

The Cradle of Jesus and the Oratory of Mary in Jerusalem's al-Haram al-Sharif

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In hadith and Islamic pilgrimage accounts, al-Haram al-Sharif – comprising the Dome of the Rock, the Aqsa Mosque, and the Marwani Musalla – linked the Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey (*isra'* and *mi'raj*) to the temple of David and Solomon, to numerous *maqams* of Israelite/Qur'anic prophets,¹ and to Mary's oratory (*mihrab*) and the cradle (*mahd*) of Jesus. Oleg Grabar noted in his study of the Dome of the Rock, "At some point, Muslims began to associate Jesus' birth with a place in the southeastern corner of the esplanade," adding that the cradle of Jesus was introduced "considerably later than the seventh century."² The cradle was, as Stephan Hanna Stephan explained, "a large stone block, lying flat, [and] hollowed out regularly. It has a conch at its top and is Byzantine."³

Neither Grabar nor Stephan, however, raised the question as to why the cradle and the oratory were installed within the Marwani Musalla and what role they played in the history of Muslim piety.⁴ This paper will examine the descriptions of the cradle and the oratory in Arabic writings until the end of the nineteenth century.⁵

Before the Frankish Invasion

Pilgrimage to Jerusalem was often combined with the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.⁶ As part of devotion, the pilgrim prayed in the Musalla which had been built by al-Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik (reg. 705–715).⁷ In centuries that followed, numerous earthquakes caused massive damage (especially in 747 and 1033), but the Haram was always repaired,⁸ and whatever the impact of those earthquakes, they did not seem to have damaged the

cradle or the oratory: Jesus was fixed into the same space as the Prophet Muhammad, along with Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Zachariah, and other Qur'anic prophets.⁹ And since the Qur'an always associated Jesus with his mother, *'Isa ibn Maryam*, then she, too, became part of that geography.

The earliest account of the *isra'* of the Prophet Muhammad to Jerusalem by Ibn 'Abbas (618–687) included reference to neither cradle nor oratory, while the account attributed to Anas ibn Malik (612–709) only mentioned that Muhammad prayed in Jerusalem alongside Jesus and other prophets.¹⁰ Muqatil ibn Sulayman (d. 767), however, in one of the first extensive commentaries on the Qur'an (compiled in the ninth century), affirmed that the verses about Mary in the Qur'an applied to Jerusalem: Mary was in Jerusalem when she received the winter fruit in summer and the summer fruit in winter, that the palm tree under which Jesus was born was in Jerusalem, and that Jesus spoke from the cradle in Jerusalem.¹¹ It is significant that Muqatil associated the Haram with Jesus and Mary just a half-century after the completion of its construction, though it is not clear if he had the physical oratory and cradle in mind. A century later, the Cordovan poet Ibn 'Abid Rabbih (860–940) confirmed the association between “the oratory of Mary” and the cradle in Jerusalem.¹² By then, the tradition had taken shape, showing the importance of place/geography, especially pertaining to sites of sanctity, in early Islamic history.¹³

A native of Jerusalem, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Muqaddasi (c. 945–991) wrote in *Ahsan al-taqasim*, his encyclopedic work of geography, about al-Haram al-Sharif and the gate called *Bab Mihrab Maryam* (the Gate of the Oratory of Mary), which led to her oratory.¹⁴ Such a *mihrab* was mentioned in the Qur'an as the place where Mary had been visited by Zachariah: “Every time he entered *al-mihrab* to visit her, he found her supplied with sustenance [food]” (Q 3:37). Muqaddasi added that the ninth-century hadith narrator Muhammad ibn Karram (806–869), who lived in Jerusalem for a period, preached his controversial views on the equivalence of *iman* (belief) and *iqrar* (vocal declaration) while sitting near the “column of the cradle of Jesus, where many people used to meet him.”¹⁵ As a native of Jerusalem, Muqaddasi viewed his city as the greatest, uniting “the advantages of this World to those of the Next” and the location where “the gathering together and the appointment would take place” on the Day of Judgment.¹⁶ Since Jesus was to inaugurate the Last Judgment by returning to fight the antichrist (*dajjal*) in Jerusalem, and since at that moment he would lead the Muslims in their apocalyptic battle,¹⁷ then he could not but belong to a place that was central to Muslim veneration. The Haram enclosed the whole history of Jesus in his Islamic role, from miraculous birth and speaking in the cradle to the second coming. It was a role that was sustained in all subsequent writings about his cradle.

A contemporary of al-Muqaddasi, Abu Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Khuli, dreamt that he visited the Haram, where he offered prayers near “the Cradle of Jesus and the oratory of Mary.”¹⁸ In 1047, Nasiri Khusrow (1004–c. 1078) on a pilgrimage-cum-secret mission from Persia gave a detailed description of Jerusalem and of the history of the prophets of the Haram: how Moses took the rock as his *qibla*/direction of prayer, and how Solomon built a mosque around it, and how the Prophet Muhammad determined it as the first *qibla* for his followers.¹⁹ Two of the highlights there were the cradle of Jesus

and the oratory of Mary:

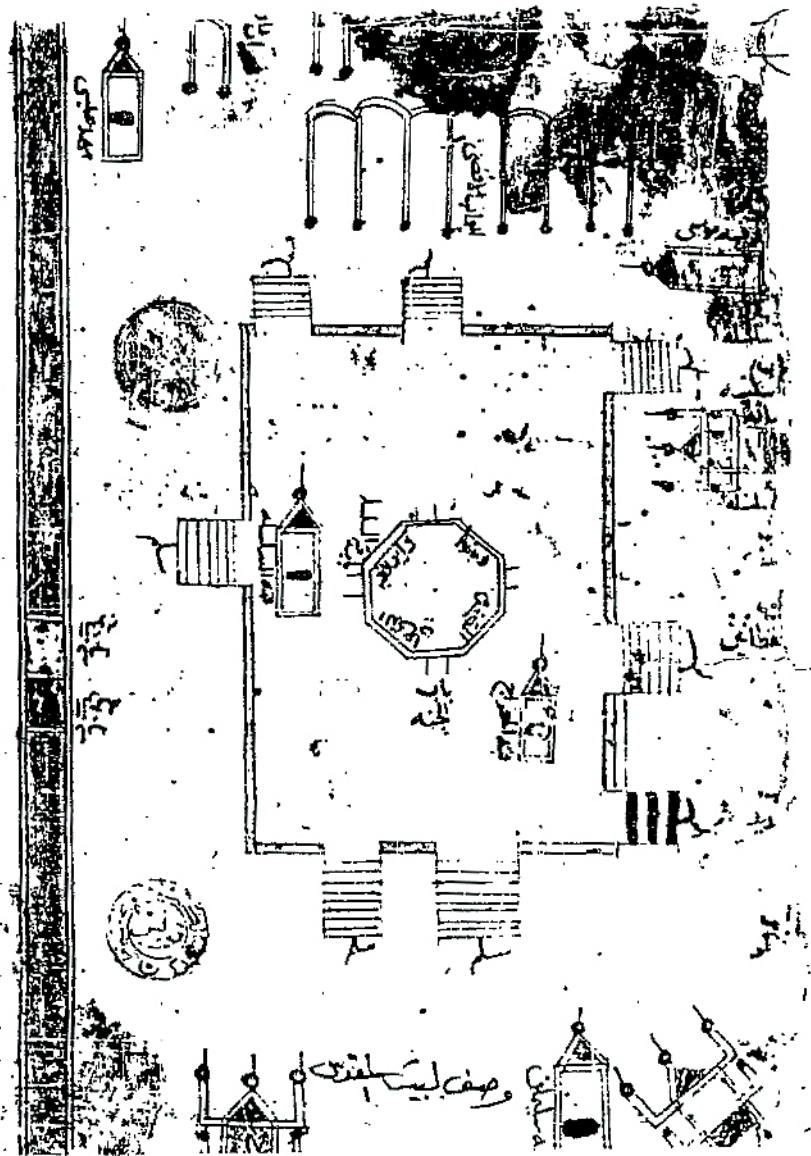
The cradle is made of stone, big enough that people can pray at it . . . and is immovably fixed in the floor. It is the cradle in which Jesus spent his childhood and from which he spoke to people . . . To the east side is the oratory of Mary, peace be upon her. And there is another oratory for Zachariah, peace be upon him. Above these two *mihhrabs* are Qur'anic verses that were revealed about Zachariah and Mary. It is also said that Jesus was born in this mosque . . . This mosque is known as The Cradle of Jesus, peace be upon him.²⁰

