

## New Research on Jaffa in the Islamic and Crusader Periods

by Katherine Strange Burke

**Y**afo, ancient *Jaffa* (Gk. *Joppa*; Ar. *Yāfa*), sits south of the modern city of Tel Aviv on the coast of Israel between Caesarea and Gaza, about 60 km northwest of Jerusalem (fig. 1). The site consists of an ancient tell atop a kurkar sandstone ridge overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, and a sprawling lower city with port facilities (Peilstöcker 2000). As a major port, Jaffa was inhabited throughout nearly all periods from the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1900 BC) to the present, and possessed connections not only with neighbors in its hinterland but also with distant maritime commercial centers throughout the Mediterranean world. A program of renewed exploration and systematic publication was initiated by the Jaffa Cultural Heritage Project in 2007. It aims to synthesize nearly sixty years of intermittent work by various institutions with recent rescue excavations by the Israel Antiquities Authority. These excavations have begun to reveal something of Jaffa in the Islamic and Crusader periods.

Preliminary work on a collection of whole and reconstructed ceramic vessels excavated in 1995 and 1996 at the

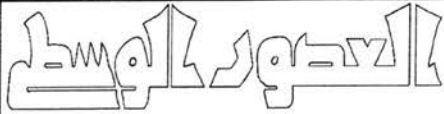
Ganor site on Yefet Street in Jaffa (fig. 2), under the direction of Martin Peilstöcker of the Israel Antiquities Authority, permits a preliminary sketch of the history of the site from the early Islamic through the Ottoman period. This ceramic collection does not represent a coherent assemblage from a single context in the excavation, but is a group of sherds and vessels that were gathered together from disparate loci because they presented good prospects for reconstruction and conservation.<sup>1</sup> A publication of these vessels with drawings and photographs is forthcoming in the first volume of the Jaffa Cultural Heritage Project series. Complete publication of Islamic and crusader ceramics with their stratigraphy and quantitative analysis will be included in future volumes in the same series.

As with many of the excavation sites in Jaffa, at the Ganor site the transition from the Late Antique to the early Islamic period is difficult to distinguish in the archaeological record; the town seems largely unchanged by the Islamic conquest.

SEE JAFFA, PAGE 22.

### In This Issue

|   |    |
|---|----|
| New Research on Jaffa   | 21 |
| Ideas, Methods, Issues: Relations between Jews, Christians, and Early Muslims | 27 |
| Annual Meetings   | 34 |
| Early Islamic Military Architecture   | 36 |
| Book Reviews  | 43 |
| Contributors & Credits  | 47 |



Al-'Usur al-Wusta

The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists  
Volume 19, Number 2 • October, 2007

**Editor: Fred M. Donner**

**Associate Editors: Michael G. Morony (Book Reviews), Donald Whitcomb (Archaeology)**

**Editorial and Production Assistant:  
Aram Shahin**

*Al-'Usur al-Wusta* is published twice yearly (April, October) by Middle East Medievalists, and is produced at The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, U.S.A. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Middle East Medievalists, its officers, the editor of *Al-'Usur al-Wusta*, or The Oriental Institute.

Subscription to *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* is automatically included with membership in Middle East Medievalists (see below). Membership inquiries or changes of address should be sent to Steven C. Judd, Secretary of MEM, Department of History, Southern Connecticut State College, 501 Crescent St., New Haven, CT 06515, U.S.A.

Manuscripts, news, reviews of Middle Eastern books, and other items for inclusion in *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* should be sent to Fred M. Donner, The Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th St., Chicago, IL 60637, U.S.A. Deadline for receipt of items for inclusion in April issues is the preceding March 1; for October issues, the preceding September 1.

ISSN 1068-1051. Copyright © 2007 Middle East Medievalists. All rights reserved.

### Middle East Medievalists

Middle East Medievalists (MEM), founded in 1989, is a professional non-profit association of scholars and organizations interested in the Islamic lands of the Middle East during the medieval period (defined roughly as 500-1500 C.E.). MEM's main objectives are to encourage scholarship on the medieval Middle East and to foster lines of communication among its members.

Regular membership in MEM is open to scholars and students of all nationalities interested in any aspect of the history and civilization of the Middle East in the medieval period. (See the membership application form on the last page of this issue.) Annual membership dues for members with addresses in Canada, Mexico, or the United States are US \$15.00. Members with addresses outside Canada, Mexico, or the United States are required to pay a postal surcharge of \$2.50 in addition to their dues, for a basic annual rate of US \$17.50. See the membership application form on the last page of this issue for multi-year memberships and payment options. Payment should be made by check or money order in the appropriate amount, in U.S. dollars payable on a U.S. bank only, and made out to "Middle East Medievalists," or by credit card. Send membership applications and dues payments to Steven C. Judd, Secretary of MEM, Department of History, Southern Connecticut State College, 501 Crescent St., New Haven, CT 06515, U.S.A.

The Board of Directors of MEM is elected annually at the general business meeting, normally held in the fall at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association. (For information, see "Annual Meetings" section inside this issue.) The next business meeting will take place in Montréal, Canada in conjunction with the 41st annual meeting of MESA (17-20 November, 2007). The Board of Directors for 2007 consists of the following members:

President: Nasser Rabbat, Department of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139, U.S.A. (term expires December 31, 2009)

Vice-President: Hugh N. Kennedy, Department of Medieval History, University of St. Andrews, Fife KY16 9A2, Scotland (term expires Dec. 31, 2008)

Secretary: Steven C. Judd, Department of History, Southern Connecticut State College, 501 Crescent St., New Haven, CT 06515, U.S.A. (term expires December 31, 2008)

Treasurer: Eric J. Hanne, Department of History, Florida Atlantic University, P.O. Box 3091, Boca Raton, FL 33431, U.S.A. (open term)

Member: Bethany Walker, Department of History, Grand Valley State University, 106A MAK, Allendale, MI 49401, U.S.A. (term expires December 31, 2007)

Member: Suleiman A. Mourad, Department of Religion, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063, U.S.A. (term expires December 31, 2007)

## JAFFA, FROM PAGE 21.

In the century following the conquest Jaffa became the port of Ramla, the new regional capital built by the Umayyad governor of Filasṭīn Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Malik before he became caliph (Le Strange 1890: 303). The closeness of association between Jaffa and Ramla is remarked upon by Ya'qūbī in the late ninth century CE: "[Yāfā] is much frequented by the people of ar-Ramla" (Le Strange 1890: 550), a phenomenon that should be manifest in the material culture of the two towns.

By the 'Abbasid period the ceramic assemblage at Jaffa not only shows close associations with its near neighbors, but illustrates the city's context in the greater Islamic world, containing many types that have wide distribution beyond the region. At this time the Ganor site can best be characterized as domestic, with many whole and completely reconstructable vessels being found in large refuse or sanitation pits beneath houses (Peilstöcker, pers. comm.). Some types that have wide distribution in this period are creamware juglets in several sizes and usually of cylindrical shape, often referred to as "eggshell ware" in the literature (fig. 3; cf. Arnon 1999: Fig. 3b). This ware is present at Ramla, Jaffa's close neighbor, and as far away as Samarra in Iraq and Zabid in the Yemen (Kletter 2005: Fig. 16:1-2; Sarre 1925: Abb. 1-7; Ciuk and Keall 1996: Pl. 95/11). Very thick-walled and hard-fired spherico-conical vessels, sometimes erroneously referred to as "grenades," are found all over the Muslim world and Jaffa is no exception (cf. Kletter 2005: Fig. 17:2; see Keall 1992). Types with more regional connections include a white-painted ware jar, identical to those found at Ramla, Pella, and several other sites in *Jund Filasṭīn* and *Jund al-Urdunn* (Cytryn-Silverman forthcoming: Fig. 2:14; McNicoll et al 1982: Pl. 144:4, 7). Several types of glazed bowls are known from the region, including "common glaze bowls" (fig. 4) as they are termed by Miriam Avissar, monochrome glazed, and "splashed and mottled" (cf. Avissar 1996: 78-79, Type 6).

By the eleventh century Jaffa appears as a node on a trade route between Egypt and Constantinople that is mentioned in the documents of the Cairo Geniza (Goitein 1967: 214). The documents also

attest the export of Ramla's olive oil through Jaffa to the ports of Egypt (Goldberg 2005: 336, n. 14). As with the preceding period, the shape and layout of the city are little known, and the Ganor site does not provide much clarity. In terms of ceramics, to date few types can be assigned to this period, but include types with regional distribution, such as glazed bowls continuing the previous traditions, and cooking pans believed to be imported from Lebnanon (see below).

The shift in material culture in both ceramics and building traditions that was introduced by the arrival of the Crusaders in 1099 brought dramatic changes to Jaffa (Peilstöcker 2006). For the Franks Jaffa was a county seat, home to the Count of Jaffa and Ascalon, who was vassal to the king of Jerusalem. Although Acre eventually usurped Jaffa's importance, eventually becoming the de-facto capital of the kingdom (1192-1291), Jaffa nevertheless sat at the head of a major route to Jerusalem and received numerous pilgrim and merchant ships (Richard 1979). Many of the major Crusader buildings at Jaffa are not preserved, yet significant traces of their occupation are to be found in nearly all excavation areas.

The crusader occupation at the Ganor site seems to consist of well-constructed courtyard buildings that may be domestic in nature. The ceramics well illustrate the active Mediterranean trade of the period, which brought North African and Italian wares as well as the products of Byzantium, to the Levantine and Egyptian coasts. Jaffa possesses a particularly rich assemblage of late twelfth and early thirteenth-century Black Sea amphorae and Aegean table wares. The latter types include coarse-incised, green-splashed, and a type combining the two decorative techniques (cf. Avissar and Stern 2005: Types I.5.2-I.5.4). This seeming predominance and variety of Aegean wares represents a departure from the proportion and diversity of types found at Acre and other sites in the Latin Kingdom (see Avissar and Stern 2005), and must be verified by quantitative analysis of the entire crusader-period pottery assemblage at Jaffa. The thirteenth century pottery assemblage at Jaffa is closer to that at Acre, however, with imports predominantly from Lebanon.



Figure 1. Jaffa.

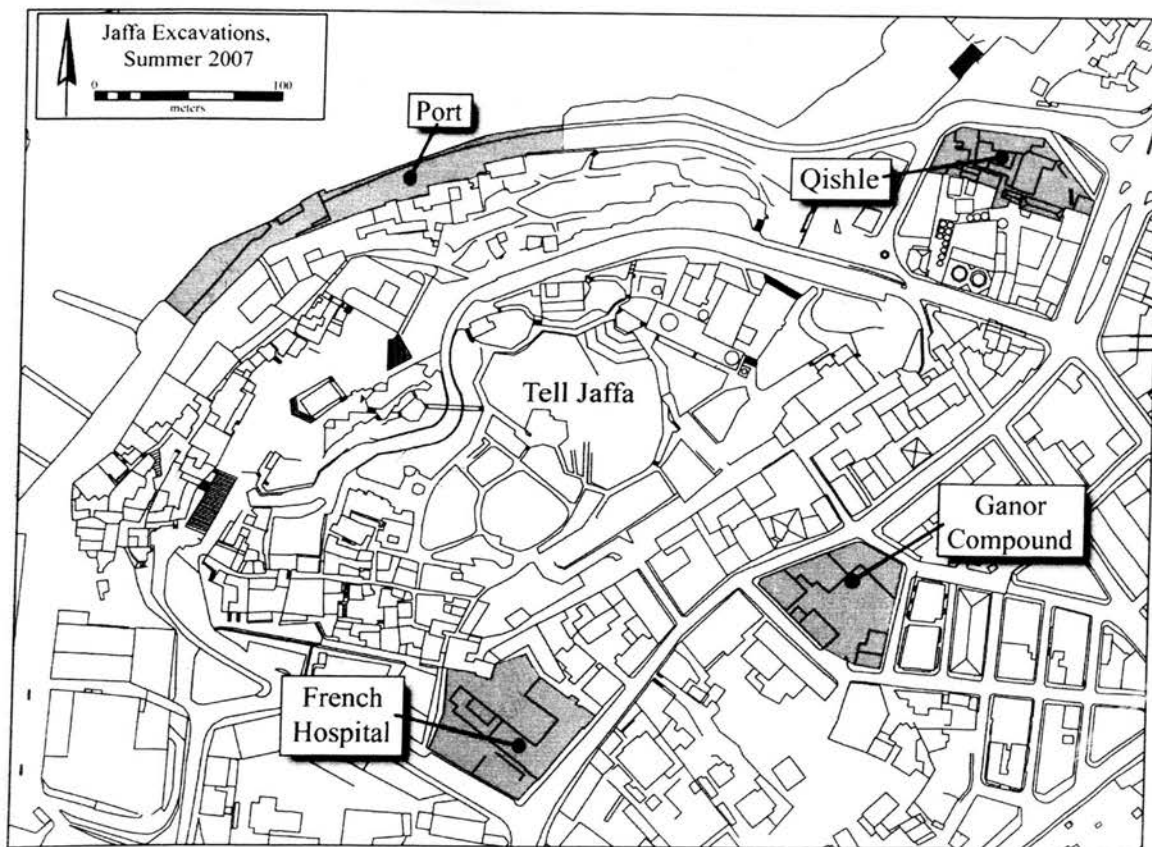


Figure 2. Jaffa excavations map, Summer 2007.



Figure 3. Cream ware juglet.

Cyprus and Italy (fig. 5) rather than the Aegean. Perhaps in lesser quantities are "Port St. Symeon" dishes known to have been produced at numerous manufacture centers in northern Syria, western Mesopotamia, Cilicia, and Anatolia (Avisar and Stern 2005: 52, Types I.7.4, I.8, I.9.1.1., I.9.2.1). Also from Syria are a few stonepaste pieces with blue and black designs under clear glaze. These changes in the crusader ceramic assemblage over time may be attributable to the commercial rights of the Italian city states, which varied in the ports of Byzantium, the Latin states, and Egypt, and which changed over time (Richard 1979: 270-280, 361-371). It is one of the avenues of investigation planned for the coming year.

Throughout the crusader period numerous cooking pots and glazed tablewares seem to be made in Lebanon, based on their similarity to vessels excavated in Acre that have been shown to be Lebanese products (Stern and Waksman 2003: 173-175), although this must be verified with petrographic analysis (e.g., cf. Avisar and Stern 2005: Types I.1.6.4;

Types II.2.1.1-4, II.2.3.1-2). This large increase in the supply of ceramics from Lebanon (possibly Beirut itself) is perhaps reflective of both areas being under Latin control. On the other hand, handmade geometric painted wares, a type with wide distribution in the Islamic world from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, are also not rare in the assemblage and is one indication that commerce at Jaffa was not restricted to trade within the Latin states or with Byzantium (cf. Avisar and Stern 2005: Type II.4.4.1; Johns 1998; Whitcomb 1991; Irwin 1980).

In 1268 the Mamluk sultan Baybars occupied Jaffa and reportedly razed the town (Buhl and Bosworth 2002: 234). To date we have little archaeological evidence of occupation at Jaffa in the Mamluk period. The Ganor site was not occupied at this time, probably an indication that the city had shrunk in size and its remains must be sought nearer to the port facilities. It seems even in reduced circumstances Jaffa's markets and ports were lively loci of commerce throughout the period. For example, Abū al-Fidā (ca. 1321) remarks that the "markets are much frequented," and the celebrated, large harbor is "frequented by all the ships coming to Filasṭīn, and from it

they set sail to all lands" (Le Strange 1890: 551). Two reported destructions for fear of new crusades in the mid-fourteenth century may have temporarily halted this activity (Buhl and Bosworth 2002: 234), but by the fifteenth century Venetian traders were exporting the cotton of the region from Jaffa (Ashtor 1974: 30; 1976: 677-681).

In 1514 Jaffa like the rest of the Levant fell under Ottoman control until 1917 when western powers divided up Ottoman holdings. The latter part of this period, after Jaffa's gradual revival from the second half of the seventeenth century (Buhl and Bosworth 2002: 234), is perhaps one of the most interesting phases of settlement in Jaffa, forming an essential link between the town's past and its present form. Although the extensive material remains of this period are not legally recognized as archaeology by the Israeli government, several building foundations have been carefully excavated and recorded by the Israel Antiquities authority in Jaffa. Together with standing architecture, monuments, maps, travel logs, and photographs they permit a detailed understanding of Jaffa's features and its evolution during the Ottoman period, during which it was once again Palestine's principal port. This is one of the avenues of research being pursued by the Jaffa Cultural Heritage Project.

