikr umaraʾ al-Sham wa-l-Jazira*, ed. D. Sourdel (Damascus: al-Maʿhad al-faransi bi-Dimashq, 1953), 31, quoted in Guidetti, *In the Shadow of the Mosque*, 116.
[135] Ibn al-Shihna, *Al-durr al-muntakhab fi taʾrikh Halab*, ed. Sarkis, 61, quoted in Creswell, *EMA*, 483.
[136] Sauvaget, *Alep*, 75-76.
[137] Katia Cytryn-Silverman argues for a wider range of possible dates, suggesting based on the similarity of the Tiberias imperial mosque's layout to the imperial mosque at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi that it could be attributed to Hisham ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (Cytryn-Silverman, "Tiberias from its Foundation," 207). Such an assessment, however, neglects to recognize that the Tiberias mosque would then be the only mosque built by Hisham outside of northeastern Syria and the Hawran. Moreover, it would be more than three times larger than any of the other half-dozen mosques in al-Sham attributed to Hisham, and, based on the Cytryn-Silverman's finds of marble paneling, brass chains, and glass lamps in the Tiberias mosque, significantly more ornate than any of the mosques built by Hisham (see Chapter 4). Finally, the palace of Khirbat al-Minya was built nearby on Lake Tiberias during the reign of al-Walid, and Creswell demonstrates the similarity of its small mosque to the mosque at Qasr al-Hayr

mosque that closely matched the size, proportions, and layouts of the Damascus and Aleppo mosques.[138] Cytryn-Silverman's initial excavations of the mosque also uncovered the remains of marble panelling, an opulent decorative technique employed in all the monumental mosques of the early Marwanids in al-Sham, as well as in the Great Mosque of Medina.[139] Finally, in Sulayman's time, after failing to convince the residents of the city of Ludd to allow him to build a mosque in the city center, the caliph did the next best thing: he founded his own city a short distance away, naming it Ramla, erected a massive palace and mosque, and made it the new administrative capital of Jund Filastin. Upon visiting Ramla, Muqaddasi wrote that its mosque was "more magnificent, more elegant than the mosque of Damascus. It is called the White Mosque, and in all Islam there is found no larger *miḥrāb* than that here, after the pulpit in Jerusalem there is no more beautiful pulpit than the one here".[140] Archaeological findings today attest to a structure which covered an area some 7,800 meters square.[141] This would make Sulayman's White Mosque of Ramla the largest of any of the Umayyad mosques in al-Sham other than the Great Mosque of Damascus and al-ʾAqsa II. By continuing the ostentatious architectural and decorative habits initiated in Jerusalem by their father, al-Walid and Sulayman continued the monumental mosque's visual competition with monumental churches.

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al-Sharqi, which suggests that both mosques were similar to the main imperial mosque at Tiberias. Thus, it is more likely that al-Walid built the Tiberias mosque, and that Hisham later based the Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi mosque on the archetype articulated by al-Walid at both Tiberias and Khirbat al-Minya, among other locations, rather than that Hisham was responsible for the construction of the imperial mosque at Tiberias.

[138] Tiberias' mosque had an area of just over 7,000m^2. Cytryn-Silverman, "Tiberias' Houses of Prayer in Context," 244; Damascus' mosque had the largest area, at some 15,000m^2. Creswell, *EMA*, 156; however, the mosques of Ramla and Aleppo were much closer in size to that of Tiberias, with areas of 7,800m^2 and 6,800m^2, respectively. Rosen-Ayalon, "The White Mosque of Ramla," 68; Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine*, 109; The height of the Tiberias mosque, about 10m from crossbeam to floor, is also proportionally consistent with the height of the Great Mosque of Damascus. Cytryn-Silverman, "Tiberias from its Foundation," 208.

[139] Cytryn Silverman, "The Umayyad Mosque of Tiberias," 54.

[140] Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, 165; trans., 139-40.

[141] Rosen-Ayalon, "The White Mosque of Ramla," 76.

The mosques of Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo, Tiberias, and Ramla, however, did not simply seek to outdo their Christian analogues, but to consciously take from and juxtapose themselves with those churches. The caliphs repeatedly constructed these mosques in such a way that not only acknowledged the Christian nature of the sites, but employed it in order to amplify the potency of the new Muslim construction. At Damascus, for example, while the proximity of the *temenos* to the caliphal palace likely played a role in determining the location of construction, Muslim texts frequently make reference to the importance of the cult of St. John in the decision to appropriate the site (see Figure 31). In the early Medieval period, the Baptist was a key point of contention between Christians and early Muslims. As historian Nancy Khalek explains,

> In Christian cult practice, veneration of John the Baptist was both imaginatively and, eventually, iconographically related to the cults of Jesus and the cross. The veneration of John the Baptist by the Muslim community in the Great Mosque of Damascus was, therefore, a dramatic moment in the complicated project of stepping into and articulating, in Qurʾanicized if not strictly "Islamic" terms, Muslim heirship to the biblical prophetic tradition. At the same time, it was a response to Christian views on the relationship between John and Jesus, to the notion of a God Incarnate, a deity enfleshed.[142]

In converting the church of St. John into the Great Mosque of Damascus, the Umayyad caliphs emphasized the preeminence of their interpretation of the figure of John. Legends that the Baptist's head was buried in the church were reinvigorated by the Umayyad caliphs; in the aftermath of the construction of the Great Mosque, a number of anecdotes emerged in which al-Walid is depicted as finding and venerating the saint's head, giving it a special location within the mosque.[143] In the account of ʿAli ibn Muhammad al-Rabaʿi, for example, al-Walid explores a cave beneath the *temenos* and uncovers a box containing John's head. According to al-Rabaʿi, "al-Walid ordered that [the head] be restored to its place, and he said, 'Design the column which

[142] Nancy Khalek, *Damascus After the Muslim Conquest: Text and Image in Early Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 85.
[143] Khalek, *Damascus After the Muslim Conquest*, 92-93.

stands above this spot so that it looks different from the other columns.' They placed the column above the spot, with [a capital that was in the shape of] a basket".[144] To the present day, a shrine said to contain the head of St. John is found in the eastern half of the prayer hall.[145] The Great Mosque of Damascus thereby geographically and decoratively appropriated the Christian legacy of St. John the Baptist, and turned it toward legitimizing the Muslim Umayyad project.

Similarly, rituals carried out at the Dome of the Rock specifically and on the Haram in general reinforced its juxtaposition both with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Jewish Temple. Servants at the al-ʾAqsa held regular services on Mondays and Thursday, the same days during which the Jews read from the Torah.[146] These servants, who were originally selected by ʿAbd al-Malik and whose position was only passed down hereditarily, prepared themselves by eating, bathing, and wearing special clothes, before anointing the Foundation Stone with olive oil, circumambulating it and burning incense while the Muslim faithful prayed.[147] This entire ritual service clearly mirrored the priestly caste of the Jewish Temple and was specifically meant to be a Muslim enactment of the Temple service and of practices which were then common in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[148] In this way, in both the cases of the Great Mosque of Damascus and the al-ʾAqsa, the Umayyad leadership's use of the mosque specifically aimed to appropriate a symbol common and familiar to the Abrahamic faiths and employ it in a manner which would be unique to Islam itself.

[144] ʿAli ibn Muhammad al-Rabaʿi, *Fadaʾil al-Sham wa Dimashq* (Damascus: Matbaʿt al-tarqi, 1951), 33, quoted in Khalek, *Damascus After the Muslim Conquest*, 113-14.
[145] Creswell, *EMA*, 187.
[146] Elad, "Why did ʿAbd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock?," 48.
[147] Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 50; Elad, "ʿAbd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock," 180-81.
[148] Kaplony, *The Haram of Jerusalem*, 41-42.

Critically, the Umayyad caliphs could not have clearly articulated this contrast between Christianity and Islam had they relied on the simple replacement of preexisting shrines. Their message inherently depended on visual comparison and contrast as a means of expressing a sense of tangible difference between the Christian structures and their new Muslim counterparts. For this reason, these mosques did not replace church presence, but rather directly addressed themselves to it. Sulayman's work at Aleppo is a prime example. Muslim historical sources note consistently and clearly that the caliph took only part of the church's grounds to construct his mosque.[149] The church itself continued standing and was in use by the Christian community for another four centuries, until it was converted by the Muslim governor of Aleppo into the Madrasa al-Halawiyya.[150] The beauty of the Aleppo mosque thus stood in direct and intentional visual comparison to the church, in keeping with the dynamic noted by Muqaddasi (see Figure 32). The case of the Great Mosque of Damascus, which seems an obvious example of outright replacement, was anomalous.[151] The Umayyad appropriation of the site prompted complaint from the Christian population of Damascus, and ultimately resulted in the Umayyads returning a number of churches from the neighborhood of al-Ghutah which had been captured during the initial conquest of the city.[152] This includes the Church of Saint Mary, one of Damascus' most famous Christian structures, which the 12th century geographer Ibn Jubayr referred to as the

[149] Mattia Guidetti, *In the Shadow of the Church* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 45-46.
[150] Ibn al-Shihna, *Al-durr al-muntakhab fi taa'riikh mamlakat Halab*, ed. ʿA. al-Darwish (Damascus: Dar al-kitab al-ʿarabi, 1984), 77-8, 82, 115, quoted in Mattia Guidetti, "Contiguity Between Churches and Mosques in Early Islamic Bilad al-Sham," in *Bulletin of SOAS*, 76, no. 2 (2013): 240.
[151] As Avni has noted, the physical transformation of churches into mosques (not just the use of churches as Muslim prayer spaces) was a rarity even through Abbasid times, indicating the slow acceptance of Islam by the local population. Gideon Avni, *The Byzantine-Islamic Transition in Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 336.
[152] Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 132; trans., 192.

most important Christian sanctuary after the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[153] It was, he wrote, "a well-constructed building that contains many amazing pictures which dazzle the thoughts and attract one's vision. The sight of it is amazing."[154] The monumentality of the Umayyad mosques thus did not seek to replace the churches with which it competed, but rather to make itself visible and noteworthy by virtue of an implicit comparison; without the proximate, tangible presence of massive and ornate churches, the monumentalization of the Umayyad mosque would not have been as significant.

ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman further amplified the contrast between mosque and church via the discourse of architecture. Besides simply placing their mosques in physical proximity to churches, they employed an architectural language which clearly borrowed from and modified the language of the churches. The Umayyad mosques built during this period-- all of those at Damascus, Jerusalem, Ramla, Aleppo, and Tiberias-- followed a notably consistent plan: a southward-facing three-aisled, hypostyle prayer hall, wider than it was long, intersected by a transept, with a courtyard about twice as large as the prayer hall (see Figures 28, 33, and 34). Cytryn-Silverman has noted that, "This is a description well known to art historians of the Islamic period, in that it is the basic plan of the Great Mosque of Damascus".[155] The design of the Damascus mosque, however, was not born ex nihilo. As Creswell and the archaeologists Rafi Grafman and Myriam Rosen-Ayalon have pointed out, construction of the Damascus mosque was directly and incontrovertibly influenced by the Muslims' extended prior experience in using the churches of Syria as ad-hoc prayer spaces.[156] By extension, all of the mosques based on this

[153] Guidetti, "The Byzantine Heritage in the Dar al-Islam," 8.
[154] Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, ed. William Wright (Leiden: Brill, 1907), 283. My translation.
[155] Cytryn-Silverman, "The Umayyad Mosque of Tiberias," 48-49.
[156] Creswell, *EMA*, 197; Rafi Grafman and Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, "The Two Great Syrian Umayyad Mosques: Jerusalem and Damascus," in *Muqarnas* 16 (1999), 11.

style, and thus all of the mosques built by the early Marwanids, are based on the structures of the archetypal design of Syrian churches. This connection was so clear, in fact, that al-Walid was even accused by some of his peers of building mosques in the same style as churches.[157] At the same time, however, the mosques of the early Marwanids departed from this design in subtle but important ways. They lacked, for instance, iconographic images, and were oriented toward Mecca on a north-south axis, as opposed to eastward like the churches of the time. In the late 7th and early 8th centuries, these seemingly minor differences actually constituted two of the most significant doctrinal issues in the Muslim world. Both were considered main points of contention in Muslim-Christian polemics of the time, and were means through which many Muslims, especially those in power, sought to ideologically distinguish themselves from Christians.[158]

On an elementary level, some of the architectural similarity of the various mosques resulted from the architects themselves; both the caliphal palace and the mosque at Ramla, for instance, were constructed by al-Batrik ibn al-Naka, a Christian architect from Ludd who had been appointed to the work by Sulayman.[159] Yet the use of Christian architects and workers was no accident, as the caliphs actively sought out the incorporation of not only the same workers as were employed in church construction, but the same material, too. The Damascus mosque, for example, retains extensive segments of the material which had previously been used in the Church of St. John, including the four towers at the corners of its wall, which would constitute the first informal minarets in Islamic history.[160] The 10th century author al-Masʿudi reports that

[157] Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, 243.
[158] See Suleiman Bashear, "Qibla Musharriqa and Early Muslim Prayer in Churches," 267-68; Christian C. Sahner, "The First Iconoclasm in Islam: A New History of the Edict of Yazid II (AH 104/AD 723)," in *Der Islam* 94, no. 1 (2017), 54-56.
[159] Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 150; trans., 220.
[160] Creswell, *EMA*, 196.

al-Walid similarly confiscated marble columns from a church in Antioch and then used them in building the Great Mosque of Damascus.[161] More pointedly, Yaʿqubi reports via the early historian al-Waqidi (747-823) that in 706 when al-Walid began rebuilding the Prophet's mosque in Medina, he wrote to the Byzantime emperor and said that the emperor should assist in the mosque's reconstruction. In response, the emperor sent gold, mosaic tesserae, and one hundred laborers to help in the construction.[162] A similar story, though contested by Creswell, is told by Ibn Asakir, who reports that the emperor also sent al-Walid workmen to help him in the construction of the Great Mosque of Damascus.[163] An account is given by the Byzantine monk and scholar Theophanes Confessor (695-785), who suggests that this pattern dated back to ʿAbd al-Malik:

> Abimelech [ʿAbd al-Malik] gave instructions for the rebuilding of the temple of Mecca and wanted to remove the columns of Holy Gethsemane. Now Sergius, son of Mansour, a good Christian, who was treasurer and stood on close terms with Abimelech, as well as his peer, Patricius surnamed Kalusys, who was prominent among the Christians of Palestine, begged him not to do this, but to persuade Justinian [the Byzantine emperor] to send other columns instead of those; which, indeed, was done.[164]

Sulayman, too, employed the same strategy. According to Ibn Shaddad, Sulayman built the mosque using columns from the Church of Cyrrhus.[165] Lastly, al-Jahshiyari (d. 942) reports that Sulayman wanted to take the marble columns of Ludd's Church of St. George, mentioned by Muqaddasi's uncle as one of the greatest churches of Syria, for use in the White Mosque. Muqaddasi, although apparently misattributing the event to the caliph Hisham, even claims that

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[161] Guidetti, *In the Shadow of the Church*, 114.
[162] Yaʿqubi, 340; trans., 991; Donner, "Umayyad Efforts at Legitimation," 192; For extensive discussion and further sources, see Creswell, *EMA*, 142-43.
[163] Creswell, *EMA*, 152-153.
[164] Theophanes Confessor, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813*, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 510.
[165] Guidetti, *In the Shadow of the Church*, 114.

the caliph actually threatened to destroy the church if he was not granted adequate columns.[166] In placing such emphasis on the intentional incorporation of Christian architectural elements into their mosques, ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman were able to further highlight a nuanced but clear contrast between Muslim mosques and Christian churches.

In essence, by juxtaposing their monumental mosques with Christian sites and architectural motifs, the early Marwanid caliphs simultaneously gained access to the dominant arena of religious expression and increasingly distinguished themselves from their Christian peers. By employing the same architectural and decorative language, and making reference to a common corpus of religious symbolism, they were able to enter into explicit dialogue with Christian Bilad al-Sham. By co-opting and modifying that language and symbolism, though, they critiqued their Christian rivals and set themselves increasingly apart. Transcending the pluralistic approach employed by Muʿawiya, they sought not simply to coexist with Christianity but to demonstrate their capability to match and even exceed its awesomeness. No longer did the Umayyads seek to simply establish themselves architecturally in al-Sham, but instead to carve out a distinct place for themselves.

The mosque turns west

Inherently, the construction of any monument demands control of tremendous power and resources. As the philosopher Fredric Jameson has noted, "of all the arts, architecture is the closest constitutively to the economic".[167] In Umayyad times, an age largely devoid of the

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[166] Ibid, 115; Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, 165; trans., 140.
[167] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990). https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/jameson.htm.

unfettered accumulation of private capital by individuals without direct connection to the state, the construction of monuments was the near-exclusive domain of empires. Ibn Khuldun, the 14th century Tunisian historian and proto-demographer, succinctly expressed the exigencies of monument building in the pre-modern Islamic world, writing, "Only a strong royal authority is able to construct large cities and high monuments. … [Such constructions] can only be achieved by unified effort, great numbers and the co-operation of workers".[168] The ability, therefore, of the early Marwanid caliphs to construct colossal, opulent structures like al-ʾAqsa, the Great Mosque of Damascus, the White Mosque of Ramla, or the imperial mosques of Aleppo and Tiberias in itself declared the power of the caliphate. Indeed, as has been noted, the caliphs spent staggering sums on these mosques. Muqaddasi reports that the total spent on constructing the Great Mosque of Damascus was seven times the annual income of the Syrian land tax, plus another eighteen shiploads worth of gold and silver.[169] Yaʿqubi claims that even the doors of the Kaʿba alone were coated in gold worth 30,000 *dinars*, apparently more than a tenth of the entire tax income from Iraq during al-Walid's reign.[170] Reports of the number of workmen employed and their diversity of origin are similarly evocative. Yaʿqubi, citing al-Waqidi, reports that the Byzantine emperor sent one hundred workers to help al-Walid in the construction of the Great Mosque of Medina, while Samhudi (1466-1533), also quoting al-Waqidi, reports that the mosque was built by both Egyptians and Greeks.[171] At Damascus, the number of workers was so immense that some 6,000

[168] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah, an Introduction to History*, vol. 2, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 238.
[169] Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, trans., 134; Creswell and Flood both note that shiploads is likely a transmission error, and that Muqaddasi meant to write "camelloads", a still exorbitant but significantly less ludicrously-proportioned report. Creswell, *EMA*, 151; Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, 3.
[170] Yaʿqubi, 340, 348; trans., 991, 1001.
[171] Ibid, 340; trans. 991; Nur al-Din al-Samhudi, *Khulasat al-Wafa* (Mekka: 1938), 131, quoted in Creswell, *EMA*, 143; See also Leor Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 193.

dinars were reportedly spent on their food every day for the decade-long duration of the project.[172] As Flood explains, "Whatever the accuracy of these accounts, they reflect a widespread perception that vast sums had been spent on al-Walid's mosque" at Damascus, as well as on other mosques.[173] Moreover, the early Marwanids' way of doing so was without precedent; mosques of this scale and of this level of opulence were simply unheard of in early Islam. Merely in the act of creating these mosques, therefore, ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman made a powerful declaration of the power of the Umayyad state.

The political aspirations of the mosques of the early Marwanids, however, superseded the incidental expressions of power inherent in all monumentation. Their politicality, in other words, was intentionally cultivated, as the caliphs actively used the geographies of their mosques to lay specific, pointed claim to the most politically important spaces of Bilad al-Sham. On one level, they accomplished this by claiming the region's most significant cities. All five cities in which these mosques were built were significant cities with their respective *ajnad*: Jerusalem was the capital of Jund Filastin prior to Sulayman's rule, and Ramla the capital after; Damascus was the capital of both Jund Dimashq and the broader Umayyad empire. Aleppo was the largest city of Jund Qinnasrin (and would become its capital in 934); and Tiberias was the capital of Jund al-Urdun (see Map 2).[174] Importantly, these *jund* divisions were not simply Umayyad-era labels, but had roots far back in Roman military administration, and therefore reflected long-entrenched political realities of which the Umayyad caliphs were cognizant.[175] Each of these cities also carried religious and economic significance: Jerusalem was the most religiously-charged city in

[172] Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, 3.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, trans., 132; Jere Bacharach, "Marwanid Umayyad Building Activities: Speculations on Patronage," in *Muqarnas* 13 (1996), 34.
[175] See Haldon, "Seventh Century Continuities".

the Middle East, Damascus among its most economically important, and Tiberias the center of Palestinian Jewry.[176] By choosing to place their monuments in these locations, therefore, the early Marwanid caliphs strategically laid claim to the primary urban nexuses of Bilad al-Sham.

Even within the cities, ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman were exacting in the location of their mosques. Without fail, they chose highly visible locations which placed Umayyad monumental presence at the center of the city. Al-ʾAqsa, as mentioned, sat in the single most prominent site in all of Jerusalem. All three mosques at Aleppo, Tiberias, and Ramla lay in the very heart of the city, and Muqaddasi's description of the Tiberias mosque as "in the marketplace" is also true of Sulayman's mosques at Ramla and Aleppo (see Figures 35-37).[177] Furthermore, the caliphs explicitly articulated the politicality of these centralized mosques by geographically pairing them with an adjacent *dar al-ʿimara*, a building halfway between palace and city hall, the architectural manifestation of caliphal government. At Jerusalem, the al-ʾAqsa mosque could be directly accessed from the palatial complex via a ramp passing underneath an ornate gate, while at Tiberias the mosque and the *dar al-ʿimara* sat facing each other, separated by a street just over five meters wide (see Figures 3, 35).[178] At Damascus, successive Umayyad caliphs were repeatedly frustrated by Christian refusals to sell the specifically desired *temenos* of the Church of St. John, which sat adjacent to the palace itself. A somewhat apocryphal account told by Baladhuri depicts a determined al-Walid reportedly finally becoming infuriated to the point of, "ordering that a spade be brought and … demolishing the walls [of the church] with his

[176] Elad, "Why did ʿAbd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock?," 48-49; Burns, *Damascus: A History*, 86-94.
[177] Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, 161; trans., 137; Nimrod Luz, "The Construction of an Islamic City in Palestine: The Case of Umayyad al-Ramla," in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, 7, no. 1 (April 1997), 37; Guidetti, *In the Shadow of the Church*, 41-42.
[178] Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 123-24; Cytryn-Silverman, "The Umayyad Mosque at Tiberias," 55-56.

own hand" (see Figure 38).[179] By consistently highlighting both the physical centrality of their mosques and the politicality of the mosque/*dar al-ʿimara* pairing, the early Marwanid caliphs imposed a conspicuous imperial presence on the major cities of Bilad al-Sham.

It must be noted, however, that in spite of the definitively Muslim nature of the mosque, these imperial structures did not presuppose an exclusively Muslim audience. Rather, the early Marwanid caliphs addressed their monumental religious architecture to a much broader constituency. In a purely quotidian sense, Muslims and non-Muslims alike could hardly avoid seeing these enormous mosques as they passed through the heart of the city. Yet the structures of the mosques themselves further suggest the assumption that non-Muslims would actively participate in the use of the space. Given their enormous size, it is impossible to imagine that, in the years before the Muslim population had reached sizeable numbers, structures such as the 15,000m^2 Great Mosque of Damascus could have been filled by Muslims alone. Indeed, Ibn Asakir reports that only a generation prior to al-Walid's construction of the Damascus mosque, Muʿawiya had such difficulty filling the main prayer space of Damascus-- which at the time only took up a small fraction of the *temenos* of the Church of St. John-- that he had to order all Muslims living within twelve miles of the city to come to the mosque for Friday prayers, no small feat in a time when all travel was done by foot or on camel (see Figure 39).[180] As with estimates for the cost of the Damascus mosque, it is worth questioning the precision of the figure cited for the distance traveled. Nevertheless, given the evidence for the continued preponderance of tribal mosques during Muʿawiya's time, and Muʿawiya's efforts to impose the imperial mosque as a centralizing standard (see Chapter One), Ibn Asakir's account is credible. That such

[179] Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 131-32; trans., 191-92.
[180] Ibn Asakir al-Shafiʿi ʿAli bin al-Hasan bin Hibatalah, *Ta'rikh madinat Dimashq*, vol. 29, ed. ʿAli Shibri (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1995-98), 95.

an imposition would be necessary in the Umayyad capital speaks to the ongoing diminutiveness of the Muslim population, and makes clear that the grand size of the mosques of the early Marwanids could not have been a simple response to a large Muslim population. Even by the end of the Umayyad period, the Muslim population of Bilad al-Sham remained a miniscule fraction of the total population.[181] Various sources, moreover, attest to the frequent presence of non-Muslims at these sites. Under ʿAbd al-Malik's command, a cadre of Jewish attendants, numbering about three hundred, served at the Haram, plus ten Christian servants.[182] Multiple contemporaneous Muslim sources record examples of non-Muslims passing through or even praying in mosques, including specifically the Great Mosque of Damascus.[183] Furthermore, many Muslim jurisprudential schools cite the reign of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz as a turning point after which non-Muslims were no longer allowed various mosques (especially in the Hijaz), implying that previously they had been allowed in such spaces. The scholar al-Hattab (d. 1547), for example, cites Malik ibn Anas (711-795), the founder of the Maliki school, who claims that the followers of ʿUmar II forbade non-Muslims from entering mosques.[184] The hadith specialist Ibn Abi Shayba (777-853) even quotes ʿUmar II as forbidding a Muslim to sit as a judge in the Great Mosque of Damascus out of concern that Jews and Christians would enter the mosque in order to have their cases heard.[185] It is even ʿUmar II who was reportedly responsible for replacing the

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[181] Even the conversion rate to Islam was well under ten percent by the very end of the Umayyad period. Richard Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 104-12.

[182] Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 50; Elad, "ʿAbd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock," 181; Kaplony, *The Haram of Jerusalem*, 61, 228.

[183] Christopher Melchert, "Whether to keep unbelievers out of sacred zones: a survey of medieval Islamic law," in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 40 (2013), 178-185.

[184] Al-Hattab, *Mawahib al-jalil*, vol. 4, ed. Zakariyyaʾ ʿUmayrat (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1995), 595, quoted in Melchert, "Whether to keep unbelievers out," 182.

[185] Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Musannaf*, vol. 3, eds. Muhammad ʿAbd Allah al-Jumʿa and Muhammad Ibrahim al-Luhaydan (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2004), 620, quoted in Melchert, "Whether to keep unbelievers out," 180.

Jewish attendants at the Haram with slaves from the Muslim treausry.[186] It is clear, therefore, that ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman built their monumental mosques in this period with a distinct understanding that the discourse of these structures would not be restricted to Muslims, but rather directed at the broad spectrum of the entire empire's population.

In light of the regular presence of non-Muslims in these imperial mosques, it should come as no surprise that the architecture and decoration of the mosques themselves tacitly accepted a non-Muslim presence. Much as Muʿwiya had tolerated non-Muslim symbolism at imperial sites during his reign (see Chapter 1), ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman continued to do so in their imperial mosques. At ʿAnjar, for instance, a substantial imperial palatial settlement founded in northern Lebanon by al-Walid, the mosque (which sat adjacent to the palace) included a limestone column used as *spolia* bearing a cross and a Greek inscription which read, "Bornes de l'asile, données à la maison de prière de notre Dame la très sainte et illustre Mère de Dieu, Marie éternellement vierge, par nos empereurs pleins de piété et d'amour pour le Christ".[187] Despite the noted aniconographic decorations of the Great Mosque of Damascus the rebuilt external wall of the *temenos* included a Christian figural relief which remained from the razed Church of St. John the Baptist.[188] Finally, while rebuilding al-ʾAqsa, ʿAbd al-Malik and his sons knowingly and routinely imported ornate column capitals carved with symbolized animals, despite having other options. These columns were only later recarved by the Abbasids, and their animal imagery disguised, in an attempt to discredit the Umayyads by

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[186] Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy*, 50.
[187] Jean-Paul Rey Coquais, *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie: Tome VI, Baalbek et Beqaʿ* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1967), 232, plates L and LI; Bea Leal, "ʿAnjar: An Umayyad image of urbanism and its afterlife," in *Encounters, Excavations and Argosies: Essays for Richard Hodges*, eds. John Moreland, John Mitchell, and Bea Leal (Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2017), 174.
[188] Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, 11, fig. 9.

casting them as irreligious.[189] Such cases illustrate not a promotion of non-Muslim practices and beliefs, but at the very least a certain pragmatism about the availability of building materials and a willingness to tolerate Christian symbolism for the sake of broader aims. Such tolerance, of course, is neither equivalent to endorsement nor even integration, but rather should be seen as a recognition that, much like in the case of requesting material and laboral assistance from their Byzantine rivals, the early Marwanids were sometimes willing to prioritize aesthetics or material convenience over ideological exigencies. In their architectural discourse, empire and religion could functionally exist in dynamic tension. And, at times, they were employed in tandem to express a very specific message.

Among the many consequences of the end of the second *fitna* was renewed conflict between the Byzantines and Umayyads. Muslims armies had been intermittently attempting to conquer Constantinople since the beginning of the expansion, almost succeeding in 674. With ʿAbd al-Malik secularly in power, the Umayyad armies resumed the push for Constantinople. Due to the new Qurʾanicizing policies of the caliphate, this struggle now took place not only on the battlefield, but in other realms as well. According to Theophanes, a minor battle was triggered at Sebastopolis, on the northern border between the two empires, when in 692 the emperor Justinian II refused to accept new coins which ʿAbd al-Malik had minted without the image of the cross.[190] While early Rashidun and Umayyad coins had essentially copied wholesale the imagery of Byzantine coinage, the years following 692 saw ʿAbd al-Malik and Justinian II issue a series of new coins that highlighted the growing theological gap between their two communities. Justinian II's currency featured the image of Christ, but ʿAbd al-Malik began to

[189] Wilkinson, "Column Capitals in the Haram al-Sharif," 138.
[190] Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 509-511.

produce strictly aniconic currency, instead inscribing his coins with the Muslim profession of faith, and even excluding his own name from the coins. His successors all continued this practice until 762, more than a decade after the fall of the Umayyad caliphate. In this way, ʿAbd al-Malik, and subsequently al-Walid and Sulayman, employed a common, public domain as an arena for an aniconic discourse which prominently distinguished itself from the well-known iconographic coinage of the Byzantines.[191] The early Marwanid caliphs effectively combined the symbolisms of religion and empire in order to emphasize their increasingly central goal of competing with and soon replacing Constantinople.

If the coins were a quotidian, microdomain of imperial discourse, seen often and by many, the decoration of the early Marwanid mosques proved the less immediately accessible but far more impressive macrodomain. Though only the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus remain to attest to this dynamic, ʿAbd al-Malik and al-Walid's message comes through clearly in the aesthetic choices of these buildings. The mosaics in particular are instructive. As art historian Sheila Blair has noted, "The mosaics of the Dome of the Rock illustrate the same adaptation of Byzantine iconography as the coins. They adapt Byzantine motifs such as vine scrolls, amphorae, and acanthus… and the inscriptions reiterate the profession of faith, which always follows the invocation".[192] Oleg Grabar's explanation of the mosaics builds upon this, as he notes the incorporation of both Byzantine and Sasanian royal symbols in a manner that indicates the defeat of those empires by the ascendant Umayyads: "The royal symbols in the mosaics could be understood as… an expression of the defeat of the

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[191] See Nadia Jamil, "Caliph and Qutb: Poetry as a source for interpreting the transformation of the Byzantine cross on steps on Umayyad coinage," in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, pt. 2, ed. Jeremy Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[192] Blair, "What is the date of the Dome of the Rock?," 84.

Byzantine and Persian empires by the Muslims”.[193] Likewise, Flood has argued that the construction of the Great Mosque of Damascus, among its various meanings, represented a cultivated effort by al-Walid to evoke the urban fabric of Constantinople and to signal the ascendance of the Umayyad empire. Thus, while the symbolism of early Marwanids’ architecture expressed religious sentiments, it also simultaneously laid claim to the preeminence of the Umayyad empire, in particular over its Byzantine rivals.

Conclusion

In many respects, the period after the second *fitna* can be seen as the peak of the Umayyad empire, and the most architecturally visible period of Umayyad rule. During the quarter-century from the reunification of the empire until the death of Sulayman, the early Marwanids built all of the largest and most remarked-upon mosques of the Umayyad era. Beginning with ʿAbd al-Malik’s construction of the Dome of the Rock, the caliphs sought to unify the empire by propagating an increasingly universalizing vision of Islam, which emphasized the Umayyads’ connection to the Qurʾan and the prophet. By building the first truly monumental mosques in Islamic history, structures on par with their Christian peers, they asserted the Islamic entity’s ability to stand on equal footing with the then-dominant Christian faith. They did this not only at Jerusalem and Damascus, but also at the other major political centers of al-Sham, such as Tiberias, Aleppo, and Ramla, illustrating the coherence and totality of this program. Lastly, they developed a symbolism of monumentality which insinuated a new

[193] Grabar, “Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem,” 56.

imperial identity; now secure, the Umayyads would not only seek to rival Constantinople, but to replace it. These were the great accomplishments of the monumental religious architecture of the Umayyad empire, and they defined the final decade of the 7th century and the first decade of the 8th. It is this standard against which subsequent Umayyad monumentation was and should be compared.

Chapter Three: ʿUmar the Iconoclast, 718-720

The Fort Mosque

When Sulayman died in late in 717, the new caliph, his cousin ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz (henceforth ʿUmar II, 682-720), immediately set out to upend the previous three decades of imperial policy. His appointment as Sulayman's successor had raised fears among the Umayyad elite of just such an issue, as they questioned his ideological inclinations. These fears were shortly realized when, upon taking power, ʿUmar II purged his government of many officials who had been appointed by his predecessors based on familial ties and replaced them with men more inclined toward his own way of thinking.[194] He even forcefully condemned the failures and abuses of his previously empowered family members, sending a letter to all the governors throughout his empire, in which he wrote, "The people have been afflicted with trials and hardships, with wrongdoing with respect to God's ordinances, and with evil traditions imposed on them by evil governors who rarely have pursued the path of the truth, gentleness, and kindness."[195] For the sake of his own vision of the empire's future, ʿUmar II was willing to go so

[194] For a brief listing of the replacements, see Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 2, 1346; trans. David Stephan Powers, vol. 24 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 75; Ibn Khayyat's history confirms this narrative, listing the various governors appointed by Sulayman and writing that they "served until Sulayman died." Ibn Khayyat, *Ta'rikh*, 193-96.
[195] Yaʿqubi, 365-66; trans., 1019; Yaʿqubi specifically writes, "ʿUmar repudiated the deeds committed by members of his family, which he branded as acts of injustice"; Tabari gives a similar account, in which ʿUmar II writes: "...the army of al-Kufah has been stricken by trial, hardship, and deviation from the judgements of God, as well as by corrupt customs that were imposed on them by evil governors." Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 2, 1366; trans. David Stephan Powers, vol. 24, 96.

far as to explicitly and publicly repudiate the leadership of his own family members, demonstrating the extent to which the House of Umayya had entered a new era.