Another Jerusalemite, Ibn al-Murajja (al-Maqdisi) (d. 1099), also described what he saw in the Haram. In his *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, Ibn al-Murajja wrote about "*mihrab Maryam*, also known as the Cradle of Jesus."²¹ According to him, Mary saw the Angel Gabriel in Jerusalem, although her delivery of Jesus three hours later had taken place in the "valley of Bethlehem."²² She returned to Jerusalem and when Zachariah saw the hostility against her, he built her an oratory "in the middle of the *masjid* [mosque]" where the palm tree bore her ripe fresh dates (*rutban janiyyan*).²³ Unlike the New Testament biography, which assigned to Jerusalem only a few weeks in Jesus' life, Ibn al-Murajja fixed everything about Jesus in Jerusalem: it was there that Jesus spoke in the cradle as a boy (*sabiyyan*) (Q 19:12); received the Holy Spirit; performed miracles and raised the dead; preached to the disciples; and would descend from heaven in his second coming to fight the antichrist and eradicate ignorance.²⁴ Jesus was a Jerusalemite who had led his whole life in the precinct of the Haram.

The centrality of Jerusalem, and the Haram in particular, to the life of Jesus and of Jesus to the significance of Jerusalem and the Haram can be seen in Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Maraghi al-Azarbijani's report that Ibn al-Murajja's contemporary, Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (1058–1111), met with numerous jurists at the cradle of Jesus.

There came together the Imams Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali and Isma'il al-Hakimi and Ibrahim ash-Shibaki and Abu-l-Hasan al-Basri, and a large number of foreign elders, in the Cradle of 'Isa (upon him be peace!) in Jerusalem, and he (al-Ghazzali, apparently) recited some lines of poetry after which al-Basri "constrained himself to an ecstasy, which affected those that were preset, and eyes wept and garments were rent, and Muhammad al-Kazaruni died in the midst of the assembly in ecstasy."²⁵

The cradle of Jesus was the locus of the mystical experience because the Haram was the only place in the world that contained the history of God's prophetic revelations, from Abraham and Solomon to Jesus and Muhammad. It was not surprising therefore that Muslims started viewing Jerusalem and the Haram as a piece of heaven, the center of the world, or, as Ibn al-Firkah described it, the omphalos (*surra*).²⁶ And just as in Medina there was a burial place for Jesus near to Muhammad and Abu Bakr,²⁷ so in the Jerusalem



Ibn al-Jawzi's map of al-Haram al-Sharif, reproduced from *Tarikh Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. Muhammad Zaynahum Muhammad 'Azab (Port Said: Maktabat al-thaqafa al-diniyya, 1989), and detail of the Cradle of Jesus, which appears in the upper left corner of the map of the Haram.

Haram, there were Jewish and Christian monuments not only near but also inside Islamic space – witnesses to the prophetic tradition that culminated in the last of the prophets, Muhammad.

Jerusalem was the city of the prophets of God but not encompassing a Catholic-like *translatio prophetarum*: rather, the shrines (*maqams*) were mnemonics, which Muslims juxtaposed together while admitting that “God knows best” in regard to geographical specificity. The *maqam* was a reminder of the divine, and not a miraculous translation of physical holiness.²⁸ Without a theology of miracles in Islam, as in Catholic Christianity, Muslims sought historical reminders of revelation.²⁹ Although some pilgrims touched or jumped into the cradle to pray,³⁰ as early as the twelfth century, Ibn ‘Asakir (1105–1175) had reprimanded worshippers for sitting in the cradle.³¹



The Oratory of Mary, from Sylvia Auld and Robert Hillenbrand, with Yusuf Natsheh, *Ottoman Jerusalem: The Living City, 1517–1917* (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 2000), 536.

The Frankish Invasion

During the assault on Jerusalem in 1099, Muslims sought shelter near the Christian symbols inside the Marwani Musalla (or Solomon’s Stables in later Western parlance), hoping they would be spared. They were not, and their blood – as Gottfried gloated to the Pope – reached as high as the knees of the horses.³² Thereafter, “Jerusalem became a Christian city, where no Muslim or Jewish cult was permitted and no non-Christian could take residence permanently. The mosques were turned into churches or used as secular buildings” – and the *musalla* of the cradle and the oratory was dedicated as a chapel in honor of Mary.³³ Even so, Muslim pilgrims and Sufi adepts trekked to the city and continued their veneration at the cradle of Jesus. But while a cradle remained inside the occupied Haram, another cradle found its way to Damascus, according to the Damascene Ibn ‘Asakir. Since another Islamic tradition held that Christ would descend at the end of time on the minaret at the Church of Mary in Damascus (but “God knows best”), then his birth could well be associated with the Syrian city, too.³⁴ Ibn Fadlallah al-‘Umari (1301–1349), writing about Nur al-Din al-Zanki, who had begun the war against the Franks in the mid-twelfth century, noted that it was Zanki who had built the *maqam* outside Damascus known as “the cradle of Jesus. It was said that Mary sought shelter there with her son Jesus, peace be upon him, and that the hill was the one mentioned in the

Qur'an, 33:50."³⁵ As late as the fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta (1304–1377) mentioned the refuge (*ma'wa*) of Jesus and his mother in Damascus.³⁶

As was the case before the Frankish occupation of Jerusalem, some writers mentioned the cradle and the oratory, while others did not. In another text, Ibn 'Asakir confirmed the oratory of Mary in Jerusalem which "is now known as the cradle of Jesus, peace be upon him, to which you descend in piety."³⁷ Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi (c. 1115/6–1201), a Hanbali jurist from Baghdad, visited the Haram and drew a map of it confirming numerous hadith traditions recounting that Mary prayed in the oratory near the palm tree and the cradle from where Jesus had spoken. It was also in Bayt al-Maqdis, Ibn al-Jawzi continued, that Jesus received the table, was raised to heaven, and would descend at the end of time.³⁸ Significantly, Ibn al-Jawzi was the first Muslim pilgrim to include a drawing of the cradle/oratory in his map – which corresponds exactly to the cradle/oratory in existence today.