Ottoman remains at the Ganor

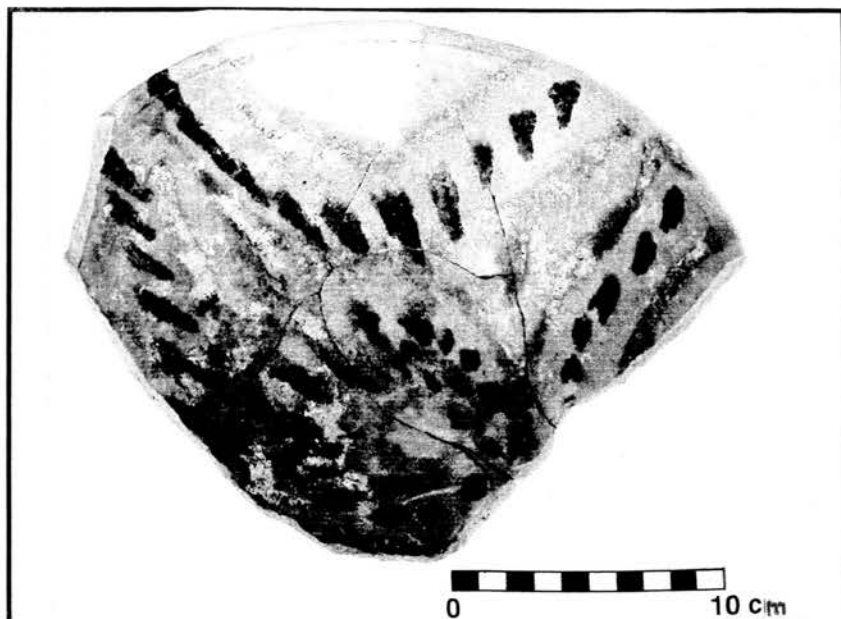


Figure 4. Common glaze bowl.



Figure 5. Imported pottery discovered in Jaffa.

site include large buildings with vaulted substructures. Although many sherds of various types have been excavated, only one type of well-preserved ceramic of this period is found in the collection of whole and reconstructed vessels from the Ganor site. It is a distinctive, brightly glazed (yellow or green) redware bowl, an import to this region from northwestern Turkey and northern Greece in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which Edna Stern has noted in great quantities in the ceramic assemblage of Acre (pers. comm. 10/27/07). Late Ottoman ceramics from Jaffa, which include copious amounts of stoneware and porcelain imports from Europe, are due to be published from the Qishle site at Jaffa (fig. 2) by Yoav Arbel. From the same site a local typology of tobacco pipes will soon be published by Lior Rauchberger.

**Notes:**

1. I am grateful to Martin Peilstöcker for allowing me to publish his finds.
2. I am grateful to Katia Cytryn-Silverman for allowing me to see her manuscript before publication.
3. See also Ruba Kana'an's work on the nineteenth-century architectural revival of the city by Muhammad Aga Abu Nabbut (1998, 2001a, 2001b).

**Bibliography**

- Arnon, Yael (1999). "Islamic and Crusader Pottery (area I, 1993-94)." In *Caesarea Papers 2: Herod's Temple, The Provincial Governor's Praetorium and Granaries, the Later Harbor, A Gold Coin Hoard, and Other Studies*, edited by Kenneth G. Holum, et al., pp. 225-251. JRA Supplementary Series 35. Journal of Roman Archaeology, Portsmouth, RI.
- Ashtor, Eliyahu (1974). "The Venetian Supremacy in the Levantine Trade: Monopoly or Pre-Colonialism?" *Journal of European Economic History* 2 (1): 5-53.
- Avissar, Miriam (1996). "The Medieval Pottery." In *Yoqne'am I: The Late Periods*, edited by A. Ben-Tor, et al., pp. 75-172. Qedem Reports 3, Jerusalem.
- Avissar, Miriam, and Edna J. Stern (2005). *Pottery of the Crusader, Ayyubid, and Mamluk Periods in Israel*. Israel Antiquities Authority Reports 26. Israel Antiquities Authority, Tel Aviv.

- Burke, Katherine Strange (In prep.). "Early Islamic and Crusader Whole and Reconstructed Vessels from the Ganor Compound". In *History and Archaeology of Jaffa*, edited by Martin Peilstöcker and Aaron Alexander Burke. The Jaffa Cultural Heritage Project 1. Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, Jerusalem and Los Angeles.
- Buhl, F., and C. E. Bosworth (2002). "Yāfā." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New edition. Brill, Leiden.
- Ciuk, Christopher, and Edward J. Keall (1996). *Zabid Project Pottery Manual 1995. Pre-Islamic and Islamic Ceramics from the Zabid area, North Yemen*. BAR International Series 655. British Archaeological Reports, Oxford.
- Cytryn-Silverman, Katia (forthcoming). "The 1996 Ramla Excavations: The Pottery Results." In *Ramla*, edited by O. Gutfeld. Qedem Reports. Hebrew University, Jerusalem.
- Goitein, Shelomo Dov (1967). *Economic Foundations. A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza 1*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Goldberg, Jessica (2005). *Geographies of trade and traders in the eleventh-century Mediterranean: A study based on documents from the Cairo Geniza*. Ph.D., Columbia University.
- Irwin, Robert (1980). "The Supply of Money and the Direction of Trade in Thirteenth-Century Syria." In *Coinage in the Latin East. The Fourth Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History (Wolfson College, 1979)*, edited by P. W. Edbury and D. M. Metcalf, pp. 73-104. BAR International Series 77. British Archaeological Reports, Oxford.
- Johns, Jeremy (1998). "The Rise of Middle Islamic Hand-Made Geometrically-Painted Ware in Bilad al-Sham (11th-13th Centuries A.D.)." In *Colloque International d'Archeologie Islamique: IFAO, Le Caire, 3-7 fevrier 1993*, edited by R.-P. Gayroud, pp. 65-93. Textes Arabes et Etudes Islamique 36. Institut Francais d'Archeologie Orientale, Cairo.
- Kana'an, Ruba (1998). *Jaffa and the Waqf of Muhammad Aga Abu Nabbut (1799-1831). A Study in the Urban History of an East Mediterranean City*. D.Phil., University of Oxford.
- idem (2001a). "Two Ottoman Sabils in Jaffa (c. 1810-1815): an Architectural and Epigraphic Analysis." *Levant* 33: 189-204.
- idem (2001b). "Waqf, Architecture, and Political Self-Fashioning: The Construction of the Great Mosque of Jaffa by Muhammad Aga Abu Nabbut." *Muqarnas* 18: 120-140.
- Keall, Edward J. (1992). "A Smoking Coconut. Archaeologists may have discovered the identity of mystery objects in a puff of smoke." *Rotunda* 12 (Spring): 12-17.
- Kletter, Raz (2005). "Early Islamic Remains at 'Opher Park, Ramla." *'Atiqot* 49: 57-99.
- McNicoll, Anthony, Robert H. Smith, and Basil Hennessy (1982). *Pella in Jordan 1: An interim report on the joint University of Sydney and The College of Wooster Excavations at Pella 1979-1981*. 2 vols. Australian National Gallery, Canberra.
- Peilstöcker, Martin (2000). "Tel Yafo (Jaffa): A Key Site of the Central Coastal Plain Re-Discovered. Preliminary Results from New Excavations in the 1990's." In *Proceedings of the First International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, eds. P. Matthiae et al., 1345-1352. Rome: Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza".
- idem (2006). "La ville franque de Jaffa à la lumière des fouilles récentes." *Bulletin Monumental* 164:99-104.
- Richard, Jean (1979). *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. 2 Vols. Europe in the Middle Ages 11. Amsterdam.
- Sarre, Friedrich (1925). *Die Ausgrabungen von Samarra, II: Die Keramik von Samarra*, Berlin.
- Stern, Edna J., and Yona Waksman (2003). "Pottery from Crusader Acre: A Typological and Analytical Study." In *VIIIe Congrès International sur la Céramique Médiévale en Méditerranée, Thessaloniki, 11-16 Octobre 1999*, edited by Ch. Bakirtzis, pp. 167-180. Ministère de la Culture Caisse des Recettes Archéologiques, Athens.
- Le Strange, Guy (1890). *Palestine under the Moslems. A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from AD 650 to 1500, translated from the works of the mediaeval Arab geographers*. Palestine Exploration Fund, London. (Reprint Beirut: Khayats, 1965)
- Whitcomb, Donald S. (1991). "Pseudo-prehistoric Ceramics from Southern Iran." In *Golf-Archäologie: Mesopotamien, Iran, Bahrein, Vereinigte Arabische Emirate und Oman*, edited by K. Schippman. M. L. Leidorf, Lyon and Göttingen.

## Relations Between Jews, Syriac Christians and Early Muslim Believers in Seventh-century Iraq<sup>1</sup>

by Frank van der Velden

### I. Syriac Christians and the New Conquerors

In his book *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, F. Donner proposed that in the period when Islam first coalesced, during the first century AH, there took place what we can call a kind of religious cohabitation: "As the Believers expanded their presence and hegemony outside Arabia ... they came into increasingly close contact with well-established monotheist communities ... At first, there may have been a period of accommodation and symbiosis between the Believers and the Jews, Christians, and even, perhaps, Zoroastrians of the region, although this is just barely apparent according to our sources. Over time, however, this apparent symbiosis began to give way ... The result of those debates was that the broader identity as Believers gradually gave way to a more sharply defined identity as Muslims, that is, as confessionally separate from Christians, Jews, and other monotheists."<sup>2</sup> This religious cohabitation of non-Muslims with early Islam in the Fertile Crescent followed different paths in two areas, due to the prevalence of different Christian sects in the two areas: the former Byzantine territories in Syria/Palestine and the former Sasanian territories in Iraq and Persia. In the case of Iraq, for example, the cities of al-Ḥīra and Prat de Meishan (later Baṣra) were centres of Christian missionary activity from the 5th century AD onward. This activity opened the way to the interior of the Arabian peninsula and down the coast of the Persian Gulf, where the Syriac Church of the East founded

monasteries and bishoprics extending into Oman. Eventually the West-Syriac church maintained missions in the territories of both the Ghassanids and the Lakhmids.<sup>3</sup> The Arabs, pillaging al-Ḥīra in their early campaigns of expansion, nevertheless founded their new centre of military and political activity next to it in Kūfa, later briefly the capital of the empire under 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (656 to 661 CE). Baṣra, on the other hand, developed into the starting-point of most military campaigns to the east, into Iran. Both Iraqi cities witnessed the political demise of the 'Alid family in the Arab civil wars of the first century AH and the subsequent development of the Shi'ite movement.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore fair to assume that, if there were any region during the seventh century CE where mediation between Syriac Christianity and Arabic-speaking culture might have occurred on a sophisticated level, it surely could have been there.

M. Cook,<sup>5</sup> in discussing the ground-breaking studies of J. van Ess,<sup>6</sup> therefore pondered over an early Christian influence upon the Qadarite sect. He further suggested an early inter-religious exchange between the Murji'ite sect and the famous Syriac-Orthodox theologian Jacob of Edessa at the end of 7th century AD on the topic of human determination and free will.<sup>7</sup> In my opinion, however, Jacob of Edessa's letter could also be an inner-Christian discussion of the monothelete cause, as the question of human determination relates to the question of the free will of Jesus Christ's human nature - the classic divergence of West-Syriac (Syriac-Ortho-

dox) and East-Syriac theology. But this leads us to the question: What did Syriac Christians actually know about the confession of their new rulers as early as the seventh century CE?<sup>8</sup> According to R. Hoyland, "The earliest clear Christian reference to the Prophet is to be found in the Syriac chronicle of Thomas the Presbyter, a resident of northern Mesopotamia ... we may assume that Thomas was writing ca. 640. In his chronicle he relates that: 'In the year 945, indiction 7, on Friday 4 February (634) at the ninth hour, there was a battle between the Romans and the Arabs of Muhammad (*tayyāyē d-Mḥmt*)' (*Chronica minora* II, 148)."<sup>9</sup> The East-Syriac Khuzistan-Chronicle (*Chronicon Anonymum*,<sup>10</sup> ca. 660 CE) reports the destruction of the Sasanian empire by the "Ishmaelites ... [whose] chief was Muhammad" (*Chr. Anon.* 12, s. Sako 32). The most detailed analysis of the "Ishmaelite" creed prior to 692 AD we find in the writings of the Armenian chronicler Pseudo-Sebeos (wr. in the 660s). He knows about an "Ishmaelite" Muhammad, a trader who assumed a divine mission to profess the God of Abraham and to fight paganism. He eventually knew the history of Moses, and he brought his people back to the living God, the God of Abraham.<sup>11</sup> Pseudo-Sebeos writes about ritual and moral prescriptions of the early Arab creed and about an Arab interpretation of their own victories as the restitution of the land, promised to their ancestor Abraham.

Discussions of the Christological creed between Christians and the Arab invaders are reported to have started after

• IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS •

the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem in 692 AD the Letter of Mar Yoḥannan, the (West-Syriac) Patriarch, to an unnamed Arab emir, according to Reinink (and others), may be an apologetic fiction from the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century CE.<sup>12</sup> But it seems to me that there had been earlier attempts to evaluate the Christological convergences and divergences of the two confessions, and (as I will try to show subsequently) that in the Syriac Church of the East in Iraq, a deeper understanding of the Christological creed of the Arabs was attained. For, the Christology of the Church of the East emphasized the human nature of Jesus and rejected the monothelete creed. Their polemic against all Byzantine confessions accused the Melkites in particular and in general all Christian churches accepting the Council of Ephesus (431 AD) of associating the Holy Virgin Mary with the Trinity by giving her the attribute *theotokos*, “the bearer of God.” We find the same polemic in the Qur’ān (Sūrat al-Mā’ida 5:116f).<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the East-Syriac catholicos Ishoyahb III, in a letter that reflects his troubles with monothelete (or, as we might more properly say, miaphysite) missionaries in the first decade of the Arab presence in Iraq and Persia (638 to 648 AD), saw a joint *anti-theopaschite* argument with his new Arab rulers: “The Arabs as *Hagarites* do not help those who say that the almighty God suffered and died.”<sup>14</sup> This may have helped him to close ranks against missionaries of the Syriac-Orthodox sect and also against some of his own clergy challenging his jurisdiction,<sup>15</sup> denouncing their creeds and their activities to the Arab authorities.<sup>16</sup> But it also gives evidence for his intimate knowledge of Christological aspects of the Arabs’ creed not many years after the invasion.

In a previous paper<sup>17</sup> I tried to show a similarity between features of the Qur’ānic notion of the “genealogy of the Virgin Mary” (Sūrah 3:33-37) and of the “Adam-Christ typology” (Sūrah 3:33 and 3:59), on the one hand, and contemporary Syriac patristic writings, on the other. After all, the larger context of Sūrah 3:33-64 seems to be a convergent text of Syriac and

early Arab Christological visions of Jesus within the framework of a Messianic salvation history.<sup>18</sup> The classical Muslim exegetes link the text of Sūrah 3:33-60 to a delegation of East-Syriac Christians from the Najrān oasis, who came to Muhammad in 631 CE (see Ṭabarī on the *Mubāhala* of Sūrah 3:61).<sup>19</sup> As usual, however, we lack contemporary sources on the delegation, making the whole issue of the treaty and its conditions unsure.<sup>20</sup> In any case, it seems insufficient to relate this highly sophisticated discussion of Christological topics in Sūrah 3:33-64 to an uncertain Arab Christian delegation in the lifetime of the prophet (as the Muslim tradition does) or to an unspecific event in the “later Medinian period” (Nöldeke / Schwally).<sup>21</sup> The convergent formulation of early Arab and typical Syriac, if not specifically East-Syriac, Christological concepts in Sūrah 3:33-64 makes the regular cohabitation of Syriac-Christians and Muslims in seventh century Iraq a much more intelligible scenario for the final redaction and canonization of these verses. Iraq also was the stronghold of the later Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik and his Iraqi governor al-Ḥajjāj. A decisive consequence of Syriac-Arab-cooperation certainly happened at the time of the 2nd Arab Civil war (680 to 685 CE), as noted by M. Morony: “The involvement of the Nestorians in the closing phase of the second civil war in Iraq brought the first real intervention of the Muslim state into their internal affairs and effectively completed the process by which the Nestorians themselves forced the Muslim government to apply Sasanian methods towards the.”<sup>22</sup> Catholicos Hananisho I (r. 686-693) was forced into exile after his interview with caliph ‘Abd al-Malik failed in 691 CE. In the years 692 and 693 CE, different parties opted for a schism that recognized the counter-patriarch John the Leprous. After the death of Hananisho I in 693 CE, the governor of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj, blocked the election of a new catholicos for 14 years (700-714 CE).