Less than a year before ʿUmar II's accession, the Byzantine empire also came under new leadership. Leo III took the throne early in 717, reinvigorating the armies defending Constantinople. The attacking Umayyad forces, on the other hand, were far from home and suffered a debilitating shortage of supplies such as food, clothing, and horses. Though he sent what he could to his haggard forces, ʿUmar II ordered a retreat.[196] Then, in a complete and apparently sudden reversal of all Umayyad policy to date, he entirely terminated all ongoing conquests throughout the empire. The jihad, both a central component of Muslim ideology from Muhammad's days and a major component of the Umayyad economy, came to a near-total halt.

In essence, the intent and effect of ʿUmar II's massive reorientation was defensive. Likely in response to the failure at Constantinople, the perennial revolts internal to the empire, as well as a devastating Turkish assault on the Azerbaijan region, he embarked on a physical and political fortification of the empire, much like his homonymous predecessor had done upon the arrival of the first Muslim forces in Bilad al-Sham. In Transoxiana, for instance (see Map 3), ʿUmar II ordered a halt to the ongoing conquest, recalling the overextended Umayyad troops back to Khurasan and writing to their leaders, "There is no Muslim frontier that is of greater concern to me or that I consider to be as important as the Khurasan frontier. Therefore… guard it without committing any injustice."[197] He reorganized the eastern provinces, dividing Kufa, Basra, and Khurasan into three governorships which could be more easily maintained and

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[196] Ibid, 1346; trans., 74; Yaʿqubi, 363; trans., 1016.
[197] Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 2, 1366; trans. David Stephan Powers, vol. 24, 95; This account is supported by Ibn Khayyat's *History*, in which ʿUmar II explicitly states, "do not undertake any raids. Hold on to what you already have in your possession." Ibn Khayyat, *Ta'rikh*, 197.

protected. In Syria, he sought, much like Muʿawiya, to defend against the Byzantines. Baladhuri gives the example of Ladhaqiya, writing, "In the year 100, when ʿAbd al-ʿAziz was caliph, the [Byzantines] made a descent by sea on the coast of al-Ladhakiyah. They destroyed the city and took its inhabitants prisoners. ʿUmar ordered that it be rebuilt and fortified and asked the [Byzantine] 'tyrant' to accept ransom for the Moslem prisoners."[198] After one hundred years of constant expansion by the armies of Islam, ʿUmar II conscientiously turned his empire's attention to consolidating its power and securing its frontiers.

In the midst of these efforts at solidification, ʿUmar II did something remarkable: in the small Cilician town of al-Massisa, he initiated and completed the construction of a new imperial mosque. Although prior to becoming caliph ʿUmar II had at times been ordered to supervise mosque construction or had completed such projects begun by other men, no other record exists of him building a new mosque of his own volition and carrying the work to completion.[199] His choice was furthermore noteworthy given al-Massisa's geography and history.

Lying in the outermost reaches of Jund Qinnasrin (in an area known as al-ʿAwasim, literally "the defences") and frequently subject to Byzantine raids, the town of al-Massisa had first been conquered around 703 by another of ʿAbd al-Malik's sons, the general ʿAbdallah ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (ca. 677-750).[200] ʿAbdallah reportedly built a small mosque there in conjunction with his reconstruction of its previously-ruined fortress, but it was not until ʿUmar II passed through during his reign nearly two decades later that al-Massisa received an imperial mosque. According to Baladhuri,

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[198] Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 139; trans., 204.

[199] The mosque at Busra, which will be discussed shortly, is the only other known case of ʿUmar II beginning the construction of a mosque, but it is most likely that he died during the process, leaving the mosque's completion to his successor Yazid II.

[200] Ibn Khayyat, *Ta'rikh*, 158; Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 2, 1127; trans. Martin Hinds, vol. 23, 72.

> When ʿUmar ibn-'Abd-al-'Aziz came to the granary of al-Massisah, he wanted to destroy the town together which the forts that lay between it and Antioch saying, "I hate to see [the Byzantines] besieging its people." When he, however, learned that the town was built to check the [Byzantine] advance on Antioch, and that, in case it was destroyed, nothing would remain to stop the enemy from taking Antioch, he desisted and erected for its people a [congregational] mosque in the Kafarbaiya quarter. In the mosque, he made a cistern whereon his name was inscribed.[201]

While his predecessors had consistently chosen major imperial loci for the construction of their mosques, ʿUmar II intentionally ensconced his mosque in this remote, war-riven corner of the empire. No evidence suggests that he ever returned to visit.[202] Nor was the mosque used for long, for by the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Muʿtasim Billah (r. 833-842), it lay in ruins.[203] This rapid decay was no doubt precipitated by the decision of the second Abbasid caliph al-Mansur (r. 754-775) in the year 757 to take over a large pagan *temenos* in order build an imperial mosque in al-Massisa "many times the size of the mosque of ʿUmar," a structure which was then further enlarged by the seventh of the Abbasid caliphs al-Maʾmun (r. 813-833).[204] Effectively, the mosque neither fulfilled some personal or political attachment of ʿUmar II's to the city, nor impressed local residents with size and grandeur, nor fulfilled a symbolic claim as did al-Mansur's occupation of the pagan *temenos*. Instead, it served exactly the humble function that ʿUmar II explicitly claimed for it: it was a declaration of Umayyad territorial integrity, a pragmatic concession to the military needs of an empire now focused on consolidation and defense rather than conquest.

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[201] Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 172; trans., 255-256.
[202] Though Yaʿqubi records ʿUmar II as having distinctly preferred the rural areas of Syria to its urban spaces, his regular haunts were typically much farther south than al-Massisa, much closer to the capital at Damascus. Yaʿqubi, 367-368; trans., 1021; The *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741*, for instance, reports that after his coronation he withdrew to a place near the town of Dabiq, where Sulayman had died. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 489.
[203] Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 173; trans., 256.
[204] This new mosque is described as "Fi mūḍaʿ haykal", "in the location of a [non-Abrahamic] temple". Hitti translates this as "on the site of a heathen temple". Ibid, 173; trans., 256.

The humbling of the mosque

Concomitant with ʿUmar II's new military strategy came a similar economic reorientation. The jihad had been an immensely potent source of income for the caliphates, both under the Rashidun and the Umayyads. Each new conquered territory yielded wealth in the form of spoils and, subsequent to the imposition of Umayyad imperial control upon the conquered populations, taxes levied in particular on their almost entirely non-Muslim residents. Such an influx of easy wealth, however, enabled unsustainable spending practices on the part of the Umayyad leadership, the impact of which became evident when ʿUmar II halted the empire's military expansion. Prior mistreatment of the imperial coffers, combined with various corrupt officials and inconsistent financial organization, precipitated a need for immediate financial reform. Thus, in his famous fiscal rescript, issued in 718, ʿUmar II wrote that he was setting out to "impose alms and the [taxes due to the caliph], while considering the orders and the prohibitions of God, and that people [might now] invest and dispose of their goods on land and on sea, without hindrance or restraint."[205] He affirmed ʿUmar I's interpretation of the *khums* and *fay*ʿ, both forms of war booty, as a unity, and demanded that they be turned in as taxes to the caliph, rather than "remain in the possession of the rich among you."[206] In keeping with this, he

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[205] This is recorded in the *Sirat ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Aziz,* compiled by Ibn ʿAbd al-Hakam, the 9th century historian. It is worth questioning the veracity of this text, especially because of how detailed it is, but its general depiction of his policies on conversion and taxation also accords with the accounts of later historians, both Muslim and Christian. See note 230. The translation is found in Azzedine Guessous, "Le réscrit fiscale de ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Aziz: une nouvelle appreciation," in *Der Islam* 73 (1996), trans. Philip Simpson as "The Fiscal Rescript of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Aziz: A New Evaluation," in *The Articulation of Early Islamic State Structures*, ed. Fred M. Donner (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 243.

[206] Here ʿUmar II is quoting Sura 59:7. Presumably he means to refer to the dishonest collection of taxes and the amassing of large personal fortunes by members of the Umayyad elite, which was a well-known problem at the time (see Chapter Four). Ibid, 250.

eliminated the use of imperial funds to pay for the private guards of the Umayyad elite, and even confiscated the ill-gotten estates that had been usurped by these elites, returning the properties to their original owners.[207] Finally, he prohibited the evasion of the land tax (the *khārāj*).[208] Legally, all *khārāj* land was the property of the state, and therefore its use was subject to taxes. Under past rulers, however, much of this land had been sold to Muslims, thereby exempting its owners from the *khārāj* tax and costing the state vast quantities of tax income. This issue was exacerbated by a growing umber of land owners who converted to Islam partly (or entirely) to avoid these taxes. ʿUmar II's solution was to unequivocally forbid the sale of *khārāj* land, thus regaining these tax incomes.[209] By these means ʿUmar II lessened the unbalanced concentration of wealth within the empire, recovered funds lost to corruption and inadequate collection, and made its financial practices much more sustainable, despite the loss of income from the jihad.

Among the most symbolically potent of all of ʿUmar II's financial reforms was an incident which occurred in Damascus. First, ʿUmar II removed the ornate golden lamps which had until then hung in the Great Mosque. Then, writes Yaʿqubi, "Umar dispatched workers to the mosque of Damascus to remove its marble, mosaics, and gold, saying, 'People are being distracted from their prayer by looking at it.' But when he was told that it served as a deception for [Satan], he left it."[210] Ibn al-Faqih tells a similar story, in which ʿUmar II is only convinced not to impoverish the mosque after a Byzantine ambassador is awestruck by the mosque that he

[207] M. A. Shaban, *Islamic History: A New Interpretation, Volume I, A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 132; Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State: The Reign of Hisham Ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 32.
[208] Guessous, "Le réscrit fiscale de ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Aziz: une nouvelle appreciation," trans. Philip Simpson, 258-59.
[209] It is also worth noting that this policy applied equally to Muslims and non-Muslims, thereby avoiding the issue of discriminatory taxes on converts as opposed to Arabian-originated Muslims. See below.
[210] Yaʿqubi, 367-68; trans., 1021.

tells the caliph that the mosque has convinced him of the Muslims' permanence.[211] Muqaddasi expands upon the general narrative, suggesting that the caliph's motives may have been as much financial as they were pious: "ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz wanted to diminish the resources of the mosque and devote the proceeds to the welfare of the Muslims, but they persuaded him to abandon the project".[212] Various other Muslim historians, including the Damascene Ibn Asakir, report that ʿUmar II's plan was in fact to denude the mosque of its riches before tearing it down and returning the land to its previous Christian owners.[213] The general thrust of the stories is thus consistent with ʿUmar II's financial program: the only motive which can overcome his desire for financial responsibility is a belief in the religious value of the Great Mosque of Damascus.

More broadly speaking, the concertedly anti-ostentatious tendencies evinced by the Damascus incident were a hallmark of ʿUmar II's other mosque constructions. Even in the absence of any physical remains of the mosque at al-Massisa, the written sources' almost disparaging description of the structure's diminutiveness, their lack of mention of its decoration (in sharp juxtaposition to their typically effusive praise of extravagant sites like the mosques of Damascus, Jerusalem, Aleppo, Tiberias, and Ramla), and the readiness with which the Abbasids replaced and abandoned ʿUmar II's mosque only four decades after its construction all strongly suggest that its appearance was humble. The actual architecture of the "ʿUmar mosque" at Busra, the only of ʿUmar II's mosques which still stands today, reinforces this conception.

The town of Busra, capital of the arid Hawran province of Jund al-Urdun (see Map 1), was a minor settlement of little apparent importance. Aside from being one of many caravan stops along the hajj route, its only other claim to significance was a possibly apocryphal story

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[211] Ibn al-Faqih, *Mukhtasar kitab al-buldan*, 108.
[212] Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, trans., 136.
[213] Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, 242, note 8.

told by early Muslim historians, in which a local monk who met an adolescent Muhammad foretold his future as the prophet of Islam.[214] Unlike al-Massisa, Busra's situation in the very heart of Bilad al-Sham meant that it carried none of the strategic military importance of al-Massisa. Yet nevertheless, Busra attracted the attention of ʿUmar II, and at some point toward the very end of his reign the caliph initiated construction on a small, square peristyle mosque.[215] Although ʿUmar II's work was interrupted by his death in February of 720, enough had been accomplished that the mosque's construction was carried to completion by his successor, Yazid II (who, it should be noted, simultaneously set about reversing many of ʿUmar II's signature policies), in 721. Furthermore, ʿUmar II's initiation of the mosque's construction had already left an inescapable mark on it; its location, dimensions, layout, and the very material of its foundations were not altered once the project had begun, and thus it was ʿUmar II's vision which most shaped the Busra mosque.[216]

In the essential respects, ʿUmar II's mosque at Busra conformed to the standards of mosque building: its southward-oriented *qibla* wall (pointing toward Mecca) was possessed of a *miḥrāb*, the mosque featured a peristyle courtyard in the center of the building, and from its northern wall protruded a minaret, possibly the first such structure built ex novo in the history of Islam.[217] Yet in a crucial way, ʿUmar II's work departed from the norms established by his cousins ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman at sites like the Haram and the Great Mosque of

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[214] Michael Meinecke, *Patterns of Stylistic Changes in Islamic Architecture: Local Traditions Versus Migrating Artists* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 31-32; Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, s.v. "Bahira," by A. Abel, accessed March 7, 2020, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/bahira-SIM_1050?s.num=2&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=bahira

[215] For an extensive discussion of the origins of the mosque and the likely chronology of its construction, see Creswell, *EMA*, 490.

[216] On the dating of the mosque, see Ibid, 489-490.

[217] Ibid, 489-491.

Damascus: its architectural form was completely different. Unlike the wide, triple-aisled, gable-roofed design of the early Marwanid mosques (see Chapter 2), the Busra mosque was square, double-aisled, lacking a transept, and had a flat stone roof which sat directly on its columns.[218] Its courtyard was central and took up only about a quarter of the building, while those in the early Marwanid mosques were skewed toward the northern portion of the *temenos* and took up approximately a third of the building's area (see Figures 44 and 45).[219] This makes the Busra mosque unlike any of the other Marwanid mosques found in al-Sham, either before or after ʿUmar II's reign. It also brings it into close alignment with one contemporaneous mosque in particular: the Great Mosque of Medina. Like the mosque at Busra, the Medina mosque was square, described by Tabari as two hundred cubits by two hundred cubits.[220] It similarly lacked a transept and had a central, rather than northward, courtyard.[221] Finally, its roof rested flat, rather than gabled, directly on the columns of the mosque (see Figures 46 and 47).[222] This is profoundly important, because the Great Mosque of Medina is the only mosque known to have been begun and completed by ʿUmar II alone for which extensive accounts exist. That ʿUmar II, who

[218] Sauvaget contends that there had at some point been a transept in the mosque, but that it had been removed or destroyed over time. Creswell, however, responds by arguing that the presence of a transept would have made the mosque architecturally unsound and liable to collapse immediately. He offers instead the explanation that it employed a doubly large arch to counteract the forces which would otherwise cause it to collapse. Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine*, 102; Creswell, *EMA*, 489-90; A similar debate emerges over the roofing; Sauvaget argues in favor of an originally gabled roof of timber at Busra, while Creswell points to the present use of "a roof of stone slabs resting on a double corbel course, in perfect keeping with the style of roofing typical of the Hauran". He notes the near-total absence of wood-based roofing in the entire region, and draws comparisons to the flat-roofed mosques of Kufa and Wasit. Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine*, 102; Creswell, *EMA*, 486-88.
[219] Based on internal measurements of the Busra mosque taken from Creswell, *EMA*, 488; For the courtyard measurements of the early Marwanid mosques, see Walmsley and Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash," 376.
[220] Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 2, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1879-1901), 1193; trans. Martin Hinds, vol. 23, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 141.
[221] According to Sauvaget, the Great Mosque of Medina seems to have had some kind of primitive precursor to a transept by way of a transversal setting of the ceiling's architraves leading toward the *miḥrāb*. Creswell concedes, however, that this is only the "beginning of the idea of a transept", rather than an actual transept such as existed in the early Marwanid mosques. Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine*, 81-82; Creswell, *EMA*, 148-49.
[222] Creswell, *EMA*, 149.

governed Medina from 706 to 712 during the reign of al-Walid, would seek to reproduce the Prophet's mosque, which he himself had built, in a Syrian context conforms to present conceptions of his personality and ideological bent. If he was indeed pietistic, as so many sources depict him, it is logical that he would seek to continue Muhammad's tradition by exporting the archetypal mosque to the rest of the empire. It suggests, therefore, a move away from the metropolitan pretensions of his predecessors and back toward the more traditional, Hijaz-aligned roots of Muslim practice.

The main departure of the Busra mosque from a likely Medinan inspiration is its ostentation: while the Medina mosque was as richly decorated as any of the mosques in al-Sham, the Busra mosque was plain and unassuming. This can be explained, however, by the initiator of each mosque. The Medina mosque, Tabari says, was ordered by al-Walid in the year 707. He specifically told ʿUmar II to buy up the land around the mosque in order to accommodate new, sprawling dimensions of some 10,000 meters square.[223] Al-Walid also supposedly wrote to the Byzantine emperor and asked him for material and physical aid. The emperor purportedly then sent massive quantities of gold, a hundred workers, and loads of mosaic tiles.[224] ʿUmar II, therefore, was the executor of the Medina mosque; he was not responsible for its superficial appearance, and indeed, his work at Busra evidences the degree to which he opposed such opulence. To begin with, while the Medina mosque was immense and the early Marwanids' mosques all covered areas of some 7,000m^2 or more, the Busra mosque was tiny by comparison, having an area of only 2,000 meters square.[225] Its walls, built of the local black basalt, would

[223] Two hundred by two hundred cubits, or around one hundred meters square. Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 2, 1193; trans. Martin Hinds, vol. 23, 141.
[224] Ibid, 1193; trans., 141.; Yaʿqubi, 340; trans., 991.
[225] For the sizes of the early Marwanid mosques, see Chapter 2. The Busra mosque's dimensions are given in Creswell, *EMA*, 485.

have contrasted noticeably with the pale sheen of the marble walls of mosques of the early Marwanids, especially those of Medina, Damascus, Aleppo, or the so-called White Mosque of Ramla.[226] Design differences, such as the novel use of slightly pointed arcades or the absence of a gabled roof, would have further amplified this distinction. Most notably, however, the mosque's construction plainly did not lay claim to the same level of grandeur as its predecessors had. Though supported internally by the expected marble columns which marked most significant religious buildings of the period, the Busra mosque clearly lacked the type of decorations, like luxuriant marble paneling, mosaics of gold and glass, or a highly-stylized *miḥrāb* so consistently present in the monumental mosques of ʿAbd al-Malik and his sons (see Figures 40-43, 48 and 49). While ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman had gone to great lengths to import the finest materials from around the world for the sake of their enormous, eye-catching mosques, ʿUmar II clearly eschewed such practices when building his mosque at Busra. In conjunction with his attempts to denude the Damascus mosque, this tendency to avoid ostentation makes it clear that ʿUmar II's understanding of the architectural discourse of his mosques was profoundly impacted by the broader program of financial reform and the religious attitudes which in part fueled it.

A Muslim space

Another issue highlighted and exacerbated by the financial consequences of the end of the jihad was the question of Muslim identity. From its inception, Islam had been associated with

[226] See Creswell, EMA, 143-47, 174; Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-taqasim*, 165; trans., 140.

the Arabian tribes. The rare non-Arabian who did seek to convert accomplished it by being legally adopted into an Arabian tribe and was thereafter known as a *mawāli* (often translated as "client" or "freedman", pl. *mawlā*).[227] As the conquest expanded the domain of Islam, however, and the number of people under the authority of the Islamic empire grew, the question of conversion became a central doctrinal concern for early Muslim authorities. Some Arabians felt that Islam was meant for them alone, and that the influx of non-Arabians threatened its essential nature.[228] Perhaps more urgently in this moment, the potential conversion of any non-Arabian (who comprised the vast majority of the empire's population) posed an existential threat to the empire's financial system, which inherently depended on the higher taxes it charged non-Muslims.[229]

ʿUmar II was sharply attuned to the issue of the *mawlā* and set out from the onset of his caliphate to resolve it. On one hand, he firmly believed that Islam ought to have missionary aims, writing in the opening of the fiscal rescript, "In truth, obedience to God, as it is revealed in the Qurʾan, is to invite people to Islam".[230] At the same time, he also recognized the economic reality of the post-jihad caliphate and the potentially catastrophic consequences of losing such an essential source of money. In his final decision, however, he was unequivocal. When a man from Khurasan came to ʿUmar II claiming that al-Jarrah ibn ʿAbdallah (d. 730), at that time governor of Khurasan, was privileging his Arabian compariots over non-Arabian converts to Islam and

[227] *Mawāli* is a notoriously difficult word to translate given the wide range in meaning over time. Numerous essays have been written debating the merits of its various historically-contingent translations and meanings. See, for example, Daniel Pipes, "Mawlas: Freed Slaves and Converts in Early Islam," in *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society*, ed. Robert G. Hoyland (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004); Patricia Crone, "The Mawali in the Umayyad Period" (PhD diss., University of London, 1975).
[228] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, 131-32.
[229] Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, 78-79.
[230] Guessous, "Le réscrit fiscale de ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Aziz: une nouvelle appreciation," trans. Philip Simpson, 243.

forcing said converts to continue to pay the tax levied on non-Muslims, ʿUmar II reacted forcefully. Tabari records, in an account paralleled by various Christian sources, the following:

> ʿUmar then wrote to al-Jarrah, saying, "Whoever prays with you in the direction of the *qiblah* [i.e. joins Islam] is to be relieved of the poll tax." As a result, many people hastened to accept Islam. Someone said to al-Jarrah, "The people are rushing to accept Islam in order to avoid the poll tax, so test them by requiring that they submit to circumcision." Al-Jarrah conveyed this suggestion to ʿUmar, who wrote back, "God sent Muhammad in order to summon people to Islam, not to circumcise them."[231]

Having rebuked al-Jarrah, ʿUmar II then removed him from the post, replacing him with someone fairer to the non-Arabians. Throughout the empire, ʿUmar II pursued the same policy: those who converted to Islam, whether of Arabian origin or not, were to be treated as equal to their Arabian Muslim peers. Concomitant, however, with his expansion of the boundaries of the Islamic community, was ʿUmar II's hardening of those same boundaries.

As an outgrowth of his new conception of the Muslim community, which foregrounded piety over ethnic origins, ʿUmar II seems to have instigated a series of norms which would eventually develop into the Covenant of ʿUmar. During the Abbasid era, the Covenant would emerge in a number of competing iterations, and become a foundational doctrine of Islamic empire well into modernity.[232] Effectively, these norms, in ʿUmar II's time and onward, governed the relationship of the Muslim community to the *ahl al-dhimma*, the collective body of

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[231] Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 2, 1354; trans. David Stephan Powers, vol. 24, 83; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 515; Theophanes writes, "Oumar… set about forcing the Christians to become converted: those that converted he exempted from tax, while those that refused to do so he killed and so produced many martyrs". Given the positive perception of other ʿUmar II by other Christian sources, and in the absence of any corroboration of the latter half of this account, the accusation that ʿUmar II punished Christian holdouts with death should be disregarded. Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 550.

[232] See Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire*; Albrecht Noth, "Problems of differentiation between Muslims and Non-Muslims: Re-reading the 'Ordinances of 'Umar'," in *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society*, trans. Mark Muehlhaeusler, ed. Robert Hoyland (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004); Antoine Fattal, *Le statut légal des non-musulmanes en pays d'Islam* (Beirut: Dar el-Macherq Sarl Éditeurs, 1986).

non-Muslim monotheists living under Muslim rule. Though later versions of the Covenant developed during the Abbasid era articulated a more consciously restrictive vision of the rights of the *ahl al-dhimma*, the earliest version of the document dealt largely with preventing the encroachment of the majority non-Muslim population upon the rights and spaces of the Muslim community.[233] This included restrictions such as a moratorium on pork sales in marketplaces patronized by Muslims, a ban on regular religious processions involving the display of crosses, and a prohibition on the construction of new non-Muslim houses of prayer in Muslim neighborhoods.[234] Thus, critically, ʿUmar II's edict also governed the shared use of holy spaces.

The sacred spaces of Bilad al-Sham were, during the first decades of Islamic presence, often used collectively. Prior to Muʿawiya's well-documented prayers at the various Christian sites of Jerusalem (see chapter one), ʿUmar I reportedly did the same in 638, praying at the Mount of Olives and possibly the Church of the Nativity.[235] The profusion of juridico-religious opinions on the issue from the 7th century onward suggests that Muslim use of Christian space was a persistent concern for Muslim authorities of the time period.[236] Even into the 10th century, the Alexandrine Patriarch Eutychius complained that the Muslims of his time would gather for prayer in the Church of Bethlehem and on the steps of Jerusalem's Church of Constantine.[237] ʿUmar II himself was said to have prayed in various churches in al-Sham, including the Church of Damascus.[238] Likewise, ample evidence exists of non-Muslims praying in or generally making use of ostensibly Muslim spaces. Ibn Muhayriz (d. 717), a contemporary of ʿUmar II, reportedly

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[233] Noth, "Problems of differentiation between Muslims and Non-Muslims," 20; Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early islamic Empire*, 167-69.
[234] See Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire*, Chapter 2.
[235] Bashear, "Qibla Musharriqa," 275.
[236] See Bashear, "Qibla Misharriqa."
[237] Ibid, 268.
[238] Ibid, 278.

was seen in the Great Mosque of Damascus shaking hands with a Christian, while Mujahid ibn Jabr (d. 722), a leading Qurʾanic commentator and translator, ruled that there was no issue in allowing a *dhimmī* to sit inside the Damascus mosque.[239] ʿUmar II, on the other hand, as mentioned above, reportedly forbade a Muslim to sit as a judge in the Great Mosque of Damascus, lest a Jew or Christian come in to the mosque in order to have a case heard.[240] The Medinese jurist Abu Salih (d. 719/720) even ruled that "Polytheists may not enter the mosque *save fearful*" [my emphasis], leaving open the possibility that sufficiently pious polytheists (whatever that looked like) might be able to enter a mosque.[241] Various Muslim scholars of the late 8th and early 9th century, felt it necessary to opine extensively on the hypothetical legal case of a Christian or Jew who prayed in concert with, or even led prayer for, a group of Muslims.[242] While it is possible that some of these cases dealt with pure hypotheticals, it is worth making two observations: one, that prohibitions rarely emerge without instigation by that which they are prohibiting, and two, that these prohibitions or leniencies all seem to converge around the time of ʿUmar II, coincident with many of his other rulings concerning the *ahl al-dhimma*. It is therefore justifiable to contend that, prior to the introduction of those rules which would eventually become the Covenant of ʿUmar, the physical divisions in the sacred spaces of Muslims and the *ahl al-dhimma* were often profoundly nebulous. It was ʿUmar II's reforms which sought to put an end to this dynamic.

During his time as caliph, ʿUmar II achieved his segregation of al-Sham's sacred spaces through a combination of articulated policy and practical action. Legislatively, he issued such

[239] Melchert, "Whether to keep unbelievers out," 180.
[240] Ibid, 178.
[241] Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Musannaf*, 620, quoted in Ibid, 180.
[242] Ibid, 178.

decisions as his prohibition on a member of the *ahl al-dhimma* sitting as a religious judge in the Great Mosque of Damascus.[243] More pointedly, the Medinese legal scholar Ibn Abi Dhiʾb (d. 775) ascribes to ʿUmar II the expulsion of the *ahl al-dhimma* from the Hijaz, the holiest area of the Arabian peninsula.[244] This ejection of non-Muslims from Muslim sacred spaces accords exactly with ʿUmar II's development of those spaces; because he no longer felt a need to attract, impress, or accomodate non-Muslims, ʿUmar II consciously turned to mosques which were smaller and less imperious. This is evident in his treatment of the Damascus mosque, as well as in the minuscule size and humble decoration of the al-Massisa and Busra mosques. And, when he took over and completed the White Mosque of Ramla in the wake of Sulayman's death, he explicitly expressed this ideology. After completing the mosque and noticeably reducing the size of its original dimensions, ʿUmar II stated that, "The inhabitants of ar-Ramla should be satisfied with the size thereof to which I have reduced it".[245] In ʿUmar II's eyes, the Muslim inhabitants of Ramla, despite likely constituing the majority of the newly-built city's population, were still not numerous to justify a mosque as large as that which Sulayman had built. Rather than go to great lengths to fill the space with caliphally-compelled Muslims (as Muʿawiya had in Damascus) or *ahl al-dhimma*, ʿUmar II chose to reduce and entrench the mosque's boundaries, counting on the dedication of the Muslim community to keep it full.

[243] Ibid, 178.
[244] Ibid, 185. Though other scholars attribute this decision to ʿUmar I, Ibn Abi Dhiʾb's recollection more accurately fits with the broader schema of the Covenant of ʿUmar, which was similarly apocryphally attributed to ʿUmar I. Given that Islamic legal and historial thought gives greater credence to traditions which emanated closer in time to Muhammad's life, the missattribution of such a tradition to ʿUmar I's reign as opposed to ʿUmar II would lend it more legitimacy, thus serving the interests of the early historians who sought to emphasize and legitimize the distance between Muslims and non-Muslims.
[245] Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 150; trans., 220.

Conclusions

The reign of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz marked a widely-acknowledged rupture in the evolutionary direction of the Umayyad identity. By the time of his death in 720, he had forcefully shifted the empire's attention from its once-expanding borders to its massive internal population, instituting much-needed reform and rapidly transforming its socio-political fabric. Much like Muʿawiya's reign, the architecture of ʿUmar II's caliphate was profoundly important. The number of mosques built by him while caliph, in fact, make him the most prolific mosque builder on a year-to-year basis of any of the Umayyad caliphs. He renegotiated the structure of the Umayyad mosque, transforming them from vehicles for the expression of imperial aspirations to tools through which he enacted his policy of consolidation. Moreover, in his hands the imperial mosque became the site through which the boundaries of the new Muslim identity were negotiated; he used their architectural discourse and their space to articulate a humbler, more pious and less imperial vision of Islam. Through this distinct reformulation of the Umayyad identity, however, he exposed profound rifts in the fabric of Umayyad society, illuminating increasingly worrisome fault lines between the various groups which comprised it and setting loose forces with which his immediate successors would have to reckon, or else fail.

Chapter Four: The Inward Turn,

720-743

Arabizing the mosque

After twenty-eight months of radical changes to imperial policy, the unexpected passing of ʿUmar II, brought the empire's new momentum to an abrupt halt. Under the successive commands of Yazid ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (Yazid II, r. 720-724) and Hisham ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 724-743), the Umayyad empire returned to many of the policies of their father and brothers. The wars of conquest, halted almost completely by ʿUmar II, were recommenced with vigor. The caliphate's armies pushed east toward China, and in Iberia reached what would shortly prove the greatest extent of Umayyad military dominance. Domestically, too, Yazid II and Hisham sought to undo many of ʿUmar II's financial and governmental reforms. Most notably they reversed many of those policies which had sought to make the empire less ethnically exclusive, reverting instead to policies enacted in particular under al-Walid. The friction induced first by the reforms of ʿUmar II and then by these rapid counterreforms served to illuminate and aggravate the underlying fissures in the fabric of the Umayyad empire. ʿUmar II had been, in many ways, an integrationist caliph, noted in particular for his explicit acceptance of the *mawlā*, including both his moral exhortations to treat them as equals and his formal, practical enshrinement of this ideology in his newly-egalitarian reforms of the tax code. In subsequent years, Yazid II and Hisham's attempts to undermine such policy had the effect of alienating large swaths of the empire; these efforts impacted virtually all non-Arabs from Spain to Afghanistan, and

reaggravated the Qays-Yamani ethno-political rift which had divided the caliphate's upper class for decades and itself been the driving force behind the controversy over ʿUmar II's succession of Sulayman. These changes, though seemingly a return to the pre-ʿUmar II status quo, would have profound effects on the composition of the caliphate, and drive it in an increasingly exclusivist direction.

In January of 724, Hisham was relaxing at a private palace on the outskirts of a town called Rusafa, on the far eastern fringes of Syria (see Map 2), when he learned that Yazid II had died. A messenger brought him the caliphal ring and staff, and Hisham departed immediately to Damascus to receive the traditional oaths of fealty. Soon thereafter, however, he would return to Rusafa, which, over the next twenty years of his reign, he would make his main abode. Like his father, who had emphasized Jerusalem by virtue of his enormous investment in the Haram, or his brother Sulayman, who had built himself an entirely new city at Ramla while governor of Jund Filastin, Hisham preferred Rusafa over the nominal capital of the empire. In fact, his affinity for Rusafa so marked the city that future Muslim historians would refer to it as "Hisham's Rusafa" in order to distinguish it from the various other places built under the Abbasids which would eventually share the same name.[246] In his years there, he spent significant time and energy improving the city's infrastructure. West of the city walls, for instance, he built himself a large palace, the remains of which have yet to be fully excavated. In the heart of the city, he created a suq, an open air market which extended for more than one hundred meters.[247] Various traditions describe Hisham's court as impressive and lavishly decorated; it supposedly contained paintings,

[246] Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, s.v. "al-Rusafa," by Manuela Marín, accessed March 7, 2020, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-rusafa-COM_0943?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=rusafa
[247] Denis Genequand, "An Early Islamic Mosque in Palmyra," in *Levant* 40, no.1 (2008), 6.

ponds, olive groves, and a hippodrome big enough for 3,000 horses.[248] And, in the southeast corner of the walled city, contiguous with Rusafa's main basilica, he built an imperial mosque (see Figures 50-52).