In 1173, 'Ali of Herat mentioned "the Caverns known as the Cradle of Jesus, the son of Mary,"³⁹ and a year later, in 1174, Abu al-Hasan al-Harawi visited Jerusalem and mentioned seeing in the Haram "a grotto and it was said that the cradle of Jesus son of Mary was there."⁴⁰ His contemporary Usama Ibn Munqidh (1095–1188), who was in Jerusalem about the same time, did not allude to the cradle, but 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani (1125–1201), secretary to Saladin, mentioned the oratory of Mary near which the Prophet Muhammad had prayed.⁴¹

After the Reconquest

After the Muslim reconquest of Jerusalem, Saladin's advisors urged him to destroy the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in revenge for the desecration of the Dome of the Rock. But Saladin refused, reminding them of the pact of 'Umar.⁴² Diya' al-Din ibn Ahmad al-Maqdisi (1174–1245), a Hanbali jurist whose parents had fled from Jerusalem in 1156, grew up in Damascus and fought in the armies of Saladin. He wrote about the *fada'il* of Damascus and Jerusalem and, visiting the latter city in 1227, made no mention of cradle or oratory, stating instead that the Prophet had prayed in the Church of Mary in the Valley of Hell.⁴³ Sixteenth-century historian Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Khidr al-Maqdisi wrote that after the victory of Saladin in Hattin (1187), the Muslim leader "promptly re-located the cradle, which had been in Bethlehem and in which Christ son of Mary was veritably born, to Jerusalem and placed it in the spot associated with Mary."⁴⁴ Though at odds with Khusrow's account that he had seen the cradle in the Haram at the beginning of the eleventh century, Ibn Khidr's statement shows that Muslims resumed their veneration at the Jerusalem cradle. Indeed, Jesus became part of the "culture of the counter-crusade" poetry,⁴⁵ and in 1229 Sultan al-Kamil (d. 1238) insisted that a treaty with Frederick II include a clause ensuring that Muslims would continue "to have free access to the cathedral at Bethlehem," where they were known to pray.⁴⁶

Muslim worshippers separated veneration of Jesus from the Frankish/Christian legacy of conquest. The Shafi'i jurist and historian Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Dhahabi (1274–

1328) confirmed that there was a Hanbali teaching circle in the mosque whose members met near the cradle of Jesus, which was led by ‘Izz al-Din Abu al-Fath Muhammad ibn al-Hafiz al-Kabir (b. 1161).⁴⁷ Traveling c. 1289–1291, the Moroccan pilgrim ‘Abdallah Muhammad al-‘Abdari spent five days in Jerusalem, where he saw “the cradle of Jesus, peace be upon him,” where the pious prostrated themselves seeking its blessing; “it was an egg-shaped hole in the ground.”⁴⁸ Jerusalem-born Shihab al-Din Ibn Tamim (d. 1363) quoted a previous author that urged visitors to the Haram to go to the oratory of Mary, which is known as the *mashhad* of Jesus, where invocations are offered.⁴⁹ An anonymous sixteenth- or seventeenth-century text of *Fada’il Bayt al-Muqaddas* [sic] repeated the exact words of advice that appeared frequently in such *fada’il* literature: the visitor should invoke God in “the oratory of Mary, peace be upon her, and the place of her worship, which is known as the cradle of Jesus, peace be upon him.” The worshipper should also read there the sura of Mary and prostrate himself just as ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab had done in the oratory of David.⁵⁰

Pilgrims seemed to pay no attention to Ibn Taymiyya’s (1263–1328) denunciation of the cradle as an outright forgery.⁵¹ Rather, Sufi pilgrims to Jerusalem from as far as the Maghrib confirmed the cradle-oratory association with the Haram not just physically, but also spiritually.⁵² When Ibn ‘Arabi (1165–1240) visited Jerusalem, he celebrated Christ as the *khalifa* and *al-insan al-kamil* of Sufi stations;⁵³ it was at Jesus’s hand, he wrote, that he had repented (*taba ‘ala yadihi*),⁵⁴ for Jesus had received “wisdom as a suckling babe in the cradle.”⁵⁵ In his treatise on *al-Isra’ ila al-maqam al-asra*, Ibn ‘Arabi turned the stages of the Prophet Muhammad’s ascent to the seven heavens into his own Sufi journey toward mystical union. In the second heaven, he met Jesus and “my life united with his being, and the self delighted in his visage, his light permeated all places and darkness was banished from the body.”⁵⁶ Then, the Sufi seeker (*al-salik*) reported how Jesus asked him:

“Where did the soul originate?”

I replied, “In the Sufi station [*hadra*] of holy splendor.”

He asked: “Why did he speak in the cradle?”

I replied: “To be a second witness against the wrong doers.”

He asked: “Was there an earlier witness to that?”

I said: “Mary’s shaking of the palm tree.”⁵⁷

For Ibn ‘Arabi, the Prophet Muhammad’s experience had prefigured his own experience of Jesus in the cradle and Mary under the palm tree.

Another Andalusian Sufi traveled in the last decade of the fourteenth century and described both his spiritual and his real experience in the *hadra* of the Holy Land. For Ibn al-Sabbah al-Andalusi, as for many other Muslims, the “holy land” referenced in the Qur’an was interpreted to apply to all of *bilad al-Sham* (Greater Syria, including Palestine).⁵⁸ Ibn al-Sabbah traveled to Bayt al-Maqdis, a place of “blessings and famous miracles” in a land that was *mawatin al-anbiya’ wa turbatihim*: the native home and resting ground of the prophets and their land.⁵⁹ In the center of the city and the land was the rock

that epitomized the whole history of the Abrahamic revelation. To confirm that history, he drew a map of the Noble Sanctuary, as earlier he had done of Mecca and al-Khalil (Hebron). In that map, he highlighted the shrines of Qur'anic veneration: the oratory of Abraham, the dome of Moses, the oratory of Solomon, the dome of the "Chain of Wise David, Prophet of the Israelites," the oratory of Yahya/John the Baptist, and the dome of Mary, her palm tree, and the cradle of Jesus.