‘Abd al-Malik and al-Ḥajjāj both played a still poorly-known role in the formation of early Muslim dogma and in the canonization of the Qur’ān.<sup>23</sup> ‘Abd al-Malik denied most of the Christological

convergences with Syriac-Christian Churches, which we found had existed earlier in the seventh century CE, as he advanced his “Christological creed” in the inscription inside the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (in 692 CE).<sup>24</sup> This act might be understood as an imperial Ekthesis (explanation) similar to the one the Byzantine emperor Heraclius had pronounced in 638 CE. It therefore would be interesting to know if Christian theologians at the end of the seventh century CE, such as the East-Syriac catholicos Hananisho I and the Syriac-Orthodox Jacob of Edessa,<sup>25</sup> are referring to an earlier knowledge of the Arab creed, or to the “*new absurdity*” (as Hananisho called it)<sup>26</sup> of the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock, where Jesus is entitled Messiah (*masīh*), Word of God (*kalimathu*), Spirit from Him (*rūḥminhu*), and Prophet (*nabi*).<sup>27</sup>

To summarize: There are hints of an early (prior to 692 CE) East-Syriac perception of Qur’ānic topics-if not of Qur’ānic texts-dealing with the Christians’ Christological ideals. A friendly perception of what became the later Muslim creed by the Church of the East might have been motivated by the challenge of the West-Syriac (Syriac-Orthodox) missionaries and by the Byzantine Church’s rejection of the radical-dyophysite creed following the monothelete Ekthesis of the emperor Heraclius (638 CE), until the sixth Ecumenical council of Constantinople eventually condemned the monothelete creed and the Iconoclasts<sup>28</sup> in 680 CE. We find a hint in the letters of catholicos Ishoyahb III that he had looked for a joint Christological argument with his new Arab rulers to fight the “*theopaschites*,” and that he had learned to be sceptical about the result of these convergences and co-operations before 660 CE. A critical analysis of the traditions and perceptions of the Qur’ānic text of Sūrah 3:33-64 suggests a shaping of those Qur’ānic texts dealing with Christian items within the context of religious cohabitation of Syriac Christians and Arab believers in the later seventh century CE. This process definitely came to an end with the second Arab Civil War (680-685 CE) and with ‘Abd al-Malik’s explanation of his “Christological creed” in 692 CE.



• IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS •

## II. Muslim Contact with Jewish or Jewish-Christian Sects in the Seventh Century CE

As in the first section, where we explored relations between Arabs and certain Christian communities during the first Islamic century, in considering relations between Arabs and Jews in the same period we are looking neither for a Jewish nor a Judeo-Christian influence on the historical person of Muḥammad,<sup>29</sup> nor are we considering the Jewish presence in the Hijāz and in the city of Medina before and during Muḥammad's time.<sup>30</sup> Rather, our interest lies in exploring Jewish cohabitation with Christianity and also with the emerging Islam in the later seventh century CE in Syria, Palestine, and in Iraq.

What kind of Jews are we considering in our discussion of the seventh century CE? It is well-known that rabbinic communities flourished at this time in Palestine, Syria and Iraq.<sup>31</sup> As noted by P. Crone, "Babylonia was in this period the unrivaled centre of rabbinic Judaism, and it is equally to this region that research from the Islamic side has traced the origins of Islamic law."<sup>32</sup> The well-known phrase regarding the absence of sources on Jewish sectarian life in the rabbinic chronicles may lead to a scrupulous interpretation, such as that of D. Wasserstrom: "No Jewish sects have been proven to exist during the long Talmudic period, roughly 200-600."<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, scholars such as E. de Gallez<sup>34</sup> assert a continuity of Jewish sectarian life (messianic Jews, Judeo-Nazareans) in Western Syria and in Iraq until the sixth century CE.

To make the quest of existing and non-existing Jewish sects in the seventh century CE even more puzzling, S. Rosenkranz reports inter-religious or even syncretistic movements on a popular level. Because of the Syriac mentality, which was familiar to the Jews, contacts between Jews and Christians became more contested about 700 CE. Church synods forbade their Christian subjects to participate in the Jewish feasts, but the frequent perpetuation of such laws suggests that they never took successfully.<sup>35</sup> After the Arab conquest there seems to have been a reac-

tion involving the re-Judaizing of proselytes to Christianity, and even the Judaizing of Christians. A seventh-century Syriac disputation between a stylite and a Jew was authored, in the opinion of its editor, to combat real Judaizing.<sup>36</sup> For example: "I am amazed how there are among you some Christians who associate with us in the synagogue and who bring offerings and at the time of the Passover send unleavened bread."<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, a considerable number of Jews seem to have converted to Christianity in the same period.<sup>38</sup>

But who were those "Jews" whom the Christian fathers made efforts to fight? The "Who's Who" of heresiography, apoloogy and polemic is not easily deciphered.<sup>39</sup> The Byzantine-Orthodox Anastasius of Sinai (640-700CE), abbot of St. Catherine's monastery, turns his polemics against a "synagogue of Jews and Arabs," which he denounced for their efforts to fight against Christianity. Reading the contemporaneous Jewish apocalypse *The Secrets of Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai* one gets the impression that a certain Jewish milieu applauded this option and welcomed the invaders as their liberators, even though later Jewish sources show them as occupiers.<sup>40</sup> Are these anti-Jewish polemics related to a conflict with rabbinic Jews or Jewish sects in Palestine, which might have Judaized parts of the Christian communities? Or should we see here the common "*adversus Judaeos*" tradition, which did not need any specific argument? May we eventually ponder the well-known inner-Christian polemic, which claimed that the East-Syriac Christians had "Judaized" the Christian Christological creed, and so were subsequently called "Jews"<sup>41</sup> by their Byzantine and Syriac-Orthodox adversaries? Or did the church fathers make no distinction at all among the "Jewish" sects, using the epithet "Jewish" for all kind of "pagans" and "heretics," whom they supposed to find in one corner of the field? Modern scholars perceive this point differently, as we shall now see.

In their ground-breaking study *Hagarism* (1977), P. Crone and M. Cook sketched the presence of Samaritan Jews in the seventh century CE and subsequently

tried to show Samaritanism's influence on Islam.<sup>42</sup> Their ideas are related to the Iraqi theatre, where they pondered over a Samaritan hill-sanctuary, molded after the pattern of Mt. Gerazim, near the Iraqi town of Bakka<sup>43</sup> (see Sūrah 3:90). The Shi'ite concepts of the (hidden) *Imām* and the return of the *Mahdī* - in their opinion - also repeat Samaritan messianic features. Leaving aside the Samaritan issue, which is denied by scholars today, the broader Jewish influence on Shi'ite sects later plays a role in the well-documented inner-Islamic polemic against the Rāfiḍa (Shi'ites), comparing their creed to the Jewish religion by "equation lists." As S. Wasserstrom notes, "In his *Iqd al-Farid*, Ibn Abd Rabbihi (d. 328/939) relates the first list of parallels between the Rafida and the Jews. The list is cited in a quotation attributed to the Kufan 'Amir ibn Sharahbil ibn 'Abd al-Sha'bi (d. 103/721-722)."<sup>44</sup> Wasserstrom dates this early equation list to the later eighth century CE.

The same eighth century CE witnessed a new development of Jewish sectarianism with the emerging of the Qara'ite movement. Wasserstrom, who reviewed the Arab Muslim sources on Jewish sects, sees only one more discernable group for which we have sufficient sources to reconstruct its history and doctrine: the 'Īsawiyya.<sup>45</sup> He reports tangible convergences to proto-Shi'ite movements from the early eighth century CE, especially for the provinces of Mesopotamia and Persia. "The Persian and eastern geographic sphere constituted a veritable crucible of Jewish heterodoxy in the early years of Islam."<sup>46</sup> It was only the rabbinic reform of Saadia Gaon in the tenth century CE that brought the Jews of Mesopotamia back to the path of orthodoxy.

To sum up our limited knowledge of Jewish-Christian cohabitation in the seventh century CE, there must have been a mingling of Christianizing Jews, re-Judaizing proselytes to Christianity, and Judaizing Christians, an emergence of new Jewish sects-possibly in addition to activities of Jewish-Christians and Messianic Jews-in the process of another confession emerging: the later Islam, which at the same time split up into different move-

• IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS •

ments. All religious confessions at the time might have been influenced by one another, but our sources are lacking. Morony quotes the East-Syriac writer John Bar Penkaye (end of seventh century CE), who considers this religious hodgepodge in Iraq to be a miserable condition for all: "In the reign of Mu'awiya (660-680) there was no difference between pagan and Christian; the faithful was not discerned from a Jew."<sup>47</sup>

III. The new quest of diachronic studies on a Jewish-messianic or a Jewish-Christian proto-Islam

The classics of western oriental studies discussed a Jewish, Christian or a Jewish-Christian<sup>48</sup> influence on the historical person of Muḥammad. Today western scholars look upon the religious cohabitation in Syria, Palestine or Iraq as influential to the creation of "Crossroads to Islam" (Nevo / Koren) and to the crystallization of "Early Islamic Dogma" (Cook) at the end of the seventh century CE. Thus the well-known argument of "borrowed" Jewish, Jewish-Christian or "heretic" Christian features (messianism, prophecy, eschatology, and Christology) may be said to belong to the "proto-historicist phase" (Donner) of emerging Islam- that is, to the times from the four "rightly-guided caliphs" (640-660 CE) to the historically more palpable period of 'Abd al-Malik (d. 705 CE).

Starting in the 1980s, Y. Nevo and later J. Koren<sup>49</sup> presented archaeological evidence for what they claimed were pagan cults in the Negev-area lasting as late as the eighth century CE, as they found seventh century inscriptions that describe Allāh as *rabb Mūsā wa-'Īsā*, "Lord of Moses and Jesus." Subsequently, in their study *Crossroads to Islam* (2003), both authors drew the conclusion that a development of primitive monotheism with a Judeo-Christian background was significant for the emergence of the early Arab creed. This conclusion has, however, been the subject of debate.<sup>50</sup>

In 2005, E. Gallez<sup>51</sup> published a voluminous study that aimed to prove the existence of a messianic Jewish sect ("the Judeo-Nazarenes") in Syria during the fifth

and sixth centuries CE. Not only does he trace scriptures and ideology of this sect from the time of the Qumran community in the first century CE (what he calls the "Essenian dossier"), but also he depicts these Judeo-Nazarenes as direct antecedents of early Islam, and considers their scriptures to be proto-Qur'ānic manuscripts.

Also in 2005, Chr. Luxenberg<sup>52</sup> published a new translation of the Umayyad inscription inside the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (692 CE), in a certain way the oldest archaeological evidence of a Qur'ānic text. He denies that the inscription makes any reference to the historic person of Muḥammad, deciphering instead the participle *muḥammad* (meaning in Syriac "the praised") as a messianic attribute of Christ. This dovetails with the assertions of a group of German investigators (K.-H. Ohlig, R. Puin and V. Popp),<sup>53</sup> who consider the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'awiya (r. 660-680 CE), to have been a Christian and a lieutenant of the Byzantines, whereas 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685-705 CE) brought from Iraq a new confession, which eulogized Jesus as *muḥammad*, subsequently promulgating this new "muḥammadanism" inside the Dome of the Rock as the official Christological formula of his empire.<sup>54</sup> K.-H. Ohlig and Chr. Luxenberg consider this proto-Qur'ān to be a Christian lectionary, based on a "pre-Nicaean" Syriac Christology that viewed Jesus as the "Elected of God" and as the Messiah, obedient to God's will, but *not* as the Son of God "having the same substance with the Father" (*homo-ousios*), as the Nicene creed would have it.

Common to all such theories are the deconstruction of the historical Muḥammad and of the "Uthmanic" final redaction of the Qur'ān, both which are considered to be retrospective interpolations from early Abbasid times, when our literary sources about early Islam increase in number. However, the problem of feeble sources cannot be restricted to the lifetime of Muḥammad or the caliph 'Uthmān, but continues as well into the later seventh and the first half of the eighth century CE. Due to the lack of Islamic source material, Josef van Ess decided to skip the whole early

period in his voluminous monograph on Islamic theology and society in the second and third centuries AH. Other scholars are more optimistic. The tradition of *ḥadīth*-literature and Muslim *akhbār* has been re-evaluated by H. Motzki<sup>55</sup> in a manner that yields a rather different view than the unanimous disdain for such sources expressed by early researchers such as Th. Nöldecke, F. Schwally, and I. Goldziher. Numismatic evidence and even contemporaneous architecture of the seventh century CE are strongly debated, Arab papyri and early inscriptions still are under research and waiting for publication. R. Hoyland concludes that this situation "makes it difficult to see how historical scenarios that require for their acceptance a total discontinuity in the historical memory of the Muslim community-such as that Muhammad did not exist, the Quran was not written in Arabic, Mecca was originally in a different place etc.-can really be justified. Many of these scenarios rely on absence of evidence, but it seems a shame to make such a recourse when there are so many vocal forms of material evidence still waiting to be studied."<sup>56</sup>

On the other hand, most of the Christian and Jewish sources of the seventh century dealing with the Arab confession that have been published in the last twenty years shed more light on Christian attitudes toward, and polemics against, the confession of the Arab invaders, rather than providing a balanced source of reliable information on this topic. It is intriguing to see how P. Crone and M. Cook in 1977 and in 1981 constructed an alternative picture of the emergence of Islam through an analysis of these Christian sources, and how it has been repeated ever since by scholars such as Nevo, Koren, de Gallez, and Ohlig, leaving aside only the Samaritan issue. Due to the lack of documents and source material from the seventh century, however, we should recognize that there is still not enough information available to falsify or to justify such a reconstruction of history.

This situation makes it attractive for scholars such as Nevo/Koren, de Gallez or Luxenberg/Ohlig<sup>57</sup> to look for new evidence through source-historical and

• IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS •

source-critical analysis. They opt for a layer of "proto-islamic" tradition in a rude Arab monotheism of the sixth to seventh centuries (Nevo/Koren), or in the Syrian messianic Judaism of the fifth to sixth centuries (de Gallez), or in fourth-century Syriac theology (Ohlig). But such approaches face a three-fold problem: First the sheer existence of such a tradition remains, in each case, to be proven. Second: This presumed tradition has to be linked to a sect for which there exists some historical evidence—such as formerly pagan Arab tribes of the Negev and the Transjordanian area (Nevo/Koren) or the "Judéo-Nazaréens" (de Gallez) or a "pre-Nicaean Syriac-Christian heresy" in the confines of the Iraqi deserts (Ohlig).<sup>58</sup> Reconstructing such assumed proto-Islamic traditions and identifying a group or a sect whose features eventually matched those practices or beliefs is a complicated and disputed business. The whole issue of a "Jewish-Christian or Messianic influence on early Islam," for example, clings to acceptance of a revisionist interpretation of earlier Christian heresiographic sources.<sup>59</sup> But the third

step necessary to establish such views is even more hazardous: Once the positive identification matches the tradition with a relevant sect of *its* time, the source-critical analysis has to prove its diachronic relevance, looking for the missing-link that relates a fourth, fifth, or sixth-century sect and its ideas or practices to the seventh century's phenomenon of an "original Islam," which itself has to be peeled out of various overlays from the early Abbasid period. Of course, we never find an allegiance to it, neither in Muslim or Jewish nor in Christian literature contemporary to the events, leaving us to the less trustworthy pieces of circumstantial evidence. "Peeling" this original form may easily result in re-shaping or wilfully constructing it.<sup>60</sup> Here again we look into the kind of hermeneutical abyss that misled some Christian biblical exegetes of the "new form critical school" in the 1970s.