The basilica, known in the scholarship as Basilica A, dated back to the tail end of the 5th century when its construction had begun as part of a general trend of martyr worship which enveloped al-Sham for some two hundred years.[249] Inside it lay a reliquary which claimed to contain the earthly remains of Saint Sergius, supposedly a 4th century Roman officer tortured and executed for his profession of the then-illicit Christian faith.[250] The town, known before the Muslim conquest as Sergiopolis, had become a site of pilgrimmige in the years after Sergius' death, and was eventually patronized by powerful figures such as the Byzantine emperor Justinian I (527-565) and the Persian ruler Khusrau II (590-628).[251] Well before Hisham's time, the cult of Sergius had risen to wide-ranging prominence in the region, in particular among the Ghassanids.[252]

For centuries before the arrival of Islam, the great empires of the Middle East had contracted nomadic Arabian tribes as powerful military forces and political allies. Beginning as early as the 4th century, the Sasanians employed a coalition known as the Lakhimids, while the Byzantines had allied themselves with the Ghassanids and their federation of associated tribes. The coalition of the Banu Ghassan soon became the most powerful Arabian group that had ever existed in Syria, both defending the Byzanto-Sasanian border and serving as an internal police

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[248] Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, s.v. "al-Rusafa."
[249] Elizabeth Key Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain: Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 77-83.
[250] David Woods, "The Emperor Julian and the Passion of Sergius and Bacchus," in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5, no. 3 (Fall 1997). https://muse.jhu.edu/article/9892.
[251] Ibid.
[252] See Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, Chapters 3-5.

force.[253] Most importantly for the case of Rusafa, the Ghassanids were deeply committed Christians. As the famously assiduous scholar of Ghassanid history Irfan Shahid has noted, "of all the Arab groups before the rise of Islam to convert to that faith, it was the Ghassanids whose lives were most fully permeated by Christianity".[254] At the center of this Christian identity was the Ghassanids' patron saint, Sergius.

Throughout Syria, the Banu Ghassan dedicated a number of churches and monasteries to the cult of Sergius, ranging from Damascus in the northwest to Busra in the southeast.[255] The center of their worship of Sergius, however, was Rusafa. With the Ghassanid rise to power, the city became their center of pilgrimage, complete with a circular track surrounding the city and allowing for the ancient Semitic religious practice of circumambulation.[256] Rusafa at that time served as a waystation, a military base, and "also a place where the Ghassanids held court and received poets".[257] One early Ghassanid phylarch named al-Nuʿman reportedly devoted extensive attention to repairing Rusafa's reservoirs and even constructed a new, larger one. Later, the phylarch al-Mundhir (r. 569-582) made it his center of power, building a large structure which has been alternately identified by Sauvaget as a meeting hall and by Fowden as a possible church.[258] During Syria's last pre-Islamic century, therefore, Rusafa became, because of its association with Sergius, the religious and political center of Syria's most powerful Arabian tribe.

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[253] Gaube, "The Syrian desert castles: some economic and political perspectives on their genesis," 349-50; Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, 142.
[254] Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. 2, pt. 2, 340.
[255] Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, 145-46.
[256] Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. 2, pt. 1, 117.
[257] Ibid, 121.
[258] Ibid, 122; Gaube, "The Syrian desert castles," 351; Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, 149-173.

In the context of Rusafa's distinctly Ghassanid connections, Hisham's construction of the imperial mosque takes on specific connotations. Setting his mosque directly contiguous with the walls of Basilica A, Hisham built it so that the columned prayer hall of the mosque protruded a full third of the way into one of the Christian sanctuaries (see Figures 53 and 54). At once connecting the mosque with the basilica and intruding upon the Christian space of the basilica, this kind of partial encroachment upon a Christian sanctuary was without parallel in any other Umayyad mosque in al-Sham; either they completely appropriated a Christian *temenos*, or they did not intrude upon the preexisting sanctuary. Further heightening this dynamic tension of simultaneous appropriation and participation, Hisham included a door in the southern *qibla* wall of the mosque which opened directly into Basilica A. Via this entryway, a Muslim worshipper could enter the compound through the mosque, cross into the basilica, and proceed directly to Sergius' martyrium.[259] As historian Elizabeth Fowden notes, "Acknowledgement of the martyr's importance is implied in the mosque's very location. Its proximity to basilica A suggests an effort to benefit from the saint's miracle-working presence and to provide Muslims with a place nearby to worship-- even to participate in the cult of Sergius".[260] In effect, Hisham's mosque gave Muslim worshippers a direct connection to a not-very-distant Arabian past.

Around the same time as Hisham's construction of Rusafa's Ghassanid-associated imperial mosque, a much broader trend was occurring at the upper levels of Umayyad society. Roughly a decade prior to the beginning of Hisham's reign, the word "Arab" began to find common usage among the Umayyad leadership, mostly by way of poetry sanctioned and commissioned by the caliphs themselves. Used fairly simply, "Arab" denoted ethnic superiority,

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[259] Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, 175-77.
[260] Ibid, 179.

serving to distinguish elites of Arabian origin from the non-Arabian subaltern.[261] Jarir, for example, one of the famous Umayyad court poets of the early 8th century, lampooned his equally famous rival al-Farazdaq, also a poet of the Umayyad court, writing,

> Al-Farazdaq has no glory to protect him
> Except, perhaps, his cousins, who carry wooden staffs,
> Be gone cousins! You should settle in al-Ahwaz
> And the river Tira; no Arabs know you![262]

At the same time as this emergence of Arab identity expressed in court poetry, various *ahadith* ascribed to ʿUmar II made reference to the same idea, suggesting the Umayyads had started to insert the idea of Arabness into the emergent Muslim religious literature.[263] Likewise, non-Muslim texts began to use "Arab" as a term to describe the ruling population. This was a noted change from older documents, which had almost exclusively made use of pre-Islamic terms such as "Saracens".[264] As a whole, this discursive shift signaled that the Umayyad leaders themselves were placing a growing emphasis on ethnic and historical connections to Arabian origins.

In addition to imperial discourse, the actual policies of Yazid II and Hisham served to highlight their role in the cultivation of and preference for the emerging Arab ethne. In contrast to ʿUmar II's more integrationist, universalist vision for Islam, first Yazid II and then Hisham attempted to enact policies which specifically sought to undo ʿUmar II's work and exclude

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[261] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, 85-88.
[262] One must wonder why Jarir would tell Farazdaq, who was also an Arab, that "no Arabs know you!" Perhaps a hint is to be found in the exhortation to "settle in al-Ahwaz", a province of southwestern Iran. Could it be that Jarir is impugning the reputation of Farazdaq's associates by comparing them to the Persians? As Webb points out, the juxtaposition between Arab (good) and Persian (bad), and the heroic fight of the Arabs against the Persians, would constitute an increasingly prominent component of Arabic language poetry from the late Umayyad period into the Abbasid period. Jarir, *Diwan*, vol. 1, ed. Nu'man Muhammad Amin Taha (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1969), 441, quoted in Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, 86-90.
[263] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, 149.
[264] Ibid, 150-51.

non-Arabs from the privileged community. In North Africa, Yazid II's attempts to reimpose the various *ahl al-dhimma* taxes on Berber converts to Islam led to open and violent revolt.[265] Likewise, in Khurasan and Sind, non-Arab converts to Islam were once again obliged to pay the taxes owed by non-Muslims, a change which raised rebellion in Khurasan which continued into the caliphate of Hisham.[266] Indeed, the empire's subjects had no doubt as to the discriminatory nature of these policies. Revolts continued through Yazid II and Hisham's reign, mostly notable in Iraq and Iran, often explicitly naming the Umayyads' mistreatment of non-Arabs as the source of their discontent, and ultimately culminating in the Abbasid revolution during the 740s.[267] In keeping with this growing political emphasis on Arabness, Hisham repeated his approach at Rusafa and transformed the imperial mosque into a space for the expression of the Umayyads' Arab identity. Notably, he accomplished this not through the mosque architecture, but through geography.

Muʿawiya and the early Marwanids had prioritized the most prominent centers of al-Sham, building their monumental mosques in the region's religious, political, and demographic centers. Nevertheless, even after eighty years of Muslim control, many of the cities of Bilad al-Sham lacked a major imperial mosque. Antioch, for instance, perhaps the most important city in Christendom after Jerusalem, had none. Likewise, Qinnasrin, the official capital of Jund Qinnasrin, does not appear to have received one.[268] Other significant cities, such as Raqqa and Ladhiqiyya (see Maps 1 and 2) are known to have had small mosques that were built

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[265] Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State*, 89, 136-37.
[266] Ibid, 88.
[267] Ibid, 176-185, 199-222.
[268] By Muqaddasi's time, Quinnasrin ceded to Aleppo its position as jund capital, a fitting change given the sizeable shrinkage in its population following the Muslim conquest. Bacharach contends that one would indeed expect to find some kind of Umayyad mosque at Qinnasrin, though no evidence, archaeological or otherwise, has yet been found to prove it. Bacharach, "Marwanid Umayyad Building Activities," 39.

prior to the Umayyad period but that do not appear to have been monumentalized by the Umayyads.[269] During the first half-century of Abbasid rule that followed the Umayyads' fall in 750, a great number of these locations would receive imperial mosques of their own, attesting to their significance.[270] Yet in spite of this obvious inconsistency, none of Yazid II or Hisham's mosques were built in those major cities of al-Sham which did not yet have monumental imperial mosques. Instead, they shifted eastward and northward, to the desert reaches of al-Sham.

In their combined twenty-five years in power, Yazid II and Hisham are known to have built mosques in the cities of Amman, Baalbek, Rusafa, Jerash, Palmyra, and Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (see Map 1).[271] Not one of these towns rose to greater significance than a provincial capital, a full tier below cities like Qinnasrin and therefore on the same level as cities such as Tripoli, Acre, Gaza, Jericho, and about twenty others throughout al-Sham.[272] Other than Rusafa, none of these cities were known for religious associations or for making unique economic contributions. Instead, they were distinctly associated with the Umayyads' Arab origins. Heinz Gaube, the scholar of Islamic architecture and urbanism, has aptly catalogued the Ghassanid architectural presence in al-Sham, which corresponds very neatly to northeastern Bilad al-Sham (see Map 4).[273] This region matches almost perfectly the sites in which Yazid II and Hisham built their mosques. This exclusivity is all the more striking in light of the building habits of Muʿawiya and the early Marwanids who built all of their known mosques within a few dozen

[269] Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, 138-40, 186; trans., 203-5, 278.
[270] Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine From Byzantine to Islamic Rule*, 140-41.
[271] See Walmsley and Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash"; On the inclusion of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi as a city rather than a desert castle, see Denis Genequand, "From 'desert castle' to medieval town: Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Syria)," in *Antiquity* 79 (June 2005).
[272] This is based on the list of major cities on Bilad al-Sham recorded by Muqaddasi in the 10th century. Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, trans., 132.
[273] Gaube, "The Syrian desert castles," 350-53.

kilometers of the Mediterranean coast, and in particular in the south, close to the Holy Land. Muʿawiya, ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman had focused their mosque building on this region in an effort to emphasize the ascendance of Bilad al-Sham as the new and cosmopolitan domain of the Islamic world, relative to the Hijaz.[274] Yazid II and Hisham, meanwhile, built not a single mosque in either Jund Filastin or Jund al-Urdun. This turn away from Palestine in particular, the sacred omphalos of al-Sham, suggests the potency of these new Arab affiliations.

It is furthermore telling that, while the locations of Yazid II and Hisham's mosques lacked religious or economic incentivization, a number of them were the preferred cities of some of the Umayyads' main allies among the other Arab tribes. Amman, for instance, was the base of the Banu Umayya themselves, other members of the ruling clan who were presumably not directly involved in governance, and during the early Abbasid era was the epicenter of an Umayyad-affiliated coup attempt.[275] Similarly, Palmyra was the main city of the Banu Kalb, another group allied with the Umayyads, and, in fact, Palmyra faced significant decline in the Abbasid era as a result of its noted Umayyad affiliations.[276] In building their mosques, therefore, Yazid II and Hisham consciously turned away from the cultural and religious affiliations of the major cities of Bilad al-Sham. Instead, they pivoted to northeast Syria in order to emphasize their direct connection to the Arab-affiliated cities of the region. As a whole then, the geographies of the half-dozen mosques built by Yazid II and Hisham sent a clear message. In keeping with the broader policies pursued by these caliphs, these mosques signaled a turn away from the religious legitimation pursued by Muʿawiya and the early Marwanids. Now, Yazid II and Hisham

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[274] Elad, "ʿAbd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock," 168.
[275] Alastair Northedge, *Studies on Roman and Islamic Amman: The Excavations of Mrs C-M Bennett and Other Investigations, Volume I, History, Site, and Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 50; Walker, "Islamization of central Jordan in the 7th-9th centuries," 161.
[276] Genequand, "An Early Islamic Mosque in Palmyra," 13.

emphasized the newly important Arab ethne, using these mosques to indicate their own embrace of and connection to this historically legitimizing identity.

The mosque unadorned

In 744, a year after Hisham's death, the newest Umayyad caliph Yazid III faced widespread rebellion throughout the empire, in fervent opposition to his rule. When military actions failed to quell the uprisings, he was forced to make a series of concessions. According to Tabari's account, Yazid III addressed his indignant subjects, beginning:

> O people, I give you my pledge that I will not place stone upon stone or brick upon brick, I will not dig any river, I will not accumulate wealth… I will not transfer wealth from one town to another until I have made good the loss to that town and repaired adequately the fortune of its people. If there is any surplus, I will take it to the next town and to those who are in greatest need of it.[277]

Although Tabari's account may be driven by his well-documented bias against Hisham, his characterization of the Umayyad modus operandi under Hisham is supported by Theophanes, who writes that, after Hisham became caliph, he "started to build palaces in the country and in towns, to lay out plantations and gardens and to channel water."[278] The report of Michael the Syrian, the 12th century Christian patriarch of Antioch, draws on the no longer extant historical writings of the 9th century Dionysius of Tel Mahre, and is even more revealing:

> Dès le commencement de son règne il se mit à opprimer les hommes par des impôts excessifs et des tributs. --Il fit amener des canaux de l'Euphrate au-dessus de Callinice, pour irriguer les

[277] Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, vol. 2, , 1834-35; trans. Carole Hillenbrand, vol. 26 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 194.
[278] Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 557.

> récoltes et les plantations, et leur revenu s'accrut au delà de tous les impôts qu'il tirait de son empire.[279]

In other words, Hisham's personal fortune swelled, thanks to his investment in the empire's infrastructure, while tax money-- used to provide services to his subjects-- floundered.[280] Thus, in forcing these concessions upon Yazid III, the people of the Umayyad empire repudiated what they saw as exorbitant spending by the empire's leadership, and in particular the self-indulgence of a handful of political and economic elite. Their anger was not unfounded; as noted Islamic historian Hugh Kennedy has written, the concentration of private wealth in the hands of landed elites became a substantial problem during Hisham's reign, having debilitating effects on the empire's economic and political stability.[281] These elites frequently indulged in ostentatious displays of this wealth, most prominently in the construction of desert estates and palaces which Gaube has described as seeking to "emulate the fabled palaces of the Sasnid [sic] High Kings".[282] Yazid III's concession to his subjects thus acknowledged the total unsustainability of these profligate habits which had increasingly emerged under Yazid II and Hisham. In this era of material excess, and following in the wake of the imperious grandiosity of the early Marwanids' mosques, one would expect that Yazid II and Hisham's mosques would have reached new and even greater heights of opulence, seeking to outdo even the glory of their predecessors. Instead, however, these new imperial mosques stood out as surprisingly sober.

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[279] Michael the Syrian, *Texts and Translations of the Chronicle of Michael the Great*, ed. George A. Kiraz, vol. 3, *French Translation of the Syriac Text of the Chronicle of Michael the Great*, pt. 2, trans. Jean Baptiste Chabot (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2011), 490; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it*, 516.

[280] Hugh Kennedy clarifies that "revenu" refers not to imperial funds, but rather to Hisham's personal, private fortune. This ties directly to the reforms of ʿUmar, who attempted to regulate such estates and ensure that their profits flowed into imperial coffers, rather than the pockets of the Umayyad elite. See above, chapter three. Hugh Kennedy, "Elite Incomes in the Early Islamic State," in *The Articulation of Early Islamic State Structures*, ed. Fred Donner (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 150.

[281] Kennedy, "Elite Incomes in the Early Islamic State," 145-50.

[282] Gaube "The Syrian desert castles," 364.

According to those who saw it, Rusafa's Basilica A was a remarkable monument. Not only the largest church in Rusafa, it was also among the largest churches in all of Bilad al-Sham, with a total area of roughly 1,500m^2. It was impressively decorated, with carved marble columns, high arches, white, green, and pink marble flooring, a vaulted, mosaic-covered ceiling, and a silver sarcophagus claiming to hold the remains of Sergius. Basilica B was similarly well-decorated, employing marble columns, mosaics of gold tesserae, and a number of decoratively-painted rooms (see Figure 55).[283] As the largest, most visually arresting, and most literally significant buildings in Rusafa, these two basilicas would be the basis of comparison for Hisham's mosque. In consideration of the Umayyads' desire to compete with the grandeur of al-Sham's famous churches (see Chapter 2), it is surprising that, with the Rusafa mosque, Hisham showed no inclination to match their visual potency.

Broadly speaking, Hisham's mosque at Rusafa repeated the tropes of the early Marwanids' mosques. Embracing the style pioneered at Damascus, Hisham attempted to build a rectangular, southward-facing mosque with a triple-ailed, columned prayer hall divided by a transept (see Figures 56 and 57). The instability of the terrain forced him to abandon his attempt to construct a transept and led to the elimination of the courtyard's arcades, but overall he was successful in recreating the typical Damascene mosque layout.[284] In its decoration, however, the Rusafa mosque broke sharply with the style utilized in mosques like the Great Mosque of Aleppo or the White Mosque of Ramla. The instantly-recognizable techniques of the early Marwanids', such as ornate mosaics, extensive use of marble, and the powerfully expressive inscriptions, are nowhere to be found in Rusafa's mosque. Those decorations which in any way parallel the visual

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[283] Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, 78-89.
[284] Dorothée Sack, *Die grosse Moschee von Resafa - Rusafat Hisam* (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1996), 277-79.

appeal of the basilicas or the monumental mosques of ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman--column capitals, carved lintels, and so forth-- were all simply *spolia*, the basic building material of virtually all large buildings in this period and in no way indicative of any pretense of grandiosity.[285] The prayer hall floor was made of gypsum mortar, rather than paving stones.[286] Supporting this conception is the fact that none of the historical sources report on the grandeur of Rusafa's mosque the way they did on the famous mosques of the early Marwanids. While these sources repeatedly praise the beauty of Hisham's court at Rusafa, they are noticeably silent on his mosque.[287] Hisham's mosque at Rusafa, therefore, did not concur with the material impressiveness of either the churches of Rusafa or the monumental mosques of Muʿawiya and the early Marwanids.

In conjunction with the apparent decorative humility of the mosque at Rusafa, Yazid II and Hisham pursued a similar program at the other five imperial mosques built during their reign. In all of these structures, Yazid II and Hisham followed a noticeably consistent floor plan, a design even more tightly-regulated than that of their early Marwanid predecessors. Continuing with the triple-aisled hypostyle design, Yazid II and Hisham constructed a series of mosques of nearly the same size and almost identical length-to-width ratios, a level of consistency which not even al-Walid achieved (see Figures 58-62).[288] Yet as was the case at Rusafa, nothing about these mosques suggested grand aims. Their floors, for instance, were, at best, paved with limestone.[289] This contrasted with the marble flooring of the churches of Rusafa, the White Mosque of Ramla,

[285] Ibid, 38-40; Dorothée Sack, email message to the author, March 4, 2020.
[286] Sack, email message to the author, March 4, 2020.
[287] For a survey of these sources, see Sack, *Die grosse Moschee von Resafa - Rusafat Hisam*, 133-35; Brill Encyclopedia of Islam, s.v. "al-Rusafa."
[288] See Walmsley and Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash".
[289] Kristoffer Damgaard, "Sheltering the Faithful: Visualizing the Umayyad Mosque in Jarash," in *ARAM* 23 (2011), 194.

or the Great Mosque of Damascus.[290] Indeed, even minor churches of al-Sham, such as the basilicas of Tell Hisban near Amman or the baptistry in Jarash's Church of St. John the Baptist were often given marble floors (see Figure 63).[291] At Amman, the courtyard of the mosque was not even granted the dignity of paving stones or mortar, consisting simply of hard-packed dirt and perhaps pebbles.[292] Similarly, the mosque at Palmyra, built on top of an old Roman building, just reused the preexisting limestone pavers and columns, eschewing the use of marble columns that were so notably part of the symbolism of monumentality at this time (see Chapter 2).[293]

Nor does it appear that Yazid II or Hisham employed extravagant decoration in building these mosques. The walls of the Jerash mosque, for instance, were made of simple packed earth and small stones, and were devoid of any plastering or decoration other than a simple incised herringbone pattern.[294] The total nudity of the mosque at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi is surprising, even given its ruined state, because the settlement in which it is found is full of lavishly carved (and even iconographic) stucco dating to the same period as the mosque's construction.[295] Of all of these structures, only the Amman mosque elicited any praise from the Islamic writers. Muqaddasi, upon visiting, described the mosque as "fine", and wrote that it had a "courtyard tiled with mosaic".[296] Even this, however, hardly serves as reassurance of Amman's mosque having some unique beauty, as the Palestinian native Muqaddasi was quick to express pride in all things of Shami origin. A survey of his description of the other towns of Jund Filastin is telling:

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[290] Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim,* 165, trans. 140; Creswell, *EMA*, 174.
[291] Walker, "Islamization of central Jordan in the 7th-9th centuries," 156.
[292] Damgaard, "Sheltering the Faithful," 195.
[293] For a more extensive treatment of the importance of these columns, see Guidetti's *In the Shadow of the Church*, chapter 5.
[294] See Walmsley and Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash".
[295] Creswell, EMA, 526-27; see also Denis Genequand, "Les décors en stuc du Bâtiment E â Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi," in *Syria* 88, (January 2011).
[296] Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, 175; trans. 147.

the church of Bethlehem is "incomparable", the mosque of Jaffa "a pleasure to behold", and all three the mosque of Gaza, the mosque of Qaysaria, and the pulpit of Arsuf are "beautiful". Even the minor village of ʿAqir possesses "a fine mosque".[297] Furthermore, tiled floor mosaics were so common in 8th century Bilad al-Sham that virtually all of the churches near Amman in central Jordan had mosaics with inscriptions, and even many private residences had mosaic floors of their own.[298] Muqaddasi's description of the Amman mosque, therefore, serves not as affirmation of its aesthetic quality, but rather as a reinforcement of the notion that the mosques built by Yazid II and Hisham were in no way visually exceptional, and certainly not in the manner of mosques of the early Marwanids.

Considering the economic challenges that faced the Umayyad empire from the early 8th century until its collapse, the decorative sobriety of the mosques built by Yazid II and Hisham might have suggested new, more practical priorities. Hisham in particular was hard at work investing in the built fabric of Bilad al-Sham, especially in the socio-economic domain.[299] He drained marshes and built irrigation canals in order to improve agricultural outcomes. Around the empire, he built marketplaces and waystations to help bolster trade.[300] Yet even in these attempts to improve the empire's financial state, he showed a willingness to create decorative built spaces. At Baysan, for instance, fewer than two dozen kilometers from Jarash and only slightly farther from Amman, he built a new suq with an arched entry gate, on which were found two large mosaic inscriptions declaring Hisham as the builder of the market (see Figures 64 and 65). The

[297] Ibid, 172-75; trans., 145-148. Note that, by Muqaddasi's time, Bilad al-Sham had been divided into six *ajnad* as opposed to the four and then five of Umayyad times, and thus he considers fewer cities in his survey of *jund filastin* than someone in Umayyad times would have.
[298] For descriptions of these tiled mosaics, see Walker, "Islamization of central Jordan in the 7th-9th centuries," 147.
[299] See Walmsley and Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash," 363.
[300] Elias Khamis, "Two wall mosaic inscriptions from the Umayyad market place in Bet Shean/Baysan," in *Bulletin of SOAS* 64, no. 2 (2001), 175.

two panels, each at least a meter square, were both made of more than a thousand colored glass tesserae, fitted carefully together in a carved stone frame and spelling out the *bismillah* (the Qurʾanic invocation used in all official Muslim doccuments) before giving the dedicatory inscription of the suq and its date of construction.[301] The color pattern of the inscriptions-- blue, black, green, and gold-- clearly evoked the same color scheme as the Dome of the Rock, the Great Mosque of Damascus, and the other famous imperial mosques from the early Marwanid era. So, too, did the use of the *bismillah*, which had first been carved so prominently on the Dome of the Rock.[302] According to al-Jahshiyari, a 10th century court historian, Hisham also created a similar inscription at a palace in the coastal city of Acre when he rebuilt the city after a series of Byzantine assaults.[303] Yazid II and Hisham, therefore, had not ceased to create decorations in the same style as their predecessors; they had simply ceased to do so in their mosques.

Further evidence for the sometimes-aesthetic inclinations of Yazid II and Hisham comes in the form of the *qusur*, or desert castles, which dotted the Syrian desert. The Umayyad elite, especially members of the caliphal family, built a number of these throughout Bilad al-Sham, mainly in the northeast. Some of these palaces dated back to pre-Islamic times, with Umayyad princes reusing structures which had previously belonged to Arab leaders such as the Ghassanids.[304] A number of these buildings were small, almost rustic hunting lodges that served as isolated meeting places for political maneuverings, or refuges in times of trouble. Yet many others were luxurious palatial estates meant to sustain princes or caliphs and their entourage for

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[301] Ibid, 161-69.
[302] Ibid, 163-168, 170-71.
[303] Muhammad bin ʻAbdus al-Jahshiyari, *Kitab al-Kuttab wa-'l-Wuzara* (Cairo, 1938) 60, quoted in Khamis, "Two Wall Mosaic Inscriptions," 170.
[304] Gaube, "The Syrian desert castles," 349-365.

lengthy periods of time. Unsurprisingly, then, these latter structures displayed a keen sense of aesthetic appeal. Khirbat al-Mafjar, for instance, a site just outside of Jericho and most likely attributable to one of Hisham's nephews, is renowned for its extensive imagistic mosaics and iconographic stucco carvings (see Figures 66-68).[305] Likewise, at Qasr al-Hallabat, which Hisham ordered built in the early 8th century, the floors are covered with similarly designed mosaics (see Figure 69). It was likely these very buildings, among the many others built by various Umayyad princes, which would later force Yazid III to swear off any kind of construction projects during his reign.

Given the overwhelming evidence for Yazid II and Hisham's propensity for architectural and decorative grandiosity, it is impossible to conclude that the reservedness of their mosques was simply the product of economic hardship. Nor can it be said that these decorations once existed but were stolen, destroyed, or erased over time. Although both theft and reuse of expensive building materials from ruined or abandoned buildings were common in the early medieval period, the mosques built by Yazid II and Hisham all continued into use well into the Abbasid era, and sometimes even longer.[306] Furthermore, evidence of such theft ought to exist. Marble paneling, for example, ubiquitous in the mosques of the early Marwanids, requires noticeable pitting in stone walls, evidence of which is found at al-Walid's palatial residence at Minya on Lake Tiberias, and would have therefore have left clear evidence had it ever existed in these mosques (see Figure 75).[307] The general neglect of these mosques by the Muslim historians and geographers further reinforces the notion that these mosques simply were

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[305] See Creswell, *EMA*, Chapter 20.
[306] For chronologies of mosque use, see: Walmsley and Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash"; Genequand, "An Early Islamic Mosque in Palmyra"; Genequand,"From 'desert castle' to medieval town"; Northedge, *Studies on Roman and Islamic 'Amman*; Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain.*
[307] For photos of the walls at Minya, see Creswell, *EMA*, pl. 67f.

not visually impressive to begin with. Lastly, because so much evidence of decoration survives until today in desert castles and early Marwanids' mosques alike, the total absence of any parallel decoration in the mosques of Yazid II and Hisham can only lead to the conclusion that this decoration never existed. It is thus not the case that the decorations of these mosques were destroyed over time, or that economic hardship prevented Yazid II and Hisham from building opulent structures as their predecessors had, but rather that these caliphs chose to spend their money on structures other than their mosques.

The Umayyads apart

In general, the era of the late Marwanid caliphs, all of those who followed ʿUmar II, was a time of rapidly growing insecurity. Muslim jurists and theologians in this time became increasingly preoccupied with the intermingling of Muslims and non-Muslims, and the threat it posed to the integrity of the Muslim community. As historians of Islam Albrecht Noth and Milka Levy-Rubin have both shown, the emergent Covenant of ʿUmar (see Chapter 3) gained force in the mid-8th century as a tool to protect the autonomy of Muslims from the enroachment of the rest of the empire's population, which remained overwhelmingly non-Muslim. In particular, these rules concerned themselves with encouraging and even mandating the physical separation of non-Muslims from Muslims.[308] Such policy likewise tied into the increasing emphasis on Arabness, which intentionally posed yet another barrier to non-Muslim subalterns.[309] This dynamic compounded broader issues of imperial security, as external war and internal rebellion

[308] Noth, "Problems of Differentiation between Muslims and non-Muslims," esp. 108-9; Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire*, 60-63, 100-103.
[309] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, 144-45.

rent the empire apart. From the Berbers in North Africa, to the Egyptian navy, to the soldiers on the eastern frontier at Khurasan, populations disenchanted by the disfavorable policies of the Umayyads during this period expressed their anger in repeated, violent revolts.[310] Critically, these events signaled not simply opposition to the now-century-old Islamic rule, but specifically to the leadership of the Banu Umayya. Increasingly, the Umayyad dynasty was challenged not just externally by foreign enemies like the Byzantines, but by various ethnic and sectarian dissenters, not least of which were the proto-Shiʿites, whose uprisings, in Kufa heralded the coming Abbasid revolution.[311] The reigns of Yazid II and Hisham were thus rife with immediate and existential threats to Umayyad rule. Facing a breakdown of internal cohesion and growing external pressure to assimilate to the majority cultures of Bilad al-Sham, the leadership of the Banu Umayya turned to self-segregation.

Whether by convenience or intentionally, the mosques of al-Sham had long existed in dialogue with Christian buildings. The first Muslim conquerors had often emphasized practical concerns in sharing or appropriating church spaces for use as mosques (see Chapter 1). More pointedly, ʿAbd al-Malik, al-Walid, and Sulayman had used the juxtaposition of church and mosque in al-Sham as a means of entering into conversation with Christianity (see Chapter 2). Under Yazid II and Hisham, however, this dynamic changed significantly. Often, the two caliphs eschewed the use of Christian sites, instead choosing locations with Hellenic associations, or simply with no religious association at all. Palmyra's mosque, for example, replaced an old Roman building of imperial, though not necessarily religious, association.[312] Qasr al Hayr

[310] Shaban, *Islamic History*, 134-35.
[311] Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State*, 191.
[312] Genequand, "An Early Islamic Mosque in Palmyra," 7-9.

al-Sharqi was a site built totally anew by Hisham, and thus had no preexisting associations.[313] At Jerash, Hisham built the mosque over what had once been a Roman bathhouse, more than a hundred meters from the nearest church.[314] The church dedicated to St. John the Baptist, a figure so symbolically essential at Damascus, was left untouched. Finally, while the Rusafa mosque abutted Basilica A, it must be recalled that this mosque did not serve to contest or appropriate the sacrality of the Christian basilica, but rather to give Muslims separate access to it.[315] The basilica still retained its integrity. In short, the mosques built by Yazid II and Hisham turned away from their predecessors' direct architectural dialogue with Christianity, setting Islam distinctly apart.

A short distance south of Rusafa's exterior wall, Hisham's caliphal residence rises up out of the earth (see Figure 52). It comprises an area of some 4 km^2, and is made up of six large buildings and associated facilities.[316] According to the *Kitab al-Aghani*, the famed 10th century encyclopedia of Arabic poetry, Hisham's court was a hub of culture and the site of extraordinary literary endeavors.[317] Ibn Asakir mentions that Hisham would hold court here, seated under a green dome like the one which rose over the palace in Damascus.[318] This palace therefore served as Hisham's *dar al-ʿimara*, the administrative center of Rusafa. Yet unlike the administrative centers of his predecessors, Hisham's palace at Rusafa was completely separate from the city's mosque.

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[313] See the caliphal inscription found at the site, quoted in Jean Baptiste Louis Jacques Rousseau, *Voyage de Bagdad à Alep, publié, d'après le manuscrit inédit de l'auteur*, ed. Louis Poinssot (Paris, 1899), 151.
[314] Walmsley and Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash," 365, 371.
[315] Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, 182.
[316] Sack, *Die grosse Moschee von Resafa - Rusafat Hisam*, 49-50.
[317] Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, 175.
[318] Ibn Asakir, *al-Tarikh al-Kabir*, vol. 3, ed. Kalid Faisli (Damascus, 1913), 284, quoted in Sack, *Die grosse Moschee von Resafa - Rusafat Hisam*, 49-50, 145.

Under Muʿawiya and then the early Marwanids, the physical connection between mosque and *dar al-ʿimara* was well-established (see Chapter 2). These caliphs repeated the archetypal contiguity of the Damascus palace and Great Mosque even at tiny settlements like ʻAnjar, wherein the mosque and *dar al-ʿimara* were directly connected by a door in the *qibla* wall (see Figure 70).[319] The largest physical separation of any of the major early Umayyad imperial mosques may have been at Tiberias, where the mosque and *dar al-ʿimara* were separated by the width of the main road.[320] At Rusafa, however, roughly half a kilometer stretched between the mosque and Hisham's palace, a distance amplified by the fortified city wall which physically divided the two (see Figure 71). At Palmyra, too, while Hisham's mosque sits in the city center, right next to the suq which he rebuilt, there are no signs of an adjacent *dar al-ʿimara*.[321] Hisham may have built the Jersash mosque next to an administrative center (though this remains unclear), yet the most revealing dynamic is found at Amman.[322] Yazid II built Amman's imperial mosque exactly where one might expect it: at the intersection of Amman's main streets, adjacent to the city's main cathedral (see Figure 72). The ostensible *dar al-ʿimara*, however, was located more than half a kilometer away, at the top of a large hill overlooking the city (see Figure 73).

