

## Khirbet al-Karak Identified with Sinnabra

by Donald Whitcomb

**K**hirbet al-Karak is a small site of great renown in Palestine, located on the southern shore of the Lake of Galilee, 5 miles south of Tabariyya (Tiberias), capital of the *jund* of al-Urdunn. The site, located beside one of the oldest of the *kibbutzim* in Israel, is also known as Beth Yerah. It includes an Early Bronze Age occupation, especially famous as the type site for Khirbet Karak ware. The initial excavations at this site in 1950 by P.L.O. Guy and later B. Maisler (aka Mazar) discovered structures identified as a Roman fort of the second century, a Byzantine bath of the 6th century, and within the fort, a large synagogue.

### The University of Chicago excavations

The involvement of The Oriental Institute in this site began in 1952-1953, when Delougaz and Haines excavated a Byzantine church about 50 meters north of the fort and bath. They also recovered a substantial occupation of the early Islamic period and published a complete report in *A Byzantine Church at Khirbet al-Karak* in 1960. This excavation is an example of one

of basic problems in Islamic archaeology, sorting out the first stages of Islamic occupation from the latest pre-Islamic phase. In the case of Khirbet al-Karak, the Byzantine church had three construction phases, the last of which bears a mosaic inscription dating the work to 528/29 (1960, 53). Kraeling (in the Delougaz and Haines report) posits continued use throughout the 6th century; this ended, according to Delougaz, with "...a period of neglect and encroachment, and finally of the tearing-down of what must have been largely ruins and their leveling in preparation for the construction of the new Arab building" (1960, 57).

The most recent coin found in excavated context was an Abbasid issue in the courtyard of the Arab building. This coin seems to represent a continuation of the 15 Umayyad coins from the excavations. Most of the Umayyad dynasty coins were found in debris within the church and its atrium, suggesting these depositions occurred during the century of the mid-7th

SEE KARAK, PAGE 2.

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## Al-'Usur al-Wusta

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## KARAK, FROM PAGE 1.

to the middle of the 8th c. The two coins of Constans II (655/56) date to the same period; one of these was found on the floor of the *diaconicon*, suggesting continuing use of the room. Byzantine issues of the late 6th c. are few (4) and seem to be antiquated currency, while even earlier issues were often pierced for use as jewelry.

The ceramic inventory reflects a similar pattern of chronological duration: a few types belonging to the 6th century, but the majority comfortably associated with types known from Baysan, Jarash, and Pella as 7th and early 8th century. The typology suggested by Walmsley in 1995 provides a convenient outline for the Khirbet al-Karak ceramics: Wares 1 - 5 are late Byzantine types which clearly have a presence on the site. Wares 6 - 14 present a variety of painted storage jars, fine red wares and cream wares, which seem to span the Umayyad century (ca. 660 to 750, with about half the types continuing well into the 9th century); these ceramics have close parallels among types discovered in the church. Finally Wares 15 - 19 are finer ceramics, including the earliest glazed

wares, which clearly fall within the Abbasid 9th century, if not slightly earlier; these are apparently rare on the site of Khirbet al-Karak.

The excavators attempted to distinguish find-spots as pre-church (very few), church, and "Arab building." Even those associated with the church phase must be considered as deposited in debris after the church ceased to be used as such. In the words of Delougaz, "...the designation 'church' applies strictly to architectural remains, not to objects; the latter are not associated with the church as such but are later" (1960, 59, n. 6). Again, this would fit with the numismatic evidence.

The post-church construction is poorly known and, for Delougaz, was a public building, "an Arab structure of the Umayyad period" (1960, 3). A similar structure was excavated by Hirschfeld at Ramat Hanadiv (Khirbet Mansur al-'Aqab) near Caesarea. The later occupation of this site was labeled a Byzantine villa of the 6th - 7th centuries, situated on a height above agricultural lands. The comparable features are the tripartite stable/storerooms on the eastern side and the formal entrance vestibule on the west. This limited



Figure 1. Incised sherd from the narthex of the church.

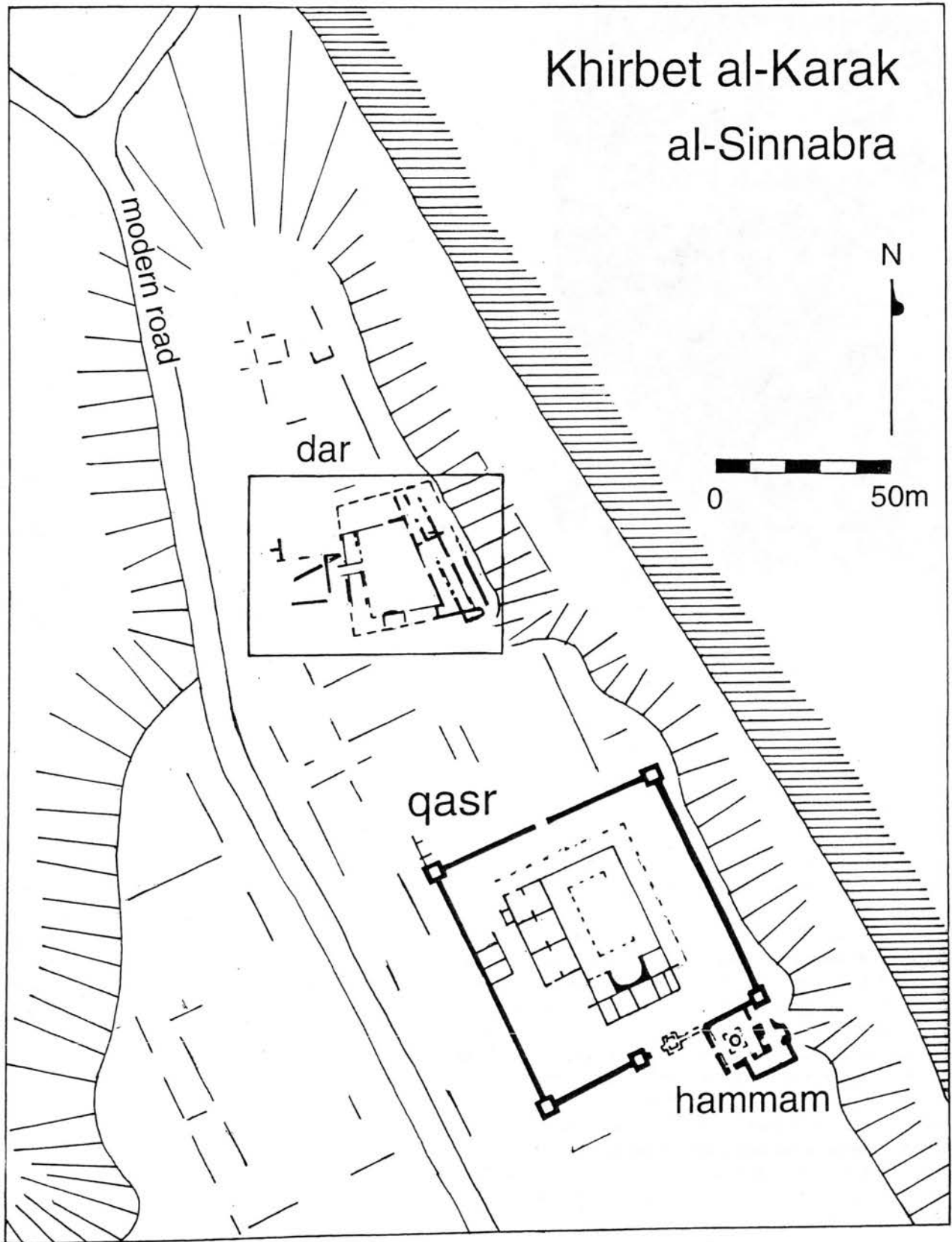


Figure 2. Map of Khirbet al-Karak.