Therefore, the significance of religious cohabitation in the early years of Islam may be summarized best by the perceptive statement of U. Rubin: "The Qur'anic Impact on Islamic tradition is

secondary to the Biblical one ... Since the Qur'an could become a literary mode for historiography only when its availability increased considerably, it is feasible to assume that Jewish and Christian models of sacred history preceded the Qur'anic ones in Islamic tradition."<sup>61</sup> But to what extent did this affect the shaping of the Sūrah's, its redactional and its canonical process?<sup>62</sup> We may assume that Syriac-Christians were already informed about Christological differences and convergences with the Muslim point of view before 692 AD. In my opinion, the Qur'anic texts and the processes of their redaction certainly do reflect the cohabitation of the Arab believers with their Jewish and Christian contemporaries.<sup>63</sup> Therefore the synchronic analysis of these "Qur'anic" texts within their Christian and Jewish sectarian milieu of the seventh century CE, i.e., the time of its redactional and canonical process—is the first item we should address and still has to be completed, before we may trust ourselves to a diachronic reconstruction of how Islam came to be.

**Notes:**

1. A simpler version of this paper was presented at a conference on "Byzantium in Early Islamic Syria," organized by Balamand University, The American University of Beirut, and the Institut Français du Proche Orient, held June 18-20, 2007, in Beirut.
2. Donner, F., *Narratives of Islamic Origins. The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton, 1998), 277.
3. As late as the 8th century AD missionary activities of the Church of the East still compelled the former Syriac-Orthodox Christians of Najrān to convert; they had been displaced to al-Ḥira and Baṣra in the times of the caliph Abū Bakr.
4. See Hinds, M., "Kufan political alignments and their background in the mid-seventh century AD," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2 (1971) 346-367 (reprint: M. Hinds, *Studies in Early Islamic History* [Princeton, 1996], 1-28).
5. See Cook, M., *Early Muslim Dogma* (Cambridge 1981), 145-152, 149.
6. Van Ess, J., *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie* (Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1977); idem, *Frühe mu'tazilitische Häresiographie* (Beirut and Wiesbaden, 1971); idem, *Zwischen Hadith und Theologie* (Berlin and New York, 1975).
7. See Cook, M., *Early Muslim Dogma*, 145-152.
8. See the compilation of early Christian sources on Islam, prior to 692 AD, in the works of: Brock, S., "Syriac View of Emergent Islam," in: Juynboll, G.H.A. (Ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1982), 9-22, 199-203; Suermann, H., "Orientalische Christen und der Islam. Christliche Texte aus der Zeit von 632-750," *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 67 (1983) 120-136; Landron, B., *Chrétiens et Musulmans en Irak: Attitudes Nestorienne vis-à-vis de l'Islam* (Paris, 1994); Hoyland, R.G., *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, 1997); de Prémare, A.-L., *Les fondations de l'Islam* (Paris, 2002), 395-469.
9. Hoyland, R., "Earliest Christian Writings on Muhammad," in: Motzki, H. (ed.), *The Biography of Muhammad* (Aldershot, 2000), 276-97, here 277ff. (*Islamic History and Civilization* 32). See also Palmer, A., "Chronique Syriacque contemporaine de la conquête arabe," in: Canivet, P. (ed.), *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam (VIIe-VIIIe siècles)* (Damascus, 1992), 31-46.
10. Sako, L.R.M., *Lettre christologique du patriarche syro-oriental Ishoqahb II de Gdala* (Rome, 1983), 29-34; see Baumstark, A., *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 207; de Urbina, I., *Patrologia Syriaca* (Rome, 1958), 207; Fiey, J.-M., *Jalons pour une histoire de l'Église en Iraq* (Louvain, 1970), 13.

• IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS •

11. See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 124-132; Flusin, B., "Ist dies das Ende der Zeiten?," *Welt und Umwelt der Bibel* 1 (2005), 34-40, at p. 38.
12. See Reinink, G.J., "The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam," *Oriens Christianus* 77 (1993), 165-187.
13. See Cuypers, M., *Le Festin. Une lecture de la sourate al-Mâ'ida*, (Paris, 2007), 352.
14. Letter No. 48 of Ishoyahb III to some credulous confratres; Duval, R., *Ishoyahb Patriarchae III liber epistularum* (Louvain, 1955) (CSCO scr. syri 11), textus syr. 93-97; versio latina (CSCO scr. syri 12), pp. 71-74. Hoyland votes for a later date, but not against the relative chronology "prior to Patriarchal letter No. 15" (see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 179, note 23).
15. "What seems to upset Išo'yahb more than these conversions is that the dissenting bishops have informed the local Arab authorities that they are no longer under obedience of the catholicos. Išo'yahb is thus forced to negotiate with the Arab authorities to whom he is responsible, rather than keeping the quarrel within the confines of his church" (Erhart, V., "The Church of the East during the period of the four rightly-guided caliphs," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78/3 [1996], 55-71, at p. 70).
16. Baumer, Chr., *Frühes Christentum zwischen Euphrat und Jangtse* (Stuttgart, 2005), 151. The Būyid 'Aḍud al-dawla (949-983 AD) employed the Eastern-Syriac Christian Nasr Ibn Hārūn as minister (see Le Coz, R., *Histoire de l'Église d'Orient*, [Paris, 1995], 168ff). Ibn-Nasūr served as wazīr and governor to the Fātimid caliph al-'Aziz (975-996 AD). In these later times of a considerable political influence the Eastern-Syriac Church openly displayed her radical divergence to the Byzantines and her presumable convergence to the Muslim creed: "Wie die nestorianischen Katholikoi hatte auch Ibn-Nastur die große Distanz der Kirche des Ostens zur römisch-byzantinischen Kirche betont und die angebliche Nähe zum Islam angedeutet" (Baumer, Chr., *Frühes Christentum zwischen Euphrat und Jangtse*, 155; see Landron, *Chrétiens et Musulmans en Irak*, 45). We may see a literary reflection of this subject at Yahyā Ibn 'Adī (893-974 AD), who let a Muslim philosopher portray the Eastern-Syriac Christology in his "grande polémique antinestoriane" (ed. E. Platti, CSCO 427/428 und 437/438, 1981-1982).
17. See van der Velden, F., "Expecting a joint anti-theopaschite argument: Early Eastern-Syriac perception of Islam in Ishoyahb III letter epistularum (640-660 AD)," to be published in the proceedings of the symposium: "Byzantium in Early Islamic Syria", Beirut, 18-20 June 2007.
18. See van der Velden, F., "Konvergenztexte syrischer und arabischer Christologie: Stufen der Textentwicklung von Sure 3,33-64," *Oriens Christianus* 91 (2007) 162-201.
19. This delegation also is mentioned in the Eastern-Syriac chronicle of Seert (9th to 11th century AD). The prophet guaranteed their residence in Arab territory and their belongings, and a free observation of their Christian creed as long as they paid a tribute. This might have been the first covenant between Muḥammad and an Arab Christian party. See: Erhart, Victoria, "The Church of the East during the period of the four rightly-guided caliphs," in: Coakley, J. F., and Parry, K. (eds.), *The Church of the East: Life and thought.* (= *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78/3 [1996]), 55-71, at pp 65ff.
20. Baumer, *Frühes Christentum zwischen Euphrat und Jangtse*, 150: "Kalif Omar (reg. 634-644) setzte ... den Wunsch Mohammeds um und widerrief den Pakt Mohammeds mit den Christen Najrans, die er mehrheitlich nach al-Hira, teilweise auch nach Syrien und Bosra, deportieren ließ. Ihre Religion durften sie aber behalten (Tabari, *Chronik*, 1871, Bd. III, 213) ... Die in al-Hira angesiedelten Miaphysiten bekehrte Patriarch Timotheus I. Ende des 8. Jhs. zur Kirche des Ostens;" see also Landron, *Chrétiens et Musulmans en Irak*, 27.
21. See Ahrens, K., "Christliches im Qoran. Eine Nachlese," *ZDMG* 84 (1930), 15-68 and 149-190, and Busse, H., *Die Theologische Beziehungen des Islam zu Judentum und Christentum* (Darmstadt, 1988), 116-124.
22. Morony, M., "Religious Communities in Late Sasanian and Early Muslim Irak," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 17 (1974) 113-135, at p. 128.
23. The evaluation of the Christological topics under discussion matches with a new emission of the *Muṣḥaf* by 'Abd al-Malik's governor in Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj (694-714 AD) (see de Prémare, A.-L., "'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan et le Processus de Constitution du Coran," in: Ohlig, K.H. and Puin, G.-R., [eds.], *Die dunklen Anfänge* (Berlin, 2005), 179-211). It ended up in the well known anti-Christian movements of the caliphs 'Abd al-Malik and Yazīd II, like the banning of crosses etc. In Egypt banners were fixed on the churches, showing the text of Sūrah 112 and a reference to Jesus as a prophet (see van Ess, J., *Theologie und Gesellschaft* 1 [Berlin and New York, 1991], 11).
24. See Grabar, O., *The Shape of the Holy, Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton, 1996).
25. See the letter of Jacob of Edessa on the genealogy of Holy Virgin Mary (quotation from Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 166, translation of the underlined words altered by the present author): "The "Mehagraiē" (= people of Hagar) too, although they do not know nor wish to say that this true Messiah, who came and is acknowledged by Christians, is God and the son of God, they nevertheless confess firmly that he is the true Messiah who was foretold by the prophets. ... They say to all at all times, that Jesus son of Mary is in truth the Messiah and they call him the Word of God, as do the Holy Scriptures. They also add, in their ignorance, that he is the Spirit of God, for they are not able to distinguish between word and spirit, just as they do not assent to call the Messiah God or son of God."
26. Reinink, "The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam," 177: "Henanisho I (died 699/700), however, in

• IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS •

- mentioning a *new absurdity* that takes Jesus for a prophet, is undoubtedly referring to the Muslims (see G. Reinink, "Fragmente der Evangelienexegese des Katholikos Henanisho I," R. Lavenant (ed.), *V Symposium Syriacum* (OCA 236), 1990, 89f.)"
27. See Luxenberg, Chr., "Neudeutung der arabischen Inschrift im Felsendom zu Jerusalem," in: Ohlig and Puin, (eds.), *Die dunklen Anfänge*, 126.
28. For the discussion of early iconoclast convergences between Arab believers and Christians see Griffith, S.H., "Images, Islam and Christian Icons," in: Canivet, P. (ed.), *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam*, 121-138: "As for the charge of idolatry ... it was already an issue between Jews and Christians, at least from the beginning of the seventh century ... Polemics between Muslims and Christians seem simply to have sharpened an already existing debate on this issue ... But the icon as a moment in the controversy between Christians and Muslims is a much different phenomenon than is the icon as the focus of an attempted theological reformation in Byzantium." See Schick, R., *The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule* (Princeton, 1995), 223; and Crone, P., "Islam, Judeo-Christianity and Byzantine Iconoclasm," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980) 59-95.
29. See Geiger, A., *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?* (Bonn, 1833). The issue of a Judeo-Christian or a Jewish-messianic influence will be discussed below.
30. See Newby, Gordon D., *A History of the Jews of Arabia: from ancient times to their eclipse under Islam* (Columbia, S.C., 1989); Lecker, M., *Muslims, Jews, and Pagans: Studies on Early Islamic Medina* (Islamic History and Civilization 13), 1995.
31. See Newby, Gordon D., *The History of the Jews of Arabia*, 1989, 24-48.
32. Crone, P. and Cook, M., *Hagarism. The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1977), 30.
33. Wasserstrom, S., *Between Muslim and Jew: the Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam* (Princeton, 1995), 33.
34. See Gallez, E.-M., *Le messie et son prophète. Tome I - De Qunrân à Muhammad, Tome II - Du Muhammad des Califes au Muhammad de l'histoire* (Paris, 2005).
35. See Rosenkranz, S., *Die jüdisch-christliche Auseinandersetzung unter islamischer Herrschaft, 7. bis 10. Jahrhundert* (Bern, 2004), 47.
36. Hayman, A. P., *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew* (Louvain, 1973), 75.
37. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, 38; see Haymann, A., "The Image of a Jew in the Syriac Anti-Jewish Polemical Literature," in: Neusner, J. and Frerichs, E. (eds.), *To see Ourselves as Others See Us* (Chicao, CA, 1985), 423-443; Hayman, *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite*.
38. See Ohlig, K.-H., "Das syrische und arabische Christentum und der Koran," in: Ohlig and Puin (eds.), *Die dunklen Anfänge*, 366-405, at p. 377.
39. A similar argument we find in early Sunni polemic literature describing the Shi'ite movement as "the Jews of our community" (see Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*).
40. See Déroche, V., "Muhammad - Messias der Juden?," *Welt und Umwelt der Bibel* 1 (2005), 18f.
41. This common polemic appeared after the council of Ephesos (431 AD). The Eastern-Syriac Catholicos Babai (497-502 AD) was accused of being a "Jew" by a Syriac-Orthodox disputator in the presence of the Sasanian king Kawad I; see Baumer, *Frühes Christentum*, 89f and Grillmeier, A., *Jesus, der Christus, im Glauben der Kirche* (Freiburg/Br., Basel, and Wien, 2002), 266.273.
42. See Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 21f.
43. Sūrah 3:90, for unknown reasons, writes *Bakka* instead of *Makka*.
44. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, 100.
45. *Ibid.*, 38 and 47-92.
46. *Ibid.*, 41.
47. Morony, "Religious Communities," 120.
48. See Wellhausen, J., *Reste arabischen Heidentums* (2nd ed. Berlin, 1987), 232; Schoeps, H.-J., *Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums* (Tübingen, 1949), 342; See van Ess, J., "Der Islam," in Küng, H., et al., *Christentum und Weltreligionen: Hinführung zum Dialog mit Islam, Hinduismus und Buddhismus* (München, 1998), 180.
49. See Nevo, Y. and Koren, J., *Crossroads to Islam, The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State* (Amherst, N.Y., 2003).
50. "At Sde Boqer in the Negev, from the late seventh century, and presumably therefore from 'Abd al-Malik's reign, investigators have found inscriptions which describe Allāh as 'rabb Musa wa-'Isā, Lord of Moses and Jesus' (The authors say that the formula 'indicates some variety of Judeo-Christian belief'. In my judgement it could just as well reflect contemporary religious controversy)": Griffith, S.H., "Images, Islam and Christian Icons," in: Canivet, P. (ed.), *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam*, 121-138, at p. 128 and n. 29.
51. See Gallez, *Le messie et son prophète*.
52. See Luxenberg, Chr., "Neudeutung der arabischen Inschrift im Felsendom zu Jerusalem," in: Ohlig and Puin, (eds.), *Die dunklen Anfänge*, 124-148.
53. See Ohlig and Puin (eds.), *Die dunklen Anfänge*; Ohlig, K.-H. and Puin, G.-R. (eds.), *Der frühe Islam* (Berlin, 2007).