Andalusi recognized that the holy land that housed Bayt al-Maqdis of the multi-prophetic *mi'raj* was holy *with* other monotheists – that is, People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*) – in it. And so, after celebrating the cradle, the oratory, and the palm tree, Andalusi could not but engage with local Christians for whom such objects were holy. After some monks asked him how he and other Muslims reached Mecca, and whether they flew there or not, he explained that Muslims traveled on foot. One of the monks fainted, and when he regained consciousness, he invited Andalusi for a meal at his house. At the end, the monk asked him to invoke God's blessing on him, which caused the guest some confusion. Ultimately, Andalusi relented and said, "O lord, let him die a believer in the best religion": a diplomatic answer, which the monk accepted. Later, Andalusi stopped in a Christian village where a woman invited him, a Muslim hajj, to rest. She brought him bread and milk and when he was about to leave, she too asked him to invoke God's blessing on her and her children, taking a piece of his clothing to wear as a *baraka* from the Blessed House in Mecca. Initially, Andalusi had thought her a Muslim, but she smiled and told him, "I am a Christian." He blushed and said: "Praise be to God, how God has blessed you with eloquence in Arabic. Why don't you convert to Islam?" (As a Muslim living in Christian Spain, he would not have thought of Christians in an Arabic context.) She answered: "Pilgrim, I, my children, and my forefathers are Christians, as well as all my people. What do you want me to do?" She stood waiting for his blessing, and when he did not offer it, she started to cry while holding her children. Again he said, "O Lord, let her die a believer in the best religion," to which she replied, "Amen."⁶⁰

Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad al-Suyuti (1445–1505) wrote an extensive description of the *fada'il* of the Aqsa Mosque in 1469, relying heavily on nearly two dozen previous accounts, and mentioned the cradle and the oratory briefly: Mary's "oratory was inside the mosque in Bayt al-Maqdis, and it is the place that is known as the cradle of Jesus and Zachariah."⁶¹ However, in 1496 Suyuti's contemporary, Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali (1456–1522), chief judge of Jerusalem between 1486 and 1516, wrote a detailed history of his native Jerusalem and al-Khalil. Like others before him, including his tenth-century predecessor Muqaddisi, Hanbali believed his hometown to be a site of paradise, because a Qur'anic prophet had prayed in every corner of that city.⁶² That was why God had declared that city and that land holy: *al-ard al-lati barakna fiha li-l-'alamin* (Q 21:71). Hanbali's survey of monotheistic history provides a wonderful example of an Islamic biography of Jesus by an author who lived and moved in the places in which Jesus was described in the gospels to have lived and moved. Jesus – "God's prayer and peace upon him," Hanbali wrote, applying as other Muslim authors did the same blessing used for the Prophet Muhammad – had been born in Bethlehem and Hanbali, priding himself on being born in *Filastin*/Palestine, continued in his description of the Haram:

Under the ground, there is a mosque known as the cradle of Jesus, peace be upon him. And it is said, it is the oratory of Mary, peace be upon her ... People there should repeat the invocation that Jesus, peace be upon him, repeated when God raised him from the Mount of Olives [Tur Zayta].⁶³

Later, Hanbali stated that Jesus, “peace be upon him, was born and spoke from the cradle in Jerusalem, received the table in Jerusalem, was taken up by God to heaven in Jerusalem, and will descend from heaven to Jerusalem.”⁶⁴

On numerous occasions, alongside the reference to cradle and/or oratory, authors referenced the palm tree that had sheltered Mary and which had been mentioned in the Qur’an. It may well be that reference to a palm tree in accounts of Jerusalem originated in the eleventh century and continued into the thirteenth. In the tenth century, Muqaddasi recounted seeing the tree in Bethlehem,⁶⁵ but, a century later, Cordovan-based Abu ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Amr al-Bakri (1014–1094), who relied heavily on the writings of previous pilgrims and geographers, located it in the Haram⁶⁶ and in his massive *Mu‘jam ma ista‘jam* he appealed to a hadith in which the Prophet had interpreted the rock as Jerusalem and the date as the palm tree: *al-sakhra bayt al-maqdis wa-l-‘ajwa hiya al-nakhla*.⁶⁷ In the following century, Ibn al-Jawzi also located the palm tree in the Haram, as did Ibn al-Murajja,⁶⁸ though Harawi still associated it with Bethlehem.⁶⁹ In the thirteenth century, Ibn al-Firkah mentioned cradle, oratory, and palm tree together: at the beginning of his treatise, he stated that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, where the Prophet Muhammad had prayed, but a few pages later, he asserted that the annunciation to Mary had taken place in the Haram of Bayt al-Maqdis; that Jesus had been conceived of the Holy Spirit in that city; that he spoke from the cradle in that city; and that God sent Mary a palm tree in that city. In the fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta saw the stump of the tree – in Bethlehem.⁷⁰ Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali did not mention Mary’s palm tree in the precincts of the Haram but recognizing its importance, he explained how references to the tree had been made in the context of the Haram. Quoting the Prophet, he repeated that the “rock of Bayt al-Maqdis stands on a palm tree, and the palm tree on a river, which is one of the rivers of paradise.”⁷¹

Meanwhile, Sufis associated heaven and the Jerusalem *hadra* with the Furthest Mosque.⁷² After long pilgrimages to reach Jerusalem, they conflated their experience with the Prophet’s, as Ibn ‘Arabi did, arriving not just to the physical city but also to “the station of holiness and purity.”⁷³ For the Ottoman Sufi traveler Evliya Celebi (1611–1682), who visited Palestine between 1648 and 1650 and again in the early 1670s, the Aqsa Mosque was “the Ka‘aba of the mystics” because of its association with Muhammad’s Night Journey, including, as he noted, “the Shrine of Mary, where she lived. Here she took refuge from the comments of people that offended her. This cave has a small prayer-niche facing east. In it is the Cradle of Jesus, a nest-like polished shining stone.”⁷⁴ Just about the time Celebi was visiting Bayt al-Maqdis, the Moroccan Sufi ‘Abdallah ibn Muhammad al-‘Ayyashi rounded out his pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina with a stop in Jerusalem where he saw “a carved stone which is called the cradle of Jesus.”⁷⁵ In 1671, the Iraqi scholar ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Khiyari (d. 1672) described the cradle of “our lord

Jesus, to which you descend by a few steps in the corner of the mosque”; it is “made of marble and to its left is a beautiful oratory, it is said, where our Lady Mary worshipped.”⁷⁶