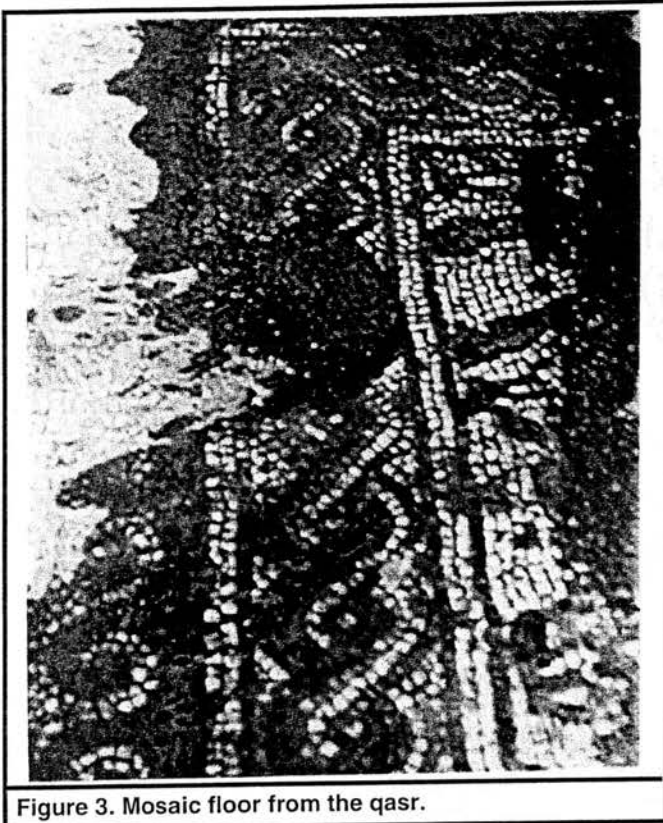


Figure 3. Mosaic floor from the qasr.

comparandum suggests a villa rustica or manor house, here described as a *dār*, associated with the *qasr* immediately to the south.

#### The Revelations of Reich

The identification of the fort containing a "basilical building" (i.e., the structures excavated by Maisler in 1950) as a Roman fort containing a 5th-6th century synagogue has been challenged recently by R. Reich ("The Beth Yerah 'synagogue' reconsidered," *Atiqot* 22 [1993], 139-144), who had access to unpublished records in the Israel Antiquities Authority. Identification of this building as a synagogue rests on a *menora* roughly engraved on a reused stone and on the orientation of the building toward Jerusalem. Reich notes that the orientation deviates by 42° from a true orientation to Jerusalem. In addition, Reich argues that the stone with an engraved *menora* would have been plastered over and not visible; it was very likely reused from an earlier building. Finally he notes that this large apsidal structure is by far the largest synagogue apse known in Palestine. The mosaics found within the building are fragmentary scenes of animals,

(12 x 12m) with a central round pool. The pool is enclosed in a sort of pavilion, which may have supported a dome, somewhat similar to the Umayyad pavilion recently discovered at Rusafa and that before the *qasr* at Khirbet al-Mafjar. The hall and sequence of rooms of the bath itself most closely parallels the bath near the north gate of 'Anjar.

#### Another "Desert Palace?"

The association of the bath, the internal decorations, and the apsidal building within fortified walls forms of structural complex with characteristics which recall the palaces of the so-called desert castles (*quṣūr*) of the Levant. The fortified perimeter closely duplicates the *qasr* recently discovered by Leisten at Balis in 1998. Unlike many of the *quṣūr*, Khirbet al-Karak does not seem to feature a series of *buyūt* arranged around a central courtyard; this suggests a different function, perhaps more "urban" in the sense of a design comparable to 'Anjar or more palatial as at Qasr ibn Wardan.

In the interior, the large apsidal element may be compared with the "palace" within the southwestern quadrant of

vegetation, and a common rope pattern, all common to late Byzantine and early Islamic buildings. Maisler notes in a brief description in 1952 that the excavations of this "basilical building" produced two Umayyad coins found on floor of hall and fragments of Greek inscription, 6th c. in style.

The bath house immediately south of the fort is described as "Late Roman" but has benches compared by Maisler to the bath at Khirbat al-Mafjar. The entrance to the bath is from the western side, adjacent to the main gate of the fort, into a square hall

'Anjar, putatively of similar date. Perhaps more interesting is the apse of al-Mundhir's building at Rusafa, which Shahid describes as a *praetorium* based on an inscription within this building, following Sauvaget's classic discussion. The building is analogous to the "Vierstützen-bau I" which has upper levels in brick and stone like Qasr ibn Wardan. This latter building complex, located in the Syrian desert (100km NE of Hama), has been described as a Ghassanid palace. Its plan fits comfortably within the Khirbet al-Karak *qasr*, with common features of a southern apsidal structure, colonnaded yard and northwest block of rooms, which may be taken as elements of a palatial structure inherited from pre-Islamic rulers in this region. (see fig. 5)

#### Historical Topography

One may reconsider the topographical situation of Khirbet al-Karak. The site is on the shore of the great lake which takes its name from the capital of al-Urdunn province, Tabariyya (Tiberias), about 6 km to the north. This places the site on the great highways connecting al-Ramla (by the coast and by Baysan) to the Umayyad metropolis of Damascus. The Classical cities of Gadara (Jadar, with its Hama) and Hippos (Susiya) lay to the east, north and south of the pass of 'Aqabat Afiq and the town of Afiq itself (see map).

The Early Bronze Age occupation has been consistently identified as Beth Yerah, although Bar Adon, who worked there in the 1950s, concluded that Beth Yerah should be sought elsewhere. He further states that two Classical period toponyms, Philoteria and Sennabris, properly belong to Khirbet al-Karak. Grootkerk, in his study of the Classical topography of the Golan, describes Philoteria as a Jewish village of the first through 5th centuries. He locates its "sister" settlement of Sennabris as contiguous on the north, presently the site of Hazar Kinneret.

The latter of these two toponyms is well-known in Islamic literature as al-Ṣinnabra (with Sinn al-Nabra and other variants). Mayer discusses the Arabic reports of al-Ṣinnabra, "a place in al-Urdunn province, opposite 'Aqabat Afiq, a distance of three miles from Tabariyya." This place was famed in the Umayyad period as the wintering site of Mu'awiya and 'Abd