# ANNUAL MEETINGS

| Organization   | When and Where                       | Information   | Telephone/Fax/Email/Web   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Middle East Studies Association</b><br>(2007 Meeting) | Nov. 17-20, 2007<br>Montréal, Canada | MESA Secretariat<br>University of Arizona<br>1232 N. Cherry Ave.<br>Tucson, AZ 85721  | (520)-621-5850<br>mesa@ccit.arizona.edu<br>www.mesa.arizona.edu                                 |
| <b>Middle East Studies Association</b><br>(2008 Meeting) | Nov. 22-25, 2008<br>Washington, DC   | see preceding   | see preceding   |
| <b>Middle East Studies Association</b><br>(2009 Meeting) | Nov. 21-24, 2009<br>Boston, MA       | see preceding   | see preceding   |
| <b>American Oriental Society</b><br>(2008 Meeting)       | Mar. 14-17, 2008<br>Chicago, IL      | American Oriental Society<br>Hatcher Graduate Library<br>University of Michigan<br>Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1205                                   | (734)-764-7555<br>www.umich.edu/~aos  |
| <b>American Oriental Society</b><br>(2009 Meeting)       | Mar. 13-15, 2009<br>Albuquerque, NM  | see preceding   | see preceding   |
| <b>American Historical Association</b><br>(2008 Meeting) | Jan. 3-6, 2008<br>Washington, DC     | American Historical Assn.<br>400 A Street, S. E.<br>Washington, DC 20003  | (202)-544-2422<br>www.historians.org  |
| <b>American Historical Association</b><br>(2009 Meeting) | Jan. 2-5, 2009<br>New York, NY       | see preceding   | see preceding   |
| <b>The Medieval Institute</b><br>(2008 Meeting)          | May 8-11, 2008<br>Kalamazoo, MI      | The Medieval Institute<br>Western Michigan Univ.<br>1903 W. Michigan Avenue<br>Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5432                                       | Tel.: (269)-387-8745<br>Fax: (269)-387-8750<br>mdvl_congres@wmich.edu<br>www.wmich.edu/medieval |
| <b>The Medieval Institute</b><br>(2009 Meeting)          | May 7-10, 2009<br>Kalamazoo, MI      | see preceding   | see preceding   |
| <b>Seminar for Arabian Studies</b><br>(2008 Meeting)     | July 24-26, 2008<br>London, UK       | Dr. Ardle MacMahon<br>Seminar for Arabian Studies<br>The British Museum<br>c/o Asia Department<br>Great Russell Street<br>London WC1B 3DG, UK | Fax: 44-(0)208-985-3561<br>seminar.arab@durham.ac.uk<br>www.arabianseminar.org.uk               |

# ANNUAL MEETINGS

| Organization  | When and Where                            | Information   | Telephone/Fax/Email/Web  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>College Art Association</b><br>(2008 Meeting)  | Feb. 20-23, 2008<br>Dallas-Fort Worth, TX | Suzanne Schanzer<br>275 Seventh Ave.<br>New York, NY 10001                              | (212)-691-1051 ext13<br>www.collegeart.org   |
| <b>College Art Association</b><br>(2009 Meeting)  | Feb. 25-28, 2009<br>Los Angeles, CA       | see preceding   | see preceding  |
| <b>International Medieval Congress</b><br>(2008 Meeting)<br>"The Natural World"                     | July 7-10, 2008<br>Leeds, UK              | Axel E.W. Müller<br>IMC, Parkinson 1.03<br>University of Leeds<br>Leeds LS2 9JT, UK     | Tel.: +44 (113) 343-3614<br>Fax: +44 (113) 343-3616<br>imc@leeds.ac.uk<br>www.leeds.ac.uk/im |
| <b>International Medieval Congress</b><br>(2009 Meeting)<br>"Heresy and Orthodoxy"                  | July 13-16, 2009<br>Leeds, UK             | see preceding   | see preceding  |
| <b>Dumbarton Oaks Symposium</b><br>(2008 Meeting)<br>"Trade and Markets in Byzantium"               | May 2-4, 2008<br>Washington, DC           | Dumbarton Oaks<br>1703 32nd St., N. W.<br>Washington, DC 20007                          | (202)-339-6940<br>www.doaks.org  |
| <b>ARAM International Conference</b><br>(2008 Meeting)<br>"The Decapolis: History<br>& Archaeology" | July 7-10, 2008<br>Oxford, UK             | ARAM<br>The Oriental Institute<br>Oxford University<br>Pusey Lane<br>Oxford OX1 2LE, UK | Tel.: 44-1865-514041<br>Fax: 44-1865-516824<br>aram@ermine.ox.ac.uk<br>users.ox.ac.uk/~aram  |
| <b>ARAM International Conference</b><br>(2008 Meeting)<br>"The Mandaean"                            | Sep. 8-10, 2008<br>London, UK             | see preceding   | see preceding  |
| <b>American Academy of Religion</b><br>(2008 Meeting)   | Nov. 1-4, 2008<br>Chicago, IL             | American Academy of Religion<br>1703 Clifton Rd., Suite G-5<br>Atlanta, GA 30329-4019   | (404)-727-7920<br>aar@emory.edu<br>www.aarweb.org  |
| <b>American Academy of Religion</b><br>(2009 Meeting)   | Nov. 7-10, 2009<br>Montréal, Canada       | see preceding   | see preceding  |

## Early Islamic Military Architecture: The Birth of *Ribats* on the Palestinian Coast

by Yumna Masarwa

**D**uring the Islamic conquest of al-Shām and Egypt in the first half of the 7th century, the Muslims were inexperienced in naval battles compared with the Byzantines, and had difficulty conquering the coastal cities of these regions. The fortified coastal cities of Palestine, such as Gaza, Ascalon and Caesarea, were subjected to siege by the Muslims, and were the last places there to fall to them because of the Byzantine supplies that reached these cities by sea.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Byzantines did not miss a chance to regain localities on the coasts of Egypt and al-Shām.

Al-Balādhurī records that 'Asqalān (Ascalon) was first conquered by 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ during the reign of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 634-644), but that its inhabitants rebelled and received reinforcement from the Byzantines. Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, the governor of al-Shām, recaptured it, posted guards in it and settled garrisons of cavalry guard (*rawābiṭ*) in it.<sup>2</sup> Al-Balādhurī also tells us that in 645, the Byzantine fleet recovered Alexandria; however, 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ succeeded in recapturing it and demolished its walls to the ground.<sup>3</sup> It was at that time, when 'Uthmān wrote to his governor in Alexandria ordering him "to station cavalry guard (*rābiṭa*) in it, and to assign abundant subsistence allowances to the guard, and to change its personnel once every six months."<sup>4</sup> We also know from al-Balādhurī that the Byzantines raided the coasts of al-Shām twice during the Umayyad period (661-750); in 669<sup>5</sup> and in 683 when they invaded and devastated 'Asqalān, Caesarea, Acre and Tyre.<sup>6</sup>

The repeated Byzantine attacks on the coastal region of Syria-Palestine led the Umayyad caliphs to undertake major efforts to defend this coastline, which was considered part of a strategically important

border area with the Byzantines. Literary sources and archaeological evidence enable us to reconstruct the efforts initiated by the Muslim caliphs in the coastal cities of Palestine. Although the title of this essay speaks of "the Palestinian coast," it is more precisely about the coastal cities of the Byzantine province Palaestina Prima, which became *jund* Filasṭīn during the Islamic era. In modern terms, these cities

are located on the Mediterranean shore of Israel and extend from Gaza in the south to Haifa in the north (fig. 1). The chronological scope of this essay is from the time of the second caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb until the end of the Umayyad period (750).

When the Muslims took possession of Palestine and Egypt from the Byzantines, they realized that maritime strength was necessary to keep and con-

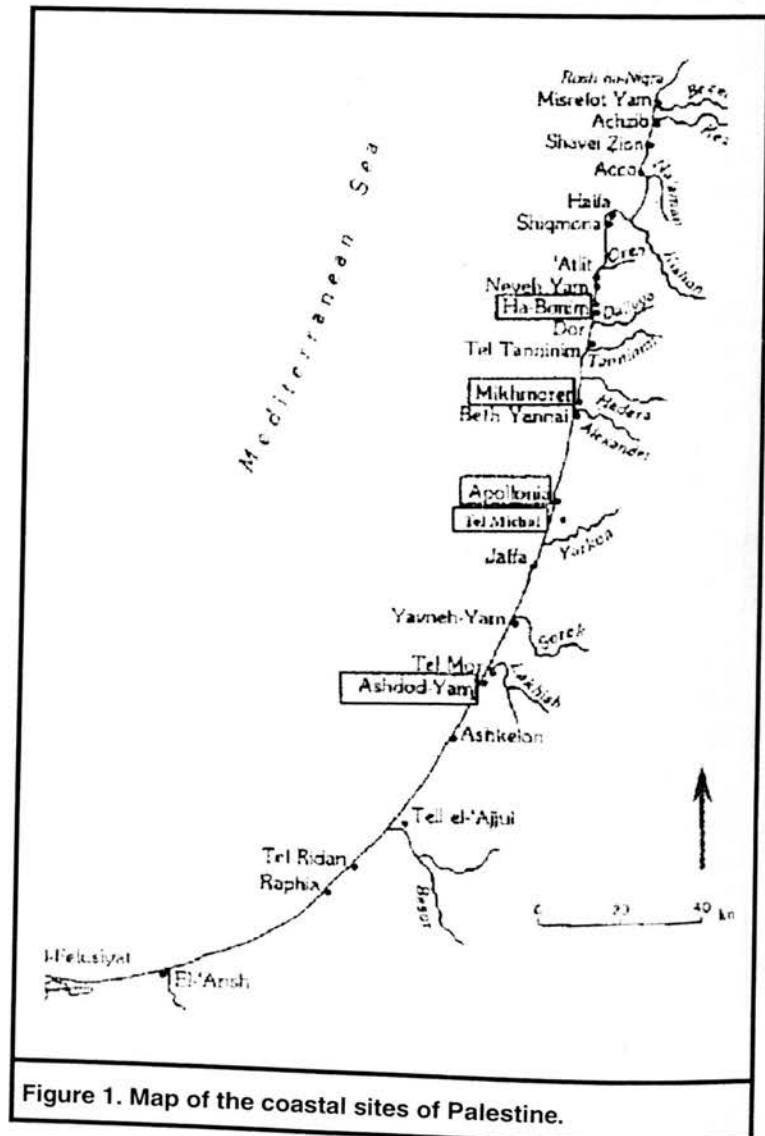


Figure 1. Map of the coastal sites of Palestine.



tinue their conquests. As long as Constantinople could send out a fleet, the coastal cities of al-Shām could easily be attacked. Mu'āwiya, the governor of Syria-Palestine, had long felt himself handicapped by the lack of a fleet, and had asked permission from the caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in Madīna to send his soldiers to conquer by sea. 'Umar determinedly refused to consider naval action.<sup>7</sup> According to al-Balādhurī, he preferred a policy of passive defense of the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine. During his reign, "whenever the Muslims conquered a coastal city, they would station the necessary number of Muslims in it, and if the enemy there should start a revolt, the Muslims would flock for reinforcement."<sup>8</sup> This strategy demanded military structures to accommodate the Islamic troops, and enable them to defend the coastline. Therefore, 'Umar ordered Mu'āwiya "to repair the fortifications of these cities (*marammat ḥuṣūnihā*), to garrison them, to post guards on their watchtowers (*manāzir*), and to establish an alarm system by means of flaming torches (*mawāqīd*)."<sup>9</sup> 'Umar granted fiefs (*qaṭā'i'*) to the garrison he stationed in the coastal cities; al-Balādhurī speaks of the existence of certain fiefs in 'Asqalānī from the time of 'Umar.<sup>10</sup>

When 'Uthmān b. 'Affān became caliph in 644, he ordered Mu'āwiya "to fortify the coastal cities (*taḥṣīn al-sawāhil*), to settle them and to give fiefs to those who dwell in them."<sup>11</sup> We learn from al-Balādhurī that 'Asqalān was also among the coastal cities in which 'Uthmān settled Muslims and granted them estates (*qaṭā'i'*).<sup>12</sup> 'Uthmān also instructed Mu'āwiya to keep troops in readiness in the coastal cities in addition to those already there, to give the garrison lands, to distribute the abandoned houses among the garrison, to establish new mosques and to enlarge those that had been established during 'Umar's caliphate.<sup>13</sup> After Mu'āwiya had done these things, and during the time that followed, people from all areas moved to the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine.<sup>14</sup> In addition, we learn from al-Balādhurī that new fortresses (*ḥuṣūn*) were established in the coastal region of al-Shām in the time of 'Uthmān, such as the fortress of Jabala (Gabala) founded by Mu'āwiya<sup>15</sup> and the fortress of Sufyān

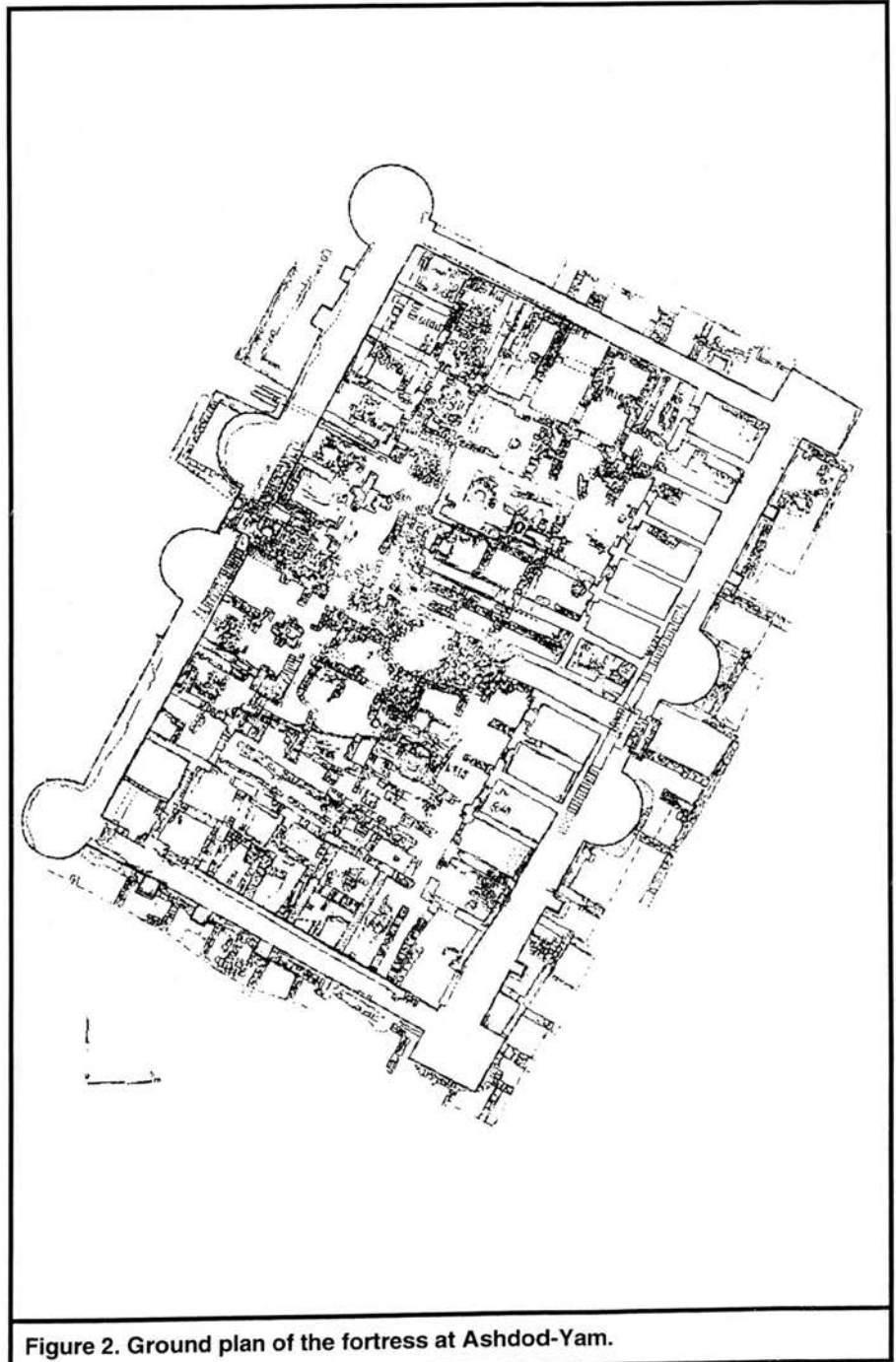


Figure 2. Ground plan of the fortress at Ashdod-Yam.

(*Ḥiṣn Sufyān*) founded by Sufyān b. Mujīb al-Azdī a few miles from Tripoli.<sup>16</sup>

In comparison with 'Umar's policy of passive defense of the coastal cities, the real age of Muslim sea power began during the time of 'Uthmān.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, we might say that the Islamic settlement of the coastal cities of al-Shām and the foundation of Islamic military architecture (*ḥuṣūn*) there began in the reign of 'Uthmān. 'Umar only settled soldiers in

these cities and ordered them to repair and reuse the Byzantine fortifications there (*marammat ḥuṣūnihā*), while 'Uthmān increased the number of the Muslim soldiers in these cities, started a policy of settlement there, and ordered fortification of the coastal cities (*taḥṣīn al-sawāhil*).

'Umar and 'Uthmān's major efforts to rebuild and settle the coastal cities of al-Shām were initiated, supervised and encouraged by the governor of al-Shām

Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān. We have no further information about these cities during the time of the fourth caliph 'Alī b. Abī Tālib (r. 656-661) because of the fighting between him and Mu'āwiya over the caliphate during these years. However, the region seems to have been peaceful since the struggle took place elsewhere, outside Palestine. In 661, Mu'āwiya became the first Umayyad caliph and a new Islamic era began, during which the Umayyads ruled the Islamic empire from their capital Damascus until 750.

During the Umayyad period, the coastal cities of Palestine formed a maritime frontier zone between the Muslims and the Byzantines. They were called "*al-thughūr al-bahriyya*," and were considered as a frontal defense line since they faced the Byzantine lands from the sea-side, and could be easily attacked by the Byzantines.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, Mu'āwiya and his successors undertook major efforts to defend this coastline against Byzantine incursions by continuing the policy of settling Muslims in the coastal cities and even transferring non-Arab elements and settling them there.