For the Damascene Sufi ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (1641–1731), Jerusalem was *al-hadra qudsiyya* – “the holy [Sufi] station” – as he stated in the title of his travelogue of 1691. Nabulusi knew most of the accounts that had been written about al-Haram al-Sharif and therefore, as he visited the site on 11 April 1691, he went to see

the cradle of Jesus, peace be upon him, which is in a mosque under ground level . . . which can be reached by going down a few steps. There is the cradle, made of marble, and to its left is a beautiful oratory which, it is said, is the place where our lady Mary, peace be upon her, worshipped. It is a very pleasant place, and in the corner there is the place (*mahal*) of our master Gabriel, peace be upon him, and there is another place which, it is said, is where the disciples of Jesus, peace be upon him, worshipped. It is said that prayers there are accepted by God. So we prayed two prostrations.⁷⁷

Two years later, Nabulusi visited Lebanon and continued down to Palestine. Again, he visited “the cradle of Jesus, peace be upon him,” in Bayt al-Maqdis, which was repaired by the Ottoman authorities after “stones from the southern wall of the cradle of our master ‘Isa, peace be upon him, which is located in al-Aqsa mosque, had collapsed.” Four days later, he visited Bethlehem, where he saw the church in which Jesus had been born and the location of the cradle and the palm tree.⁷⁸ Like Khiyari and a few other Muslim pilgrims before him, Nabulusi entered the Church of the Nativity and invoked God’s blessing. Standing near the birthplace of the sinless prophet, Jesus, Nabulusi composed a poem in praise of Jesus and then joined the monks of Bethlehem as they offered him and his fellow pilgrims food. The monks played the *orghula* (organ) for them, the music of which, Nabulusi wrote, was more beautiful than that of a blackbird and a nightingale together.⁷⁹

A century later, the Moroccan Sufi and ambassador Muhammad ibn ‘Uthman al-Miknasi (d. 1799) vituperated against the Christians for their control of religious sites, but when he arrived at the Haram, he did what many pilgrims had done before him:

I visited our Lady Mary’s *mihrab*, where there is also the cradle of Jesus, peace be upon him. We went down some stairs and I sat in the cradle, seeking his blessing. . . Then we went to the location where Jesus, peace be upon him, was raised and we performed two prostrations. They showed us a stone that still bore the mark of his foot and we sought its blessing and invoked God there.⁸⁰

So did Miknasi’s contemporary Abu al-Qasim al-Zayyani, who also noted the stone-carved cradle “known as the cradle of Jesus, in which I sat and invoked [God’s] blessing.”⁸¹

Old habits die hard.

Conclusion

In 661 AD, just about the time of his *bay'a* as caliph in Jerusalem, Mu'awiya used the phrase "holy land" in his description of the country, whereupon Sa'sa' ibn Suhan warned him: "it is not the land that makes a people holy: it is the people who make the land holy."⁸² Jerusalem was holy by the presence of believers who celebrated monotheistic history: it was the city of God's prophets, from Abraham and David to Jesus and Muhammad. That is why Muslims went down the steps to touch the oratory and the cradle and to offer their devotions, combining the physical with the mystical. At the same time, Muslims conceived of the Haram and Bayt al-Maqdis as a multi-religious site because it reflected the Prophet Muhammad's multi-prophetic experience. Along with the *maqams* of the Israelite prophets, the cradle of Jesus and the oratory of Mary became devotional sites for pilgrims, Sufis, and jurists alike. This inclusiveness of devotion translated into demographic inclusion, too: since Jewish and Christian prophetic histories were part of the Haram (al-Hasan ibn Ahmad al-Mahlabi, who died in 990, had noted that the Jews helped the Muslims clean up the rock on which the Haram was built),⁸³ then Jews and Christians could not but be part of the Islamic conceptualization of Bayt al-Haram. The builders of the Dome of the Rock, fully aware of the Christian population of the city,⁸⁴ sought to challenge them: the Qur'anic verses about Jesus that were carved on the outer rim expressed Islam's disagreement with the Christian interpretation of Jesus.⁸⁵ But while the conquerors inscribed the verses to be read and perhaps disputed by passers-by, inside the Marwani Musalla they venerated Jesus and Mary, as the Qur'an enjoined them, and ten Christians served inside the Haram, bequeathing their jobs to their children.⁸⁶ The Haram and the city that housed it were to remain multi-religious, attesting to the long history of the coexistence of the People of the Book in the Islamic world.⁸⁷

One of the leading scholars on Jerusalem, 'Arif al-'Arif, wrote about his city in 1947:

Across the ages, Jerusalem was the target of conquerors and invaders. It was besieged numerous times, destroyed frequently, deserted and rebuilt dozens of times in history. But, despite all that, it survived and its name remained standing among all cities and lands. It is, in truth, nothing and everything, the city of contradictions, the city of history, the city of bigotry, the city of magic and imagination. It is the city of religions [*madinat al-adyan*].⁸⁸

In her study of Jerusalem, Karen Armstrong also noted how the Haram has served as "a vital symbol of Islam's sense of continuity and kinship with the *ahl al-kitab*, whether or not Jews and Christians were willing to acknowledge this."⁸⁹ And so, in 1995, twenty-eight years after the Israeli illegal annexation of Jerusalem and the gradual expulsion of the non-Jewish population from the city, Edward Said stated: "For Israel to claim Jerusalem as its eternal undivided capital does injustice to the city's rich-textured history of religious, cultural, and political significance."⁹⁰ Some Israeli Knesset members and their followers continue to mobilize for the destruction of the Haram and the multi-prophetic *maqams* that surround the rock of the Prophet Muhammad's *mi'raj*. Thereby, they undermine the

history of Jerusalem's Islamic inclusiveness and of Muslim piety for Abraham and Moses, David and Solomon, the cradle of Jesus and the oratory of his mother.