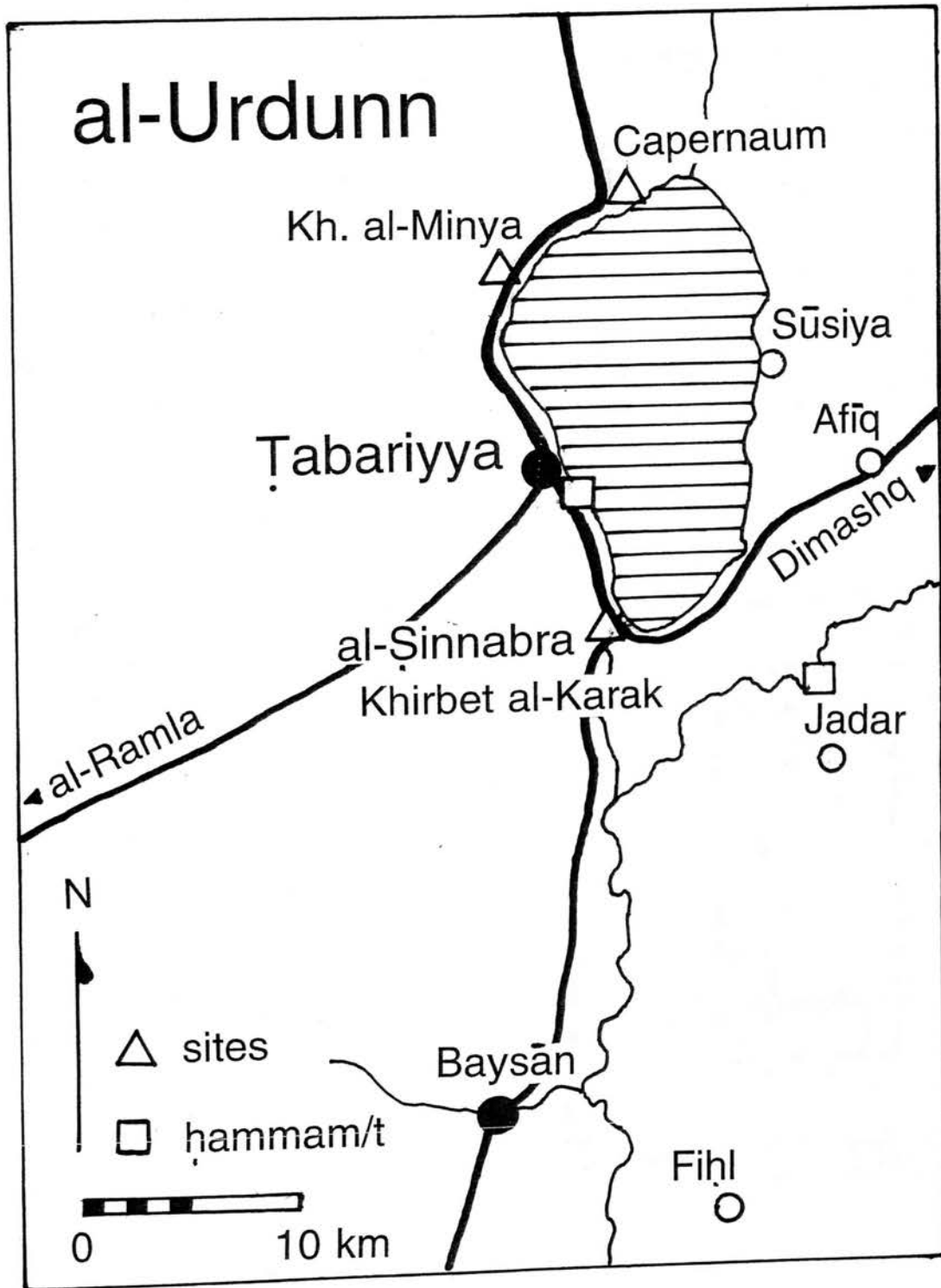


Figure 4. Map showing the location of Khirbet al-Karak.

al-Malik. Likewise, the caliph Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam stayed there and may have died in this palace. Elad reports two milestones of 'Abd al-Malik found near Afiq and dated to 704 A.D., in his 1999 study of the Golan in the early Islamic period. These inscriptions, together with one reported by Sharon in 1966 on the improvements of the 'Aqabat Afiq by 'Abd al-Malik in 692, suggest that this road may have been built by 'Abd al-Malik. Finally Hirschfeld has published the reconstruction inscription of Mu'awiya at nearby Hammam Jadar.

The fame of Ṣinnabra in "the historical scene" seems to be as a palace of the early Umayyad caliphs, from Mu'awiya through 'Abd al-Malik (661 - 705 A.D.). Thus an accumulation of regional docu-

mentation may be combined with historical information and the above archaeological evidence. The Umayyad occupation of the *qaṣr*, *ḥammām*, and north building (*dār*) excavated at Khirbet al-Karak may be identified as the palace and settlement of al-Ṣinnabra, probably founded in the early Umayyad period.

#### Conclusions

A question remains, and why not Tabariyya? What was the attraction of Ṣinnabra over the Jund capital? As with Khirbet al-Mafjar, Umayyad courts seem to have been established apart from the urban center, though not necessarily in the desert. As Kennedy has noted, "...the Umayyad *qaṣūr* were the product of pecu-

liar and particular social and economic conditions...." One of the chief problems in understanding the *qaṣūr* is the perceived variation in form and presumed function. The *qaṣr* of Ṣinnabra may represent the earliest of these Umayyad building complexes. Its interior structures may have served as an audience hall as part of a palatial complex, used during the time of Mu'awiya, Marwan and 'Abd al-Malik, its seasonal residential rulers. This palace, bath, and other buildings (the *dār*) may allow, even in their fragmentary ruined state, new interpretations into the phenomenon of the *qaṣūr*. This important phase in early Islamic history may directly benefit from a more nuanced understanding of the archaeological evidence.

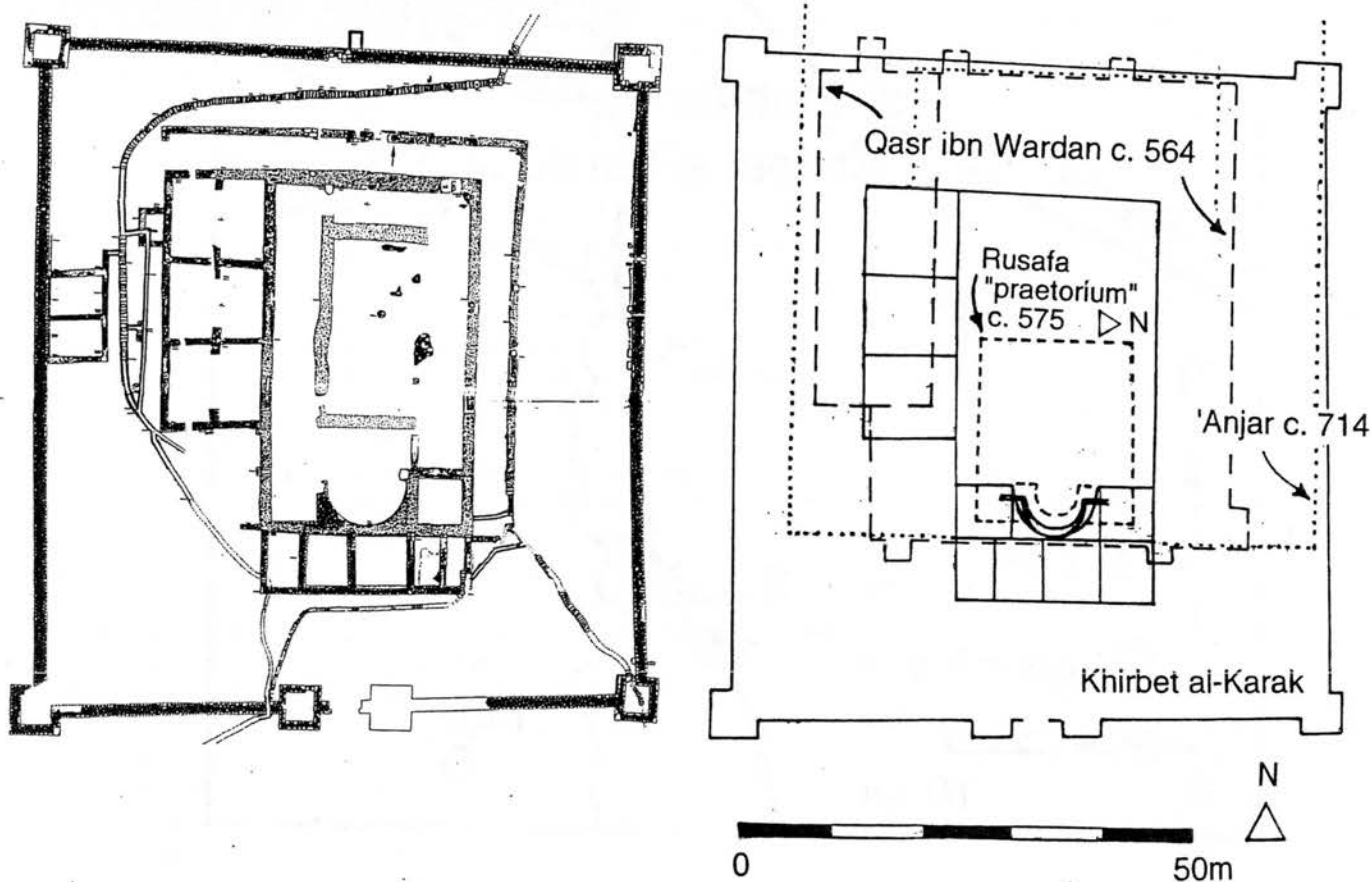


Figure 5. Comparison of qasr (left) with other apsidal buildings.