At 15,600m^2, the palace at Amman was larger than even the Great Mosque of Damascus, and in fact the third-largest palace known to have been built by the Umayyads.[323] Constructed some time after Hisham built his mosque at Rusafa, the Amman *dar al-ʿimara* incorporated equal parts Roman and Sasanian architectural elements, a novel development in Umayyad

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[319] Robert Hillenbrand, "Anjar and Early Islamic Urbanism," in *The Idea and Ideal of the Town Between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. G. P. Brogiolo and Bryan Ward-Perkins (London: Brill, 1999), 63.
[320] Cytryn-Silverman, "The Umayyad Mosque at Tiberias," 55-56.
[321] Genequand, "An Early Islamic Mosque in Palmyra," 7.
[322] Walmsley and Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash," 365.
[323] Northedge, *Studies on Roman and Islamic ʻAmman*, 98.

architecture. Most importantly, however, the Amman citadel had a sizable mosque of its own (see Figure 74). A square hypostyle structure of some 1,100m^2 in area, this mosque had a large, likely decorated *miḥrāb*. Though simple in layout, the mosque "boasted abundant decoration very similar to what was adopted in the different parts of the palace", including friezes, column capitals, and plasterwork.[324] This decoration mirrored not the style of the grand mosques of the early Marwanids, but rather that of the Umayyads private residences and desert castles. The citadel mosque at Amman, built in the late 730s or early 740s, therefore served to further distance the Umayyads from the people at Amman; while the typical Muslim prayed in an unadorned, Damascene style mosque down in the city center, the Umayyad elite ensconced themselves in a decorated mosque evocative of their private residences, far from the people, and behind fortress walls. By breaking the contiguity of the *dar al-ʿimara* and the imperial mosque, Hisham and his associates thereby fundamentally undermined the connection between the caliphate and its subjects.

As Hisham and his Umayyad associates were setting themselves on high, far apart from those that they ruled, they simultaneously propagated a discourse which reinforced the idea of the Umayyads as a unique and separate elite, inaccessible and untouchable. The official correspondence of Hisham, recorded over the course of his reign by his scribe ʿAbd al-Hamid, declared what scholar of early Islamic history Wadad al-Qadi has referred to as the first theory of state in Islamic political thought.[325] In this series of missives spanning a period of more than twenty years, Hisham and his successors delineated a vision of Islam and caliphhood in which the Umayyads-- and only the Umayyads-- stand as God's chosen inheritors of the prophethood,

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[324] Antonio Almagro, Pedro Jiménez and Julio Navarro, *El Palacio Omeya de ʿAmman*, vol. 3, *Investigación Arqueológica y Restauración, 1989-1997* (Granada: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de Granada, 2000), 244.
[325] al-Qadi,"The Religious Foundation of Late Umayyad Ideology and Practice," 269.

figures to whom absolute obedience is owed, and the uniquely rightful leaders of Islam.[326] In terms couched in the Qurʾanicizing language of their predecessor, Hisham and his successors laid claim to supreme sovereignty over the Islamic realm, while at the same time insisting on the absolute exclusivity of that right. Those who contend with the Umayyads contend with Allah; protection of the Umayyads, therefore, is protection of Allah.[327] And, of course, these letters were routinely meant to be read from the pulpit of the mosques from which the Umayyads themselves had now withdrawn.[328] Thus, while Hisham's words filled his imperial mosques, he himself remained far away, in buildings meant for the Umayyad elite alone.

Conclusion

At first glance, the reigns of Yazid II and Hisham represent a return to the status quo established under the early Marwanids. They sought to reestablish similar policies, and the general architectures of their mosques appear to continue the Damascene style, evidencing an even higher degree of standardization than had existed in the early Marwanid period. In reality, however, their series of mosque constructions suggests a significant break with the practices of their predecessors. Embracing a newly-emergent sense of Arab identity, they shifted away from the cosmopolitan vision of empire which their predecessors had so prized, instead prioritizing spaces valued by their Arabian forebearers. They shifted away from the imperious grandiosity of the early Marwanid mosques, too, generally mimicking them in underlying form but almost entirely foregoing the ornate decorations which so defined mosques like those at Damascus,

[326] Ibid, see in particular 241-51, 261-63, and 269-73.
[327] Ibid, 259-268.
[328] Ibid, 240.

Aleppo, Jerusalem, Ramla, and Tiberias. Yet such behavior clearly contradicted the well-documented exorbitance in other realms of architecture, such as their construction of indulgent private estates. Finally, they cut the thread of political power which had physically linked the mosque and the palace, effectively distancing themselves from the population over which they ruled. The practices of imperial mosque construction under Yazid II and Hisham thus complicate the narrative of this period. Rather than imposing an assertive, muscular vision of Arab Umayyad authority through their mosques, they merely sought a means to fulfil the basic tenets of their duty while attempting to maintain an increasingly challenged hold on power.

Conclusion

When Hisham died in 743, any semblance of stability enjoyed by the Umayyad empire disappeared. His successor, al-Walid ibn Yazid, the son of Yazid II, was overthrown within a year, beginning a seven-year conflict known as the third *fitna*. This time, the *fitna* would culminate in the victory of the Abbasids, who initiated efforts to expunge most traces of their Umayyad predecessors. After their victory in 750, the Abbasids set about destroying many of the Umayyads' palaces, and erasing their names from prominent locations. The Umayyad mosques, however, were largely left untouched, and continued to be used well into the Abbasid period.[329] Perhaps most tellingly, the inscription on the Dome of the Rock which had so prominently claimed ʿAbd al-Malik as the site's patron, was altered, and the Umayyad caliph's name replaced by that of al-Maʾmun, an important Abbasid caliph who refurbished the Dome in the early 9th century. The most monumental of the mosques would be glorified and used until finally degrading or being destroyed hundreds of years after their erection. Even today, thirteen centuries after they were built, the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus remain largely intact, towering symbols of the Umayyad legacy.

Ultimately, the Umayyad mosque proved more than a mere tool of imperial hegemony. Though it began under Muʿawiya as a means of asserting control over the diverse and disparate population of Bilad al-Sham, it quickly took on a more complicated role. By the time that Muʿawiya built the first imperial mosque at Tiberias, perhaps little more than a decade after the Muslim conquest of al-Sham, he had already begun to acknowledge the complexity and potential

[329] See the various sources cited above in relation to specific mosques; as well as Peterson, *The Towns of Palestine under Muslim Rule, AD 600-1600*, 25-35, 51-102; Shick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule*, chapter 7.

inherent in creating and maintaining an autonomous Muslim space in the context of the foreign urban fabric of al-Sham. For perhaps the first time, he incorporated autochthonous architectural elements into an imperial mosque, but also paired them with Arabian building techniques. He furthermore carried out this construction with an eye toward material permanence. By bringing these components together, Muʿawiya expressed an urge to transcend utilitarian architecture and achieve a synthesis of the foreign and the familiar, of the pragmatic and the aesthetic. Such development continued in his work on al-ʾAqsa II, where Muʿawiya built a mosque which not only borrowed architectural elements from the local populace, but actively entered into conversation with them, advancing a common body of references, and physically manifesting the pluralistic community which Muʿawiya so painstakingly fostered. In Muʿawiya's hands, the mosque was a space which insisted on its own belonging in al-Sham. It offered an opportunity not only to assert the unity of the nascent Muslim community, but to give that community a way to participate in the broader human milieu of Bilad al-Sham.

Following the second *fitna*, the mosques of the early Marwanids did not emerge ex nihilo, but instead built on the precedent set by Muʿawiya, the true progenitor of the Umayyad mosque in al-Sham. His example laid the framework for what would become the "Umayyad visual culture", which his successors then built upon. Still, ʿAbd al-Malik was the first Umayyad to recognize the full potential of religious monumentation; in his eyes, the mosque could be used not just to unite a community, but to create it. He and his sons developed a "visual culture" which became not just the single most defining artistic legacy of their caliphate (and perhaps in all of Islam), but one of the central ways in which they realized their empire itself. ʿAbd al-Malik and his first two sons demonstrated a creative genius for coherently synthesizing a range of

architectural and decorative heritages in order to express with remarkable cogency their specific vision of Islam and the Umayyad empire. They concerned themselves not only with functionality, but with the heights of beauty, going to great lengths to create works of sublime aesthetic achievement. They moreover built works of aspiration, expressing not what was, but what they hoped would be. For a quarter century, the imperial mosque became a space for imagination.

After the soaring heights of the early Marwanid period, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAziz found his own potent architectural discourse by turning to humility. As an intentional contrast to his predecessors, he emphasized what the mosque did not have to be. By explicitly choosing not to build grandiose mosques-- and to reduce the grandiosity of those that existed, when given the chance-- ʿUmar II found a way to rebuke those who had come before him, distancing himself from their vision of Islam, and offering one which foregrounded piety and commitment over imperial pretension. He saw the mosque as a sacred space above all else, and moreover as a haven for those committed to the same vision. Like the early Marwanids, ʿUmar II's mosques represented a radical reenvisioning of what the Umayyad empire could be.

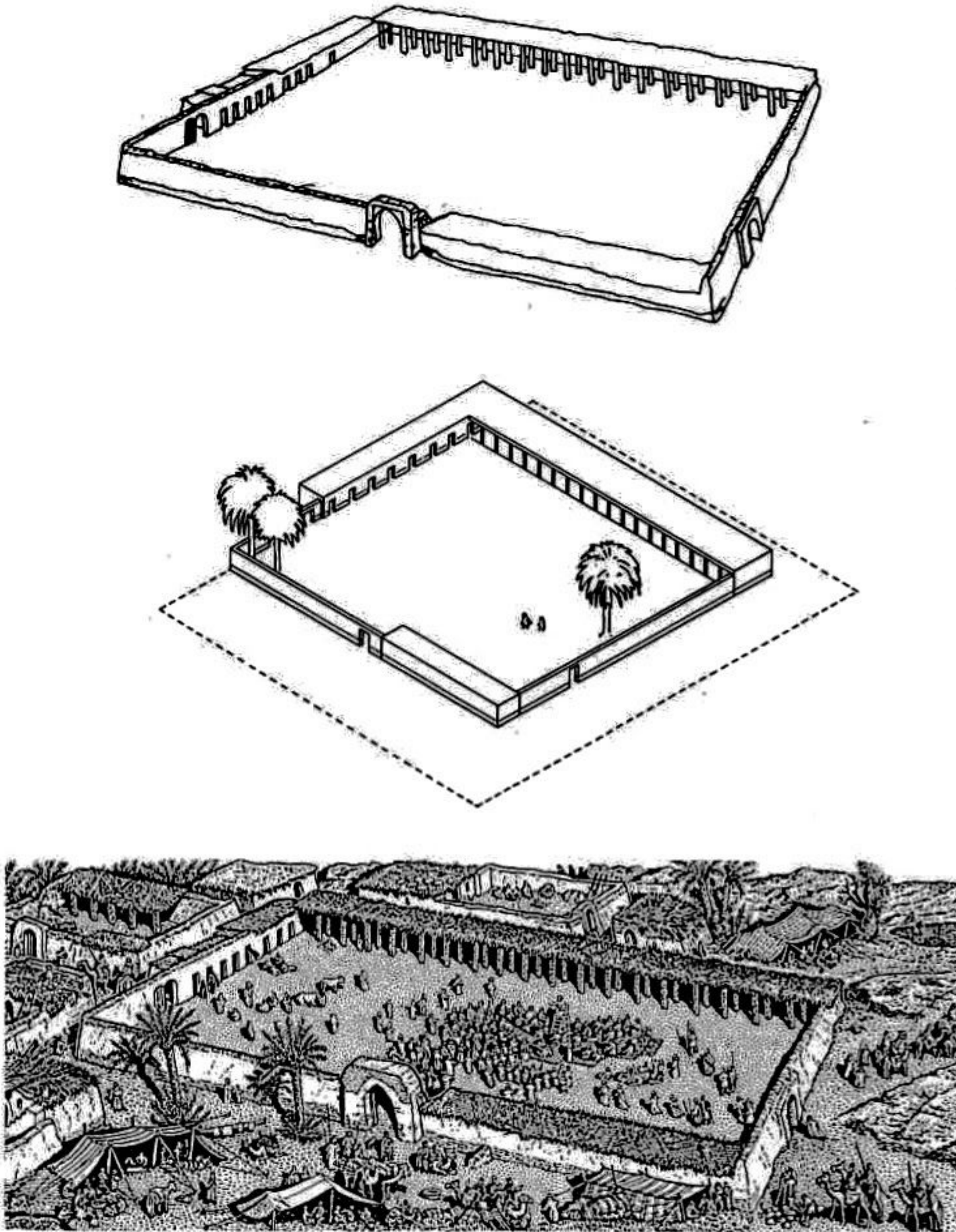
While the reigns of Yazid II and Hisham, the final years of secure Umayyad rule, have often been seen as an extension of the early Marwanid period, the mosques built by these caliphs suggest a different reality. In contrast to the growing self-assuredness and even bellicosity of the caliphs' public addresses, the mosques of this era belie a deeper sense of unease. At best, they speak to the increasingly materialistic, escapist obsessions of the Umayyad elite. At worst, they suggest an empire increasingly disconnected from its subjects, one possessed of a less and less subtle awareness that its hold on power was tenuous. The architectural reserve of these caliphs in

building their mosques, unlike that of ʿUmar II, declared their increasing focus on maintaining political hegemony, even at the expense of religious fidelity. While Yazid II and Hisham adhered to the basic form of the early Marwanid mosques, such commitment was only superficial. To these caliphs, the mosques were now an afterthought.

Stretching from Muʿawiya's early days as governor of Bilad al-Sham all the way to the death of Hisham, the mosque was cultivated by the Umayyad leadership as a vehicle through which to both express and realize their sense of self. It is tempting, and even apt, to read the text which these mosques comprise with an eye toward the kind of Foucauldian pouvoir suggested in Ibn Khaldun's observation that their creation demanded "a strong royal authority". Yet this approach overshadows the actual complexity of the mosques. Religiopolitical power was but one of a number of motivating factors in the construction of these mosques, and even when it was expressed, it took a variety of forms. Instead of promoting a single, coherent discourse, the Umayyad caliphs relied on the interplay of continuity and rupture to render their mosques expressive. Through the nuances of these variations, the caliphs were able to express the idiosyncrasies of their visions. They spoke at times to a need for belonging felt by a group of foreigners just arrived in a new land. At other times, they expressed pride and aesthetic taste, or pious religious conviction. At some moments, these mosques even hinted at the anxieties and vulnerabilities of those who constructed them. As a result, the Umayyad mosque should not and indeed, cannot, be characterized based on a specific, exceptionally prominent moment, but rather must be understood in the longue durée, as part of the gradually evolving arc of the Umayyad self-conception. In evaluating its century-long history, it is therefore important to remember that these buildings were not simply rigidly discursive, imperious edifices, expressive of grandeur

and triumph. They were also, and in no less meaningful a way, the product of complex humans possessed of complex needs and desires which changed dramatically over time. By stepping beyond analyses of cultivated discourse, and into the realm of human foibles, it is possible to approach a deeper understanding of the Umayyad mosque and the Umayyads themselves.

Figures



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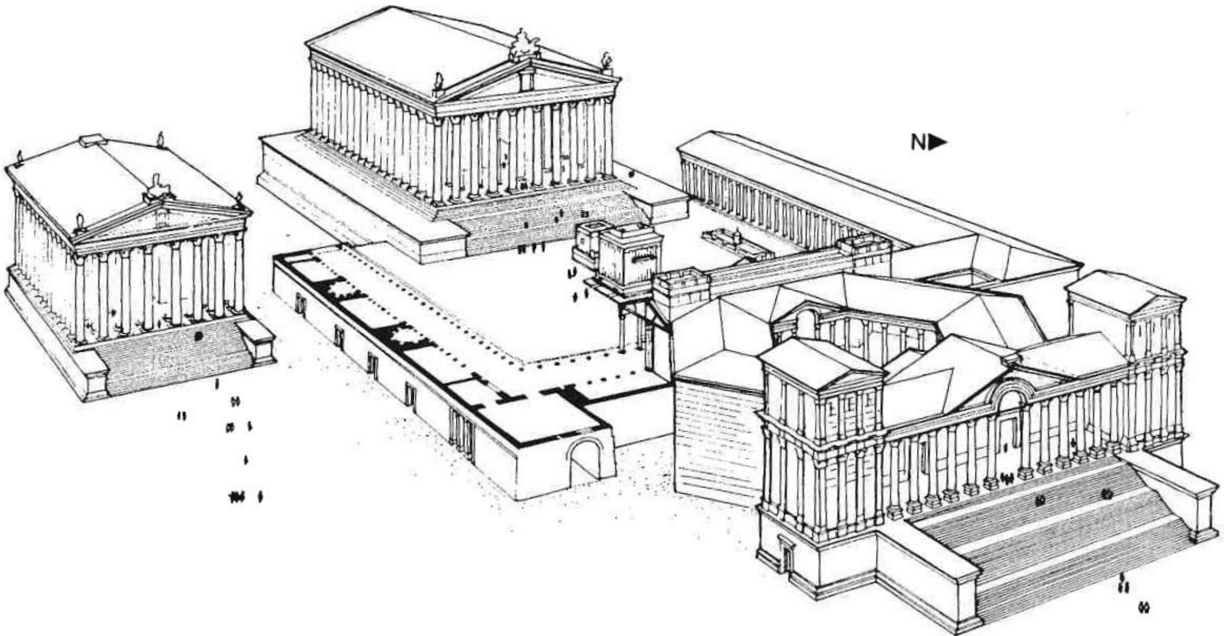

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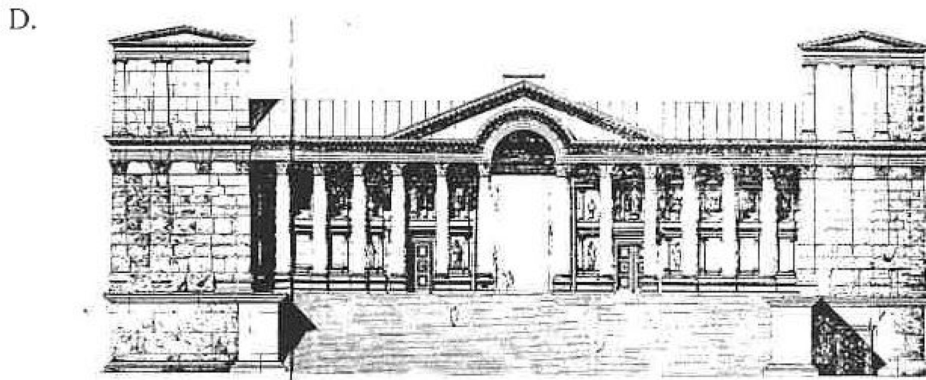
Figure 6: The temenos wall of the pagan temple complex at Baalbek. Ball, *Rome in the East*, 326.

C.

D.



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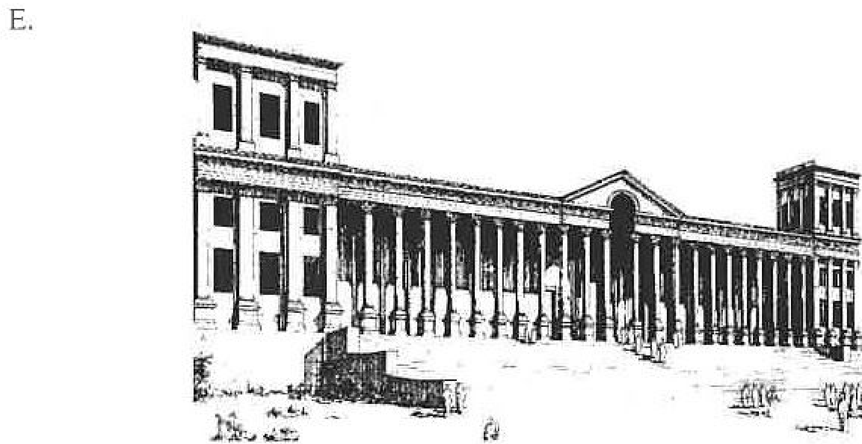

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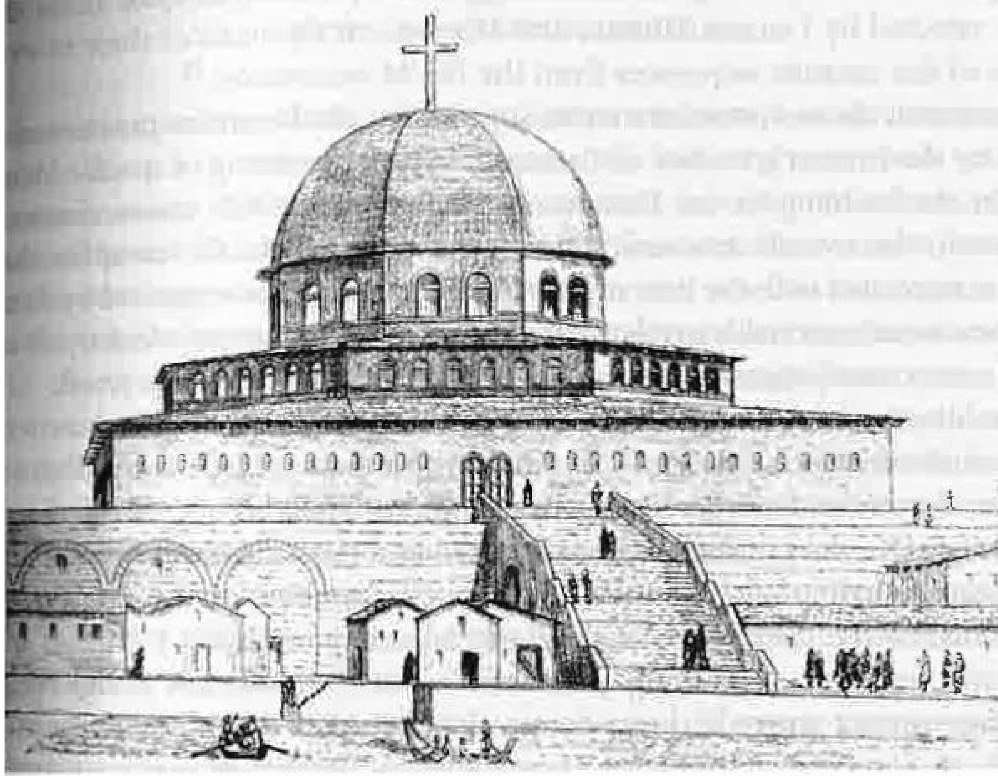

Figure 8: Reconstruction of the main Byzantine church at Qaysaria. Gideon Avni, *The Byzantine-Islamic Transition in Palestine: An Archaeological Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 47.

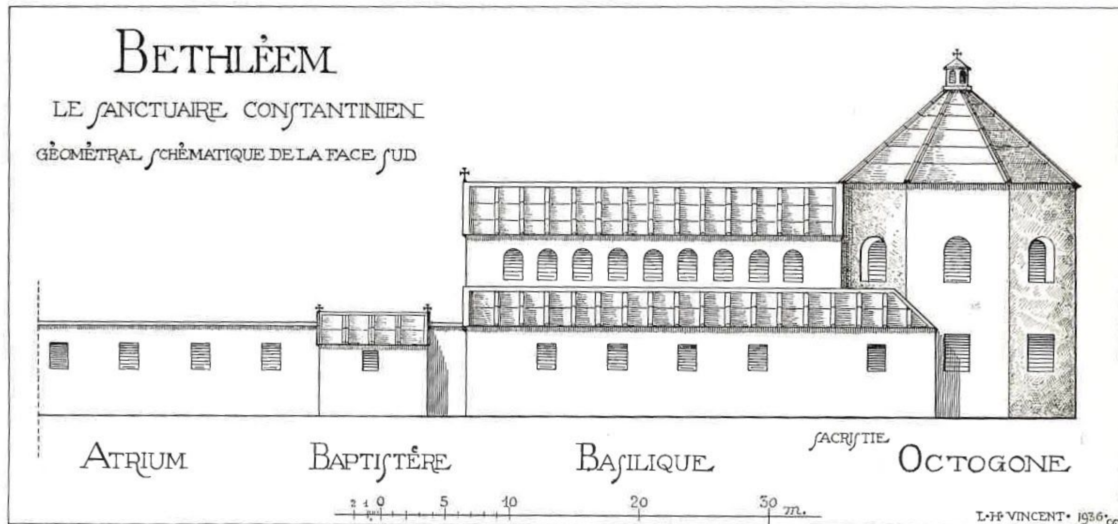

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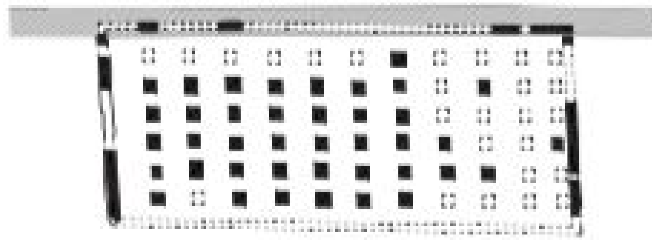
Figure 11: The 5th-century church at Qalb Lawza, in northwestern Syria. Yasser Tabbaa, "Qalb Lawza Basilica," 1990, Yasser Tabbaa Archive, Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT, Cambridge, MA, accessed May 2020, https://archnet.org/sites/4314/media_contents/106458.



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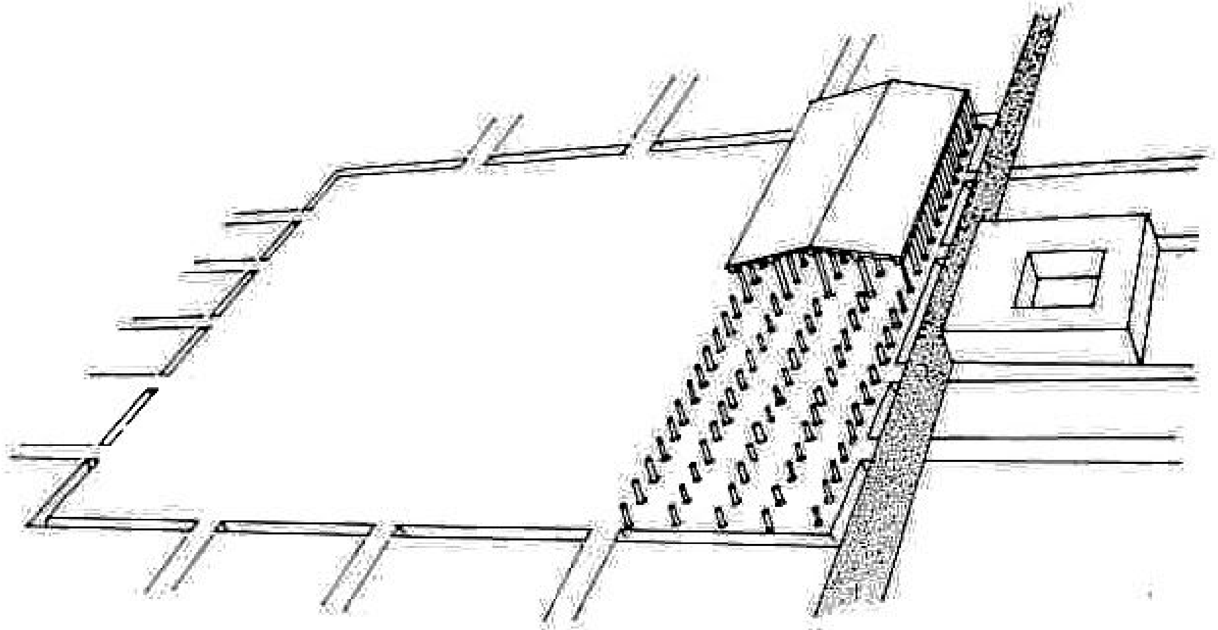

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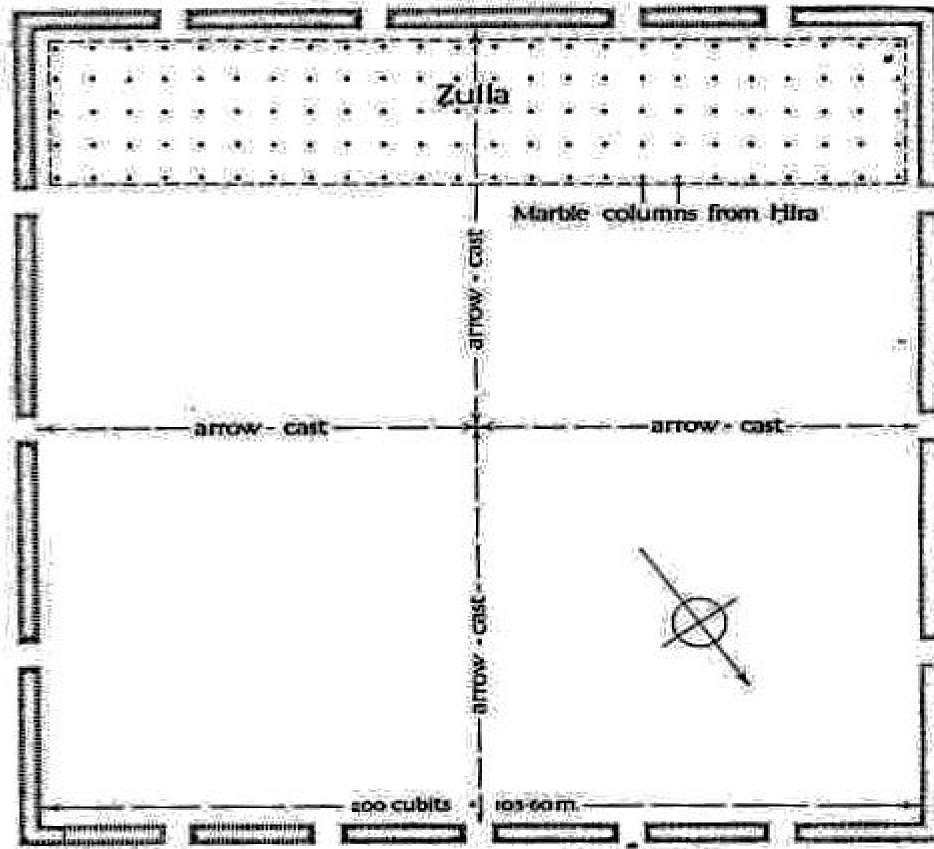

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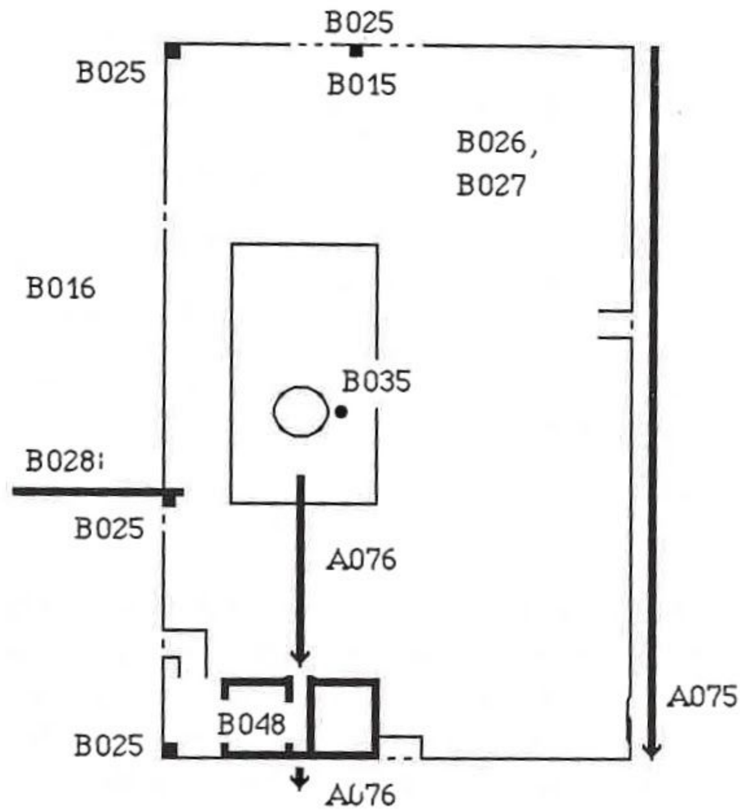

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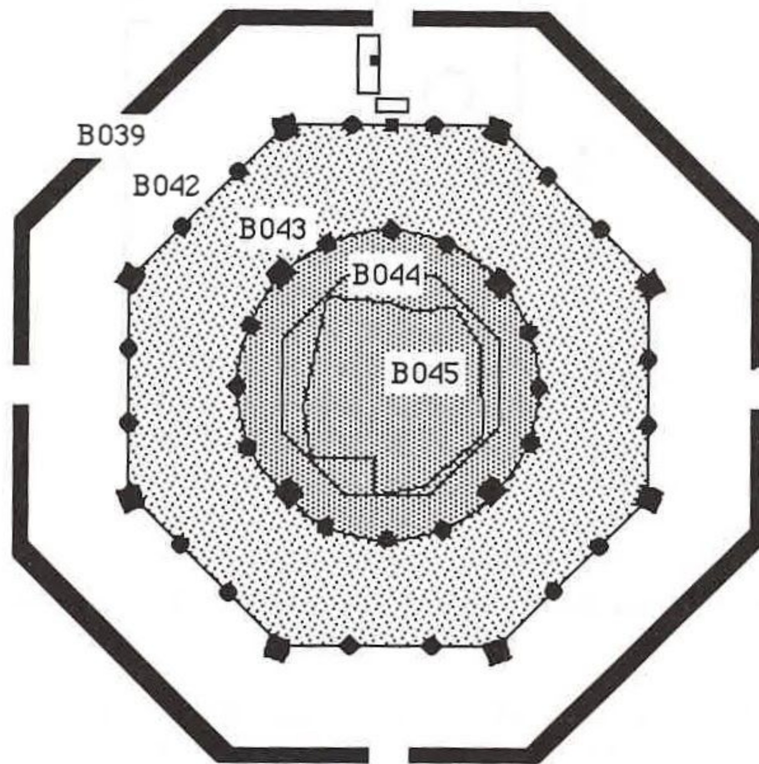