According to al-Balādhurī, Mu'āwiya (r. 661-680) transferred a group of Persian soldiers from Ba'labakk, Himṣ and Antioch to the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine,<sup>19</sup> and transported two foreign military elements to these coastal cities, al-

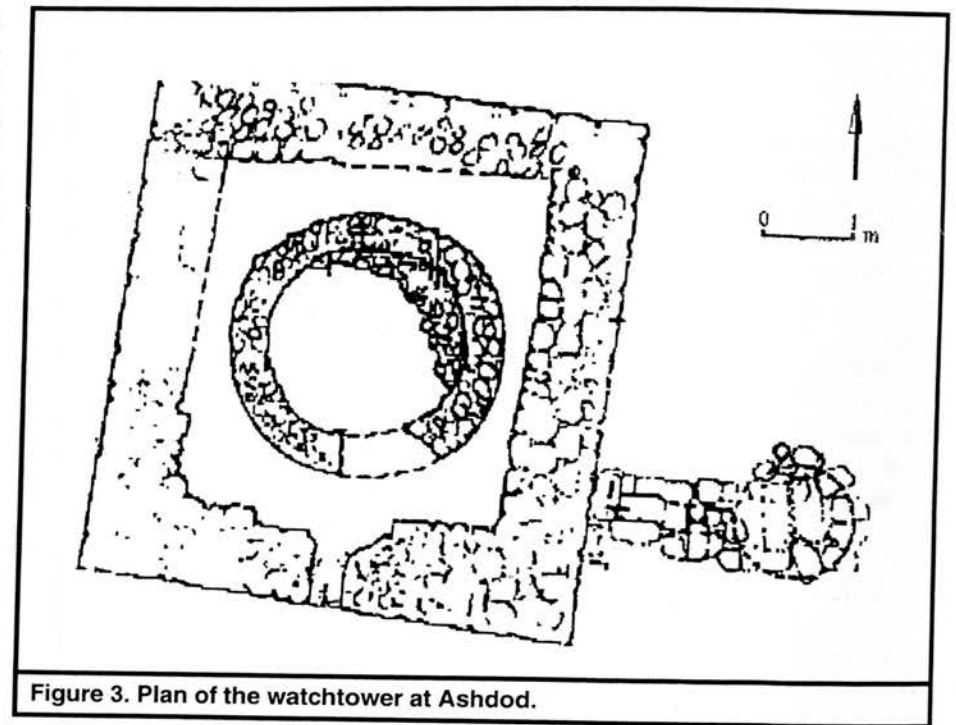


Figure 3. Plan of the watchtower at Ashdod.

Zuṭṭ (of Indian origin) and al-Sayābija (of Persian origin).<sup>20</sup> 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 685-705) settled Arab Muslims in 'Asqalān and granted them lands.<sup>21</sup> Al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 705-715) and Marwān b. Muḥammad (r. 744-750) settled Zuṭṭ as well as Persians in the coastal cities of al-Shām.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to this settlement policy, we learn that some of the coastal cities of Palestine were rebuilt and fortified

under the Umayyads. The civil war between the Umayyads and Ibn al-Zubayr started in 683, and caused an absence of a stable and orderly government in Syria-Palestine, which allowed the Byzantines to raid the coast of Palestine successfully. Al-Balādhurī informs us that during this war, the Byzantines destroyed 'Asqalān and expelled its inhabitants, they went out against

Caesarea, devastated it and demolished its mosque, and they attacked Acre and Tyre. Nevertheless, once secure in power, after 685, 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān repaired, restored and settled these cities.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, the archaeological excavations carried out at Arsūf reveal that the city was fortified during the time of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to these efforts, a combination of al-Maqdisī's text with the archaeological evidence discovered in the coastal cities of Palestine shows that the Umayyads established a military defense system of *ribāṭāt* on the coast of Palestine. Al-Maqdisī writes:

This capital [al-Ramla] has *ribāṭāt* along the sea [coast] where the men under arms assemble. The warships and galleys of the Byzantines pull into them [the *ribāṭāt*], bringing with them captives taken from the Muslims for sale ... Whenever their [the Byzantines'] ships are sighted, those prepared to fight the enemy are alerted. If it is at night, a beacon is lighted on the tower (*manāra*) of the *ribāṭ*, and if it is by day, they make a smoke [signal]. From each *ribāṭ* to the capital [al-Ramla] is a series of high towers (*manāyir shāhiqa*), in each of which is stationed a company of men ... The *ribāṭāt* of this district [Palestine] at which the ransoming occurs are: Ghazza,

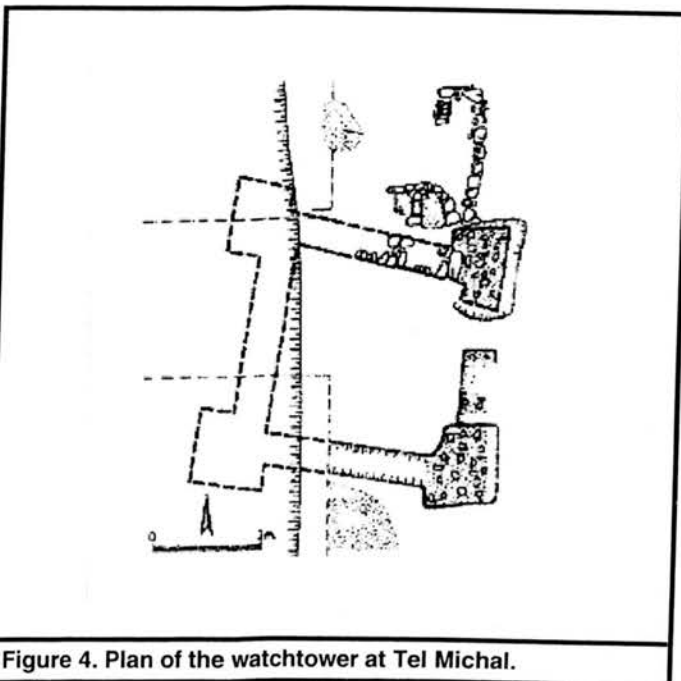


Figure 4. Plan of the watchtower at Tel Michal.

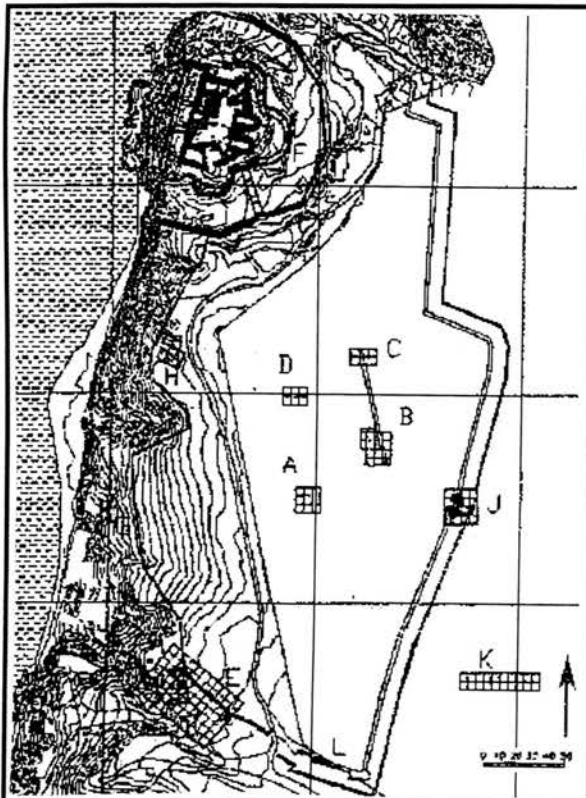


Figure 5. General plan of the city of Apollonia/Arsuf.

Mimās, 'Asqalān, Māhūz Azdūd, Māhūz Yubnā, Yāfā, and Arsūf.<sup>25</sup>

The most important term in this passage is the substantive *ribāt* with its plural *ribāṭāt*. Several scholars have given different meanings for the term *ribāt* in this particular passage, among which are: "place where *ribāt* was practiced,"<sup>26</sup> "watch station,"<sup>27</sup> "shelter,"<sup>28</sup> "garrisoned coastal city,"<sup>29</sup> and "fortified coastal city."<sup>30</sup> However, before proceeding with the discussion of the meaning of the term *ribāt* in this specific passage, I shall first present the archaeological remains.

The archaeological evidence includes six sites on the Palestinian coast (fig. 1). These sites have several things in common: first, they are located either on the coast itself or on a hill or cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Second, they were built on remains of pre-Islamic sites or cities, whose ruins provided ready construction materials such as ashlar, columns and capitals. Third, each site (except Apollonia/Arsūf) consists of a military structure, which is either a watchtower or a fortress. Fourth, their architectural remains

are constructed of sandstone ashlar laid in courses in which headers and stretchers alternate, and bonded with mortar mixed with shell inclusions. Fifth, they were excavated and dated, based on their architectural remains and archaeological finds, to the Umayyad period.<sup>31</sup> In what follows, the sites are geographically presented proceeding from south to north.

The fortress of Māhūz Azdūd/Ashdod-Yam (figs. 1 & 2), situated on the sand dunes a few meters from the shore, has a rectangular plan measuring 60x40 m. The walls are strengthened by external buttresses constructed at fixed intervals of 3-4 m. Eight solid towers are incorporated into the walls; four are corner towers and four towers guard the two gates, which are located in

the center of the eastern and western walls. The eastern gate opens towards the city of Ashdod, and the western one opens towards the sea. The interior of the fortress contains rooms along each of the four walls, a stable and a paved courtyard, which includes a mosque and two wells.

The archaeological finds such as coins, glass, but mainly ceramics revealed that the fortress was founded during the Umayyad period and abandoned in the 12th century. Moreover, it was built on some remains of the Byzantine city Azotus Paralius (Ashdod on the Sea), which was founded as the port city of Azotus in the 4th century. Both Byzantine cities are represented in the Madaba Mosaic Map.<sup>32</sup>

The watchtower at Azdūd/Ashdod (figs. 1 & 3) is about 1 km east of the fortress of Māhūz Azdūd/Ashdod-Yam. It has a square plan, about 5.50x5.50 m. On the eastern side of the watchtower, a well was discovered, and at about 5.50 m distance from the tower itself, its collapsed walls were found *in situ*.

We might assume, according to the size of these collapsed walls, that the watchtower was about 7-7.5 m in height.<sup>33</sup>

The watchtower at Tel Michal (figs. 1 & 4) is situated on a sandstone cliff rising 30 m above the sea level, 4 km south of Apollonia/Arsūf. The site's occupation strata were from the Middle Bronze Age IIB (1750-1550 B.C.) to the early Islamic period. On the summit of the high mound, stands a square watchtower, which measures 7.30 m on each side.<sup>34</sup>

The city of Apollonia/Arsūf (figs. 1 & 5) is situated on a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, between Jaffa and Caesarea. Remains of a fortified city are clearly visible on the site. The city was established in the Persian period (5th century B.C.) and continued until the end of the Crusader period (13th century).<sup>35</sup>

The archaeological excavations carried out at Arsūf revealed that the city was not fortified during the Byzantine period, and, on the basis of the architectural remains and archaeological finds, the excavators of the site attributed the construction of the city wall to the reign of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān. It encloses an area of 22 acres. It is 1.50 m wide, and strengthened by external buttresses. A moat, 12 m wide, was dug in front of the wall. Only the main gate of the city was preserved. It is located in the center of the eastern wall, and flanked by two semicircular towers.<sup>36</sup>

The watchtower at Tel Mikhmoret (figs. 1 & 6) was found on the highest point of the site, and formed a single square structure that measures 8 x 8 m. Only the foundations of the tower's walls were preserved, and they were 1.10 m wide. The

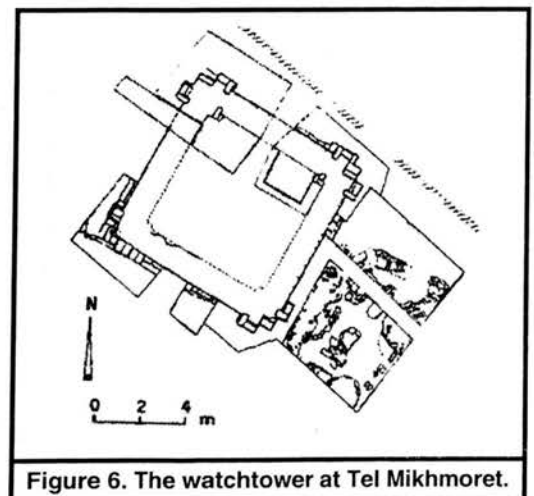


Figure 6. The watchtower at Tel Mikhmoret.

corners of the tower were strengthened with pilasters bonded into the walls.<sup>37</sup>

Kafr Lāb/Lām/ha-Bonim (figs. 1 & 7) is located 15 km north of Caesarea. The occupation strata found at the site are dated from the Persian to the Ottoman periods, while the most dominant building is an Umayyad fortress, which is built on a sandstone hill rising about 30 m above the sea level, 800 m from the Mediterranean coast.<sup>38</sup> We are told by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī that Kafr Lāb was built by the Umayyad caliph Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 724-743).<sup>39</sup>

The fortified enclosure is nearly rectangular in shape and its sides measure 46.60 m on the south, 62.80 m on the east, 51.40 m on the north, and 60 m on the west. It has four solid round towers at the corners, and two semicircular towers flanking the gate, which is located in the center of the southern wall. The walls are strengthened by external square buttresses. The interior of the fortress includes vaulted rooms (fig. 7: V10, V11, V20, V21, V22, V23) opening onto a paved central courtyard with cisterns (fig. 7: F10.3, F10.4), reservoir (fig. 7: F10.2), and a stable (fig. 7: Area 10).<sup>40</sup>

These archaeological sites together with al-Maqdisī's text reveal that it is impossible to present an unequivocal translation of the term *ribāt* while speaking of the coast of Palestine. However, this combination clearly indicates that the term *ribāt* denotes an edifice such as a coastal fortress, as in the case of Ashdod-Yam and ha-Bonim (figs. 2 & 7), or a fortified coastal city as in the case of Arsūf (fig. 5).

The Umayyad *ribāts* of Palestine consisted of a chain of coastal fortresses and fortified cities, while a watchtower was located between one *ribāt* and another. They functioned as a defense system from which the alert was given in case of Byzantine threat. A signal system was put in place to warn of the approach of Byzantine ships; a beacon was lit on the *ribāts*' towers if it were night, and a smoke signal was issued if it were day. Apart from the use of the *ribāts* as defense structures, inhabited by Muslim volunteers and soldiers, they were also places where war prisoners were exchanged. Both actions, defending *dār al-islām* (the abode of Islam) and ransoming Muslim captives, are

considered religious acts, which suggests that these *ribāts* had both a military function and a religious one.

The Islamic conquest of the Levant itself during the 40's of the 7th century was the foundation stone of the establishment of the Islamic frontier defense system. During this conquest, the inexperience of the Muslims in seafaring made it necessary to develop a military defense system in the coastal cities of Palestine in order to protect the coastline against the Byzantines, who hoped to have a chance to regain it. Consequently, a new type of military architecture was introduced in this region, and that is the *ribāṭāt*. The development of the Islamic military defense system in the coastal cities of Palestine went through several stages, which depended on the progress of the Islamic conquest of al-Shām (633-648), as well as on the Byzantine attacks on these cities. These stages can be summarized as follows:

The first stage took place in the time of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, during which the Muslims were introduced to the Byzantine military architecture in the Levant and reused it. After the fall of Caesarea in 640, the Muslims repaired the fortifications of the coastal cities of Palestine and reused their watchtowers (*manāyir*).