## Conferences and Symposia

### Third International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (3 ICAANE)

#### Workshop on Islamic Archaeology

Institut d'Art & d'Archéologie, Paris

April 18-19, 2002

The third congress continued the opportunity afforded in the Copenhagen congress two years ago for Islamic archaeologists to meet together with archaeologists of earlier periods. This workshop was held over the 18-19th of April, 2002, at the Institut d'Art & d'Archéologie, Université de Paris I, Paris, and focused on Urban Archaeology in the Islamic Near East. The following is a listing of the wide range of subjects covered by the participants.

Claire Hardy-Guilbert (CNRS), "Al-Shihir, ville portuaire d'Arabie (VIIIe — XXe);" Axelle Rougeulle (CNRS), "Ville portuaire ou entrepôt? Le cas de Sharma (Yemen);" Moti Haiman (Israeli Antiquities Authority), "Countryside-Town relationships in the Negev Desert in the 5th-8th centuries C.E.;" Donald Whitcomb (University of Chicago), "Khirbet al-Kharak reconsidered;" Alan Walmsley (University of Copenhagen), "Islamic Jarash: a precis of research;" and Scott Redford (Georgetown University), "Early Islamic Antioch."

Ignacio Arce (Spanish Archaeological Mission to Jordan), "Urban morphology and social significance of Umayyad Amman" and "Urban pattern changes from the Umayyad to the Abbasid periods: Amman Citadel;" Johnny De Meulemeester (Division du Patrimoine de la Région Wallone), "Développement de la ville d'Aqaba, Mamluk et Ottoman;" Roland-Pierre Gayraud (CNES), "L'évolution urbaine de Fustat;" Marie-Odile Rousset (CNRS), "L'urbanisme des débuts de l'Islam en Egypte: Istabl Antar et Tebtynis;" and Alastair Northedge (Université de Paris I), "Le centre-ville de Samarra."

Krzysztof Jakubiak (Warsaw University, Institute of Archaeology), "The Yarty Gummez and Abu Fazl Mausoleums from the Serakhs Oasis in Southern Turkmenistan;" Wolfram Kleiss (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Berlin), "Mittelaltliche Burgen in Iran;" and again Alastair Northedge on "Le plan d'une ville iranienne à l'époque médiévale: Misriyan/ Dehistan (Turkménistan);" Yuri Karev (Mission franco-ouzbègue à Samarkand), "Peintures murales qaraghanides de Samarkand;" and Denis Geneqand (Université de Paris I/Université de Lausanne), "Termez: la ville islamique de la conquête musulmane jusqu'à l'invasion mongole."

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# Religion and Politics in Early Abbasid History (ca. 750-850 CE)

by Hayrettin Yucesoy

One wonders why early Abbasid history is still seen from the purview of political and sectarian history. One of the reasons is perhaps that current religious, cultural and political concerns and preferences outweigh early Abbasid history's own issues. The standard narrative of early Abbasid history is a predictable story of rise and decline. According to this narrative, the Abbasids managed to overthrow the Umayyad dynasty and occupy the office of the caliphate in 750 by cleverly associating themselves with the Shiite underground movement, the Kaysaniyya. They flirted with a variety of extremist groups and promised equality to

the Persian converts in the provinces of Iraq and Iran. In order to gain power, the Abbasids exploited the messianic hopes of the oppressed and pledged that they would install a member of the prophet Muhammad's family as leader.

As soon as they captured the caliphate, however, the Abbasids swiftly turned against their former supporters, including the Shiites, persecuted the extremist movements and embraced the Sunnis, which they saw as supportive of their political and religious ambitions. The Abbasid-Sunni symbiosis was not, however, able to last more than a century. While the Abbasids tried to protect their power by creating an army and central

bureaucracy, political opposition embraced "heterodox" and "heretical" ideologies. When the Sunnis abandoned the Abbasids after the caliphs began to intervene in doctrinal matters, the Turkish military elite was set free to dominate the seat of the caliphate in the middle of the ninth century. Within this governing narrative, modern historians try to explain how and why the Abbasid's project failed to work. I would like to discuss briefly three aspects, which strike me as illustrative.

### Nationalism before nation

Nationalism is seen as one of the major analytical tools to explain Abbasid history. Since Van Vloten and

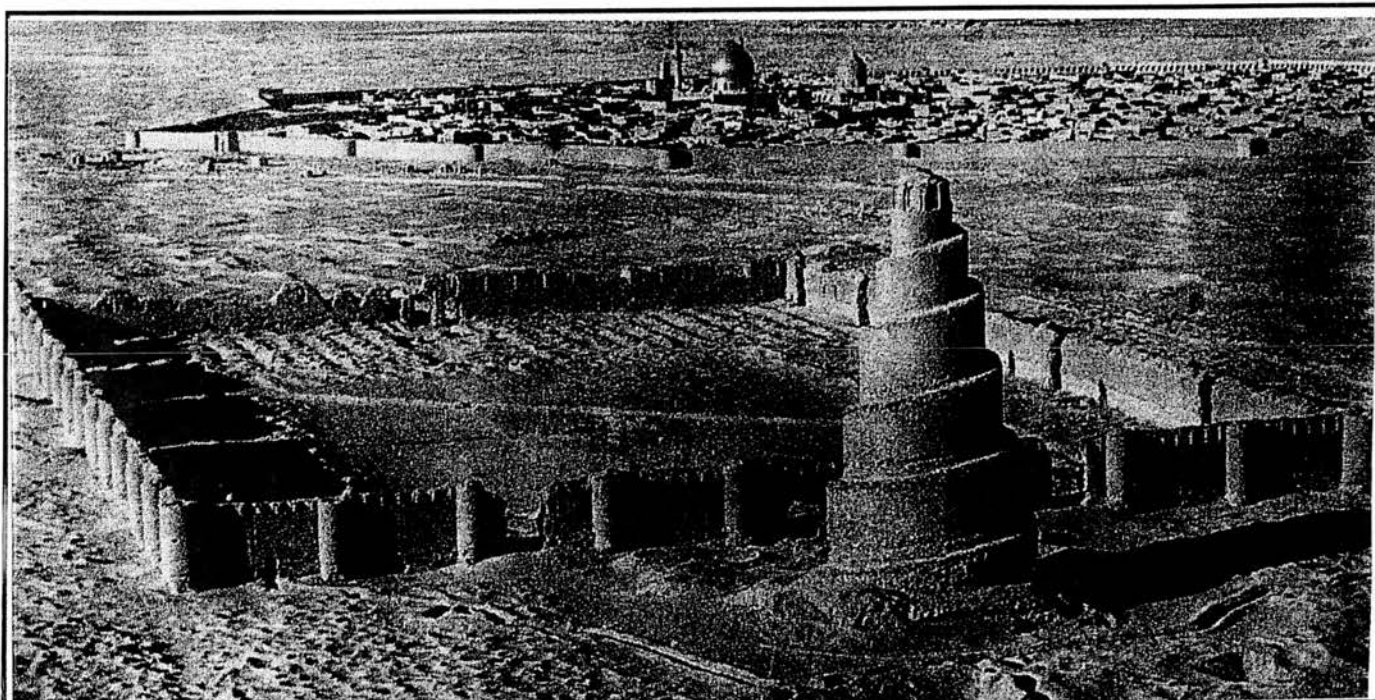


Figure 1. The Mosque of Samarra.



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Wellhausen's once widely held theory that the Abbasid revolution was in fact a Persian revolt against Arab domination, the idea of national competition between Arabs and Persians and later between Arabs and Turks remained a major analytical tool in modern studies until recently. The list of developments which have been explained within this theory is long: From the Abbasid revolt itself to the military domination of the Turkish troops in the late ninth century, all major events are seen as consistent symptoms of a national competition. Recently, the nationalist explanation lost much of its appeal in western scholarship partly because of its oversimplification but largely because of its anachronism, as Anderson's *Imagined Communities* made it obvious. In the Middle East, however, where the nation building process is still underway and where nationalism plays a significant role in politics, this idea is still very much current.