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Endnotes

- 1 Jewish tradition influenced Islam about an eschatological Jerusalem: the Jewish convert Ka'b al-Ahbar transmitted "most of the eschatological attributes of Jerusalem," Nasser Rabbat, "The Meaning of the Umayyad Dome of the Rock," *Muqarnas* 6 (1989): 14. See also Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, *The Early Islamic Monuments of al-Haram al-Sharif* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1989), 72.
- 2 Oleg Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 50. In the Qur'an, the word *mihrab* has the meaning of a "chamber" and is associated with Mary and Zachariah. See: Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1865), vol. 2, 541. It also appears in Qur'an 38:2 and in a plural form, probably associated with the Israelites, in 34:13. I owe this observation to Professor Wadad Kadi.
- 3 St. H. Stephan, "Evliya Tshelbi's Travels in Palestine, VI," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, 9 (1939): 101, n. 2.
- 4 Sabri Jarrar has a brief discussion of the cradle and the oratory, "Suq al-Ma'rifa: An Ayubid Shrine in al-Haram al-Sharif," *Muqarnas* 15 (1998): 85–87.
- 5 There is a three-dimensional experience of the Haram al-Sharif online, made by Damascus-based JoyBox under the supervision of Dr. Abdallah Marouf Omar of Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, at aqsa3d.com. For an English-language "tour" using the JoyBox design, see, for example, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQa_qx3HRBE (accessed 25 April 2017).
- 6 M. J. Kister, "You Shall Only Set Out for Three Mosques: A Study of an Early Tradition," *Le Muséon* 82 (1969): 173–196. See the list of references to this hadith in *Awraq min rihlat al-shaykh Muhammad Amin al-Fattal ila Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. Mazahim 'Umar Muhammad al-Dayarina (Amman: Dar al-yara' li-l-nashr, 2006), 28–36. For affinities between al-Masjid al-Haram in Mecca and the Jerusalem mosque, including the oratory of Mary, see Nuha N. N. Khoury, "The Dome of the Rock, the Ka'ba, and Ghumdan: Arab Myths and Umayyad Monuments," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 57–65. See also Abdallah El-Khatib, "Jerusalem in the Qur'an," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 28 (2001): 43–44.
- 7 See Beatrice St. Laurent and Isam Awwad, "The Marwani Musalla in Jerusalem: New Findings," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 54 (Summer 2013): 7–31.
- 8 Abdul Aziz Duri, "Jerusalem in the Early Islamic Period, 7th–11th Centuries AD," in *Jerusalem in History*, ed. K. J. Asali (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1990), 105–129. See also K. A. C. Creswell, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 1989), 73–76.
- 9 As Herbert Busse notes: "There is a tradition which says that every prophet had his very own mihrab on the Haram al-sharif (or in Jerusalem)." Herbert Busse, "The Tower of David/Mihrab Dawud: Remarks on the History of a Sanctuary in Jerusalem in Christian and Islamic Times," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17 (1994): 155.
- 10 Actually, among the dozens of themes that appeared in his *mi'raj* narrative, the reference to Jesus occurs only once. See the list of themes in Nazir al-'Azma's edition, *al-Mi'raj wa al-ramz al-sufi* (Damascus: Dar al-bahith, 1983), 19–23. For a translation of the account of Ibn 'Abbas, see the English section of the book. Curiously, the Jerusalem cradle and the oratory were not mentioned in the stories of the prophets concerning Jesus and Mary by writers such as al-Tabari (c. 838–923), al-Kisa'i and al-Tha'alibi (eleventh century), or Ibn al-Kathir (1301–1373). See further Uri Rubin, "Muhammad's Night Journey (Isra') to al-Masjid al-Aqsa: Aspects of the Earliest Origins of the Islamic Sanctity of Jerusalem," *al-Qantara* 29 (2008): 147–164.
- 11 Muqatil ibn Suleyman, *Tafsir*, ed. 'Abdallah Mahmud Shahata (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Misriyya al-'amma li-l-kitab, 1979), vol. 2, 514. Ibn al-Firkah

- cited Muqatil's observation in "Ba'ith al-nufus ila ziyarat al-Quds al-Sharif al-mahrus," in *Arba' rasa'il fi fada'il al-Masjid al-Aqsa*, ed. Muhammad Zaynahum (Cairo: Dar al-nada, 2000), 102.
- 12 Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500* (London: Alexander P. Watt, 1890), 166.
 - 13 See Zayde Antrim, *Routes and Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), which shows the importance of space, alongside kith and kin, in Islamic self-definition.
 - 14 Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Muqaddasi, *Description of Syria including Palestine*, trans. Guy Le Strange (London: Palestine Pilgrim's Text Society, 1886), 46. See also Majd Muhammad Hasan Shurab, *Bayt al-Maqdis wa al-Masjid al-Aqsa* (Damascus: Dar al-qalam, 1994), 510.
 - 15 Quoted in Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali, *al-Uns al-Jalil fi-tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil* (Amman: al-Muhtasib, 1973), vol. 1, 296.
 - 16 Muqaddasi, *Description of Syria*, trans. Le Strange, 36.
 - 17 See a graphic description in al-Musharraf ibn al-Murajja al-Maqdisi, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. Ayman Nasr al-Din al-Azhari (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 2002), 300–1. For a brief study of the early *fada'il* writings on Jerusalem, see: Suleiman A. Mourad, "A Note on the Origin of Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis Compilations," *al-Abhath* 44 (1996): 31–48; and the detailed study and bibliography by Mahmud Ibrahim, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis fi makhtutat 'arabiyya qadima* (Kuwait: Ma'had al-makhtutat al-'arabiyya, 1985).
 - 18 Quoted by al-Murajja in Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 70.
 - 19 Nasiri Khusrow, *Safar Nameh*, trans. Yahya al-Khashshab (Beirut: Dar al-kitab al-jadid, 1983), 57. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.
 - 20 Khusrow, *Safar Nameh*, 60–61. When Khusrow visited Bethlehem, he did not mention that Jesus had been born there but noted that a large number of pilgrims went there all the time (Khusrow, *Safar Nameh*, 70).
 - 21 Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 71. See also Antrim, *Routes and Realms*, 65–67.
 - 22 Ibn al-Murajja, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. al-Azhari, 179, 359.
 - 23 Ibn al-Murajja, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. al-Azhari, 180, 358, and Qur'an 19:25. For a study of Mary and the palm tree, see Husn Abboud, "Qur'anic Mary's Story and the Motif of Palm Tree and the Rivulet," *Parole de l'Orient* 30 (2005): 262–280.
 - 24 Ibn al-Murajja, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. al-Azhari, 298, 300, 354–55, 357, 404–5.
 - 25 Duncan B. MacDonald, "The Life of al-Ghazzali with Especial Reference to His Religious Experiences and Opinions," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 20 (1899): 101. See also the reference to the same episode cited from Ibn al-'Asakir in Ihsan 'Abbas, *Fusul hawla al-hayat al-thaqafiyya wa al-'imraniyya fi Filastin* (Beirut: al-Mu'assassa al-'arabiyya li-l-dirasat wa al-nashr, 1993), 73.
 - 26 Charles D. Matthews, "The 'Kitab Ba'itu-n-Nufus' of Ibnu-l-Firkah," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 15 (1935): 75.
 - 27 As the tenth-century Maliki jurist Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani wrote in *Kitab al-jami' fi-l-sunan*, quoted in R. Marston Speight, "Muslim Attitudes toward Christians in the Maghrib during the Fatimid Period, 297/909–358/969," in *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Z. Haddad (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1995), 182. It is interesting that Muhammad al-Kisa'i (12th century CE), in his *Qisas al-anbiya'* (Stories of the Prophets), also mentioned that Jesus would be buried near Muhammad.
 - 28 As for instance in the House of Loreto or the Scala Sancta in Rome, the latter of which is made from the floor on which Jesus walked to his trial by Pontius Pilate, or the numerous other Palestinian New Testament objects (the column of flagellation, the sepulcher, and others) that were either miraculously translated onto European soil or rebuilt as local sites of veneration.
 - 29 In the context of the discussions about the nature of religious space, it is safe to conclude that Qur'anic thinking about space is in line with the concepts elaborated by theoreticians such as Jonathan Z. Smith, as opposed to those of Mircea Eliade, for example. See Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 16–23; Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1987), 20–36.
 - 30 See the various references in Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Khidr al-Maqdisi, *al-Mustaqsa fi fada'il al-Masjid al-Aqsa* (Ramallah: Bayt al-shi'r al-Filastini, 2008).
 - 31 Ibn 'Asakir, *al-Mustaqsa fi ziyarat al-Masjid al-Aqsa*, in *Araba't rasa'il fi fada'il al-Masjid al-Aqsa*, ed. Muhammad Zaynahum Muhammad 'Azab (Nasr City: Dar al-Nida', 2000), 47.
 - 32 "It was the day indeed on which the primitive church was driven thence, and on which the festival of the dispersion of the apostles is celebrated. And if you desire to know what was done with the enemy who were found there, know that in Solomon's Porch and in his temple our men rode in the blood of the Saracens up to the knees of their horses." August. C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1921), 165–66.