The second stage happened in the reign of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (644-656), during which the Islamic conquest of al-Shām was completed and the whole coastal cities of Syria-Palestine fell under Islamic rule. These years witnessed the initial phase of the formation of Islamic military architecture; we know from the sources about the construction of two Islamic fortresses,

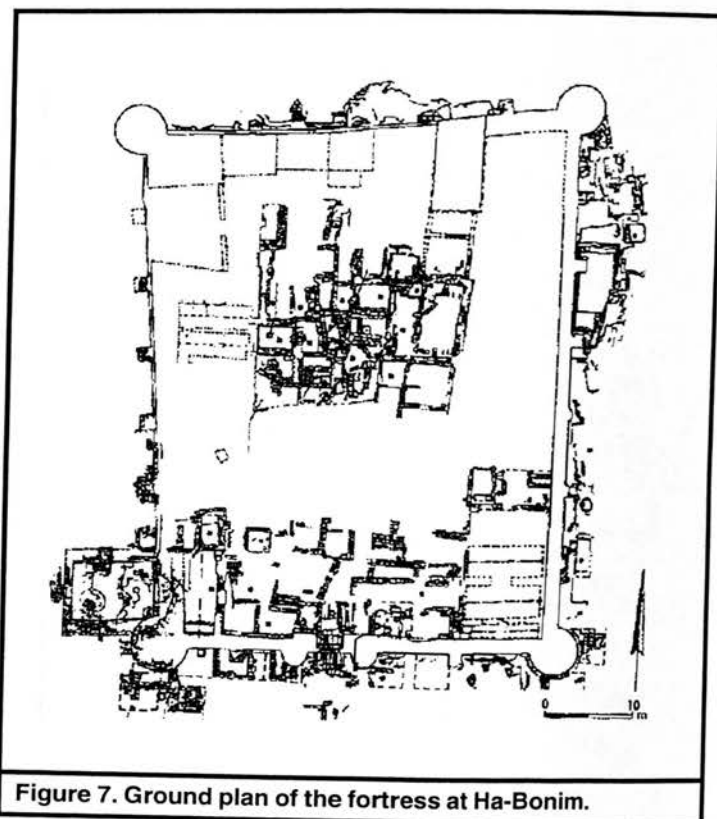


Figure 7. Ground plan of the fortress at Ha-Bonim.

*huṣūn*, in the coastal area of al-Shām. Moreover, it was during this time when the Muslims began to create their own naval power, especially after the Byzantine attack on Alexandria in 645.

The third stage occurred in the Umayyad period (661-750), during which an organized Islamic frontier defense system was established in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, which was the *birthplace* of the phenomenon of the *ribāt* defense system. During this era, the Byzantines increased their attacks on the coastal cities of Palestine and destroyed some of them. These attacks created a pressing necessity to fortify these cities and protect them by an organized defense system, since they formed the maritime frontier between the Muslims and the Byzantines.

The need of the Muslims to defend the Mediterranean coast of Palestine against Byzantine attacks transformed the coastal cities of Palestine to *thughūr* (border cities) protected by the *ribāt* defense system, which converted the Mediterranean Sea from a highway into a frontier.

## NOTES

1. F.M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 154; M. Gil, *Palestine under the First Muslim Period (634-1099)*, part I (Tel-Aviv: Tel Aviv University and Ministry of Defense, 1983), 47-50 (in Hebrew).
2. Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī (d. 892), *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. R.M. Riḍwān (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1991), 148.
3. *Ibid.*, 221-225.
4. *Ibid.*, 224.
5. *Ibid.*, 142.
6. *Ibid.*, 148-149.
7. *Ibid.*, 134.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, 150.
11. *Ibid.*, 134.
12. *Ibid.*, 150.
13. *Ibid.*, 134-135.
14. *Ibid.*, 135.
15. *Ibid.*, 139.
16. *Ibid.*, 133.
17. *Ibid.*, 157-158; A. M. Fahmy, *Muslim Sea-Power in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Seventh to the Tenth Century A.D.* (Cairo, 1966), 78-79.
18. Qudāma b. Ja'far (d. 932), *Kitāb al-kharāj*, ed. M.J. De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, vol. VI, 2nd edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 253.
19. al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 124; Aḥmad b. Abī Ya'qūb b. Wāḍiḥ al-Ya'qūbī (d. 897), *Kitāb al-buldān*, ed. M.J. De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, vol. VII, 2nd edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 327.
20. al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 369.
21. *Ibid.*, 150.
22. *Ibid.*, 369; A. Elad, "The Coastal Cities of Palestine during the Early Middle Ages," *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 2 (1982): 150.
23. al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 148-149.
24. I. Roll, H. Yohanan, Y. Tepper & T. Harpak, "Apollonia-Arsuf during the Crusader Period in Light of New Discoveries," *Qadmoniot* 119, no. 1 (2000): 19, 24 (in Hebrew).
25. Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Maqdisī (wrote circa 985), *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi ma'rifat al-aqālīm*, ed. M.J. De Goeje, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, vol. III, 3rd edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), 177.
26. J. Chabbi, "Ribāt," *EP<sup>2</sup>*, vol. 8, 502.
27. M. Gichon, "The influence of the Mediterranean Coasts on the Security of the Land of Israel as Reflected in History," in *The Mediterranean - Its Place in the History and Culture of the Jews and other Nations* (Jerusalem, 1970), 110 (in Hebrew); *idem*, "The History of the Gaza Strip - a Geo-Political and Geo-Strategic Analysis," *Cathedra* 6, (1977): 153 (in Hebrew); G.S.A Ranking & R.F. Azoo (eds. & trans.), *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi ma'rifat al-aqālīm*, vol. I, fasc. IV, *Bibliotheca Indica: A Collection of Oriental Works, New Series*, no. 1258 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1910), 291; B.A. Collins (trans.), *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions* (UK: The Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization and Garnet Publishing Limited, 1994), 161.
28. M. Assaf, *History of the Arabs in Palestine: The History of Arab Rule in Palestine*, vol. 1 (Tel-Aviv: Devir, 1935), 163-164 (in Hebrew).
29. M. Sharon, "The Cities of Palestine under the Islamic Rule," *Cathedra* 40 (1986): 93 (in Hebrew).
30. A. Elad, "The Cities of Palestine during the Early Arabic Period (604-1066 A.D.) according to the Arabic Sources," *Cathedra* 8 (1978), 173 (in Hebrew).
31. For further information about the sites, their archaeological finds, and their dating see: Y. Masarwa, *From a Word of God to Archaeological Monuments: A Historical-Archaeological Study of the Umayyad Ribāts of Palestine*, Ph.D. dissertation (Princeton University, 2006), 17-53.
32. D. Nahleali, Y. Masarwa & M. Ein-Gedi, "Ashdod-Yam," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 112 (2000): 126-128 (in Hebrew); M. Ein-Gedi, "Ashdod-Yam: ha-miflas ha-bizanti," *Atiqot* forthcoming (in Hebrew).
33. Masarwa, *From a Word of God to Archaeological Monuments*, 28-30.
34. Z. Herzog, "Michal, Tel," *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. E. Stern, vol. 3 (The Israel Exploration Society & Carta: Jerusalem, 1993), 1040-1041; Z. Herzog, O. Negbi & S. Moshkovitz, "Excavations at Tel Michal 1977," *Tel Aviv* 5, no. 3-4 (1978): 107; F.R. Brandfon, "Early Arab Occupation (Stratum I)," in *Excavations at Tel Michal, Israel*, ed. Z. Herzog, G. Rapp & O. Negbi (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 195; Z. Herzog, "Tel Mikhal (Tell Makmish), 1978," *Israel Exploration Journal* 29, no. 2 (1979): 120-122.
35. I. Roll & E. Ayalon, "Apollonia-Arsuf," *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. E. Stern, vol.

- 1 (The Israel Exploration Society & Carta: Jerusalem, 1993), 72; idem, "Apollonia/Arsuf - 'ir ḥof bi-drom ha-shfila," *Qadmoniot* 15, no. 1 (1982): 17-22 (in Hebrew).
36. I. Roll & E. Ayalon, *Apollonia vi-drom ha-Sharon* (Tel Aviv: hotza'at ha-kibutz ha-me'uḥad, 1989), 66 (in Hebrew); Roll et al., "Apollonia-Arsuf during the Crusader Period," 19, 24; I. Roll, "Apollonia - 1990," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 97 (1991): 52 (in Hebrew).
37. Y. Porath, S.M. Paley & R.R. Stieglitz, "Mikhmoret, Tel", *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. E. Stern, vol. 3 (The Israel Exploration Society & Carta: Jerusalem, 1993), 1043; Y. Porath, "Mikhmoret," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 65-66 (1978): 16 (in Hebrew); M.S. Paley, Y. Porath & R.R. Stieglitz, "Tel Mikhmoret," *Israel Exploration Journal* 32, no. 4 (1982): 261; idem, "Mikhmoret - 1982," *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 2 (1983): 71.
38. H. Barbé, Y. Lehrer & M. Avissar, "Ha-Bonim," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 114 (2002): 34 (in Hebrew).
39. Yaḳūt al-Ḥamawī (wrote circa 1225), *Mu'jam al-buldān*, vol. 16 (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir and Dār Bayrūt, 1957), 470.
40. Barbé et al., "Ha-Bonim," 34.

• IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS • METHODS • ISSUES • IDEAS •

**JEW, CHRISTIAN, AND EARLY MUSLIM, FROM PAGE 33**

54. See Ohlig, K.-H., "Vom muhammad Jesus zum Propheten der Araber" and "Hinweise auf eine neue Religion in der christlichen Literatur "unter islamischer Herrschaft"?", in: Ohlig and Puin (eds.), *Der frühe Islam*, 223-326 and 327-376.
55. See Motzki, H., "Quo vadis Hadith-Forschung?," *Der Islam* 73 (1996) 40-80, 193-231; Motzki, H., "The Question of the Authenticity of Muslim Traditions Reconsidered," in: Berg, H. (ed.), *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins* (Leiden, 2003), 211-257.
56. Hoyland, R.G., "New Documentary Texts and the Early Islamic State," *BSOAS* 69 (2006) 395-416, at p. 411.
57. See Ohlig, K.-H., "Das syrische und arabische Christentum und der Koran," in Ohlig and Puin (eds.), *Die dunklen Anfänge*, 366-405; Luxenberg, Chr., *Die syro-amamäische Lesart des Koran* (Berlin, 2000); Luxenberg, Chr., "Weihnachten im Koran," in Burgmer, Chr. (ed.), *Streit um den Koran* (Berlin, 2004), 35-41.
58. Nevo and Koren are the only ones providing archaeological evidence; the others do reconstruction work of patristic sources, and there is no clear result, how those indicted groups ever existed as such.
59. See Klijn, A.F.J. and Reinink, G.J., *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects* (Leiden 1973) (*Supplements to Novum Testamentum*, 36), and Klijn, A.F.J., *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition* (Leiden & New York, 1992) (*Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae*, 17).
60. For example de Gallez (on Sūrah 61,1-6) finds the "original form" by a section of verse "6c-f": "Il apparaît que, si l'on retranche la partie litigieuse 6c-f, on obtient un texte beaucoup plus cohérent et qui s'intègre mieux au co-texte" (Gallez, E.-M., *Le messie et son prophète*, II, 135-137). A co-textual analysis of Sūrah 61,6 with Sūrah 5,110 (the text repeats the formulations of 61,6afg; see also 3,50 to 61,6c) raises the question of whether both versions - the canonical one and the one of Ubayy - underwent such an interpolation.
61. Rubin, U., *Between Bible and Quran. The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self-Image* (Princeton, 1999), 238.
62. See Motzki, H., "Alternative Accounts on the Qur'ān's Formation," in: MacAuliffe, J.D. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān* (Cambridge, 2006), 59-75; Neuwirth, A., "Qur'an and History - A disputed relationship. Some reflections on Qur'anic history and history of the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 5 (2003), 1-18; Motzki, H., "The Collection of the Qur'ān. A Reconsideration of Western Views in the Light of Recent Methodological Developments," *Der Islam* 78 (2001) 1-34. See Ohlig, K.H., *Weltreligion Islam* (Mainz and Luzern, 2000), 65f, to find appropriate literature.
63. A contrary position is represented by Mac Auliffe: "The Qur'ānic view of praiseworthy Christians presents itself as a coherent theological construct. Qur'ānic Christians, those Christians whom the Qur'ān is understood to commend, are neither the historical nor the living community of people, who call themselves Christians. As a conceptual idealization, the notion of Qur'ānic Christians bears very little relation to present or past sociological configurations of the Christian community" (MacAuliffe, J.D., *Qur'ānic Christians: an analysis of classical and modern exegesis* (Cambridge and New York, 1991), 287).

# REVIEWS • OF • BOOKS

FROM • THE • MIDDLE • EAST

## REVIEW POLICY

Members of MEM are invited to submit reviews of recent books in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, or other Middle Eastern languages that they have read and that deal with subjects of interest to MEM's membership. In exceptional cases, reviews of books in English or other European languages will be printed, but the main focus will be books in Middle Eastern languages, because generally these are not reviewed in Western journals. *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* relies on the voluntary submission of reviews because review copies of books in Middle Eastern languages are not usually made available.

Reviews should be brief, 250 words or, if possible, fewer. A short note is sufficient in many cases, as it serves the main purpose of bringing a worthwhile work of scholarship to the attention of MEM members who may be interested in the subject it treats. Be sure to include full bibliographical information: full name of author, full title, place and date of publication, publisher, and number of pages. Send reviews directly to the editor.

Iḥsān Dhunūn al-Thamarī and Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh al-Qadhāt. *Rasā'il min al-turāth al-ṣūfī fī libs al-khirqa* [Epistles from the Sufi Heritage on Wearing the Initiatic Cloak] (Amman: Dār al-Rāzī, 2002). 313 pp.

*Rasā'il min al-turāth al-ṣūfī fī libs al-khirqa* is an important collection of epistles dating from the seventh century to the twelfth century AH written by eminent figures of Sufism about the importance of wearing the *khirqa* and the rules and behavior that those who wear it must follow. The collection includes 11 short epistles written by Ibn al-'Arabī, al-Qaṣṣallānī, Ismā'il ibn al-Jawharī, Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, al-Suyūṭī, Ibn Ṭūlūn, and others, and also contains a reproduction of the first pages of each epistle as well as a brief introduction to each manuscript author and a very extensive bibliography and index. As the epistles are quite short, it is disappointing that the editors did not decide to include the manuscripts in their entirety.

The informative introduction examines the history of wearing wool in Sufism and then goes into the origins, history, development, and meaning of the *khirqa* in the Sufi tradition and Islamic society in general. The book was intended to be read by both historians as well as specialists in Sufi studies and as it is the first detailed study and compilation on the topic, it is vital for anyone conducting research on various aspects of Sufism, especially the organization and regulations of Sufi orders.

- Rose Aslan

Jamāl 'Alal al-Bikhtī. *al-Ḥudūr al-ṣūfī fī al-Andalus wa al-Maghrib ilā ḥudūd al-qarn al-sābi' al-hijrī: dirāsa ta'rīkhiyya wa qirā'a taḥlīliyya fī mawāqif Ibn Khamir al-Sabtī min al-taṣawwuf wa al-mutaṣawwifa* [The Sufi Presence in Andalusia and the Maghreb to about the Seventh Century AH: A Historical Study and an Analytical Reading of the Position of Ibn Khamir al-Sabtī concerning Sufism and Sufis] (Tetouan, Morocco: Maṭba' al-Khalij al-'Arabī, 2003). 152 pp.

*al-Ḥudūr al-ṣūfī fī al-Andalus wa al-Maghrib ilā ḥudūd al-qarn al-sābi' al-hijrī* is a welcome addition to the ever-increasing literature on Moroccan and Andalusian Sufism. Al-Bikhtī is a young Moroccan historian who comes to the field with a contemporary and critical approach. His book is based on his much longer PhD dissertation (2002) from the Faculty of Arts at the Muhammad V University in Rabat, Morocco. Apart from a number of printing problems (several pages were printed twice and some paragraphs were repeated) and typos, this book is an excellent piece of scholarly work that examines a little known historical Sufi figure and his teachings.

In his book, al-Bikhtī asserts that while Sufism as an Islamic science has been studied extensively, Maghribi Sufism

has been neglected by scholars and many eminent Maghribi historical figures have yet to be studied. Unfortunately, al-Bikhtī's bibliography contains few Western sources, and the few that he does include are mainly early 20th century texts in French and Spanish. Were he to have had access to recent sources written in both English and other European languages, he would have discovered a good number of newer studies on Maghribi Sufism, such as Vincent Cornell's seminal *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*. While admittedly, North Africa is far less represented than the Muslim East, work has been undertaken as of late to rectify the situation. While he complains that there are many manuscripts left unstudied, the same rings true for manuscripts on Sufism all over the Muslim world, not just North Africa.