#### Sectarianism

The idea of nation brought with it the issue of identity. Abbasid society was seen as divided into large religious and sectarian congregations: Muslims and Non-Muslims; Arabs and non-Arabs; Sunnis and Shiites, etc. Also in such studies, religious affiliation follows a national divide. Arab Bedouin mentality created Kharijism; new converts, mostly Persians, sided with Shiism and other extremist oppositional ideologies; the caliphs and their privileged Arab base sought the comfort of orthodoxy; while the rationalist Mutazila and the Philosophers were marginalized in the oppressive conditions of a fatalistic religious milieu. Indeed, the most significant lesson one gets from the otherwise masterful work of Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, is the final and ultimate triumph of Orthodoxy in early Islam.

Needless to say, compartmentalizing Abbasid society into water tight sectarian divisions and assigning direct political goals to them politicizes the enormous amount of cultural and intellectual output and reproduces the claims presented in heresiographical sources, which pay little attention to the chronology, historicity and

multiplicity of religiosity in early Abbasid society.

#### Real-Politik

When historians responded to the theoretical demands of the social sciences by breaking with the tradition of Orientalism, they incorporated widely circulating social-scientific conceptual and analytical elements into their approach. Two of these interrelated analytical frameworks seem significant: Center-Periphery theory and the idea of Real-Politik. New studies of Abbasid history based on such theories saw the dynamics of the early Abbasid society in a struggle between central political power and peripheral socio-economic forces. Inspired by their theoretical edge, these scholars were able to disseminate the view that both the Abbasids and their opposition cared only for how to maximize their power, even though they used religious discourse to justify and mask their real intentions. It comes as no surprise that Foucault's theory of "power relations" heightened the belief in the primacy and absolute centrality of power in historical studies.

#### Arabist and Islamist Response

Surprisingly, modern religious political discourse views this period of Abbasid history from a very similar perspective. While orientalism exoticizes the Middle East by highlighting its essential differences from Western Europe, religious conservatism does this by propagating a faith-based supremacy in early Islam and by projecting solid religious and sectarian categories according to which religiosity and Abbasid history are judged. Modern religious conservatism is opposed to the Abbasids on religious and political grounds and views them as ruthless politicians who sought more and more worldly power. It ignores or rejects the existence and confluence of competing religious experiences and displays a deep skepticism concerning the "official" narratives, which do not conform to its normative principles. In fact, and surprisingly so, historiography is criticized for confusing fact and fiction. In the end, positivist historians reject admitting religious motivations as facts, while

Sunni or Shiite orthodoxy disclaims anything not confirming the later normative principles.

The overall picture one derives from the modernist scholarly approach as well as the conservative religious view is that of a monolithic society divided into sectarian congregations, ruled by a pragmatist, capricious and absolutist political power, and dominated by an orthodox version of religion.

#### Abbasid History in Late Antique/Early Medieval World

The problem one has with this narrative is that what it consigns to the margins is not only extremely important, but is also too bulky to be ignored. In the following, I will try to point, from the perspective of my research, to the margins as vital fields of inquiry -- in which numerous substantial studies have already been done -- that must be integrated into the larger early Abbasid history narratives. Four fields of inquiry appear highly provocative:

The Messianic Factor: Monotheistic messianism was extremely important in the formation and development of Muslim identity and history. Islam itself was born and evolved in a late antique monotheistic milieu filled with messianic and apocalyptic expectations. In addition to textual Quranic evidence, historical sources reveal a religious development, which sustained forceful messianic and interconfessional movements from the seventh century onward. During the two post-prophetic centuries, numerous Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian apocalyptic writings show how conquests, migration, conversion, social and economic affiliation were creating new religious identities in the region. Islam fed Jewish Messianic hopes, and provoked a new wave of apocalyptic predictions among Christian communities, while it itself was configured into the religious setting of the Middle East.

Confessional Ambiguity: Despite the exclusivist tendency of literalism and doctrinal sectarianism, there is ample evidence which shows that monotheistic religiosity sustained a vital confessional ambiguity,

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which better describes early Abbasid history than Sunni-Shii or Muslim-Non-Muslim parity. Sharing, or claiming the possession of, a common religious and messianic ideology among monotheistic traditions, whose protagonist would penetrate confessional boundaries, is exemplified in numerous movements throughout the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. A look at the birth of sects and of legal and theological schools results in provocative evidence against the monolithic and confrontational image of Abbasid society.

The Significance of Heresy: The ideological background of the Abbasids suggests an extremist and "heretical" environment and an ambiguous religious and ideological world-view. I will not go into detail about the confusing background of the Abbasid caliphs to show that the paradigm of orthodoxy is anachronistic. Suffice it to say that the extremist Shiite Kaysaniyya movement was both the cradle of the Abbasid movement and a powerful religio-political trend during the late first and second Islamic centuries. Among the most prominent of its branches were groups who upheld the belief that the religio-political leadership, the imamate, belonged to the Abbasid caliphs. Such groups not only supported the Abbasid caliphate but also bestowed semi-divine qualities upon the

caliphs.

This state of affairs stands in sharp contrast to the orthodox explanation of the Abbasids, and it should, therefore, come as no surprise that the Abbasids developed a messianic, divinely inspired self-image. When Ibn al-Muqaffa' warned the caliph al-Manşūr that many individuals among the army generals claimed that if the caliph ordered the mountains to move, they would move and, if he demanded that the direction of the qibla of prayer be turned around, it would be done, he was certainly referring to this unsettling and destabilizing religio-political identity that made up the Abbasid caliphate. However, the response of al-Manşūr to Ibn al-Muqaffa''s advice, which seems to question the semi-divine qualities of the caliph and call for normalization of imperial administration, was to execute him. Ironically, his execution suggests that the caliph indeed saw the Abbasids as semi-divine and divinely appointed rulers. When we take into consideration this unorthodox state of mind, we are compelled to recognize Abbasid messianic ideology, divinely inspired leadership and religio-political universalism of the 8th and early 9th centuries as the appropriate context for the religious reform policies of the caliphs. Universalism: Abbasid universalism was a forceful messianic ideology, a monotheis-

tic tradition and a viable project for the caliphs after the rapid spread of Muslim rule in the 8th and early 9th centuries. The expansion of the caliphate to the Central Asiatic steppes, North Africa and Europe made possible more sustained interaction between distant regions as evidenced in Muslim literary and material culture. The conquest activities, missionary efforts, and the well-known revitalization and translation movement of Greek and Persian heritage should be looked into from the perspective of the underlying ideology which inspired the caliphs to look at world history in a linear fashion culminating in a universal monotheistic, and frequently messianic, order, not just the political ambitions of the caliphs.

Finally, one should note that classical sources do justify more than one type of narrative. In this regard, "marginalia" and anomalies prove suggestive for alternative views of Abbasid history. More importantly perhaps is the need for questioning the identity and primacy of the observer him/herself vis à vis the observed itself, so that future research can prevent the monologue and open up a channel of communication between the reader and his/her text.

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**Conferences and Symposia**

**The Heritage of Sasanian Iran:  
Dinars, Drahms and Coppers of the Late Sasanian and early Muslim Periods**

**Columbia University, New York**

**June 8-9, 2002**

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The American Numismatic Society, the Center for Iranian Studies at Columbia University, and Middle East Medievalists will sponsor a conference on "The Heritage of Sasanian Iran: Dinars, Drahms and Coppers of the Late Sasanian and early Muslim Periods" to be held at Columbia University, New York on Saturday and Sunday, June 8-9, 2002.