- 33 Oleg Grabar, "al-Haram al-Sharif," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
- 34 For examples of hadiths associated with Syria, see: Ibn al-Murajja, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. al-Azhari, 439, 441, 451, and 455.
- 35 Ibn Fadlallah al-'Umari, *Masalik al-absar fi mamalik al-amsar*, ed. Dorotea Kravolski (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Islami li-l-buhuth, 1986), 184.
- 36 Ibn Battuta, *Rihlat Ibn Battuta, tuhfat al-nuzzar fi ghara'ib al-amsar wa 'aja'ib al-asfar*, ed. Darwish al-Juwaydi (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'asriyya, 2003), vol. 1, 94.
- 37 Ibn 'Asakir, *al-Mustaqsa*, 47.
- 38 Ibn al-Jawzi, *Tarikh Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. Muhammad Zaynahum Muhammad 'Azab (Cairo: Maktabat al-thaqafa al-diniyya, 1989), 70.
- 39 Quoted in Le Strange, *Palestine*, 167.
- 40 Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Harawi, *al-Isharat ila ma'rifat al-ziyarat*, ed. 'Ali 'Umar (Cairo: Maktabat al-thaqafa al-diniyya, 2002), 33. Many of the writers, including al-Muqaddasi and al-Suyuti, knew the Bible and quoted from it.
- 41 Quoted in Francesco Gabrieli, ed., *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. from Italian by E. J. Costello (New York: Dorset Press, 1969/1989), 153.
- 42 This according to the account of 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, quoted in Gabrieli, *Arab Historians*, 174–75.
- 43 Diya' al-Din ibn Ahmad al-Maqdisi, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. Muhammad Muti' al-Hafiz (Damascus: Dar al-fikr, 1988), 86. See also Brooke Olson Vuckovic, *Heavenly Journeys, Earthly Concerns: The Legacy of the Mi'raj in the Formation of Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 59–60.
- 44 Maqdisi, *al-Mustaqsa fi fada'il al-Masjid al-Aqsa*, 71.
- 45 Jarrar, "Suq al-Ma'rifa," 87–88.
- 46 Bernard F. Hamilton, "Our Lady of Saidnaiya: An Orthodox Shrine Revered by Muslims and Knights Templar at the Time of the Crusades," in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History*, ed. R. N. Swanson (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2000), 210.
- 47 Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Dhahabi, *Siyar a'lam al-nubala'*, vol. 16, 84 via the electronic database al-Jami' al-kabir li-kutub al-turath al-'Arabi wa al-Islami.
- 48 'Abdallah Muhammad al-'Abdari, *Rihlat al-'Abdari, al-rihla al-Maghribiyya*, ed. Muhammad Fasi (Rabat: Jami'at Muhammad al-Khamis, 1968), 229.
- 49 Shihab al-Din ibn Tamim al-Maqdisi, *Muthir al-gharam ila ziyarat al-Quds wa al-Sham*, ed. Ahmad al-Khutami (Beirut: Dar al-jil, 1994), 293.
- 50 British Library, OR 4874, 14 r.
- 51 See the text reproduced by Charles D. Mathews, "A Muslim Iconoclast (Ibn Taymiyyeh) on the 'Merits' of Jerusalem and Palestine," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 56 (1936): 12.
- 52 'Ali Ahmad, "al-Quds fi nazar al-andalusiyyin khilal al-'usur al-wusta," *Majallat Dirasat Andalusiyya* 24 (2000): 56–72. The loss of Cordova in 1236 led Sufis to view that city through the Jerusalem lens: *Qurtuba al-kubra hiya al-Quds al-sughra* – a saying that continues until today.
- 53 Mishal Hayik, *al-Masih fi-l-Islam* (Beirut: al-Matba'a al-Kathulikiyya, 1961), 87, citing *al-Futuh al-Makiyya*.
- 54 Hayik, *al-Masih*, 137.
- 55 Hayik, *al-Masih*, 87.
- 56 Ibn 'Arabi, *al-Isra' ila maqam al-asra*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahim Mardini (Damascus: Dar al-mahabba, 2003), 72. See also Ihsan 'Abbas, "Rihlat Ibn al-'Arabi ila al-Mashriq kama sawwaraha Qanun al-Ta'wil," *al-Abhath* 21 (1968): 59–85. This latter, however, was Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah ibn al-'Arabi, not the famous Sufi.
- 57 Ibn 'Arabi, *al-Isra*, 222.
- 58 Ibn al-Sabbah al-Andalusi, *Nisbat al-akhbar wa tadhkirat al-akhyar*, ed. Jum'a Shikha (Tunis: al-Matba'a al-Magharibiyya, 2011), 28. Muslim exegetes defined the Holy Land, *al-ard al-muqaddasa* (Qur'an 5:21), as *ard al-Quds wa Filastin* – the land of Jerusalem and Palestine. Ibrahim, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, 53. See also Ibn al-Murajja, who wrote that the holiest land was Syria (*Sham*), and the holiest in Syria was Palestine (*Filastin*), and the holiest in Palestine was *Bayt al-Maqdis*, and the holiest in *Bayt al-Maqdis* was the Mountain, and the holiest on the Mountain was the Dome: Ibn al-Murajja, *Fada'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. al-Azhari, 147.
- 59 Ibn al-Sabbah al-Andalusi, *Nisbat al-akhbar wa tadhkirat al-akhyar*, ed. Jum'a Shikha (Tunis: al-Matba'a al-Magharibiyya, 2011), 189, 186.
- 60 Andalusi, *Nisbat al-akhbar*, 191–92. It is unclear on what evidence Suleiman Ali Mourad bases his view: "With the advent of the Crusades, Muslim scholars gradually . . . began to highlight a much more exclusivist heritage to Jerusalem." See Suleiman Ali Mourad, "The Symbolism of Jerusalem in Early Islam," in *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality*, eds. Tamaar Mayer and Suleiman Ali Mourad (New York: Routledge, 2008), 99. See also references to Nabulusi below.
- 61 Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad al-Suyuti, *Ithaf al-akhisa bi-fada'il al-Masjid al-Aqsa*, ed. Ahmad Ramadan Ahmad (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Misriyya, 1984), vol. 2, 18. See also Guy Le Strange, "Description of the Noble Sanctuary at Jerusalem in 1470 A.D. by Kamal (or Shams) ad Din as Suyuti," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 19, no. 2 (Apr. 1887): 247–305.
- 62 Hanbali, *Uns al-Jalil*, vol. 1, 232.
- 63 Hanbali, *Uns al-Jalil*, vol. 1, 161.
- 64 Hanbali, *Uns al-Jalil*, vol. 1, 240.