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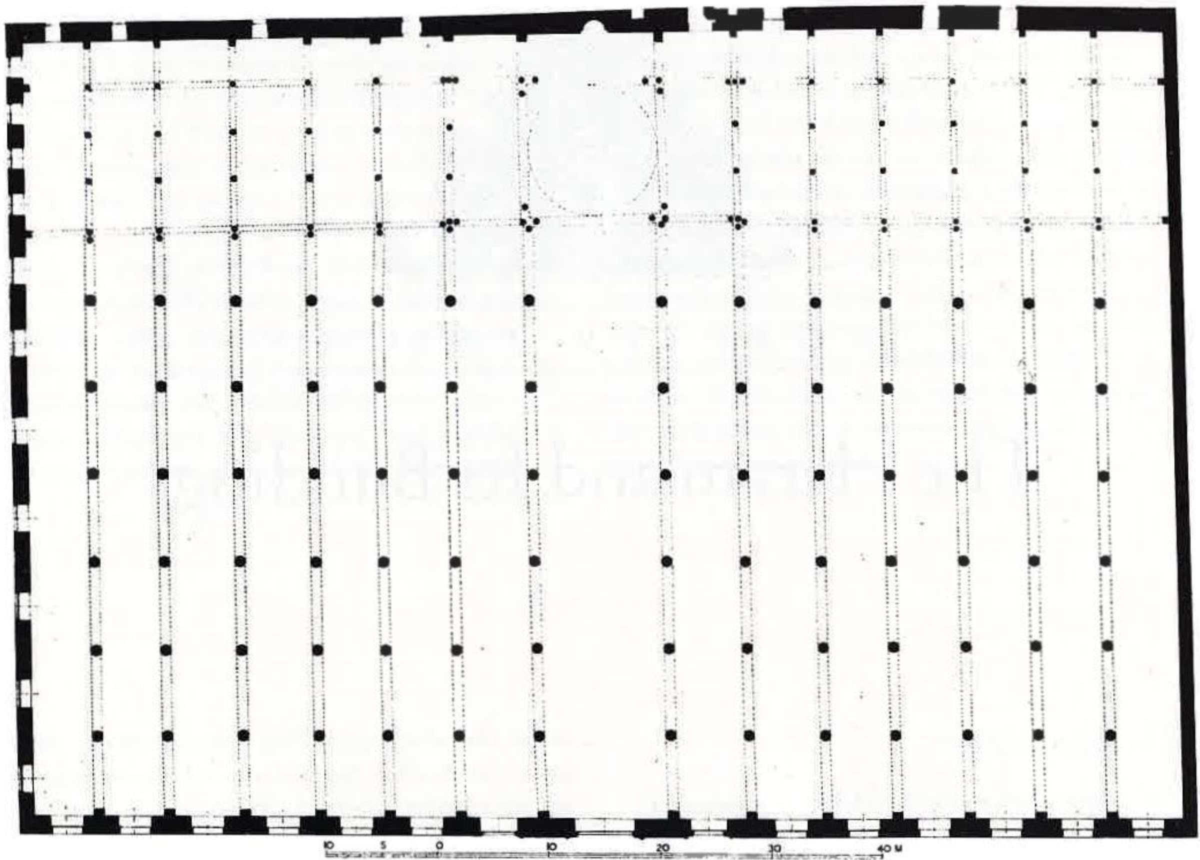

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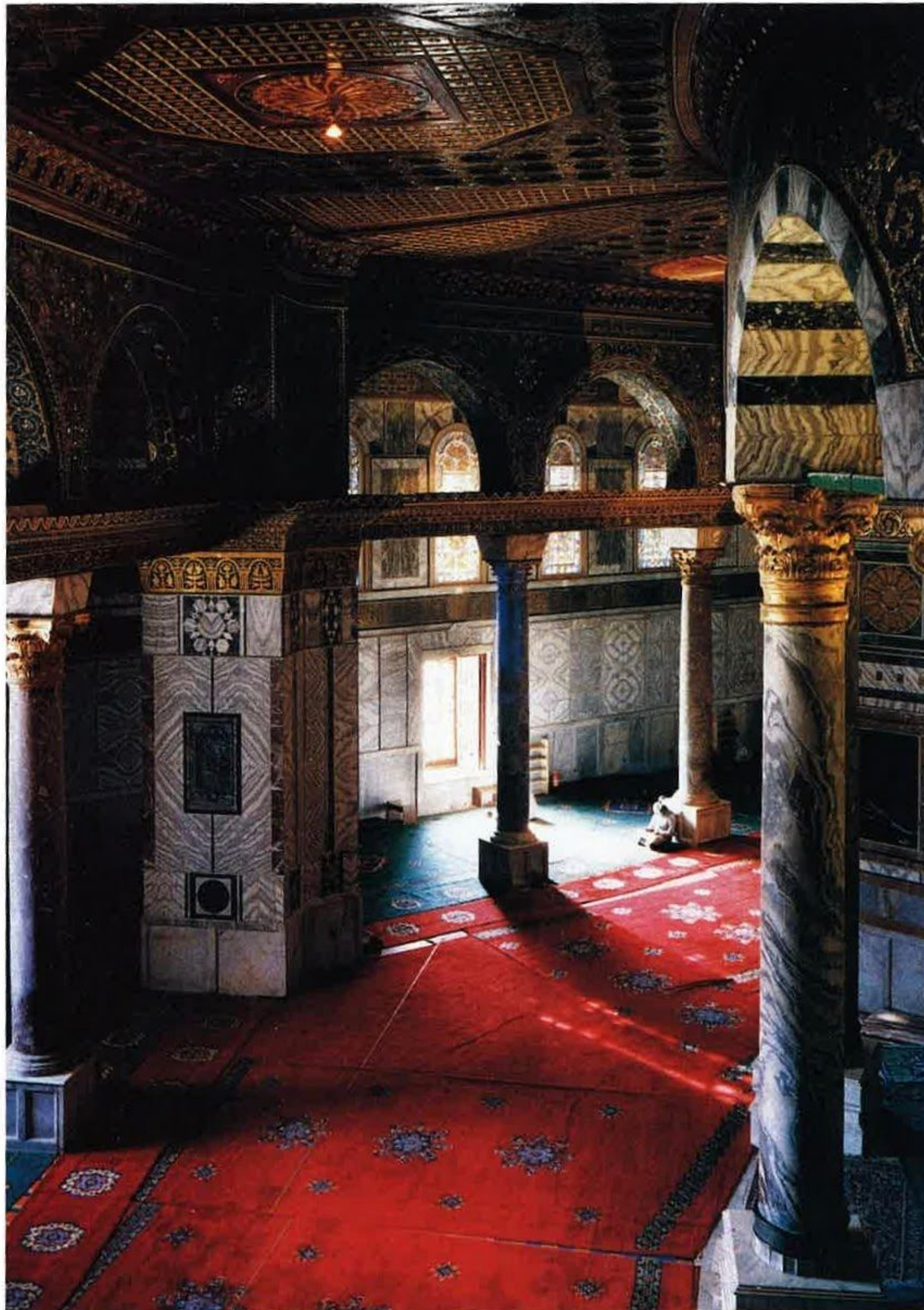

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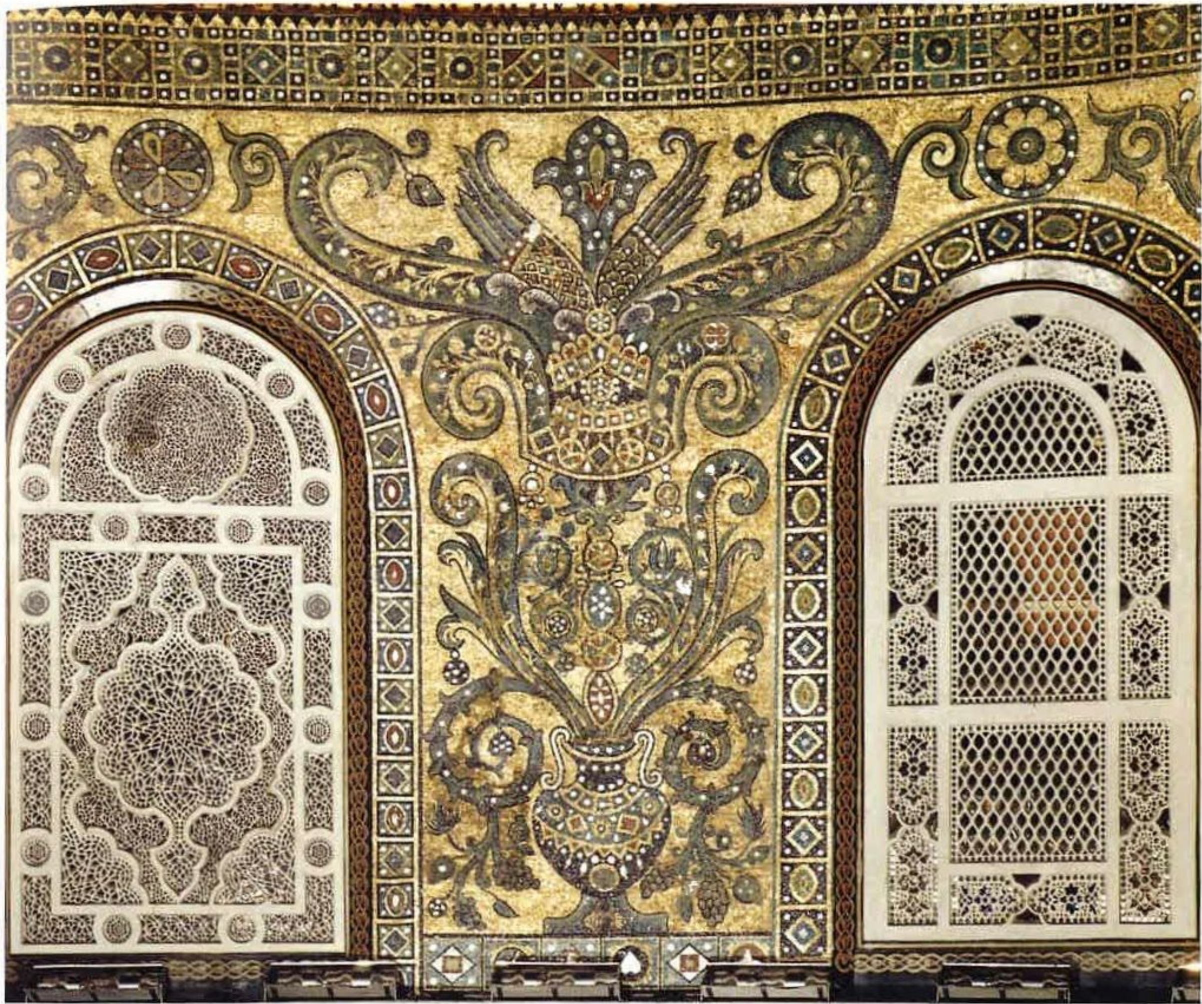

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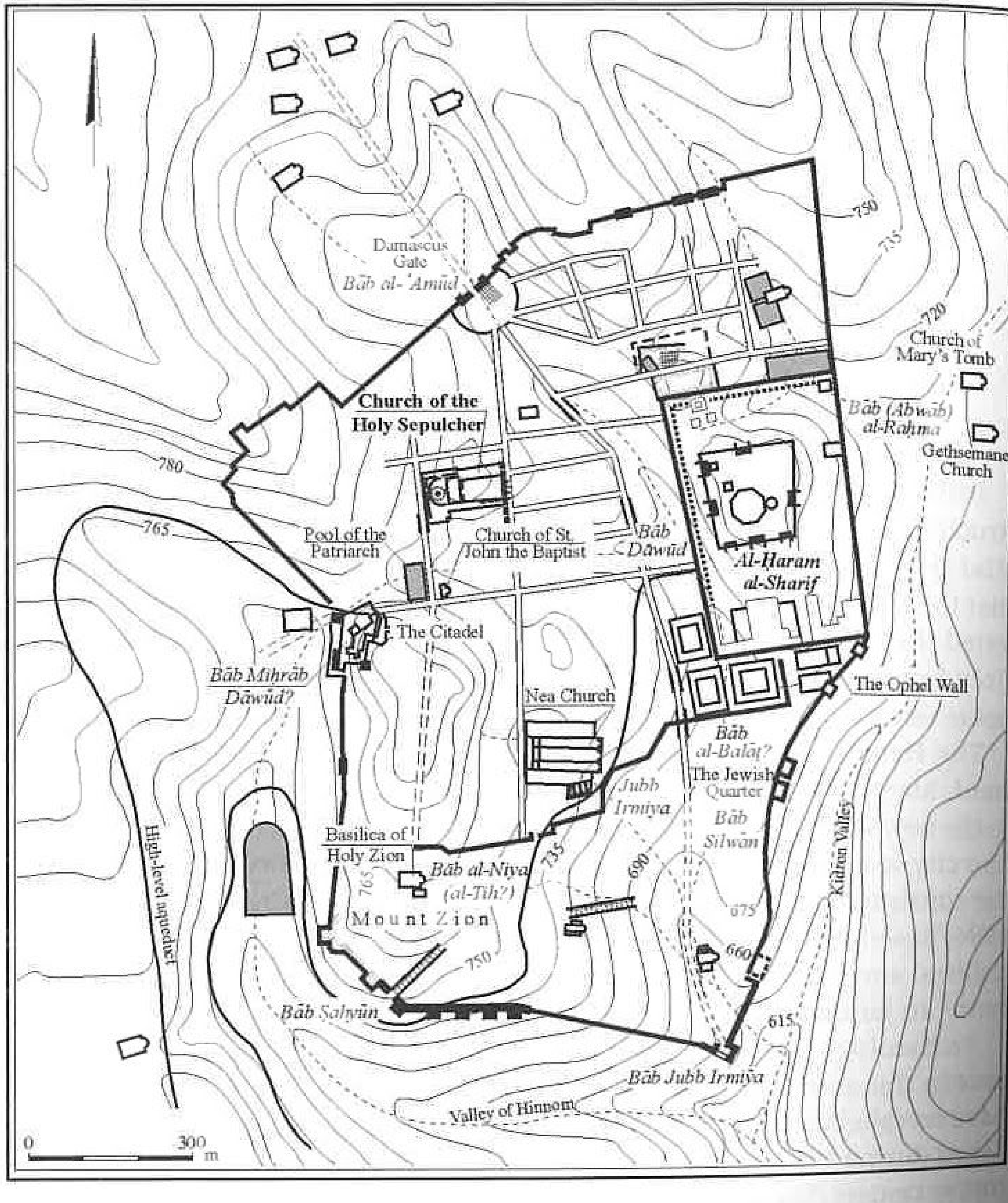

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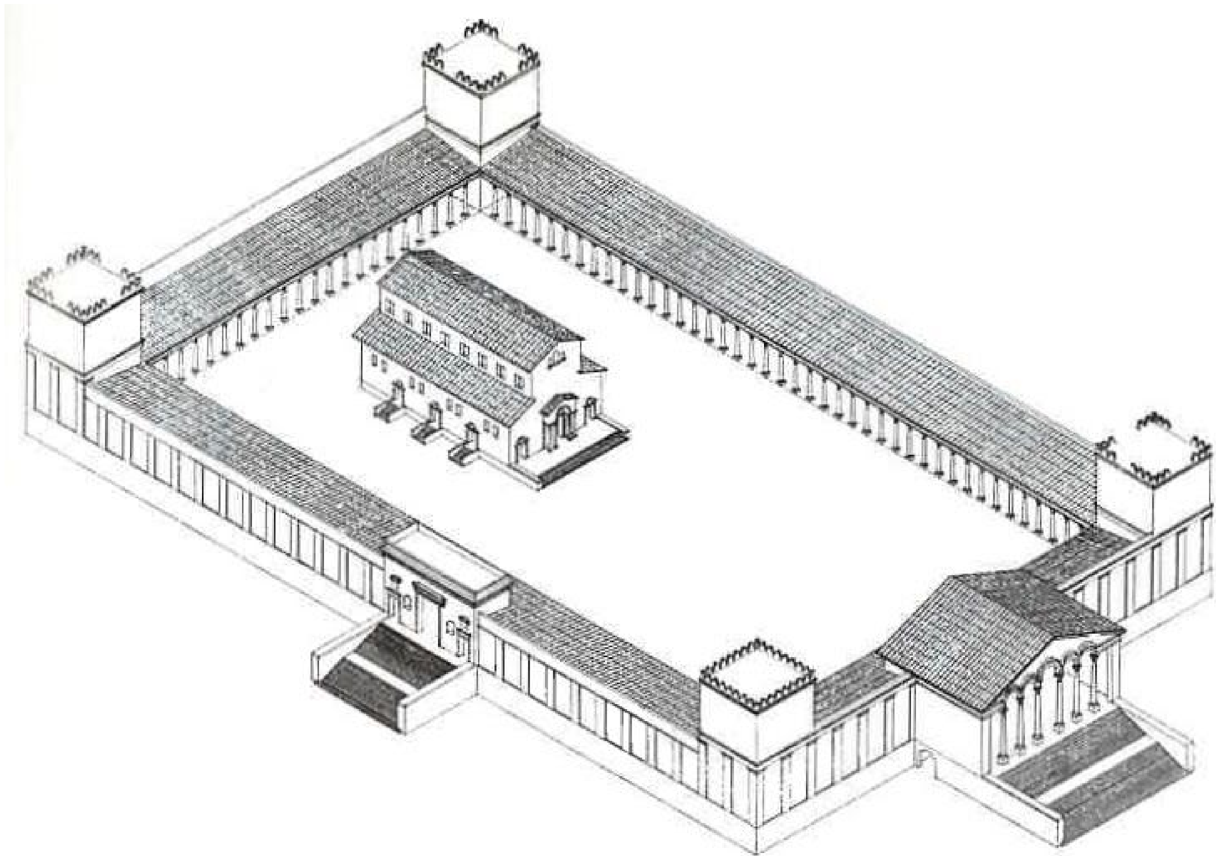

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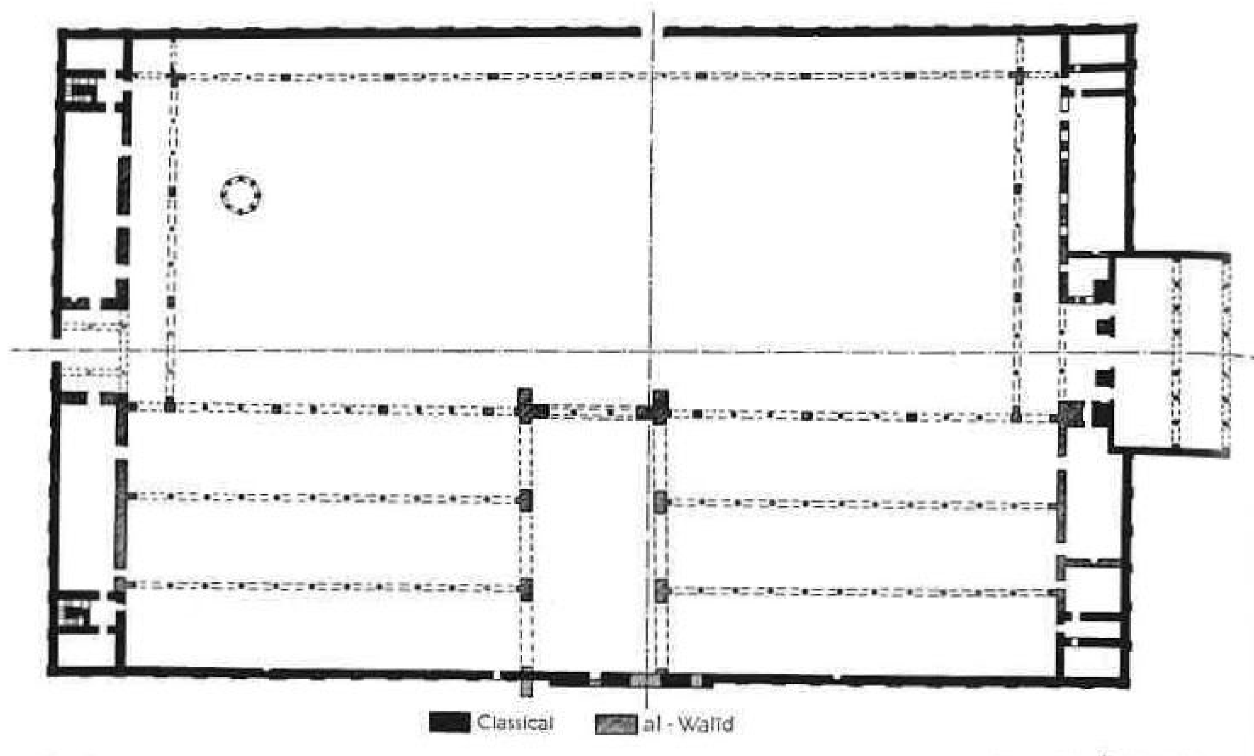
Figure 27: The facade of the Great Mosque of Damascus. Islamic Landmarks, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, 2015. https://www.islamiclandmarks.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Umayyad-Mosque-exterior.jpg



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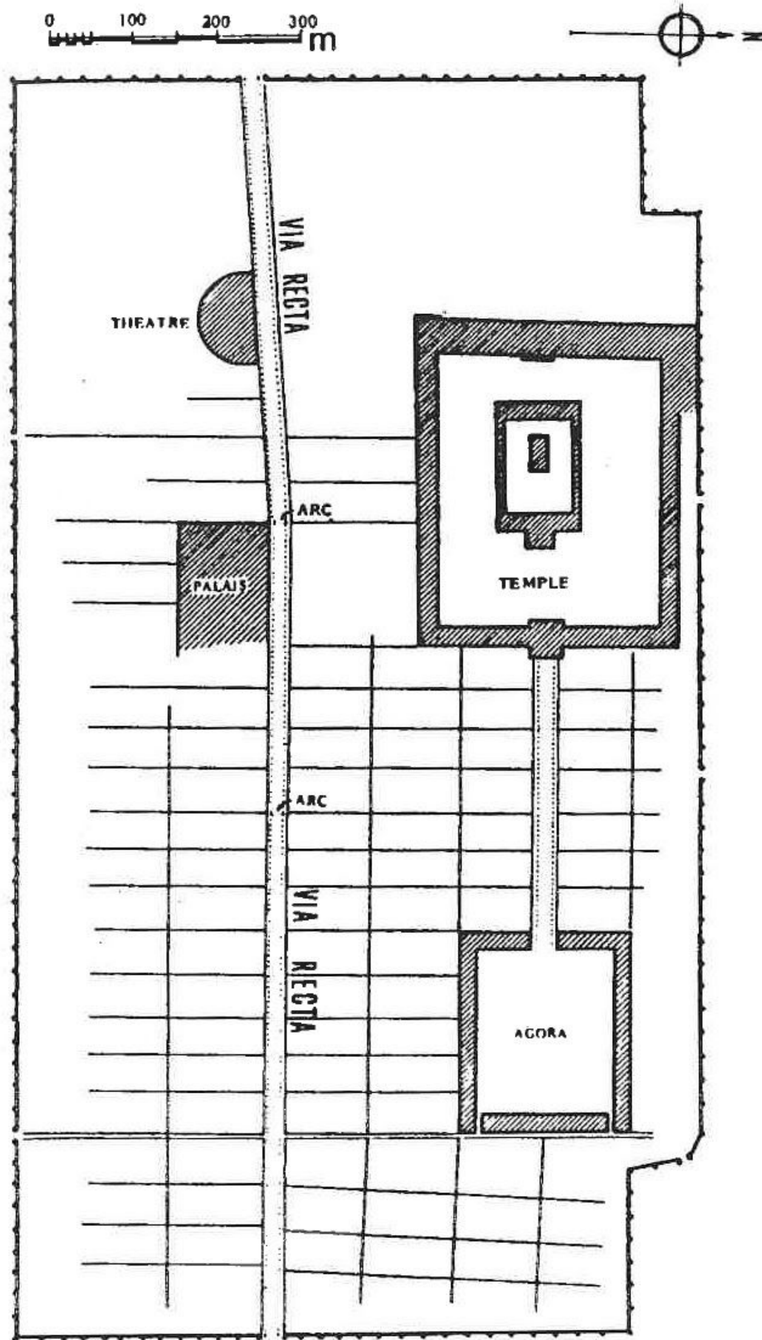

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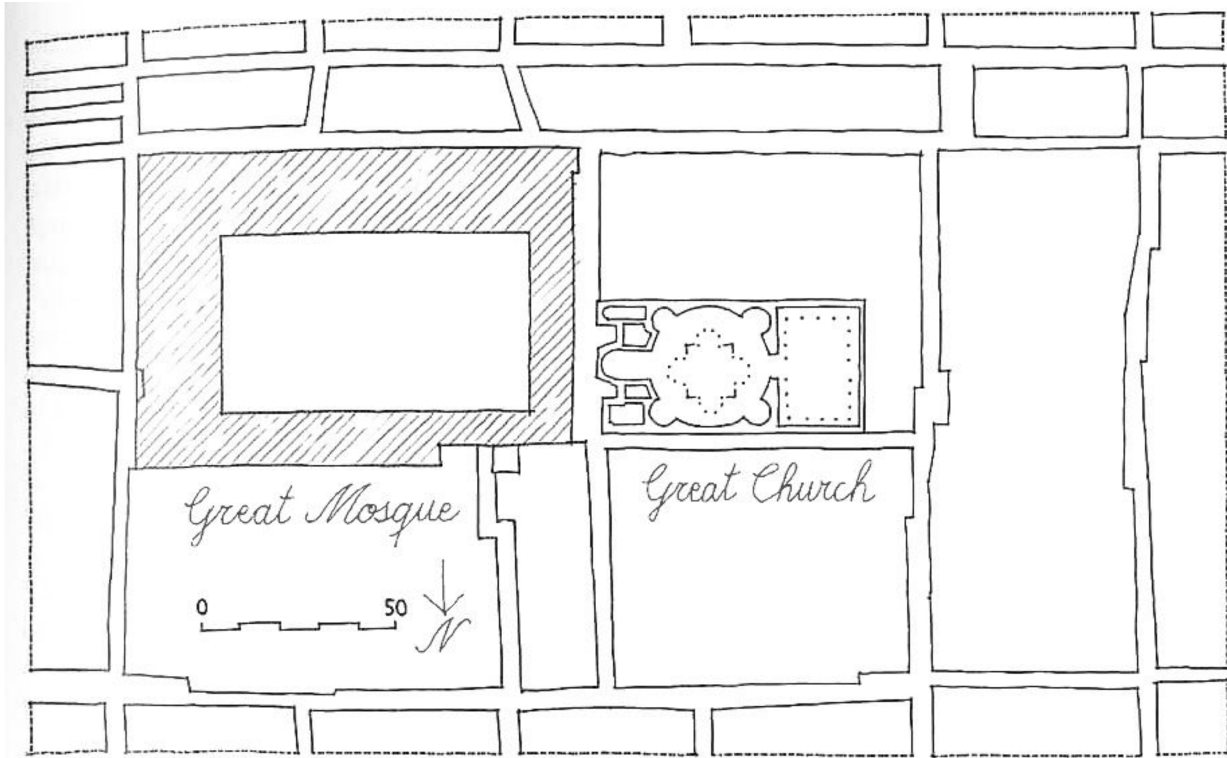

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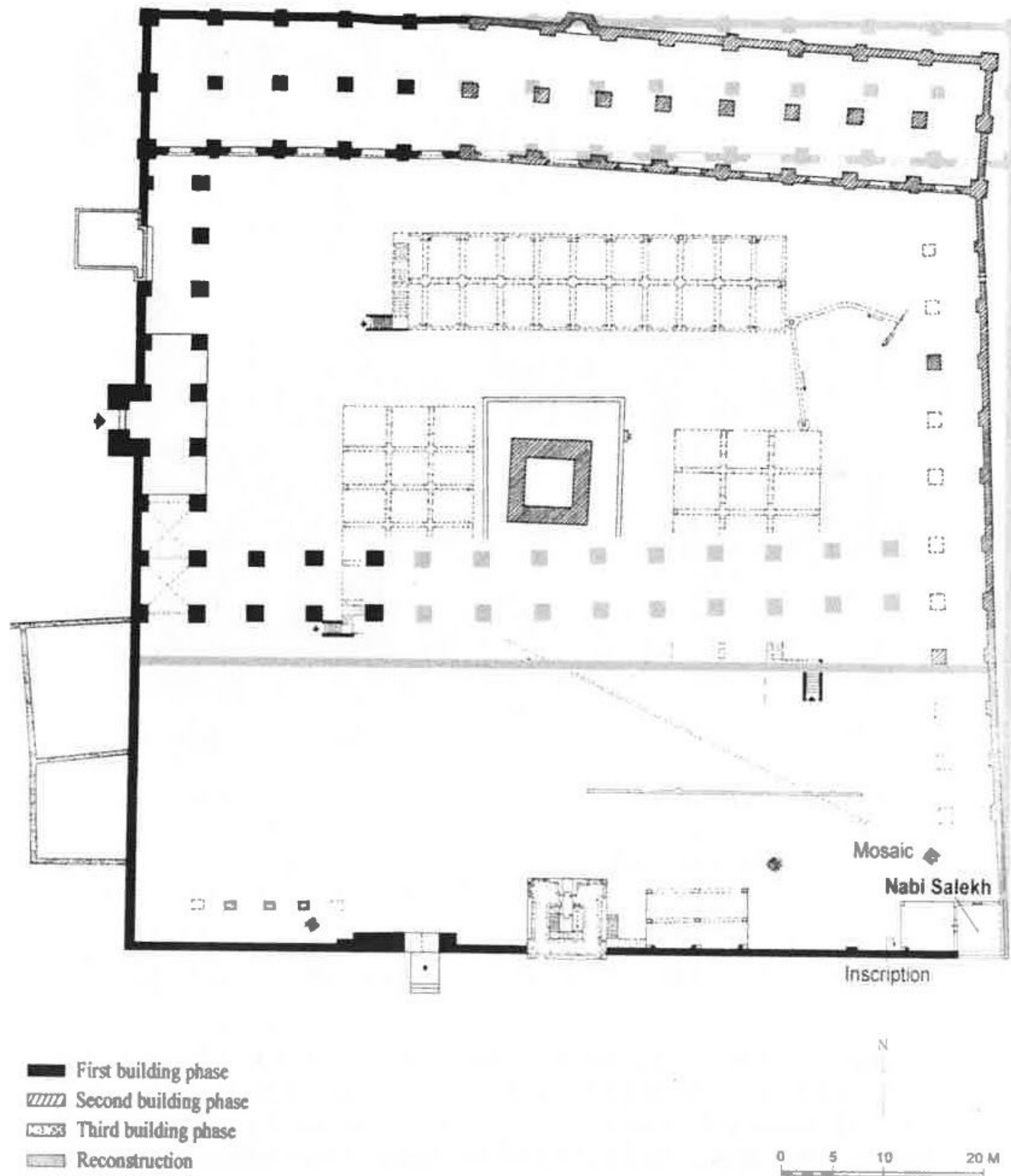
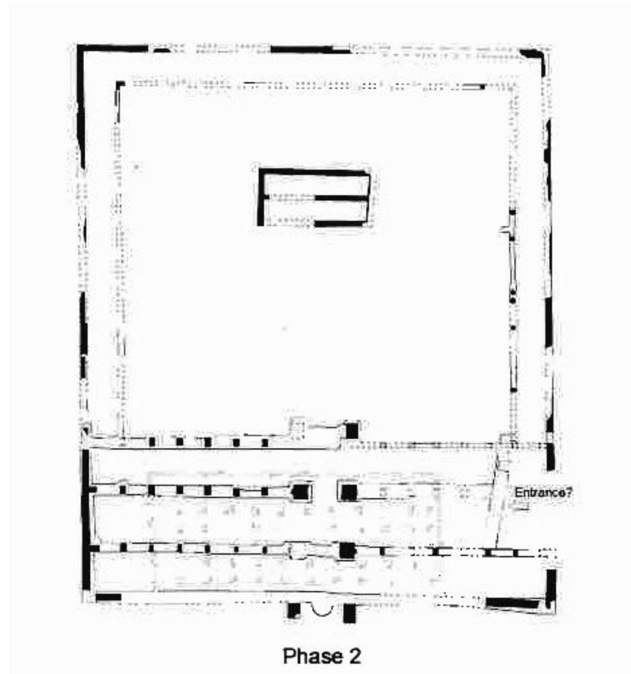


Figure 33: Reconstruction of the original plan of the Ramla mosque. Rosen-Ayalon, “The White Mosque of Ramla,” 76.