Late Sasanian coins and their subsequent Muslim, Dabuyid and Hunnic imitations formed an important part of the monetary systems of late Classical and early medieval Iran. Late Sasanian coins became the pre-eminent silver coinage in the Near East during this period. The early Muslims in Iran and dynasts of northern and eastern Iran later copied the main outlines of these coins while creating distinct provincial and regional coinages. The coins today represent documents of social, political and economic life at a time of great cultural efflorescence as well as social and political change.

The papers presented at the conference will treat any aspect of the Late Sasanian and early Muslim coins of Iran as artifacts of civilization and culture. The topics of papers will be numismatic, historical and art historical. They will examine problems in the reading and interpretation of the Pahlavi and Arabic legends or the iconography, the representation of sovereignty, Zoroastrianism and Islam, or the production, use and regulation of these coinages.

The conference will also feature a workshop in reading the Pahlavi legends on these coins and a roundtable for the discussion of issues of common interest.

Queries about further information and registration should be sent by e-mail to Dr. Stuart D. Sears at [sears@aucegypt.edu](mailto:sears@aucegypt.edu) or Dr. Michael L. Bates at [bates@amnumsoc.org](mailto:bates@amnumsoc.org) or by mail to: Dr. Stuart D. Sears, The American University in Cairo, Department of Arabic Studies, Box 2511, Cairo, Egypt 11511. Communications by E-mail are preferred.

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**Dumbarton Oaks Spring Symposium**

**“Realities in the Arts of the Medieval Mediterranean, 800-1500”**

**Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC**

**April 26-28, 2002**

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A Symposium on the “Realities in the Arts of the Medieval Mediterranean, 800-1500” will be held at Dumbarton Oaks from Friday, April 26, to Sunday, April 28, 2002. Some of the papers that will be presented are:

Christopher Wickham, “The Mediterranean around 800: On the Brink of the Second Trade Cycle;” David Jacoby, “Silk, Economics and Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World and the West;” Marianne Barrucand, “Early Byzantine Spolia in Fatimid Egypt and Contemporary North Africa;” Anthony Cutler, “Gifts as Markers of Cultural and Commercial Exchange between Byzantium and Islam;” Deborah Howard, “Venice and Damascus in the 14th and 15th Century;” Véronique François, “Réalités des échanges en Méditerranée orientale du XIIe au XIXe s.: l’apport de la céramique;” Maria Georgopoulou, “The Arts, Industry and Trade in the 13th Century Mediterranean.”

# ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone/Fax/Email/Web
<b>Middle East Studies Association</b> (2002 Meeting)	Nov. 23-26, 2002 Washington, DC [Paper Deadline: Past]	MESA Secretariat University of Arizona 1232 N. Cherry Ave. Tucson, AZ 85721	(520)-621-5850 mesa@ccit.arizona.edu www.mesa.arizona.edu
<b>Middle East Studies Association</b> (2003 Meeting)	Nov. 6-9, 2003 Anchorage, AK [Abstract Deadline: Feb.15, 2003]	see preceding	see preceding
<b>Middle East Studies Association</b> (2004 Meeting)	Nov. 19-22, 2004 San Francisco, CA	see preceding	see preceding
<b>American Oriental Society</b> (2002 Meeting)	Mar. 22-25, 2002 Houston, TX [Abstract Deadline: Past]	American Oriental Society Hatcher Graduate Library University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1205	(734)-764-7555 www.umich.edu/~aos
<b>American Historical Association</b> (2003 Meeting)	Jan. 2-5, 2003 Chicago, IL [Paper Deadline: Past]	American Historical Assn. 400 A Street, S. E. Washington, DC 20003	(202)-544-2422 www.Theaha.org
<b>American Historical Association</b> (2004 Meeting)	Jan. 8-11, 2004 Washington, DC [Paper Deadline: Feb. 2003]	see preceding	see preceding
<b>The Medieval Institute</b> (2002 Meeting)	May 2-5, 2002 Kalamazoo, MI [Abstract Deadline: Past]	The Medieval Institute Western Michigan Univ. 1903 W. Michigan Avenue Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5432	Tel.: (616)-387-8745 Fax: (616)-387-8750 mdv1_congres@wmich.edu www.wmich.edu/medieval
<b>The Medieval Institute</b> (2003 Meeting)	May 8-11, 2003 [Abstract Deadline: May 15, 2002]	see preceding	see preceding
<b>College Art Association</b> (2003 Meeting)	Feb. 19-22, 2003 New York, NY [Proposal Deadline: May 13, 2002]	Suzanne Schanzer 275 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10001	(212)-691-1051 ext13 www.collegeart.org

# ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone No.
College Art Association (2004 Meeting)	Feb. 18-21, 2004 Seattle, WA	see preceding	see preceding
International Medieval Congress (2002 Meeting) "Exile"	July 8-11, 2002 Leeds, UK [Paper Deadline: Past]	M. O'Doherty/J. Opmeer IMC, Parkinson 1.03 University of Leeds Leeds LS2 9JT, UK	Tel.: +44 (113) 233-3614 Fax: +44 (113) 233-3616 IMC@leeds.ac.uk www.leeds.ac.uk/imi/imc/imc.htm
International Medieval Congress (2003 Meeting) "Power & Authority"	July 14-17, 2003 Leeds, UK [Abstract Deadline: Aug. 31, 2002]	see preceding	see preceding
Dumbarton Oaks Conference (2002 Meeting) "Realities in the Arts of the Medieval Mediterranean, 800-1500"	April 26-28, 2002 Washington, DC [Paper: Invitation only]	Dumbarton Oaks 1703 32nd St., N. W. Washington, DC 20007	(202)-339-6940 www.doaks.org
ARAM International Conference (2002 Meeting) "Wine"	July 15-17, 2002 Oxford, UK	ARAM The Oriental Institute Oxford University Pusey Lane Oxford OX1 2LE England	Tel.: 44-1865-514041 Fax: 44-1865-516824 aram@ermine.ox.ac.uk users.ox.ac.uk/~aram
American Academy of Religion (2002 Meeting)	Nov. 23-26, 2002 Toronto, Canada [Paper Deadline: Past]	American Academy of Religion 1703 Clifton Rd., Suite G-5 Atlanta, GA 30329-4019	(404)-727-7920 aar@emory.edu www.aarweb.org/annualmeet
American Academy of Religion (2003 Meeting)	Nov. 22-25, 2003 Atlanta, GA [Abstract Deadline: Mar. 2003]	see preceding	see preceding
American Academy of Religion (2004 Meeting)	Nov. 20-23, 2004 San Antonio, TX [Abstract Deadline: Mar. 2004]	see preceding	see preceding

# NEWS OF MEM

## MEMBER News

**C. Edmund Bosworth** (Emeritus, Manchester University) was awarded the Dr Mahmud Afshar Foundation Prize for contributions to Iranian historical studies in a ceremony at Tehran in October 2001, the first Westerner to be so honoured. He has recently published the articles "Notes on Some Turkish Names in Abu 'l-Fadl Bayhaqi's *Tarikh-i Mas'udi*," *Oriens* 36 (2001), 299-313, and "Sistan and Its Local Histories," *Iranian Studies* 33/1-2 (Winter-Spring 2000), 31-43, and has edited *A Century of British Orientalists 1902-2001* (Oxford: OUP for the British Academy, 2002), with chapters by himself on E.G. Browne, V.F. Minorsky and Sir Gerard Clauson.

**Leonard Chiarelli** (University of Utah) was appointed Public Service Librarian at the A.S. Atiya Middle East Library. He has completed a book manuscript on the History of Islamic Sicily, which includes an update on the sources for Muslim Sicily since Michele Amari's book and new information about the presence of the Ibadiyah and their impact on the island.