Al-Bikhtī takes issue with the lack of objectivity exhibited by Arab scholars of Sufism, and posits that many do not understand or sympathize with this rich tradition; thus, his attempt to produce a historical and intellectual sketch of early Maghribi Sufism is both refreshing, vigorous, and carefully composed. The first half of the book gives an overview of the history of Sufism in Andalusia and Morocco and its growth in the first few centuries. In the second half, al-Bikhtī presents new material on the development of the Sufi school of Sabta (Ceuta) in the first six centuries of Islam. He pays particular attention to Ibn Khamir al-Sabtī (d. 1217 CE), whom he claims was responsible for inspiring the moderate, or sober, Sufi tradition in Sabta that eventually came to help shape Maghribi religious thought.

- Rose Aslan

Victor Shalḥat. *Al-Naz'a al-kalāmiyya fī uslūb al-Jāḥiẓ* [The Inclination toward Disputation in the Literary Style of al-Jāḥiẓ] (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1963). 191 pp.

Although published in 1963,

## REVIEWS

Shalḥat's work is by no means outdated. Nor is it of interest only to students of al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869). But despite its significance, it is not often cited in later studies. It is hoped that this review will introduce Shalḥat's work to a wider audience.

Shalḥat divides his work into two books. Book one focuses on the origin of al-Jāḥiẓ's unique style of prose literature (*adab*) and is divided into three parts: 1) on al-Jāḥiẓ's style and the rhetorical arts ('*ilm al-balāgha*'); 2) on al-Jāḥiẓ's phraseology; and 3) on al-Jāḥiẓ's cognition. Book two focuses on the origins of the theological component in al-Jāḥiẓ's non-theological writings, and is divided into three parts: 1) on the different manifestations of al-Jāḥiẓ's theological inclinations; 2) on the oratorical and dialectical components of al-Jāḥiẓ's style; and 3) on al-Jāḥiẓ's inclination towards Mu'tazili theology. The author provides both an index of al-Jāḥiẓ's works used in the study, as well as a table of contents at the end of the book.

The work focuses on a single question: why do so many of al-Jāḥiẓ's non-theological works take the form of theological debates? Shalḥat attempts to answer this question by tracing the origins of al-Jāḥiẓ's distinct style of disputational *adab*. He concludes that this is due to his adherence to Mu'tazili theology. Shalḥat notes that the techniques of persuasive speech were accepted and used extensively by theologians, but that the Mu'tazila are distinguished for the use of reason ('*aql*) and logic (*manṭiq*), in part, due to the influence of Greek philosophical texts that were being translated at this time, and that al-Jāḥiẓ is exemplary of this.

Shalḥat goes on to describe al-Jāḥiẓ's style as integrative (*mutakāmil*) and scientific ('*ilmī*), explaining that through his style al-Jāḥiẓ achieves harmony between methods of the theologians/philosophers and the *littérateurs*. The artistic aspects of prose are important to al-Jāḥiẓ (e.g. rarity of words, aurality, and parallelism), but form never overrides meaning, and *bayān* (clarity and appropriateness of content) and *ifhām* (comprehension) are the primary goals of communication.

What emerges from Shalḥat's

analysis is that al-Jāḥiẓ's ultimate aim is to convey meaning to his audience, and that for al-Jāḥiẓ, this is best achieved through a new and integrative style which seeks to balance the dialectical style of the Mu'tazili theologians combined with the artistic taste (*al-dhawq al-fannī*) of the *littérateurs*. Al-Jāḥiẓ recognizes that the best way to persuade one's audience is to appeal to all of their senses (*al-hawāss*), the rational and the aesthetic.

*Al-Naz'a al-kalāmiyya fī uslūb al-Jāḥiẓ* sheds light on *adab* in general, and the "new" (*badī'*) rhetoric of the 3rd/9th century in particular, and their connection to early Islamic theology (*kalām*) and philosophy (*falsafa*), and is therefore indispensable for the student of Arabic literature, rhetoric, theology, and/or philosophy.

- Adrian James De Gifis

**Riḍwān al-Sayyid, *Al-Mustashriqūn al-almān. Al-nushū' wa-l-ta'thīr wa-l-maṣā'ir* [The German Orientalists. Origins, Influence, and Destinies] (Beirut: Dār al-madār al-islāmī, 2007). 96pp.**

Dr. Riḍwān al-Sayyid, professor of Islamic studies at the Lebanese University and a prolific author and active publicist, must surely be reckoned among the Arab world's leading intellectuals at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Trained both at al-Azhar and at the University of Tübingen, he is one of a limited number of scholars (in the Islamic world or the West) who can address both Muslim and Western students of Islam on their own terms and with full understanding of, and even sympathy for, their very different scholarly traditions.

The short work under review constitutes an important addition to the now-vast literature on the question of "Orientalism." As the author points out repeatedly, the German tradition of Orientalist scholarship has remained much less well-known to Arab readers, including most Arab intellectuals, than the French

and British Orientalist traditions. The most obvious goal of this work, then, is to familiarize Arab readers with the range and depth of the German tradition, a goal that it must be said the author achieves brilliantly. He touches (often more than once) on the major scholars and makes clear their intellectual pedigrees (mainly: who trained whom) and their intellectual relationships to one another, and one comes away with a good sense of the approach and main contribution of each. He eschews, however, discussion of the personal rivalries or differences that sometimes divided them (or the affinities that made some of them close friends); thus one finds no mention of the intense hostility that (so I have been told) existed between H. H. Schaeder and Th. Nöldeke.

But the work is more than just a concise census of which German scholars wrote about what, and which research projects were achieved and by whom—although there is plenty of detail of this kind in its pages. Rather, al-Sayyid strives to understand the intellectual underpinnings of German Orientalism as it developed and evolved between the late eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries CE. This effort often requires him to go well beyond the strict limits of German scholars and scholarship. Sometimes this is because German scholars were trained by or inspired by scholars from other countries (Freitag, Flügel, and Fleischer, for example, three of the founders of German Orientalism, all of whom studied in Paris with De Sacy). More often, it is because the intellectual trends that marked the evolving phases of German Orientalism affected most of European thought and were not phenomena restricted to German-speaking areas only. Thus he traces how the philologically and historicist-oriented German Orientalism of the nineteenth century moved in the twentieth to the study of history of culture. He also discusses the question of German Orientalism's ambiguous relationship to state power (the role of Hartmann and Becker around the time of the First World War in particular), a theme of significance for all Orientalist studies; and considers the position of various German Orientalists toward intellectual trends such as Marx-



## REVIEWS

ism, the sociology of Max Weber, the Annales school, and the English anthropologists, as well as the old question of the Orientalists' stance vis-a-vis Christian polemic.

Given the topic of the book, al-Sayyid inevitably has things to say about Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1978), which sparked--or perhaps more accurately, re-ignited--the debate over Orientalist scholarship and its limitations (a debate that, as al-Sayyid notes, had been started by others before Said). While appreciative of Said's positive contributions, al-Sayyid cannot but reinforce the notion that Said was inexplicably (and, one might say, inexcusably) ignorant of the central importance of German scholarship in the rise of classical "Orientalism" of the philological-historicist variety, and hence that the depiction of the subject provided by Said in *Orientalism*, based as it was almost entirely on French and English-language works, seriously distorted the subject of its inquiry. This, however, is really but a small side issue in al-Sayyid's book, which focuses on much more important matters, particularly the intellectual evolution of classic German Orientalism and its gradual dissolution, in the second half of the twentieth century, into work defined as history, literary studies, religious studies, or the sociology/anthropology of Muslim societies.

Al-Sayyid also spends some time

on the debate that emerged among Orientalists, and subsequently among Muslim thinkers, over the question of Islam's "authenticity" (*aṣāla*): was Islam basically just a warmed-over version of Hellenic culture (or of Jewish or Christian traditions), or was it something new and original? For some Orientalists, the study of Islam was important mainly because they thought they could recover from the works of medieval Muslim scholarship otherwise lost works of Greek science and philosophy. That view, however, created a strong reaction among some Muslims, who agonized over Islam's relations to the "West": in some cases emphasizing that the real core of the Islamic tradition was not the work of the *falāsifa* like al-Kindī and al-Farābī, but rather the activities of the architects of Islamic law, theology, and mysticism, in other cases exhibiting a tendency (criticized by al-Sayyid) to reject everything "Western" as hostile to Islam.

That the author has packed so much in such a short book is evidence of his mastery of the general lines of development of his subject. There are a very few places where I found myself disagreeing with his judgments (anyway, he knows the subject far better than I): one was his comment (p. 52) that since World War II, Qur'ānic studies did not form a large part of German Oriental studies. This was true not only of German but of all Oriental studies until the revisionist wave of the

1970s, but since that time, particularly beginning in the 1990s and continuing today, innovative scholarship on the Qur'ān is being led, it seems to me, by contributions from Germany. It is also striking that al-Sayyid fails to mention in this context the controversial work of Günter Lüling on the Qur'ān, published in the 1970s, which was subjected to a virtual conspiracy of silence by mainstream German scholarship for decades; whether or not one agrees with it, Lüling's work raised serious questions worthy of discussion in an open forum, and al-Sayyid unfortunately missed a chance to restore some perspective on the issue. But in general, this is a work admirable for its range, balance, judgment, and accuracy. Other than references to "Max Turner," which should be Bryan Turner (pp. 75, 78), I noted virtually no factual slips or typos.

There are many passages in this rich little book that make one stop and think more deeply about the work we do as scholars concerned with the study of the Islamic world and Middle East. This alone makes it worth the attention not only of Arab scholars, but also of many of us in the West, established scholars and students alike, who want to know more about how "Orientalism" developed, and who are more at home reading modern Arabic than German. It is well worth one's time.

- Fred M. Donner

# The Jordan National Bank Numismatic Museum

by Warren C. Schultz

---

The Jordan National Bank Numismatic Museum (*mathaf al-bank al-ahlī al-urdunī li-al-nimiyyāt*), located in the Shmeisani district of Amman, features a collection of more than 30,000 coins, weights and other items. The museum was established in 1999 for “educational benefit of residents, visitors and academics” in Jordan, according to its promotional brochure. The curator is Dr. Nayef Goussous, whose donated personal collection forms the core of the institution’s holdings. His assistant is Hassan al-Zuod. Both men are welcoming and extremely helpful to visiting researchers.

While the museum contains material covering the spectrum of monetary history, ranging from specimens of primitive monies and early Lydian coins to the money of modern Jordan, the strength of the collection is in its coverage of the Nabateans, the coins of the Roman Decapolis, and of the early to Medieval coinage of Islamic Bilād al-Shām. This is particularly the case for Umayyad copper coinages. Dr. Goussous’s dissertation, published by the museum in 1994 as *Rare and Inedited Umayyad Copper Coins* draws attention to the depth of the collection’s Umayyad holdings. The museum also has an extensive range of weights, ranging from the Roman and Byzantine eras into the Islamic. The holdings in Islamic bronze weights, commonly attributed to the tenth to the twelfth centuries CE is one of the most extensive I have seen. The museum staff is in the early stages of preparation of a bi-lingual (Arabic and English) catalogue of these weights.

Approximately 3000 items are on display at any given time. These items are clearly identified and their types linked to the major publications in the pertinent field. The staff is pleased to provide researchers access to those items as well as any material not on display. Thus in my case, I was able to examine and glean information from the approximately 50 Mamluk coins from the cases, as well as more than four hundred from storage. This availability of multiple examples of many types of coins is a valuable boon for numismatic research.

The collection is also supported by a library of more than 1500 books devoted to numismatic topics and monetary history. In addition to catalogues and monographs, it includes major journals such as *The American Journal of Numismatics* and the latest series of *Numismatic Chronicle*.

The museum is located at the corner of Queen Noor and Abdallah bin Omar streets near the fourth circle in Amman. The museum has a separate entrance from the bank off of Abdallah bin Omar street, and is open to the public Sunday to Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (Hours may be restricted during Ramadan.) Scholars wishing to use the collection are encouraged to contact the curatorial staff to arrange for an appointment.

Mailing address: Jordan National Bank Numismatic Collection, P.O. Box 2102, Amman 11181, Jordan.  
Telephone: 5687090 Fax: 5685848 e-mail: museum@ahlibank.com.jo.

## The Working Files of Michael W. Dols

---

In August 2007 the scholarly working files of the late Prof. Michael Dols (1942-1989) were donated to Portland State University in Portland, Oregon.

Professor Dols, who took his PhD at Princeton and taught at California State University Hayward, was a well-known specialist in the history of medicine in the medieval Muslim world. His dissertation was published as the classic *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton University Press, 1977), and he subsequently published *Medieval Islamic Medicine: Ibn Ridwan's Treatise "On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt"*, translated and with an introduction by Dols, with an edition of the Arabic text by Adil S. Gamal (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). His final major work was *Majnûn: the madman in medieval Islamic society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

Dols's files, ten and a half linear feet, consist of scholarly notes, correspondence with various scholars and presses, and offprints or photocopies of the most important articles published on his field of study up to the time of his death. The files are arranged alphabetically by author.

For further information contact Kris Kern, Cataloging and Preservation Librarian, Millar Library, PSU, P.O.B. 1151, Portland, OR 97207-1151. Her phone number is (503) 725-5218 and e-mail is kernk@pdx.edu.

---

### NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

---

**Rose Aslan**, graduate student in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Department of Arabic Studies, American University in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt. Email: rsaslan@aucegypt.edu

**Katherine Strange Burke**, Department of History, UCLA. 2901 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Apt. 316, Los Angeles, CA 90064, USA. Email: ksburke@ucla.edu

**Adrian James De Gifis**, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, USA. Email:

**Fred M. Donner**, The Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, USA. Email: f-donner@uchicago.edu.

**Yumna Masarwa**, 94 rue d'Aboukir, 75002 Paris, France. Email: ymasarwa@alumni.princeton.edu.

**Warren C. Schultz**, Department of History, DePaul University, 2320 N. Kenmore, Chicago, IL 60614, USA. Email: wschultz@depaul.edu.

**Frank van der Velden**, Director, Okumenisches Institut Kairo, Postfach 2962, 53019 Bonn, Germany. Email: vanderVelden.Frank@gmx.net.

**GRAPHICS CREDITS**

Pages 23-25: All photographs and map courtesy of the author.

Page 36, figure 1: Map from *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (1993), vol. 1.

Page 37, figure 2: Plan after Nahlieli, Masarwa, and Ein-Gidi (2000), p. 127.

Page 38, figure 3: Plan from Israel Antiquities Authority archives.

Page 38, figure 4: Plan after Brandfon (1990), p. 196.

Page 39, figure 5: Plan after Roll et al (2000), p. 21.

Page 39, figure 6: Plan after Porath, Paley, and Stieglitz (1993), p. 1044.

Page 40, figure 7: Plan after Barbé, Lehrer, and Avissar (2002), p. 34.

**Middle East Medievalists (MEM)** is a non-profit association of scholars interested in the study of any aspect of the history and civilization of the Middle East in the period 500-1500 C.E. Regular membership in MEM is open to persons of all nationalities. Regular members receive two issues of *Al-'Usur al-Wusta*, The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists, annually (April and October). Institutions (libraries, etc.) may join at the same rate as individuals.

You may join MEM by sending the membership application form at the right (or a photocopy thereof), along with the appropriate dues payment, to Steven C. Judd, Secretary of MEM, Department of History, Southern Connecticut State College, 501 Crescent St., New Haven, CT 06515, U.S.A. Or you may join via credit card on-line at:

[www.MiddleEastMedievalists.org/MEMAPPMENU.htm](http://www.MiddleEastMedievalists.org/MEMAPPMENU.htm).

# Middle East Medievalists

## Membership Application Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

### SCHEDULE OF DUES

**For addresses in North America** (Canada, Mexico, U.S.A.) [check one]:

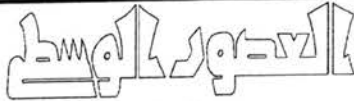
|             |         |       |
|-------------|---------|-------|
| One Year    | \$15.00 | _____ |
| Two Years   | \$29.00 | _____ |
| Three Years | \$40.00 | _____ |

**For addresses outside North America** (Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Pacific) [check one]:

|             |         |       |
|-------------|---------|-------|
| One Year    | \$17.50 | _____ |
| Two Years   | \$34.00 | _____ |
| Three Years | \$47.00 | _____ |

**Send completed application form, with your check (in US Dollars only) payable to "Middle East Medievalists" to:**

**Steven C. Judd, Secretary of MEM, Department of History, Southern Connecticut State College, 501 Crescent St., New Haven, CT 06515, U.S.A.**



**Al-'Usur al-Wusta**  
**Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists**  
**The Oriental Institute**  
**1155 East 58th Street**  
**Chicago, IL 60637 U.S.A.**