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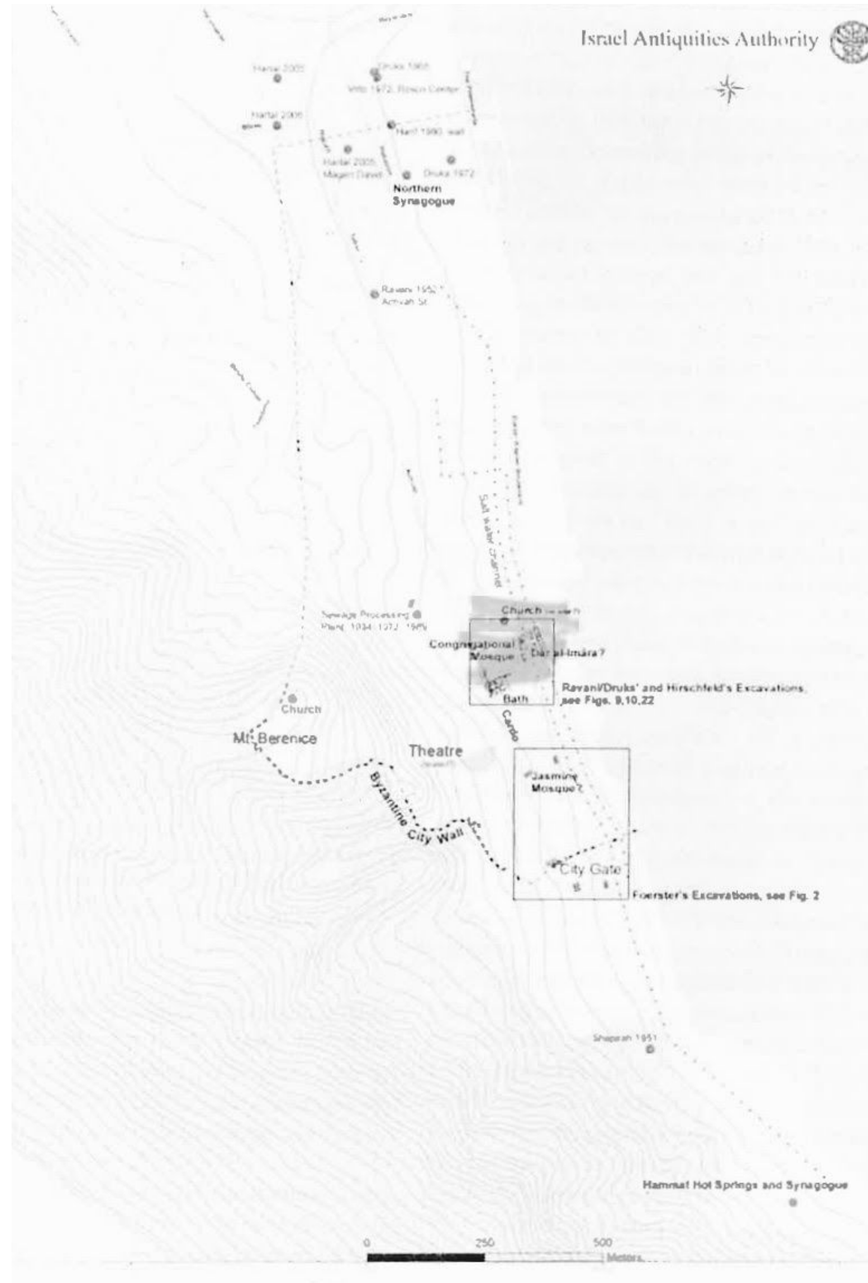
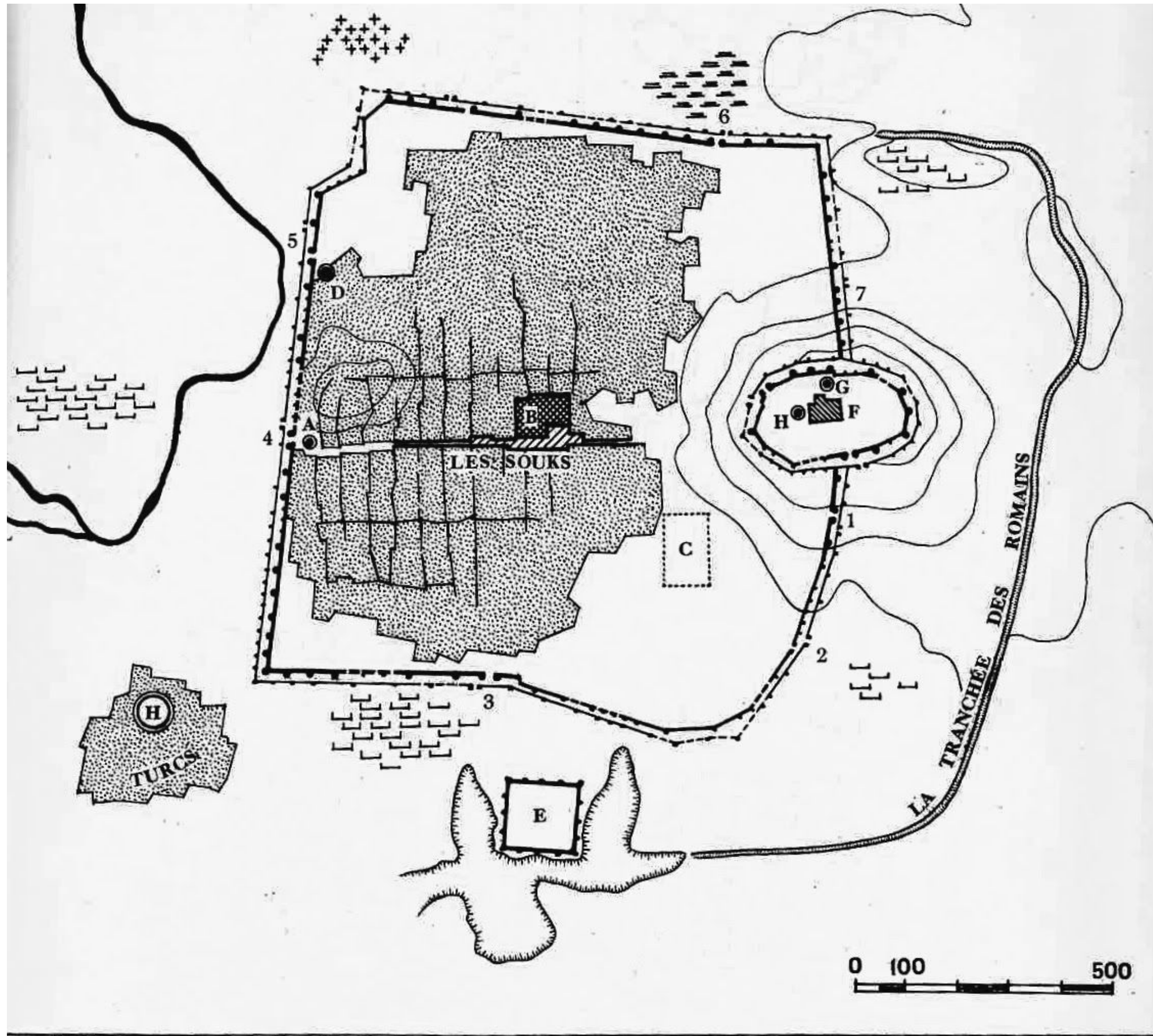


Figure 35: Layout of Tiberias, with the imperial mosque and *dar al- ʿimara* located in the heart of the city.

Cytryn-Silverman, "The Umayyad Mosque of Tiberias," 39.



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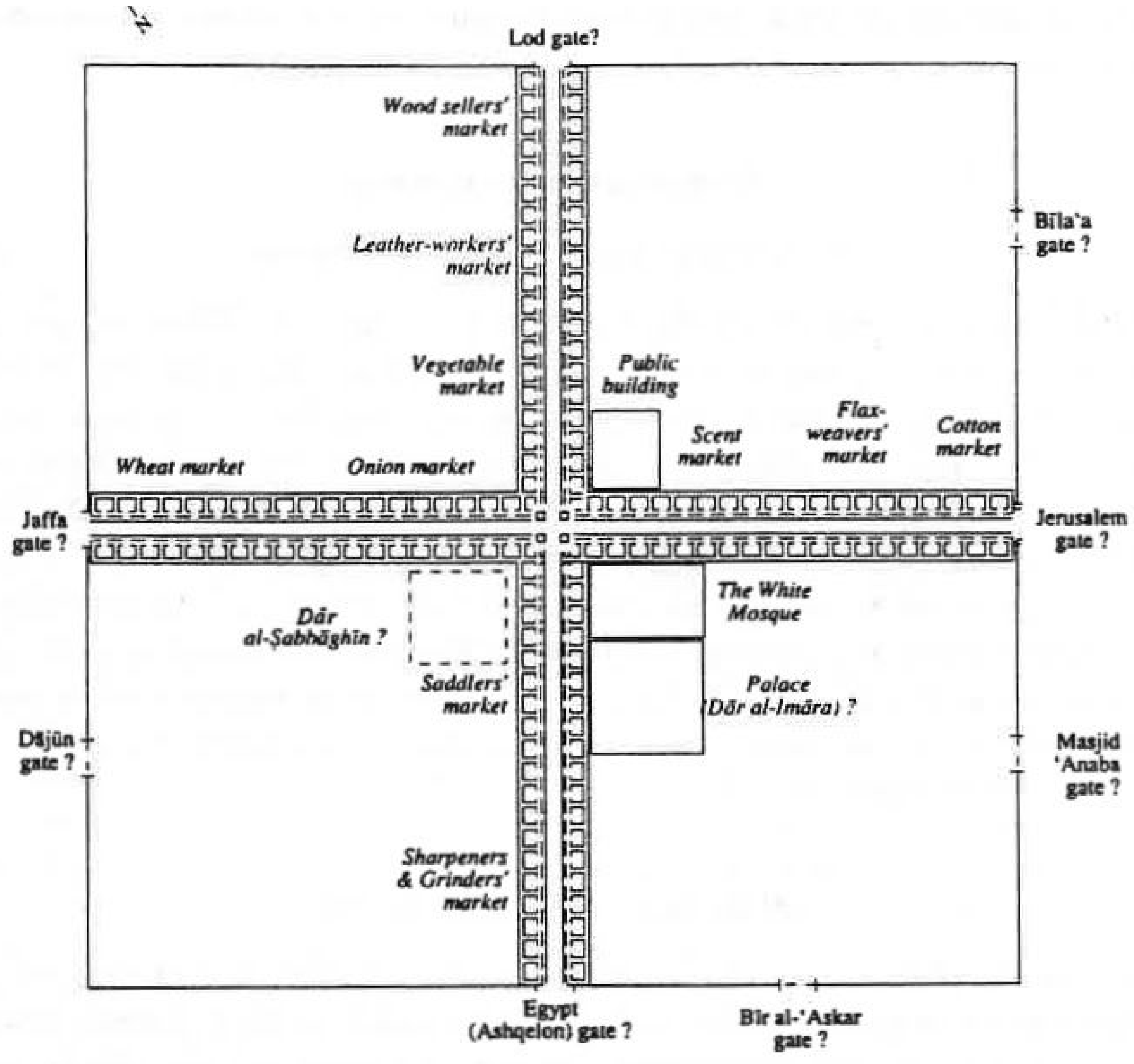

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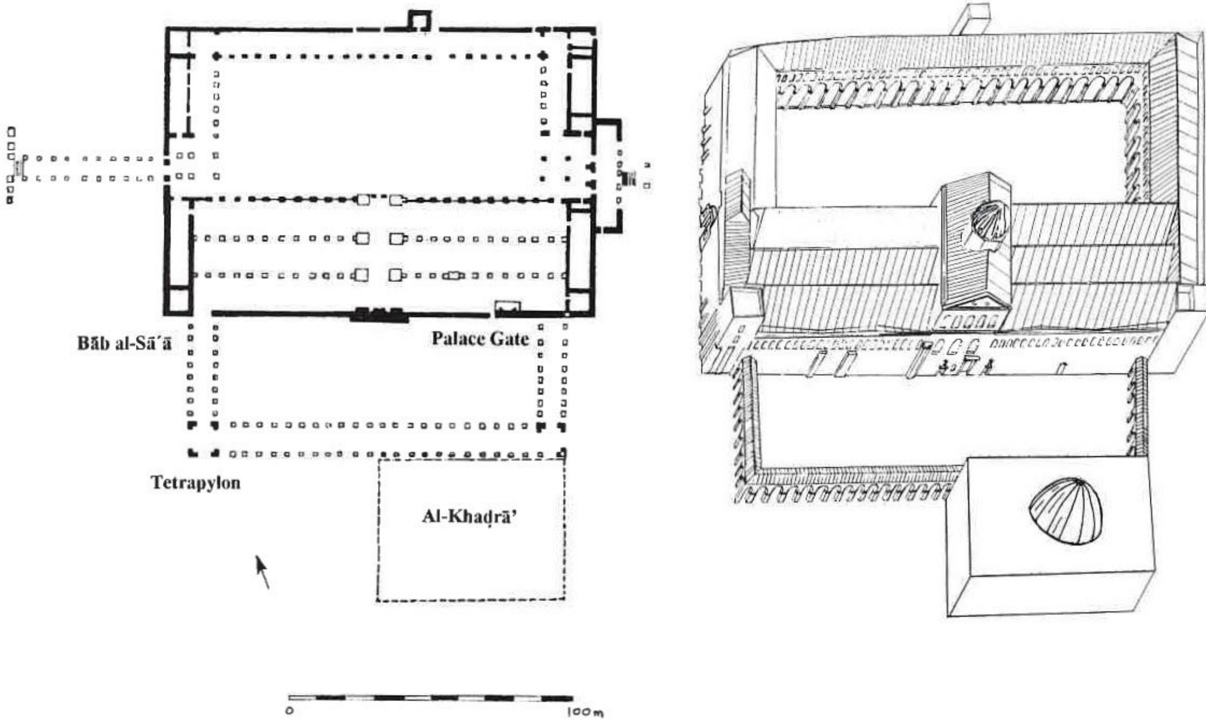

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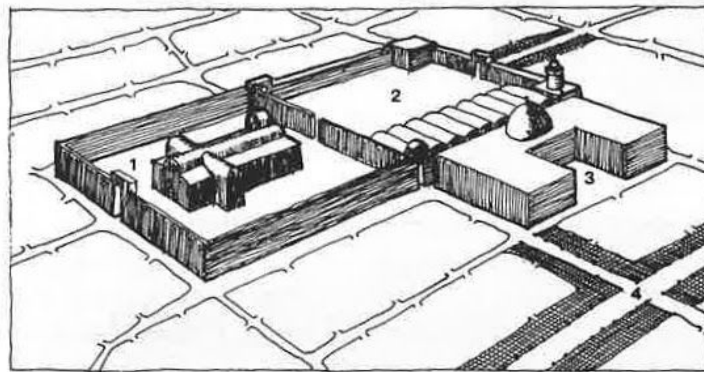

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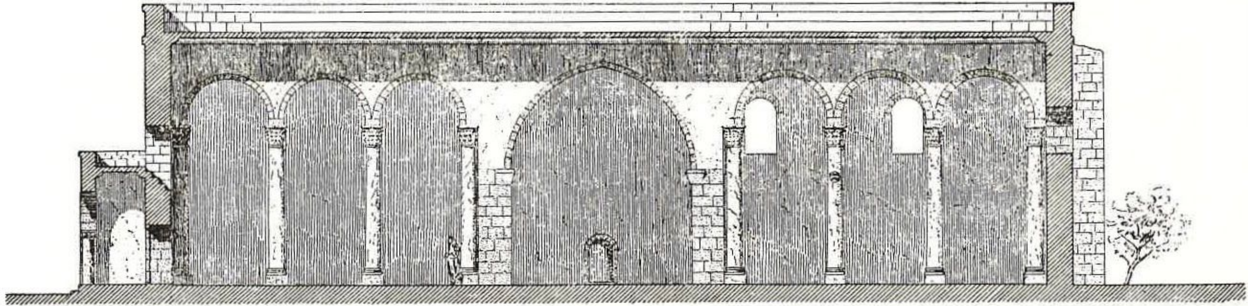

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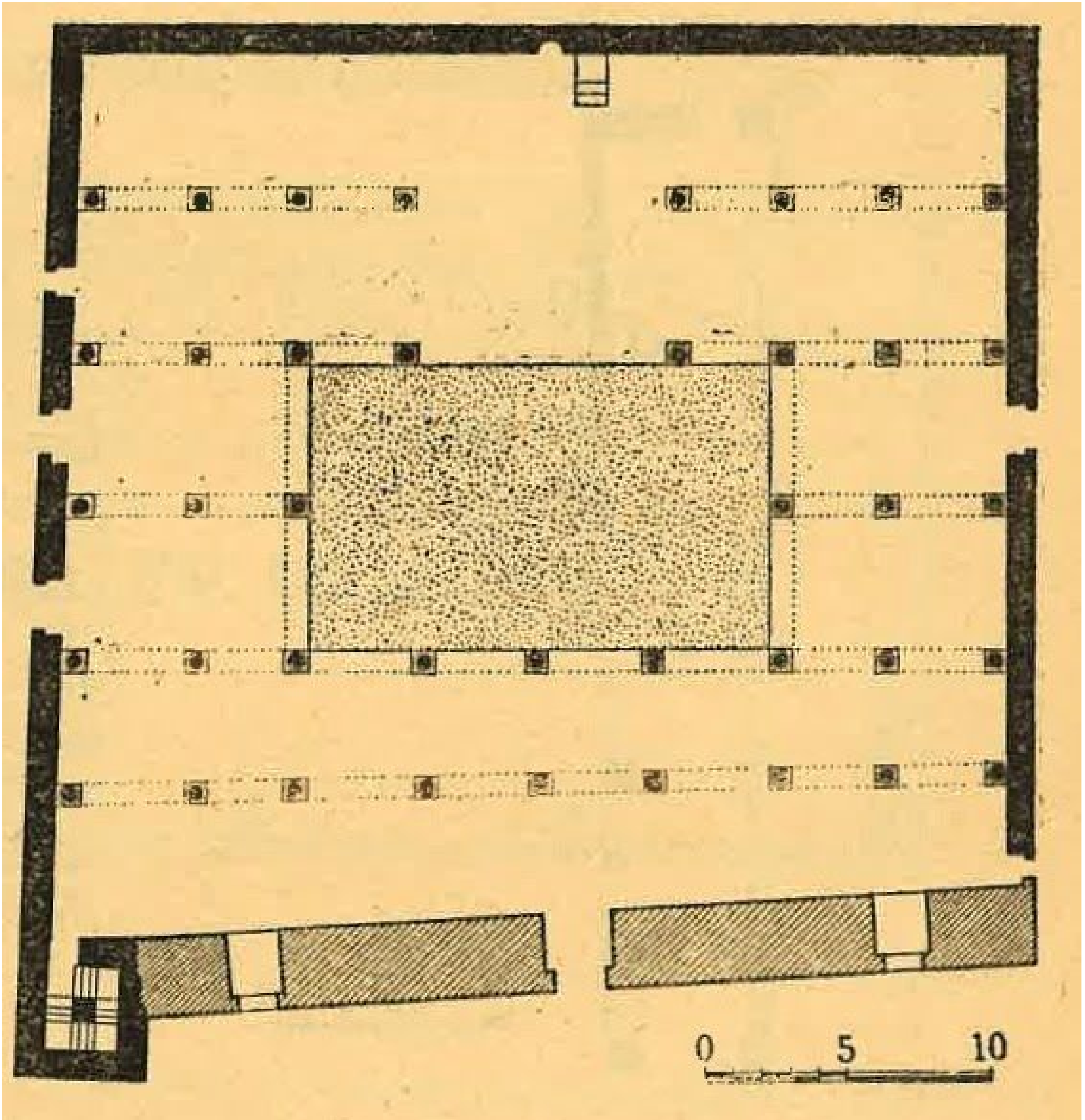
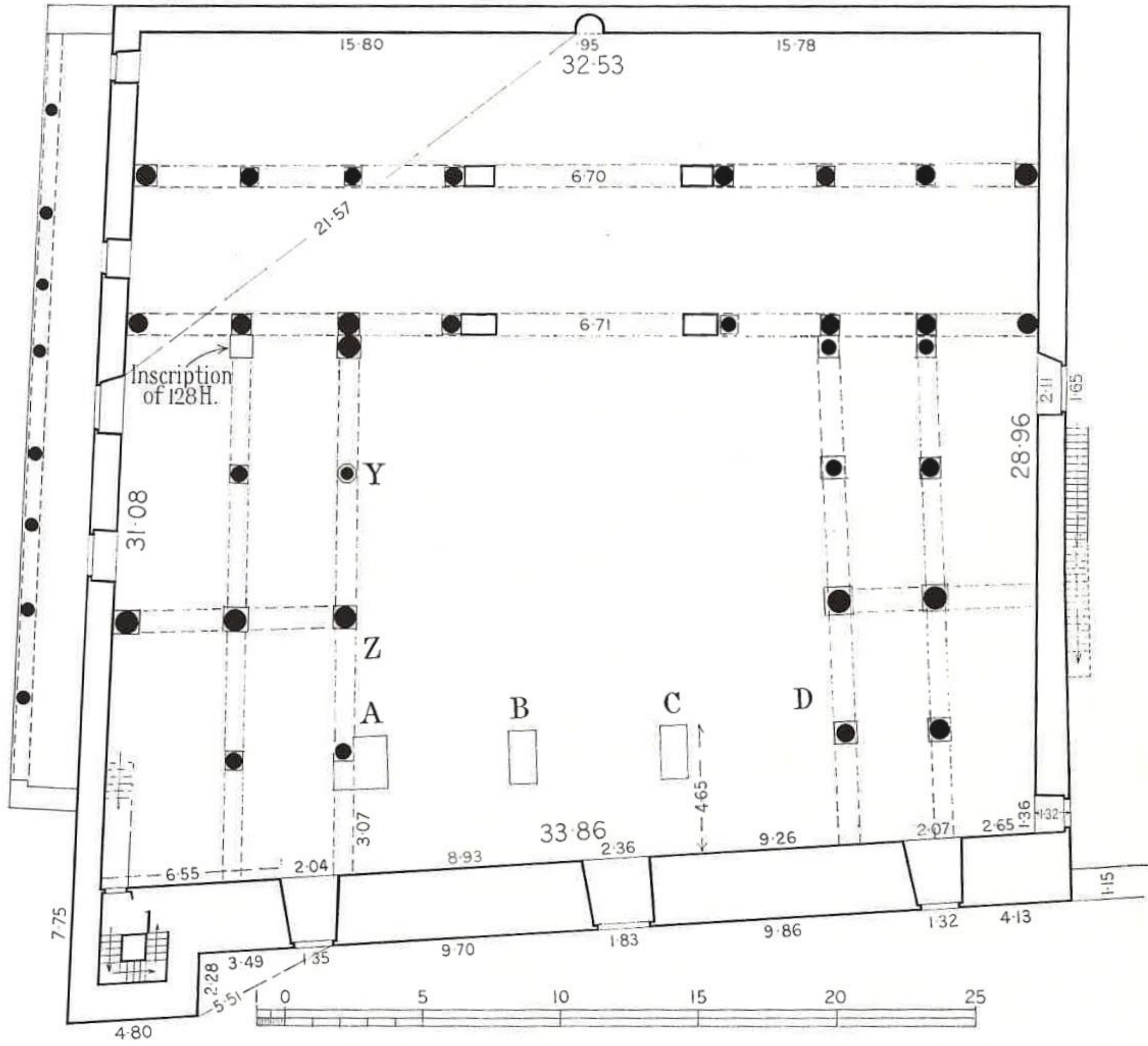


Figure 44: Sauvaget's proposed floor plan for the original mosque at Busra. Sauvaget, *La Mosquée Omeyyade de Médine*, 103.



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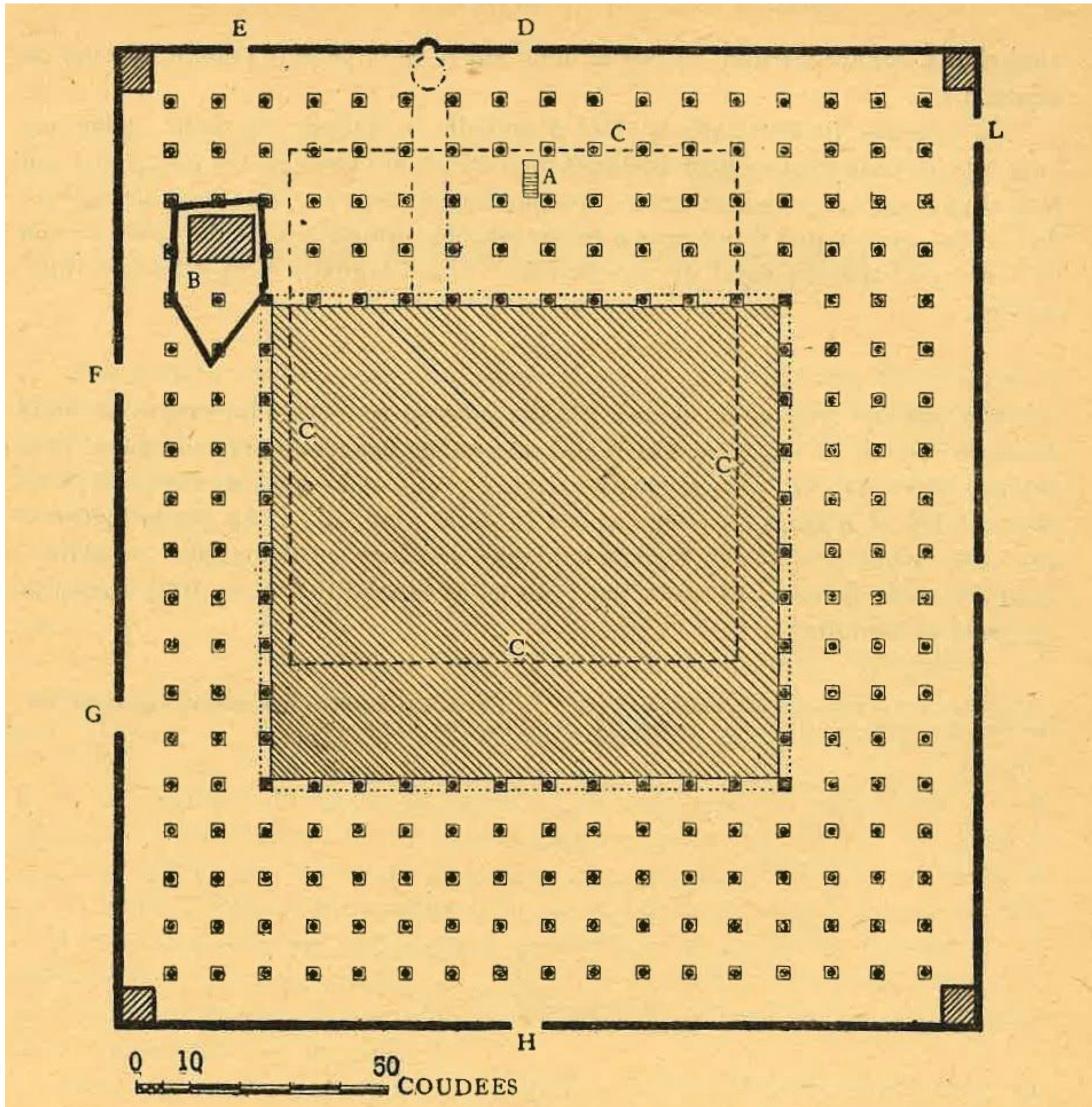

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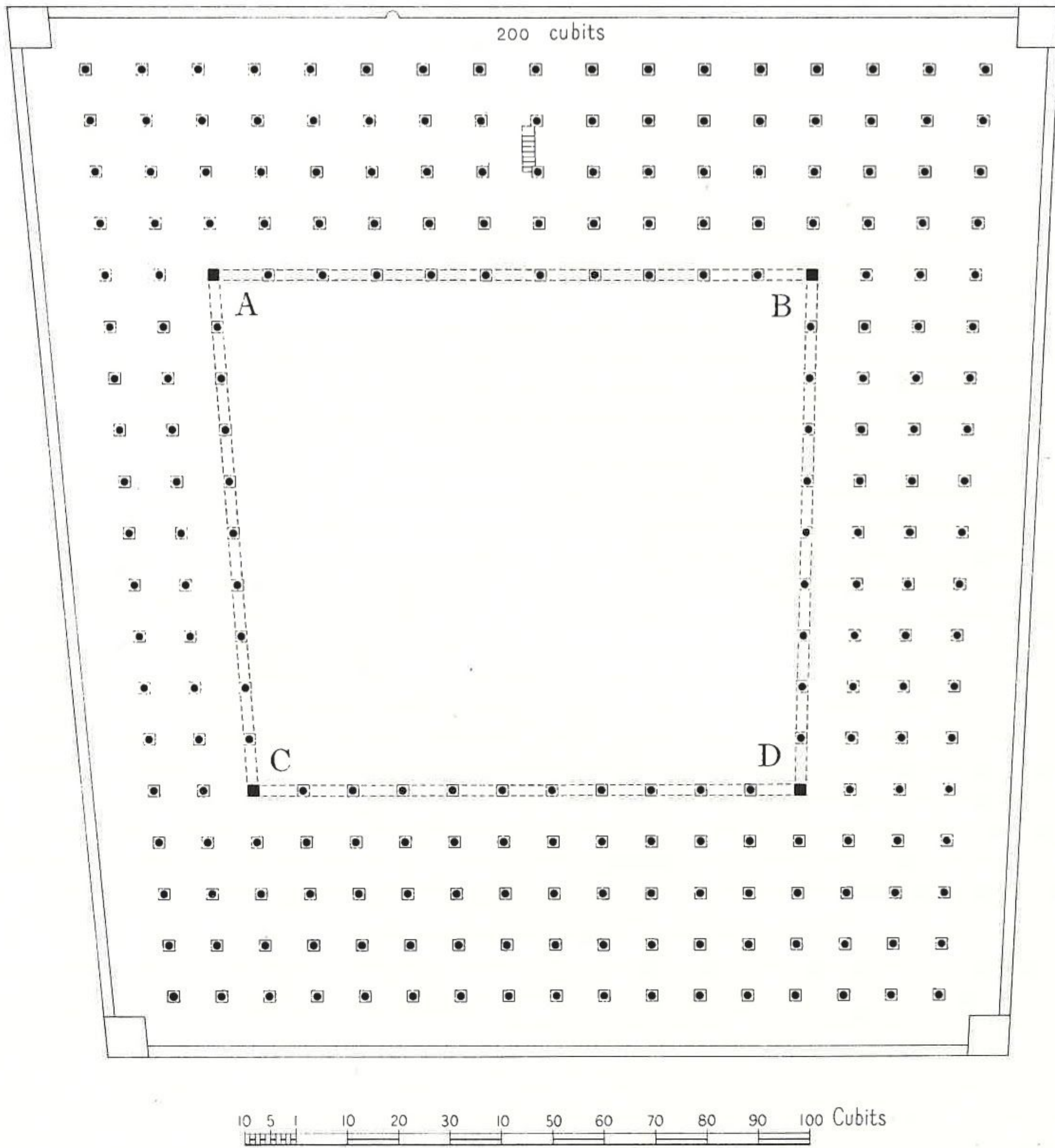
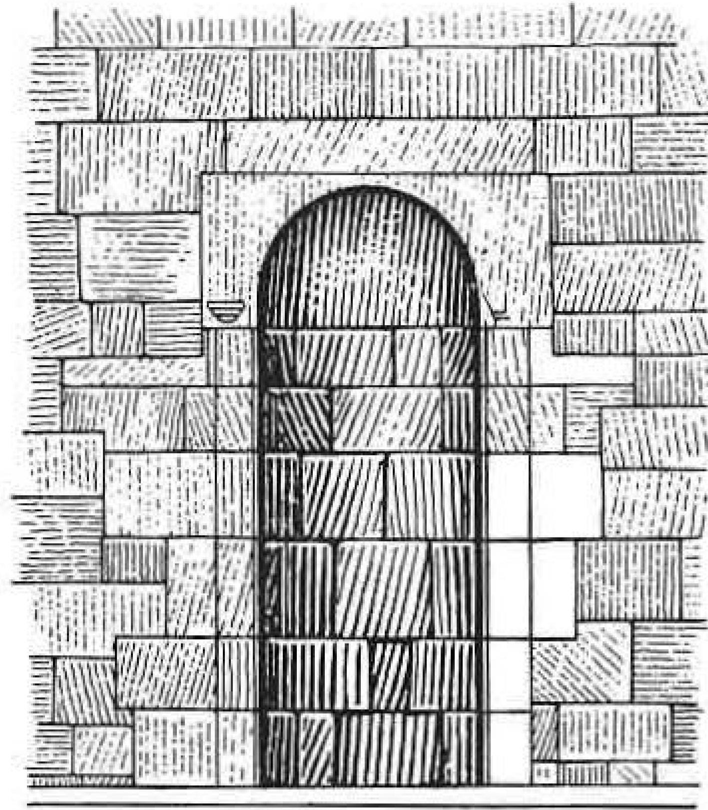


Figure 47: Creswell's proposed floor plan for the al-Walid's mosque at Medina. Creswell, *EMA*, 146.