**Jamsheed Choksy** (Indiana University) was in Baluchistan, Pakistan, in May and June as co-director of an archeological surface survey that located the first millennium B.C. Achaemenian and Hellenistic sites and first millennium A.D. Sasanian and Islamic sites near the cities of Quetta and Chaman. He served as an evaluator for Killam Research Fellowships Program of Canada Council for the Arts. He is currently on the Fellowship Selection committee of the IREX Individual Advanced Research Opportunities Program. He was quoted by the Dallas Morning News on the

Muslim Community in America. Articles published were "Dualism of the Feminine in Manichaeism: The Mother of Life and Demoneess of Concupiscence," *Third International Congress Proceedings of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* (Bombay: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 2001), pp. 301-8; and "The Zoroastrian Community in Historical Perspective (or Whither a Zoroastrian Minority Amidst the Sectarian Sociopolitics of Contemporary Iran?)" *Iran Nameh*, Special Issue on Non-Muslim Communities in Iran (2001) v. 19, nos. 1-2, pp. 5-6 (summary in English), pp. 61-78 (article in Persian). He also published a review of *A History of Iraq*, by Charles Tripp in *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, vol. 42, no. 3 (2001), pp. 343-5. In the Autumn of 2001 he was an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, CA.

**Eric J. Hanne's** (Florida Atlantic University) article "Caliphal Patronage and the Making of the Classical Theory of the Caliphate" will appear in the forthcoming *Writers and Rulers: Perspectives from Abbasid to Safavid Times*, edited by B. Gruendler and L. Marlow.

**Annie C. Higgins** received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 2001. Her dissertation under the supervision of Wadad Kadi was entitled "The Qur'anic Exchange of the Self in the Poetry of Shurat (Khariji) Political Identity, 37-132/657-750."

**Konrad Hirschler** (School of Oriental and African Studies) plans to submit his dissertation "Social Contexts and Narrative Structures of Medieval Arabic Histo-

riography - Ibn Wasil and Abu Shama" in October, 2002. His article "Defining the Nation — Kurdish Historiography in Turkey in the 1990s" appeared in *Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (3), pp. 145-66.

**Tamer El-Leithy** (Princeton University) is working on a dissertation entitled "Coptic History and Moral Regulation, 1200-1550."

**Gary Leiser** spent much of the past year laying the groundwork to build a new air and space museum at Travis Air Force Base. Meanwhile, he published a translation of M. F. Köprülü's "Turkish Civilization in Anatolia in the Seljuk Period," *Mèsogeios*, 9-10 (2000). This is part of his long-range plan to make available in English Köprülü's most important historical works. He and Robert Dankoff have been working for some time on a translation and edition of Köprülü's *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*. It should be ready for the press by the end of 2002. He is also collecting materials for a work on the dawn of aviation in the Middle East, the first flying machines over Istanbul in 1909.

**Neil D. MacKenzie** (Independent Scholar) has submitted an article "Ayyubid/Mamluk Archaeology of the Ajlun Area: A Preliminary Survey" to the *Annals of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*. He is currently working on a study of the Ayyubid/Mamluk mosques and shrines for the same area, as well as a proposal to excavate the Byzantine/Islamic site of Qafsah.

**Karen Mathews** (University of California, Santa Cruz) has published "Borrowing or Stealing? The Use of Spolia in the Mosque Complex of Sultan Mu'ayyad

Sheikh" in the *ARCE Bulletin* 180 (Summer 2001). She will present current research on the relationship between Mamluk architecture possessing spolia and urban ceremonial in Cairo at the Medieval Academy of America Annual Meeting in New York in April 2002.

**Maged S.A. Mikhail** (UCLA) is writing a dissertation entitled "Egypt from Late Antiquity to Early Islam." He recently published "Some Observations Concerning edible in Late Antique and Early Islamic

Egypt," in *Byzantion* 70 (2000): 105-21.

**Letizia Osti** received her Ph.D. from the University of St. Andrews. Her dissertation was entitled "From Person to Persons: Portraits of Scholars in Medieval Arabic Biographical Dictionaries." She is currently a temporary lecturer in Arabic at the University of Venice.

**Petra Sijpesteijn** (Princeton University) is working on a Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Creating a Muslim State: a Second Cen-

tury Archive from the Fayyum."

**Kristin Stilt** (Harvard University) is working on a Ph.D. dissertation on the Muhtasib in early Mamluk Egypt. Her interests include topics related to law and society.

**Maya Yazigi** (University of British Columbia) completed her Ph.D. in Islamic Studies at UCLA in 2001, and accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Islamic and Arab Studies at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, as of July 2001.

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## Conferences and Symposia

### First World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies

University of Mainz, Germany

September 8-13, 2002

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The First World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES) will be held at the University and Congress Centre of Mainz, Germany, on September 8-13, 2002. The World Congress aims to address, explore and exchange information on the state-of-the-art in Middle Eastern studies in its broadest sense.

The World Congress was initiated by the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) and will be held as joint congress of the European Association for Middle Eastern Studies (EURAMES), the British, French, Italian and German Middle East studies associations (BRISMES, AFEMAM, SeSaMO, DAVO). It is also supported by Middle East studies associations in 14 other member countries of EURAMES comprising more than 3000 scholars.

The World Congress will bring together about 2000 experts from all branches of humanities, social sciences and related disciplines to share and exchange their research, experience and ideas about all aspects of Middle Eastern studies as well as to discuss methodological-theoretical and practical-political challenges and their potential solutions.

More than 130 associations, research centres, universities, international organizations and other institutions from all over the world have announced meetings, symposia, plenary sessions, panels, roundtables, poster presentations, exhibitions as well as cultural events. The participation of high-ranking decision makers in politics, economics, cultural affairs and the media will promote the exchange of new ideas far beyond academic research. The conference's working languages are English and French.

In addition to the scientific-scholarly program the World Congress will assess the impact of September 11 on the development of the Middle East on the first anniversary of the terror attacks in the USA. The World Congress will also offer book exhibitions by publishers and authors, a film festival, documentary films, art exhibitions, theatre performances, a beneficial concert for the victims of terror and other cultural events.

For more information please contact: Guenter Meyer or Joern Thielmann, WOCMES Secretariat, Centre for Research on the Arab World (CERAW), Institute of Geography, University of Mainz, 55099 Mainz, Germany. Tel.: +49-6131-3922846, -3923446 or -3922701. Fax: +49-6131-3924736. Email: wocmes@geo.uni-mainz.de. Website: www.wocmes.de.

## Conferences and Symposia

### 37th International Congress on Medieval Studies

Kalamazoo, Michigan

May 2-5, 2002

The 37th International Congress on Medieval Studies will be held on the campus of Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, from 2-5 May, 2002. Some of the papers that will be delivered are:

Ibrahim Y. Najjar (Univ. of Sharjah), "Gains from the Translation of Averroes' *al-Kashf*: The Case of Induction."

James E. Lindsay (Colorado State Univ.), "Ibn Asakir as an Advocate of Nur al-Din's Jihad;" Yaacov Lev (Bar-Ilan Univ.), "Nur al-Din's Charitable Works: *Sadaqa* or Policy?" Sumaiya Hamdani (George Mason Univ.), "Nur al-Din and the Sectarian Other;" Adam Sabra (Western Michigan Univ.), "The Cult of the Ruler: Nur al-Din and His Biographers;" Yasser Tabbaa (Oberlin College), "Dominion and Intolerance: The Mosque of Nur al-Din in Mosul and Local Christianity."

Jenna Mead (Univ. of Tasmania), "The Colour White: Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe* and Its Arabic Sources;" Samuel G. Armistead (Univ. of California - Davis), "*Kharjas* and *Villancicos*;" Kristin M. Neumayer (Univ. of Wisconsin - Madison), "Reading (Aloud) the Andalusian *Kharja*;" Dorothy A. Escribano (Worcester State College), "The Hispano-Arabic Origins of the Castilian Epic: *Libro de las batallas* and *Poema del mio Cid*."

Marco Milanese (Univ. di Pisa), "Towns in Ifriqiya between Late Antiquity and the Islamic Period: The Evidence of the Uchi Maius Excavations;" Sauro Gelichi (Univ. di Ca' Foscari, Venice), "The Harim Castle Project: A Fortified Settlement in North Syria during the Age of the Crusades;" James G. Schryver (Cornell Univ.), "Medieval Caesarea: A View from Herod's Promontory."