- 65 Muqaddisi, *Description of Syria including Palestine*, trans. Le Strange, 50.
- 66 Bakri drew a map in the manuscript, but he had not traveled to Jerusalem: see Ahmad Mukhtar al-‘Abbadī, “Nazrat ahl al-Maghrib wa al-Andalus nahwa al-Quds,” in *al-Rahhala al-‘Arab wa al-Muslimun: iktishaf al-akhar* (Casabalanca: Wizarat al-thaqafa, 2003), 210.
- 67 Abu ‘Ubayd ibn ‘Amr al-Bakri, *Mu‘jam ma ista‘jam*, ed. Jamal Talba (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-‘ilmiya, 1998), vol. 3, 103.
- 68 Ibn al-Murajja, *Fada’il Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. al-Azhari, 354, 357–58.
- 69 Harawi, *al-Isharat*, 34.
- 70 Ibn Battuta, *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*, vol. 1, 60.
- 71 Hanbali, *Uns al-Jalil*, vol. 1, 236.
- 72 Qur’an 17:1, from Tarif Khalidi’s translation, *The Qur’an: A New Translation* (New York: Penguin, 2008).
- 73 Ibn al-‘Arabi, *The Tarjumán al-Ashwáq: A Collection of Mystical Odes*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1911, rep. 1978), 123.
- 74 Stephan, “Evliya Tshelebi’s Travels,” 82, 101.
- 75 ‘Abdallah ibn Muhammad al-‘Ayyashi, *al-Rihla al-‘Ayyashiyya*, ed. Sa’id al-Fadli and Sulayman al-Qarashi (Abu Dhabi: Dar al-Suwaydi li-l-nashr wa al-tawzi‘, 2006), vol. 2, 422. Years later, ‘Abd al-Latif ibn ‘Abd al-Qadir composed a poem about Bayt al-Maqdis in which he recalled Mary and Jesus: see the reference in Hasan ibn ‘Abd al-Latif al-Husayni, *Tarajim ahl al-Quds fi al-qarn al-thani ‘ashar al-hijri*, ed. Salamah Salih al-Nu‘aymat (Amman: al-Jami‘a al-Urduniyya, 2010), 314.
- 76 ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Khiyari, *al-Siyahat al-sufiyya wa al-ziyarat al-diniyya*, ed. Taysir Khalaf (Damascus: Dar Kan’an, 2010), 78.
- 77 ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, *al-Hadra al-unsuyya fi-l-rihla al-qudsiyya*, ed. Akram Hasan al-‘Ulabi (Beirut: al-Masadir, 1991), 146. For studies of Nabulusi, see Elizabeth Sirriyyah, “The Journeys of ‘Abd al-Gahni al-Nabulusi in Palestine (1101/1690 and 1105/1693),” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 24 (1979): 55–69; Elizabeth Sirriyyah, “The Mystical Journeys of ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi,” *Die Welt des Islams* 25 (1985): 84–96; Elizabeth Sirriyyah, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, 1641–1731* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005).
- 78 K. J. Asali, ed., *Jerusalem Historical Documents* (Amman: University of Jordan, 1989), vol. 3, 116, *sijil* 196 for the year 1105 AH; ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, *al-Haqiqa wa al-majaz fi rihlat bilad al-Sham wa Misr wa al-Hijaz*, ed. Riyad ‘Abd al-Hamid Murad (Damascus: Dar al-ma’rifa, 1989), 348.
- 79 Nabulusi, *al-Haqiqa wa al-majaz*, 365–66.
- 80 Muhammad ibn ‘Uthman al-Miknasi, *Rihlat al-Miknasi*, ed. Muhammad Bukabbut (Abu Dhabi: Dar al-Suwaydi li-l-tiba’a wa al-nashr, 2003), 297. See my translation in *An Arab Ambassador in the Mediterranean World: The Travels of Muhammad ibn ‘Uthman al-Miknasi* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 173, 175.
- 81 Abu al-Qasim al-Zayyani, *al-Turjumana al-kubra*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karim al-Filali (Rabat: Wizarat al-anba’, 1967), 268.
- 82 Quoted in Ibrahim, *Fadi’il Bayt al-Maqdis*, 54.
- 83 Salah al-Din al-Munajjid, “Qit’a min kitab mafqud: al-masalik wa al-mamalik li-l-Mahlabi,” *Majallat al-Makhtutat al-‘Arabiyya* 4, no. 1 (1958): 54.
- 84 According to Goitein, Bayt al-Maqdis “remained predominantly Christian.” Shelomo Dov Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 146.
- 85 See Erica Cruikshank Dodd and Shereen Khairallah, *The Image of the Word: A Study of Quranic Verses in Islamic Architecture* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981), vol. 1, 20–26.
- 86 Shurab, *Bayt al-Maqdis*, 382, quoting al-Qurtubi. According to Luqaymi (quoting Ibn ‘Asakir), after the Haram was completed, ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan appointed dozens of Jews and Christians to serve in the Dome precinct, men from whom the *jizya* was not required: Mustafa As’ad al-Luqaymi, *Lata’if uns al-Jalil fi taha’if al-Quds wa al-Khalil*, ed. Khalid ‘Abd al-Karim al-Hamshari and Hisham Abu Irmil (Acre: Mu’assasat al-aswar, 2001), 100.
- 87 Centuries later, Ibn al-Sabbah al-Andalusi confirmed that Jerusalem and its Haram were honored by “all the people of the earth and all the six religions,” chief of which was Islam, followed by Christianity and Judaism. He does not mention the other three. Andalusi, *Nisbat al-akhbar*, 203.
- 88 ‘Arif al-‘Arif, *al-Mufasssal fi tarikh al-Quds*, 3d ed. (Beirut: al-Mu’assasa al-‘Arabiyya li-l-dirasat wa al-nashr, 2005), 633.
- 89 Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 224. See also Chad E. Emmett, “Jerusalem’s Role as a Holy City for Muslims,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2001): 119–134.
- 90 Edward W. Said, “Projecting Jerusalem,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25, no. 1 (Autumn 1995): 9.