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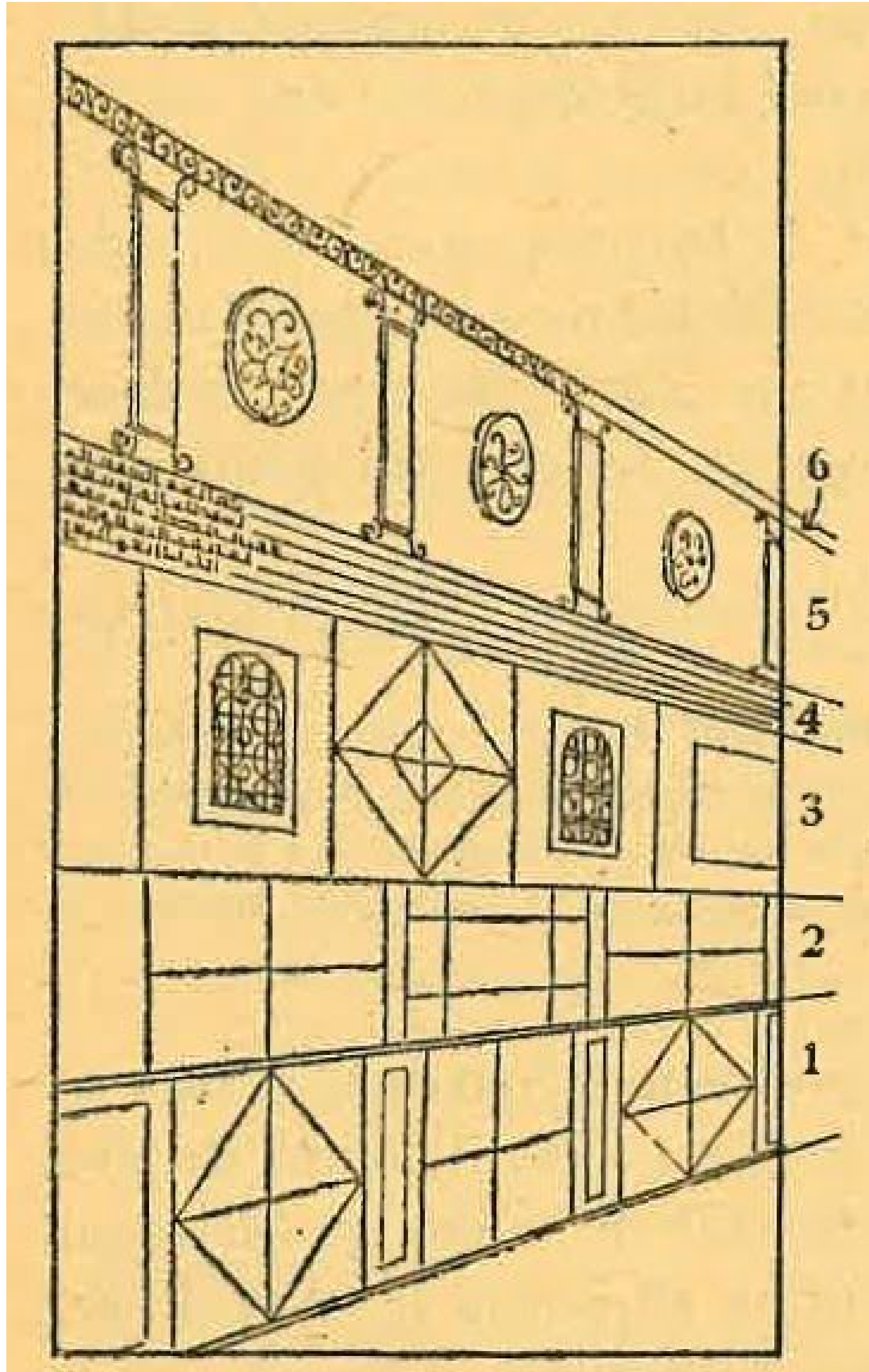

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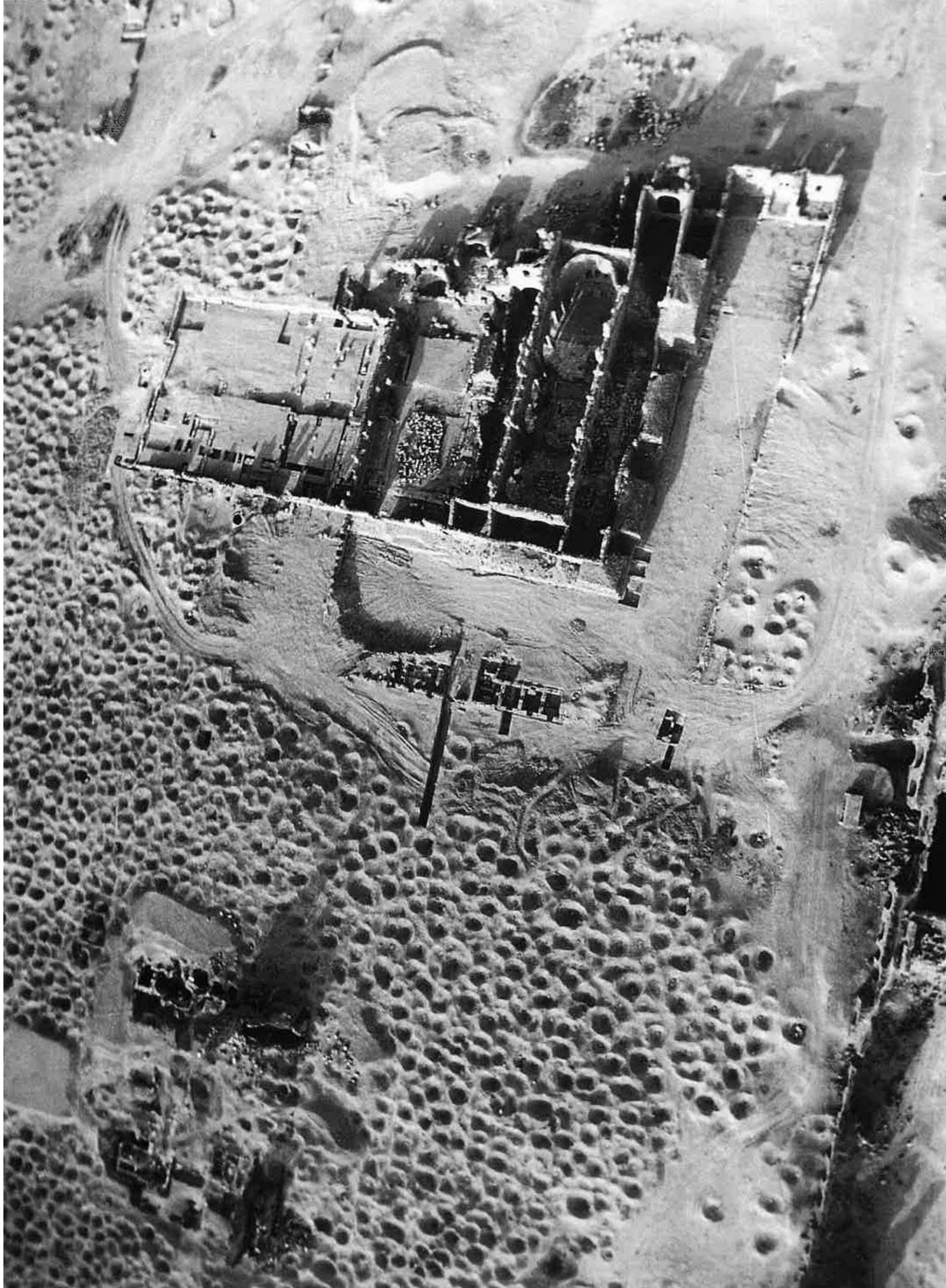

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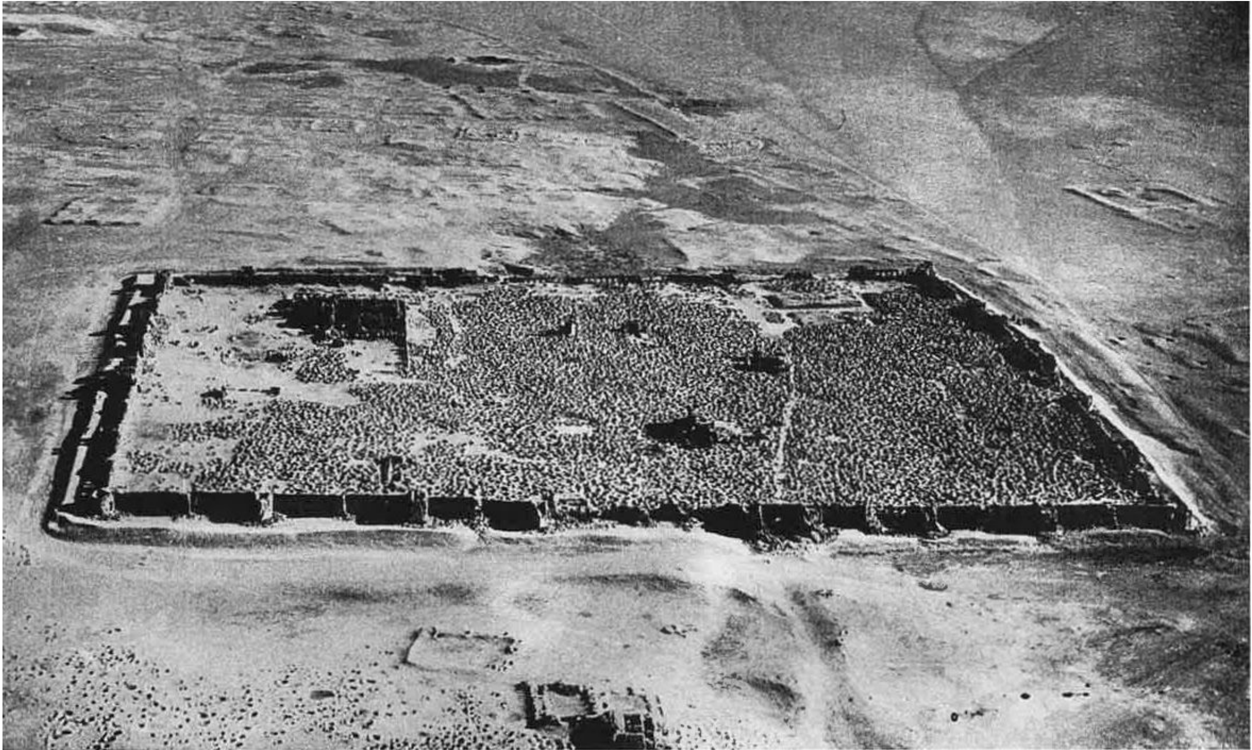
Figure 51: Basilica A and the Great Mosque of Rusafa. Sack, *Die Grosse Moschee von Resafa - Rusafat Hisam*, Tafel 2b.



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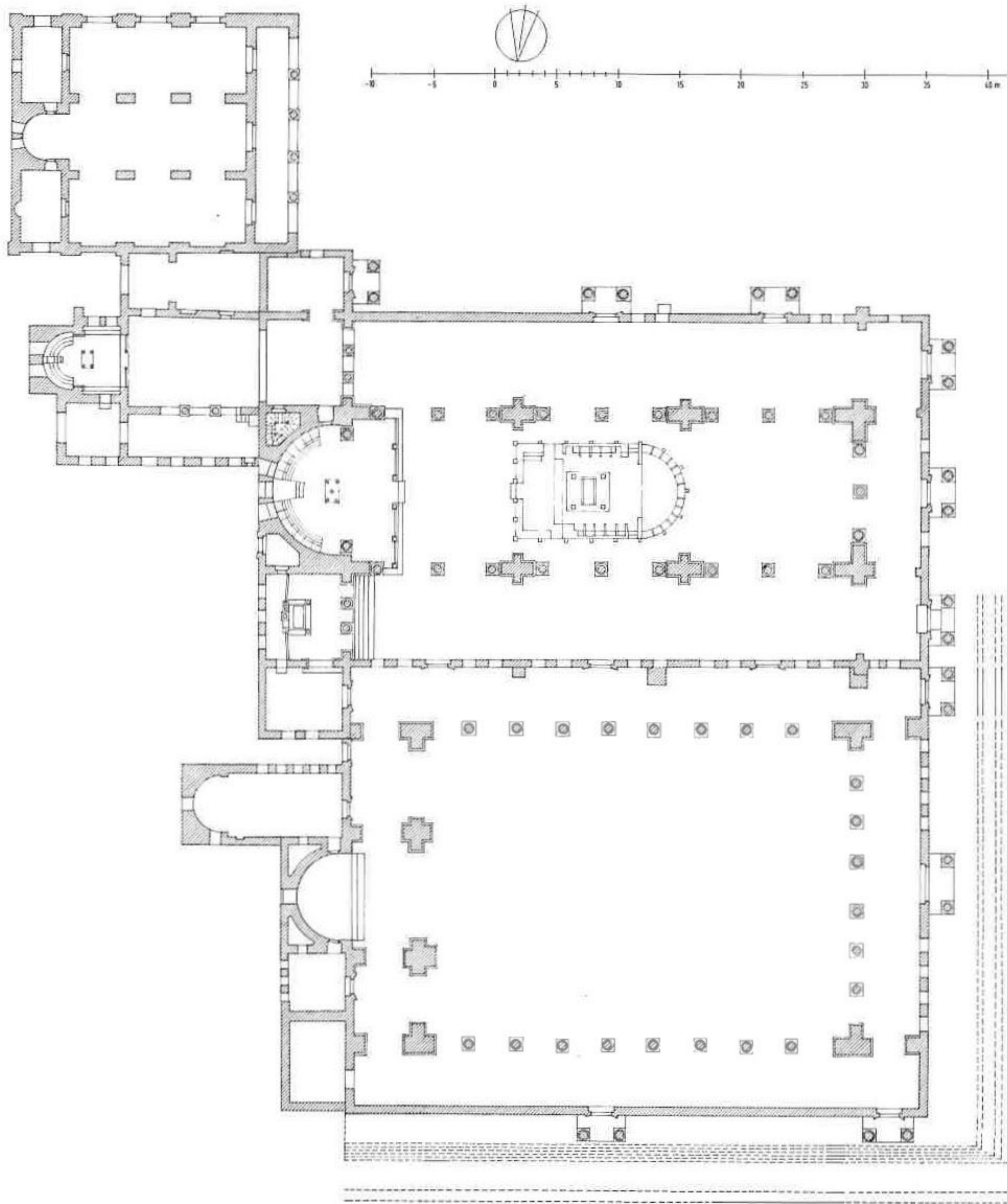

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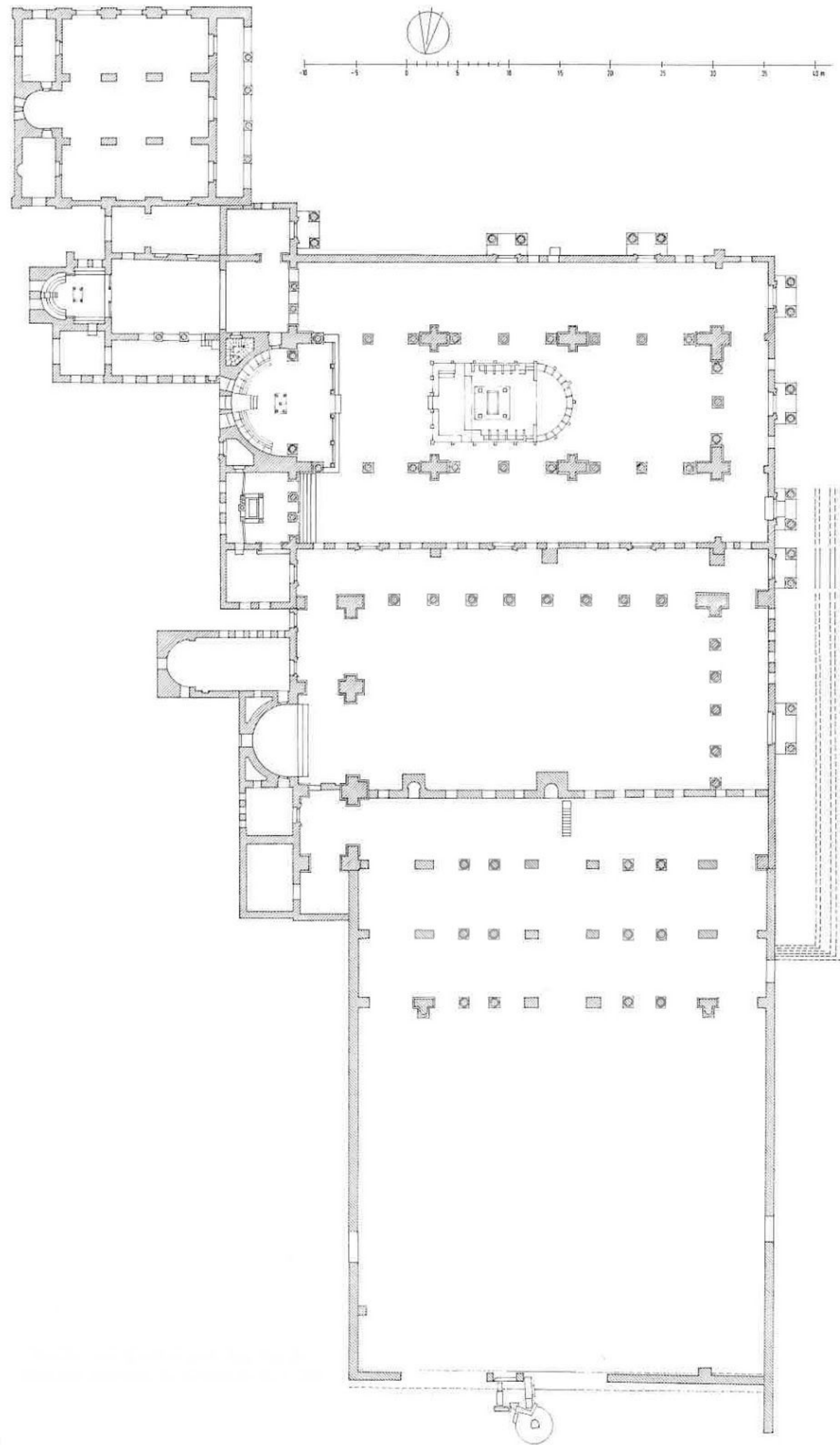

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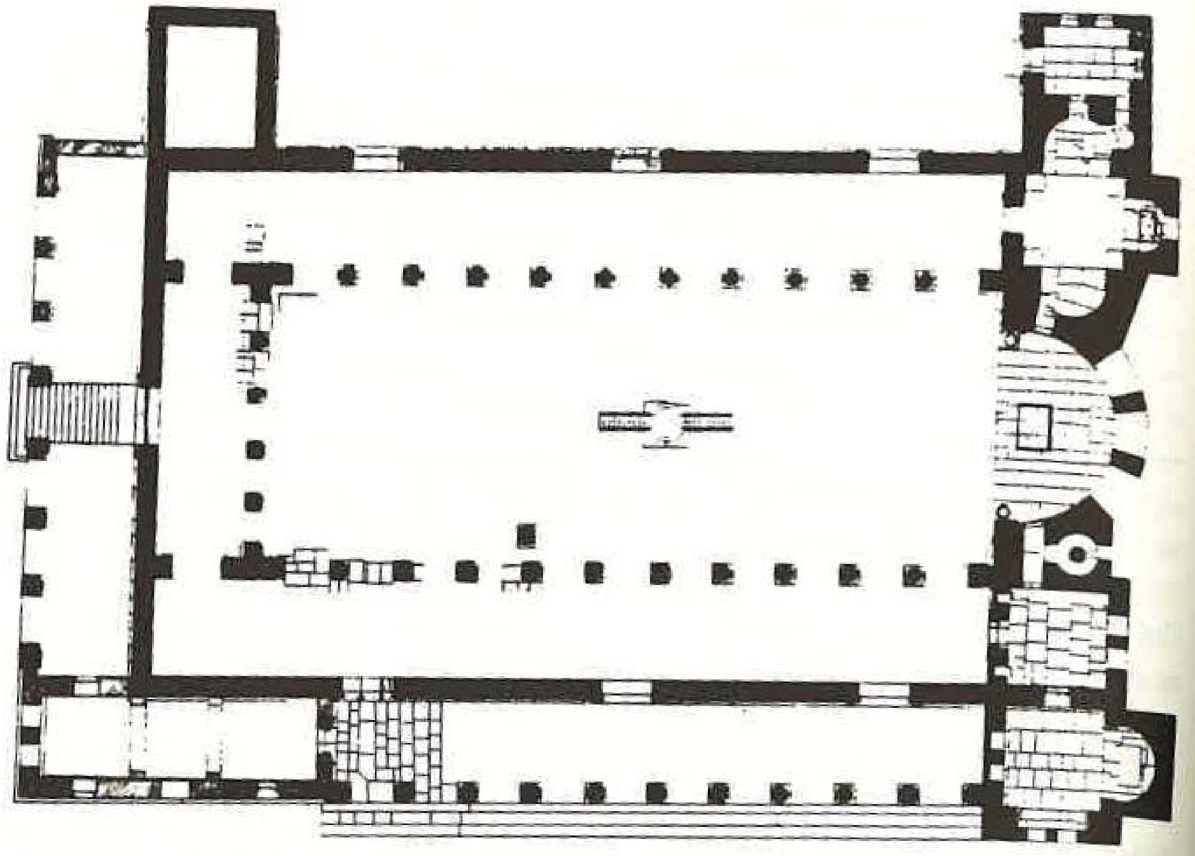

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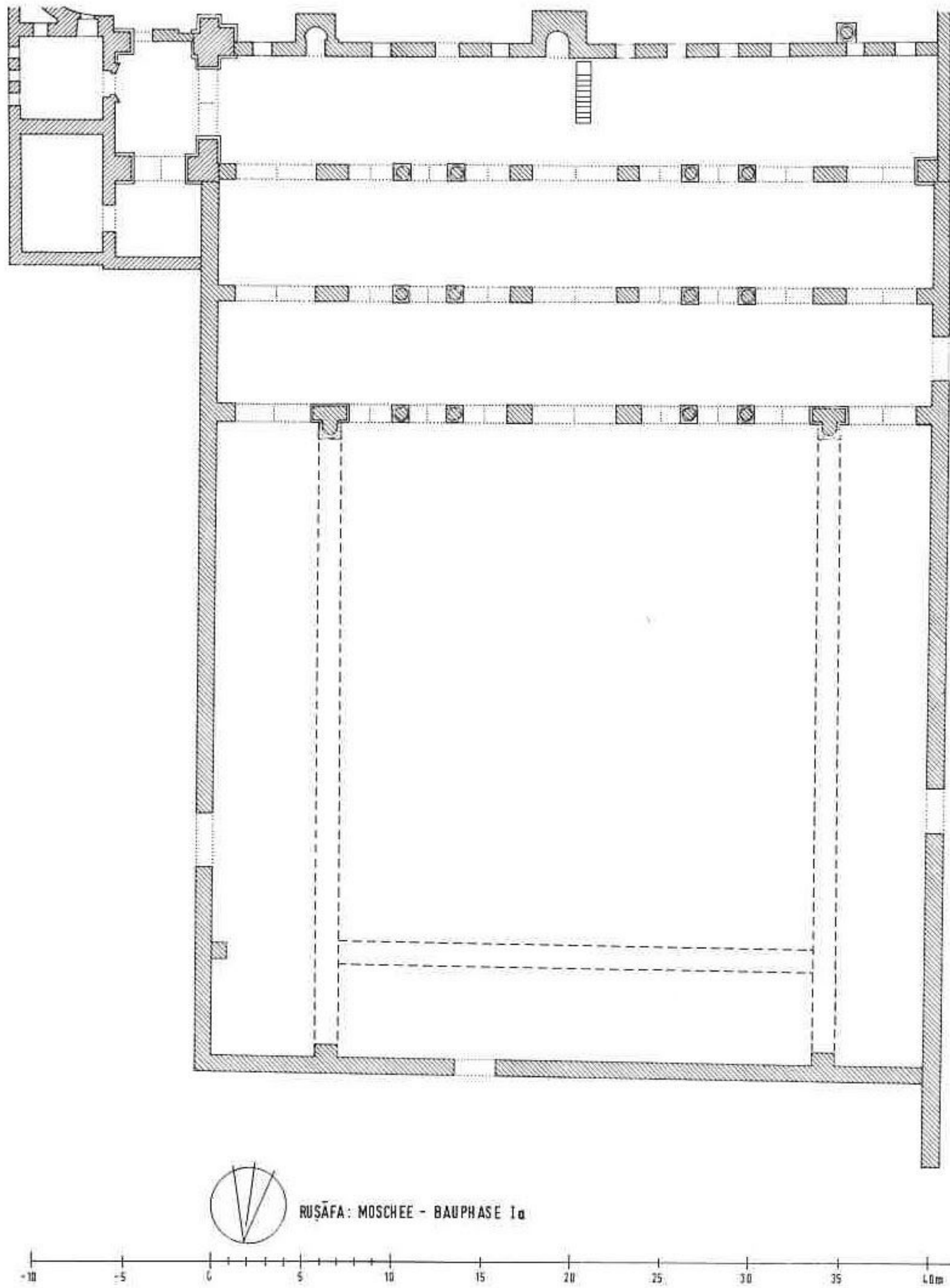


Figure 56: Floor plan of the Great Mosque of Rusafa. Sack, *Die Grosse Moschee von Resafa - Rusafat Hisam*, Tafel 72a.

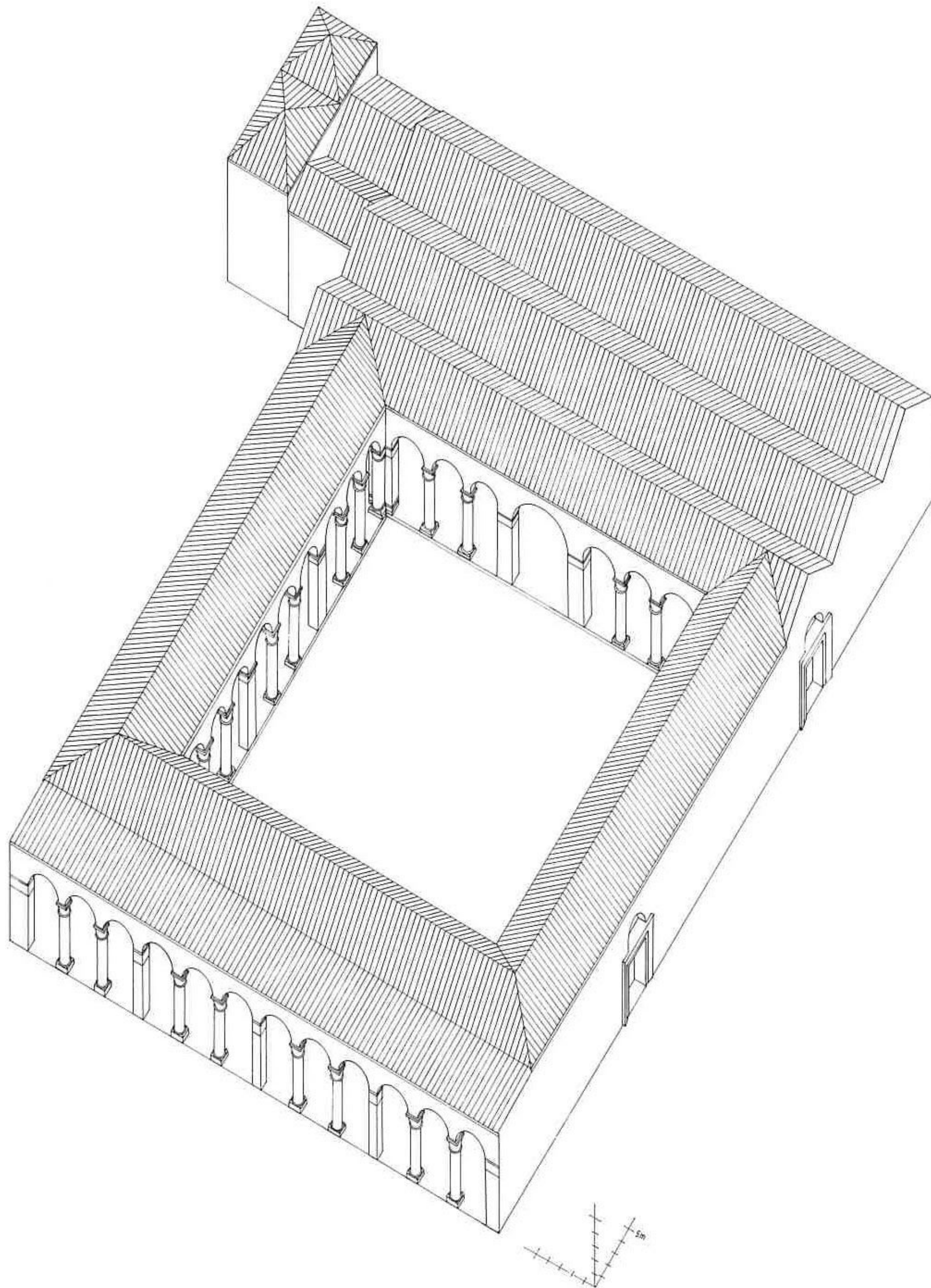


Figure 57: Isometric reconstruction of the Great Mosque of Rusafa. Sack, *Die Grosse Moschee von Resafa - Rusafat Hisam*, Tafel 74.

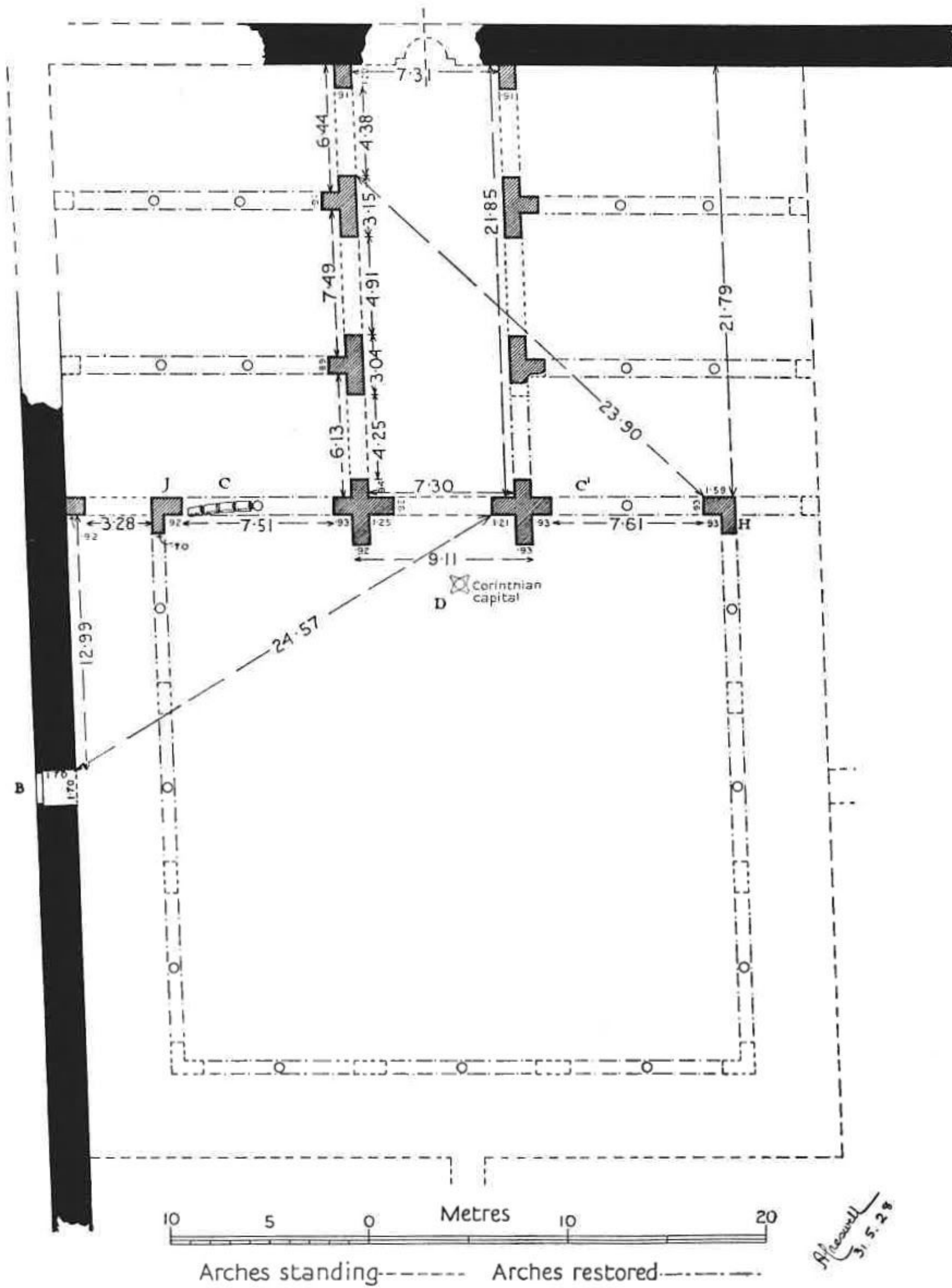
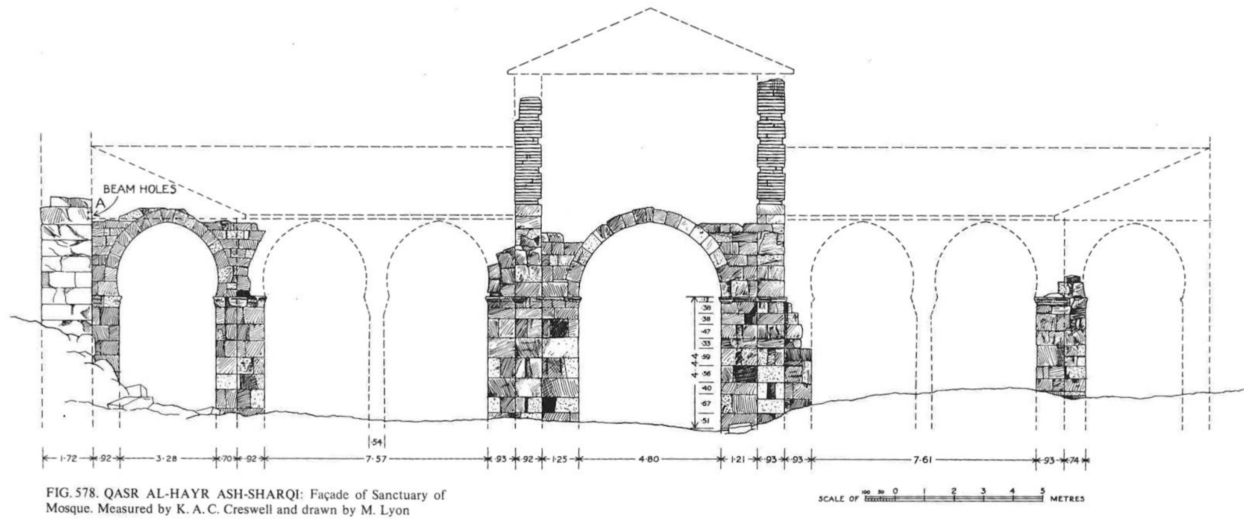


Figure 58: Floor plan of the mosque at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi. Creswell, *EMA*, 531.



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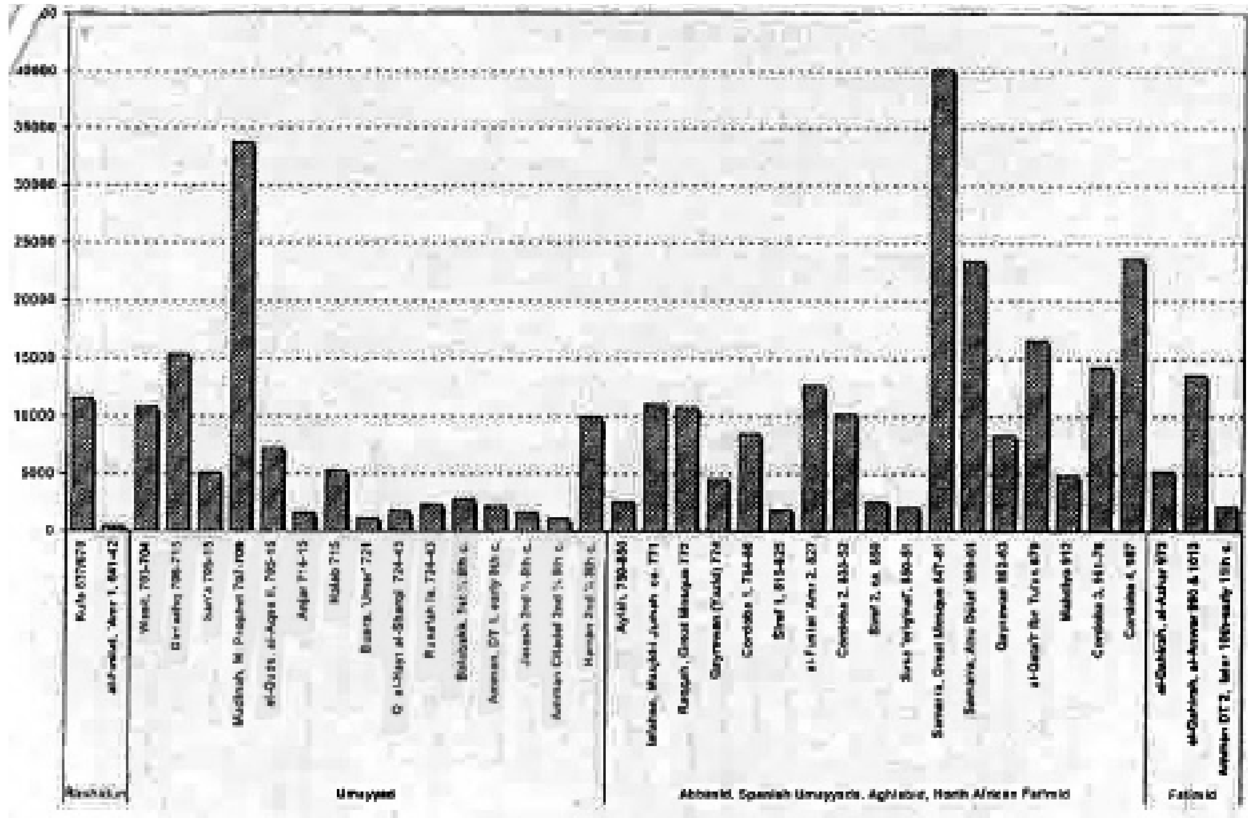

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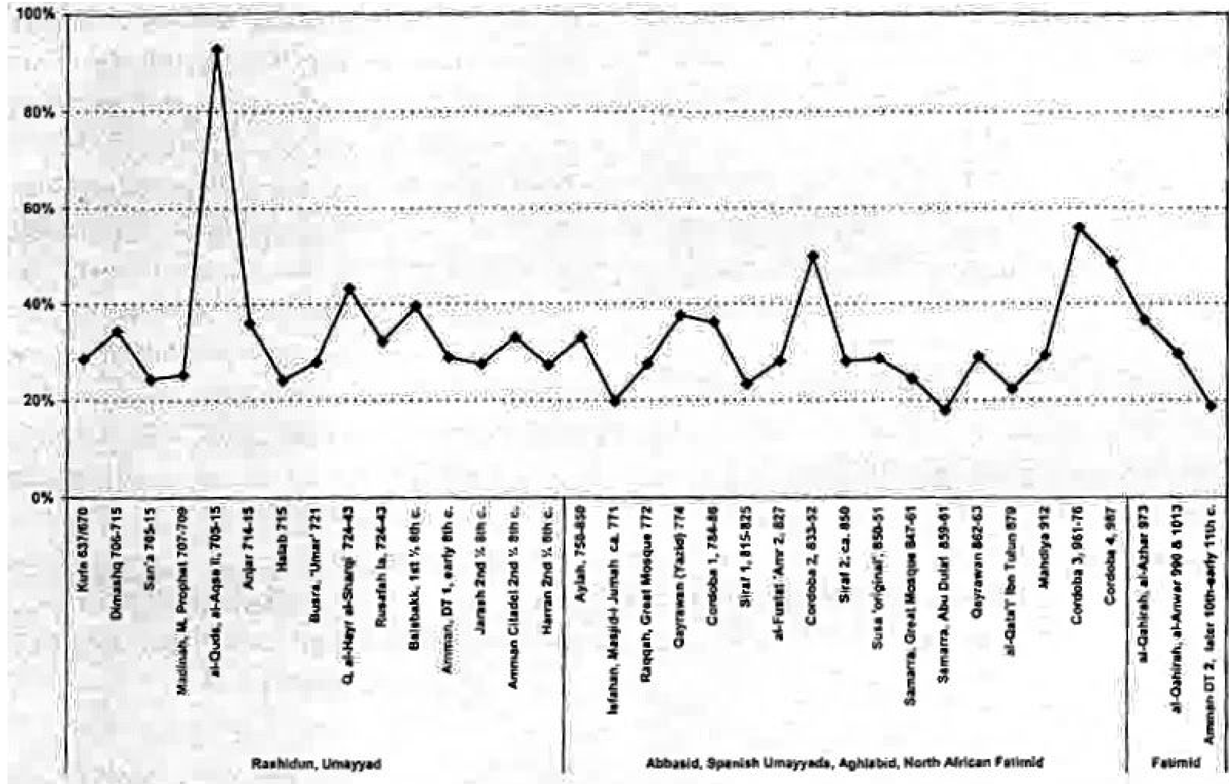

Figure 61: Percentage of total mosque area occupied by prayer hall (based on internal measurements), 7th-11th centuries. Walmsley Damgaard, “The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash,” 376.

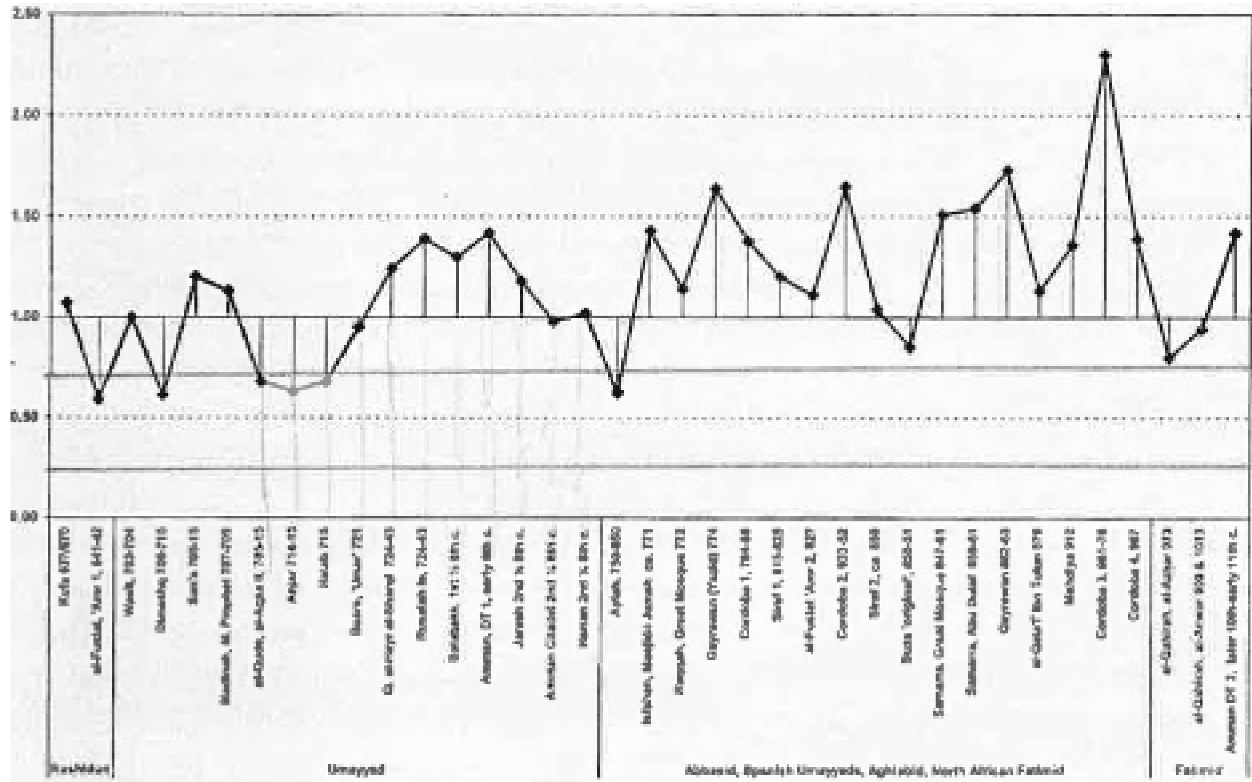

Figure 62: Length to width ratios of early caliphal mosques, 7th-11th centuries. “The width of each mosque is set according to a fixed point of 1.00, while the alternating line shows the relative proportion (greater or less) of a mosque’s length to its width (hence more than 1.00 = longer; less than 1.00 = wider).” Walmsley Damgaard, “The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash,” 374.

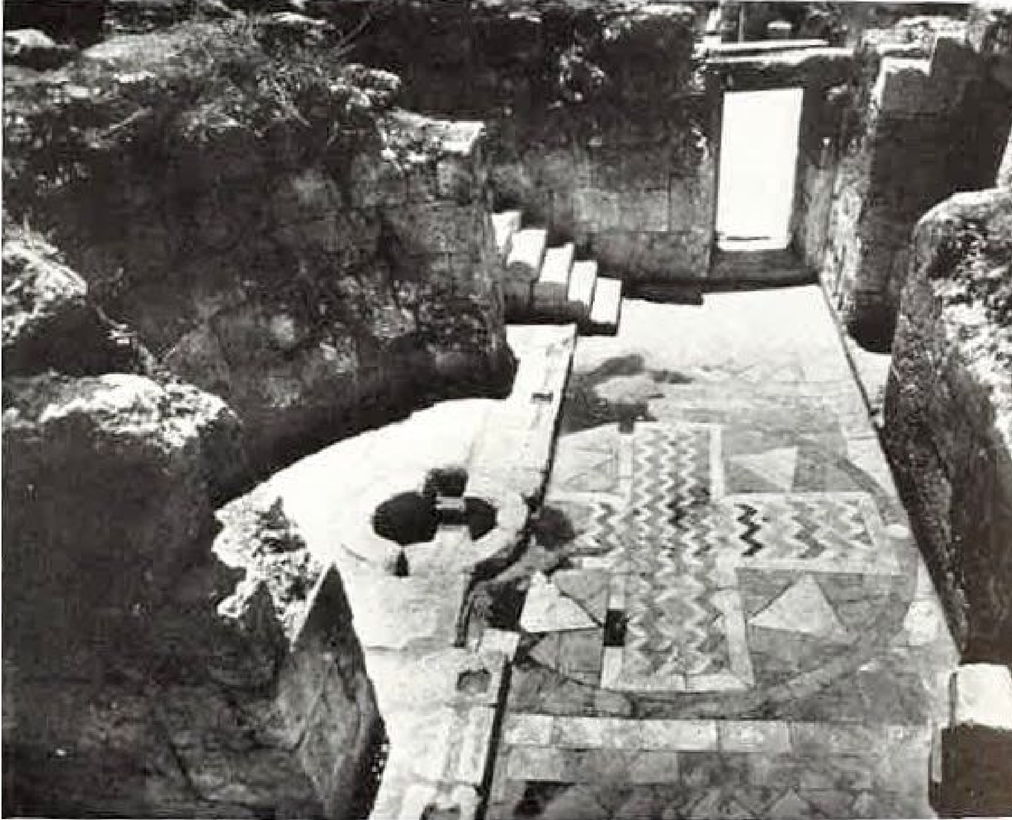

Figure 63: The marble floor in the baptistry of the pre-7th century Church of St. John the Baptist in Jarash.

Crowfoot, *Early Churches in Palestine*, 116-17, Plate IVb.

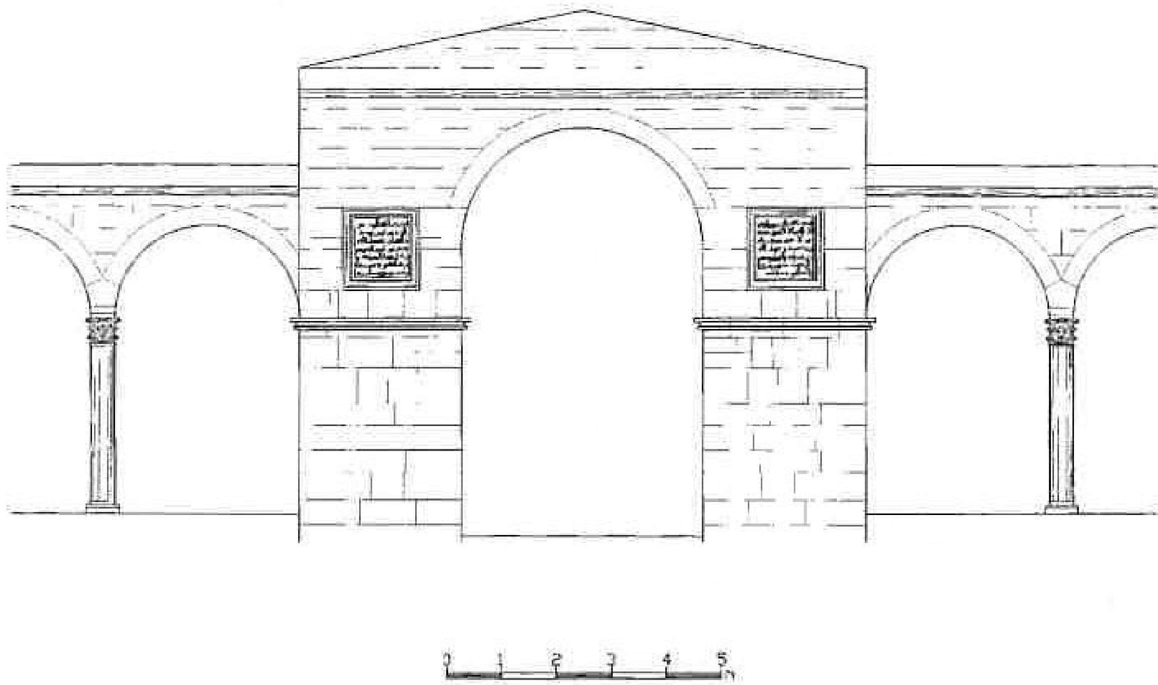

Figure 64: Reconstruction of the south-eastern facade gate and arcade from Baysan. Khamis, “Two wall mosaic inscriptions,” 162.

Figure 65: “Computerized reconstruction of the left-hand mosaic inscription.” Khamis, “Two wall mosaic inscriptions,” 164.

Figure 66: Entrance hall, south side bay, decorations at Khirbat al-Mafjar. Creswell, EMA, plate 102b.

Figure 67: Floor mosaic, including the famous “Tree of Life” image, from Khirbat al-Mafjar. Creswell, *EMA*, plate 108a.

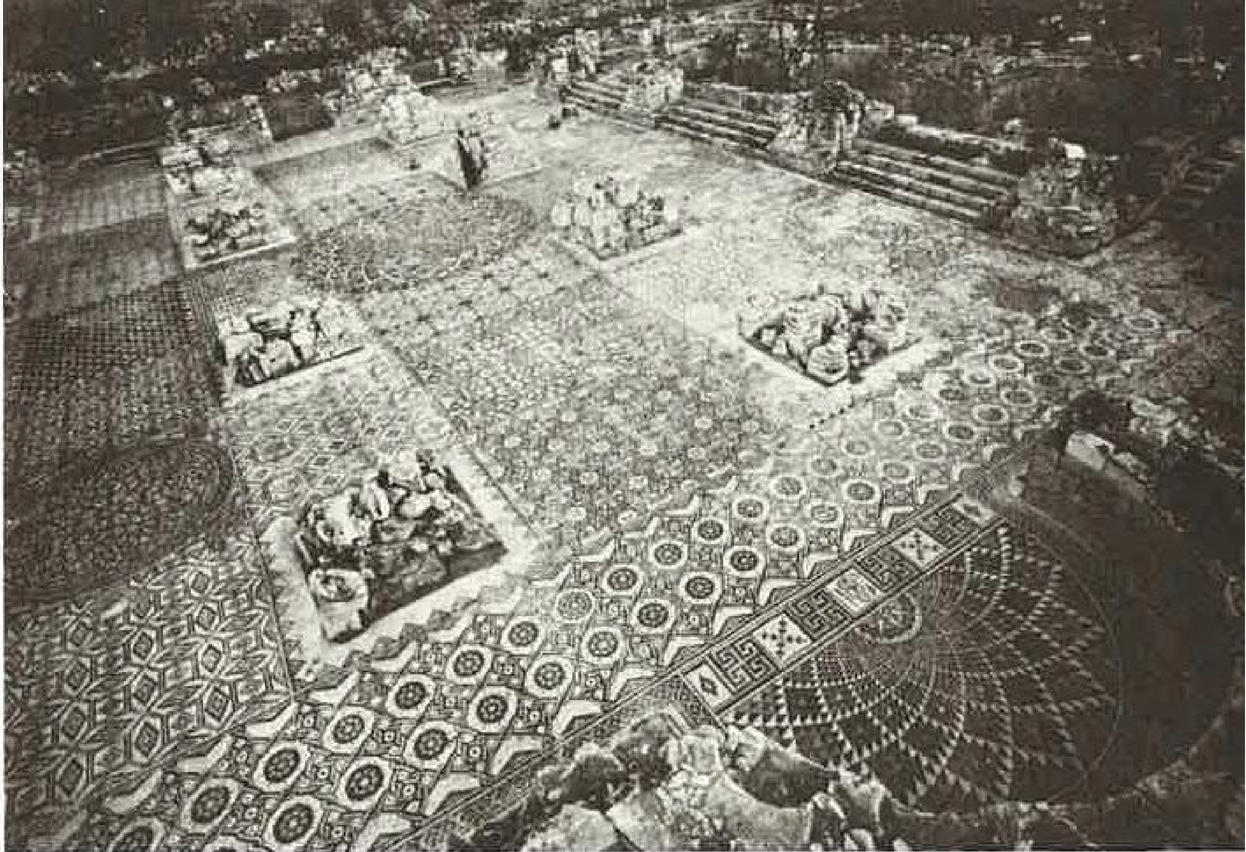

Figure 68: The bath hall mosaic floor, seen from the northwest, at Khirbat al-Mafjar. For scale, note the adult man standing just inside the second column from the back in the easternmost row. Creswell, *EMA*, plate 107b.

Figure 69: Mosaic floors at Qasr al-Hallabat, restored after original schema. “Mosaic Floor,” Art Destination Jordan.

https://universes.art/en/art-destinations/jordan/desert-castles/qasr-al-hallabat/mosaic-floor-2

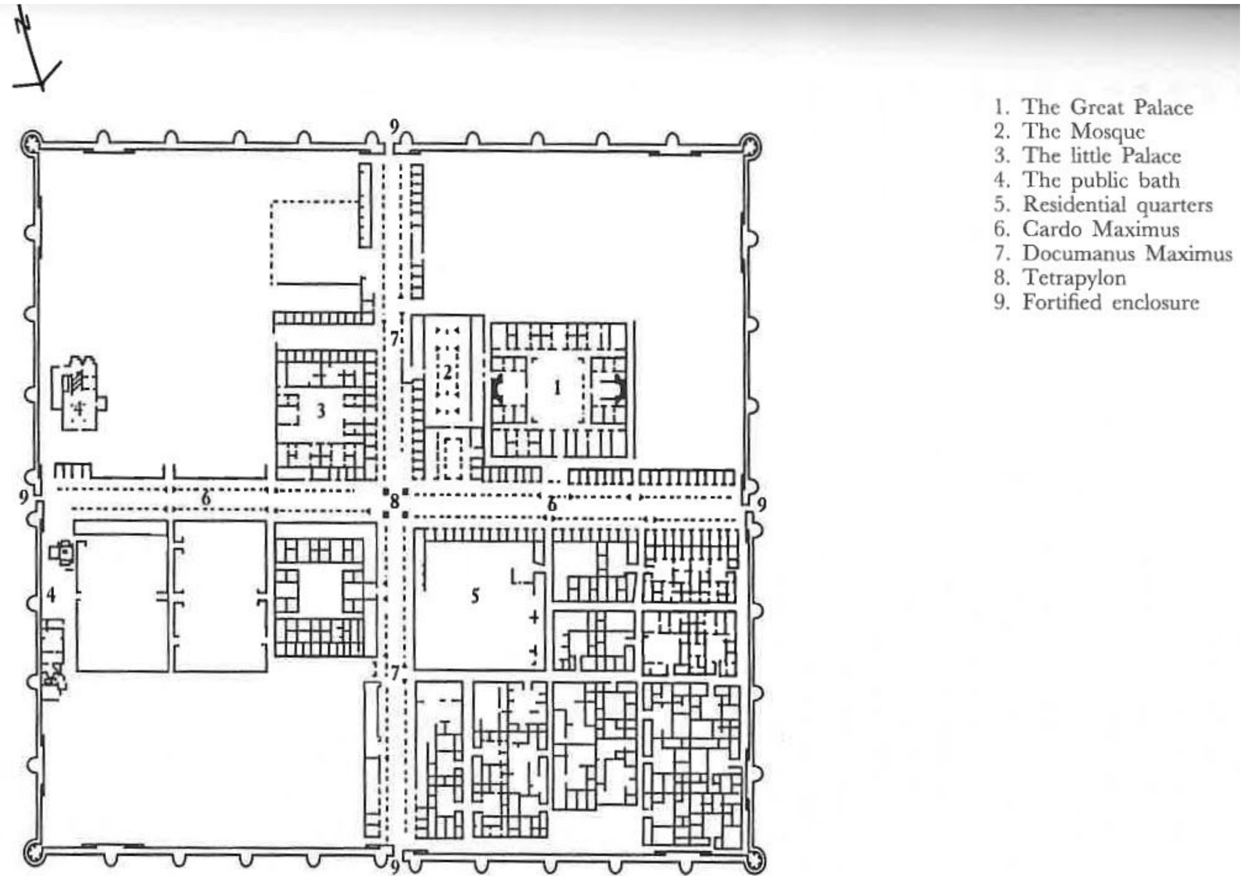

Figure 70: Unscaled map of ‘Anjar. Hillenbrand ,“Anjar and Early Islamic Urbanism,” 63.

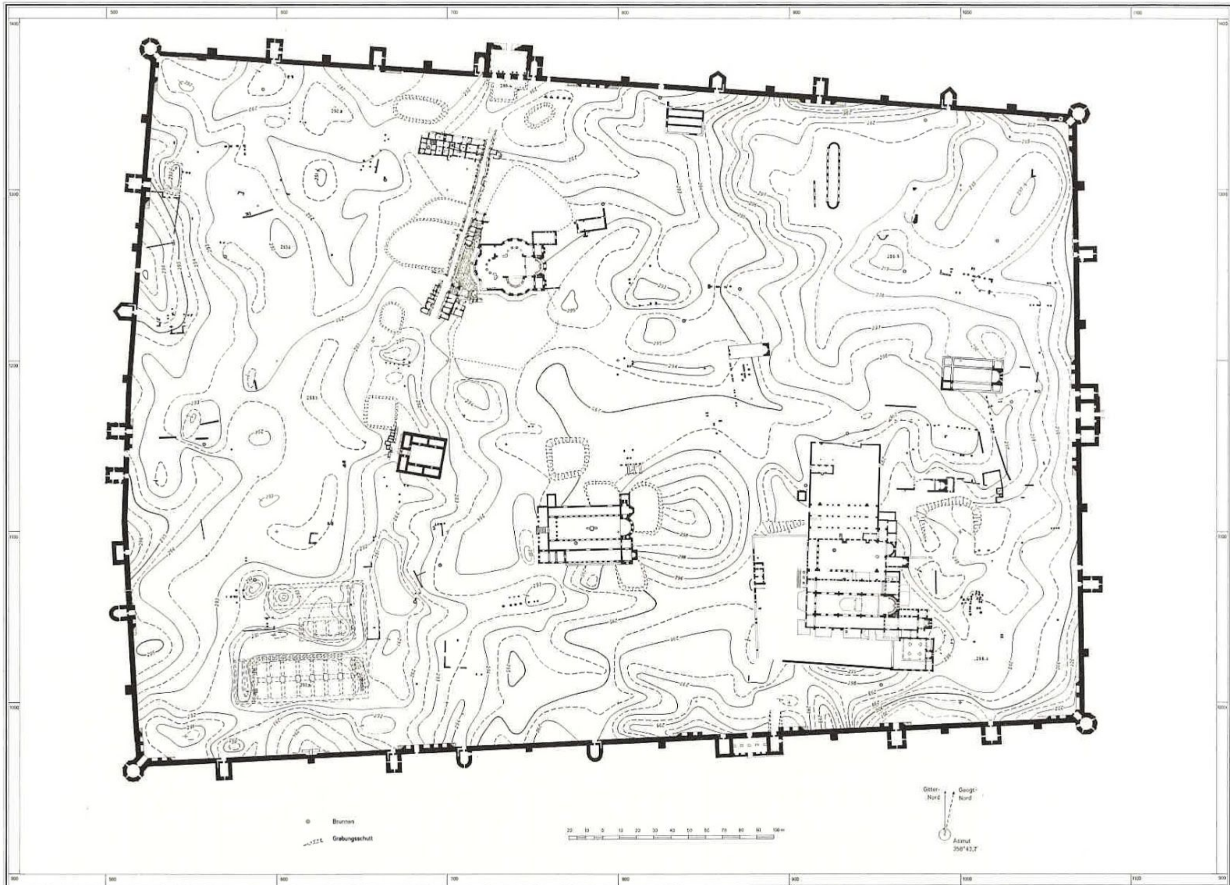

Abb. 1 Resafa-Sergiupolis/Ruṣāfat Hišām, Stadtplan, nach W. Karnapp. Ergänzende Aufnahmen der Höhenschichten 1976 durch das Deutsche Geodätische Forschungsinstitut München (H. Tremel). Die Große Moschee von Ruṣāfat Hišām wurde nach dem Forschungsstand von 1986 eingetragen (M. 1:2500)

Figure 71: Map of Rusafa. Sack, *Die Grosse Moschee von Resafa - Rusafat Hisam*, Abbildung 1.

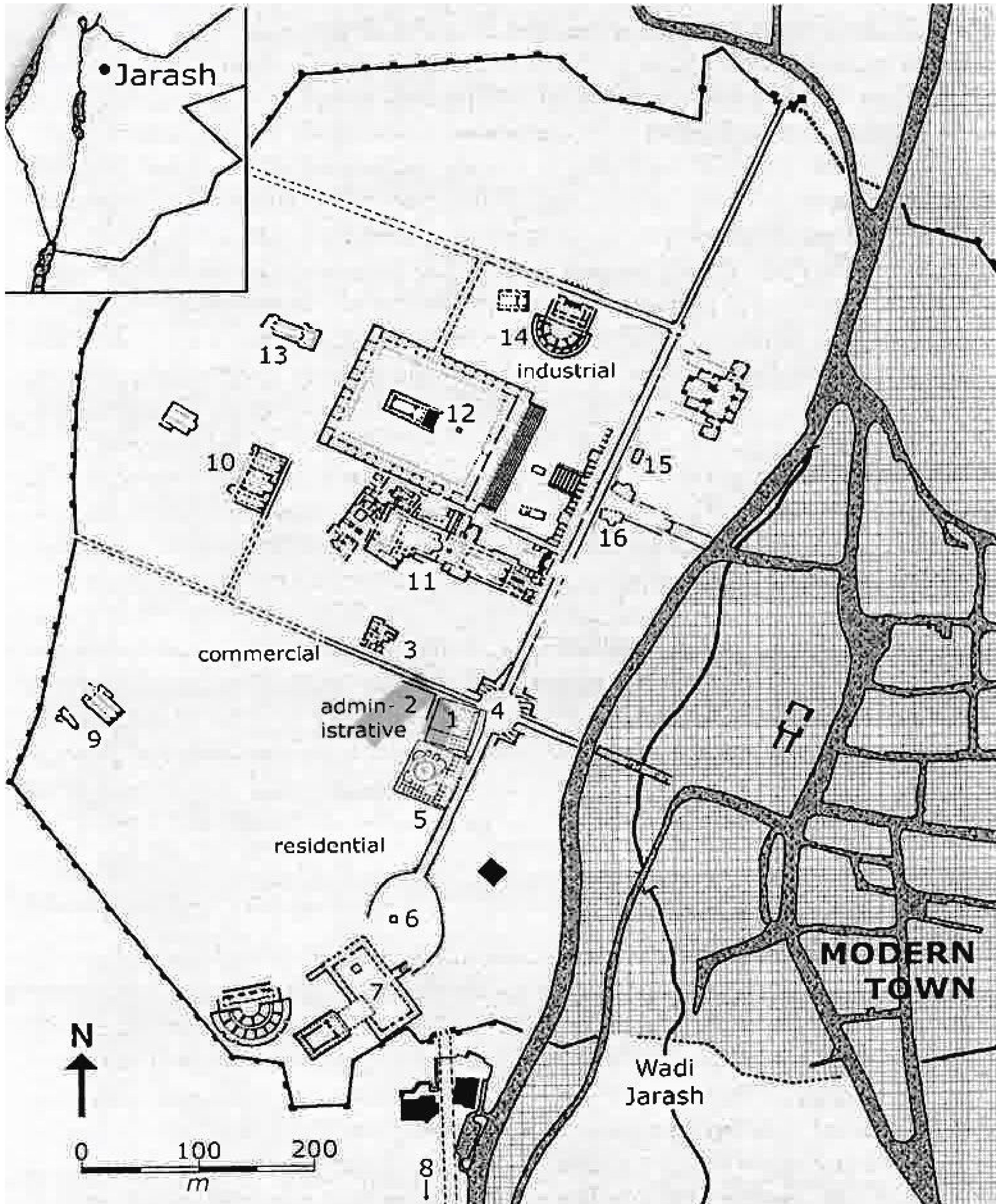

Figure 72: Map of the principal urban features of Jarash. 1: Umayyad mosque; 2: possible Islamic administrative center; 3: market (suq); 11: Christian complex of two churches. Walmsley and Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash," 365.

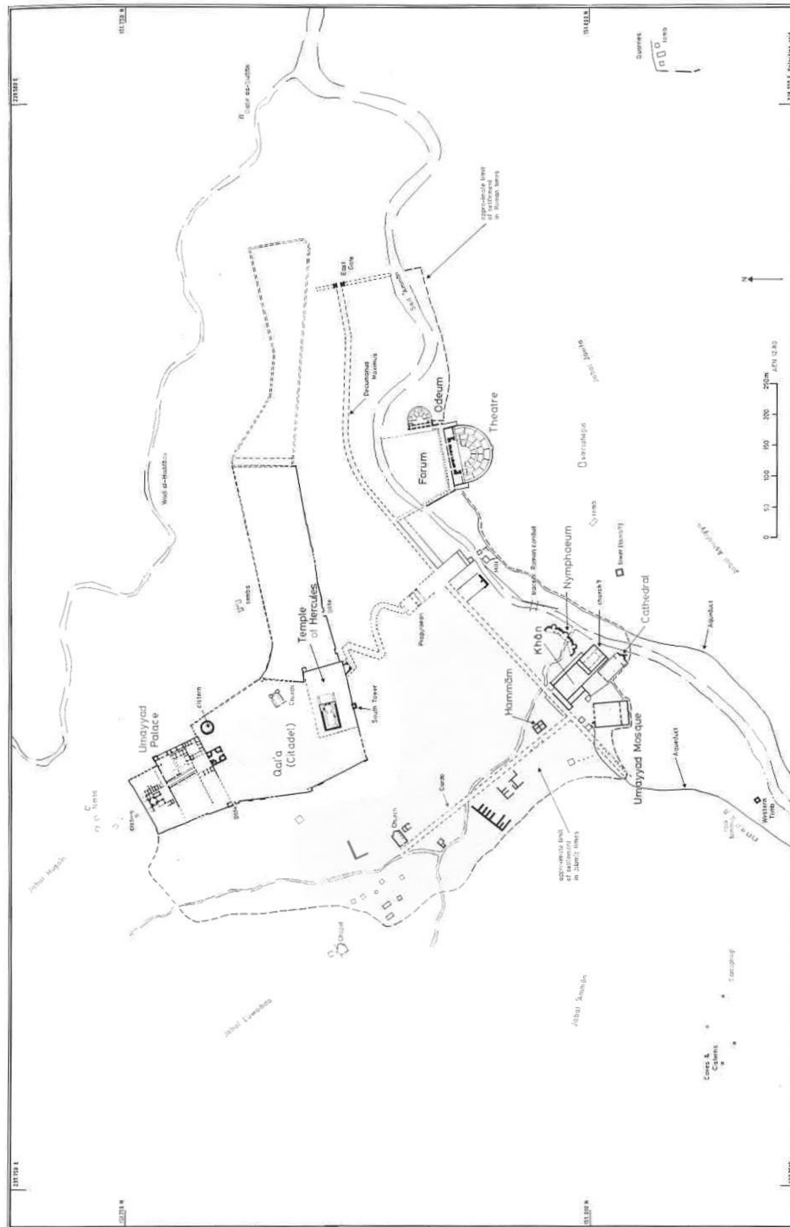

Figure 73: Map of Umayyad Amman. *Northedge, Studies on Roman and Islamic ʿAmman*, Plate 14.

Figure 74: General view of the Umayyad citadel at Amman. Almagro, *El palacio omeya de ʿAmman*, 301.

Figure 75: View of the partially reconstructed mosque at the Amman citadel, seen from the southeast. Almagro, *El palacio omeya de ʿAmman*, 306.

Figure 76: Palace wall from al-Walid's Minya palace near Tiberias, with visible pitting in the stone wall for the purpose of installing marble panelling.Creswell, *EMA*, plate 67f.

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