David Whitehouse (Corning Museum of Glass), "The Glass Industry in the Levant, AD 1000-1300;" Karen Loaiza (SUNY - Plattsburgh), "*Vitrea vasa*: Fatimid Rock Crystals in German Monastic Treasuries."

Maria Predelli (McGill Univ.), "Il collare della colomba: un prosimetro arabo come antecedente della *Vita nuova*;" Cynthia Villagomez (Wake Forest Univ.), "Muslim Court Culture in Medieval Sicily;" Simon Barton (Univ. of Exeter), "Preaching to the Converted: Spanish Missionaries and Mercenaries in the Maghreb, ca. 1200-1300."

Timothy J. Gianotti (Pennsylvania State Univ.), "Estimation (*al-wahm*) in al-Ghazali;" Thérèse -Anne Druart (Catholic Univ. of America), "al-Ghazali: God as an Agent;" Richard C. Taylor (Marquette Univ.), "Predicating Creator of the First Principle: al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd (Averroes)."

David Bachrach (Univ. of Notre Dame), "Wartime Rhetoric and the Other: Battlefield Orations and Sermons against Muslims and Pagans;" Rashidah Z. Hakeem (Univ. of Mississippi), "Medieval Libraries: The Islamic Model."



# 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.

Kāmil Ḥaydar, *al-'Imāra al-'Arabīya al-Islāmīya: Nushū' al-Madāris al-Islāmīya wa-Khaṣā'ishuhā fī al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī* [Arab Islamic Architecture: The Rise of Islamic Madrasas and their Characteristics in the Abbasid Period] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī, 1995). 125 pp. of text + 27 drawings, 15 photographs, bibliography, and table of contents.

In its final chapter, this book becomes a disappointing diatribe against "the orientalist." Up until that point, it offered a useful little survey of a number of 6th-/12th- and 7th-/13th-century *madrasas* in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, supplemented by helpful plans and photographs of the sites discussed -- a sort of Arabic *Blue Guide*.

Chapter one ("Islam's Stance Towards Knowledge and Education," pp. 7-22) traces the Islamic tradition's conspicuous commitment to knowledge and education, from the Qur'an's pronouncements on the subject to the earliest teaching

establishments -- mostly mosques -- in the first centuries of Islam. Chapter two ("The First *Madrasas* in Islam," pp. 23-30) offers a reasonable, if brief and unambitious, discussion of various forerunners of the *madrasa* proper. Not everyone will consider chapter one an exercise in scholarship, and some may feel that chapter two could benefit from wider reading in recent secondary literature.

In chapters three, four, and five, however, this book becomes more interesting, as the author takes us on a journey to a number of *madrasas* and discusses their individual and shared characteristics. Chapter three (pp. 31-100) deals with the Nizāmiya Madrasa in Baghdad, the Arba'in Madrasa in Takrīt, the Shirābī Madrasas in Baghdad and Wāsiṭ, and the Mustanṣiriya Madrasa in Baghdad. This is the best and, fortunately, also the longest chapter. Chapter four (pp. 101-109) contains much briefer descriptions of ten different Syrian *madrasas*. Chapter five (pp. 110-118) contains fairly detailed descriptions of the Kāmiliya and Ṣālihiya Madrasas in Cairo, especially the latter. The examinations of individual *madrasas* are supported by plans and photographs (where relevant or available), as well as citations to primary sources which mention these structures, their foundation, and construction.

Chapter six (pp. 119-125) offers a brief conclusion in which the author refutes the "theories of the orientalist." The author has the orientalist's views from Aḥmad Fikrī, *Masājid al-Qāhira wa-madārisuhā: al-Madkhal* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1961). The author contends that Byzantine and Sasanian architectural forms could not possibly have influenced the design of the *madrasa*. Rather, the features of the mosque absolutely determined the architectural features of the *madrasa*, which is, therefore, a thoroughly autochthonous architectural expression of core Islamic values. It is taken for granted that no mosque could have had non-Islamic antecedents. This reader did not find the author's argument particularly edifying.

Having said that, the middle chapters of this book (especially chapter three) were interesting even if not intellectually

ambitious, and the extensive bibliography of Arabic secondary literature may be of interest to historians of Islamic architecture. In addition, this whole book is written at a very readable level and is brimming with architectural terms, making it a potentially very useful teaching tool for third- or fourth-year Arabic students, especially those interested in the history of Islamic art and architecture.

- Joseph E. Lowry

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Kan'ān, *Fiḥ al-ḥadīth 'inda a'immat al-salaf bi-riwāyat al-imām al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Ma'ārif, 1419/1998). 2 vols.: 480, 344 pp.

*Al-Jāmi' al-ṣāḥiḥ* of Abū 'Isā al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892) is distinguished by continual editorial comments, first on the reliability of the quoted hadith reports, second on jurists who have taken positions one way or another concerning the topic in question. Aḥmad, Shāfi'i, and Ishāq ibn Rāhawayh are cited the most often, followed by Sufyān al-Thawrī, Ibn al-Mubārak, Mālik, and the people of Kufa, then, infrequently, by Awzā'i and various others.

Kan'ān has culled these editorial comments and added comments of his own, chiefly references to other collections in which these hadith reports appear (the rest of the Six Books, Aḥmad's *Musnad*, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, Bayhaqī, and others) with occasional comments from medieval authors; e.g., Ibn al-Jawzī.

Unfortunately, Kan'ān offers no precise references except to the Homs, 1965, edition of Tirmidhī's *Jāmi'*. Do the quoted opinions of Shāfi'i correspond to the *qadīm* or the *jadid*? Do Kufan opinions agree with Ḥanafī? Kan'ān offers no help on such questions. He offers few generalizations about Tirmidhī's approach in his short introduction, most of which is a collection of quotations, sources sometimes

## REVIEWS

not cited. In effect, Kan 'an offers the plan of a very interesting study but goes so little beyond a mere plan that one might as well work directly from the *Jāmi'*.

- Christopher Melchert

to make them relevant to the title of the book.

In a long list of works that examined the history of cities (pp.20-22) the authors cite *al-Iḥāṭah fī akhbār Gharnāṭah* of Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb. It would have been useful if they had gone a step further to verify this list to determine which works still exist and whether they have been edited or only exist in manuscript. It would have also been useful if they had updated this list.

The style of descriptive writing used in this book varies from one paragraph to another, because each paragraph is quoted from a different source dealing with one single city. Texts from Ibn Khaldūn are usually enjoyable to read, whereas the text taken from al-Numayrī's (7/14th century) *Fayḍ al-'ubāb*, concerning the city of Afrāq, is extremely dull (pp.75-78). The reader must adjust many times to accommodate different styles of writing, which include *adab*, geographies, travel literature, history, and others. Also, the fonts used are different in size and format. A good example of this is the description of the city of al-Mahillah, which is printed in a smaller font despite the fact that the second page was left almost blank (pp.78-79). The proper rules of Arabic orthography, such as *alif* and *madda*, are not carefully observed (pp.27-28). In addition, some names of cities were not carefully verified, such as Siljimāsah instead of Sijilmāsah (p.30).

Identifying the people and places is another problem that readers face in this book. The authors discuss 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Yujān, a Muwaḥḥid advisor (*wazīr*), for instance, in only two lines (p.83). It would have been better if they had followed suit for each person mentioned in the texts.

The authors depended on early sources, with the exception of two modern works, in collecting their texts. Apart from what they quote from earlier sources, there is no substance to this book. Because of the absence of a conclusion, one finds it difficult to identify the characteristics and the common features of a North African city in the Middle Ages.

The authors deserve credit for

compiling most of the texts in the early sources that deal with the cities of North Africa in the Middle Ages and for classifying them in five major chapters in what is, on the whole, an accurate reproduction.

- Ali Bakr Hassan

'Abd al-Aḥad al-Sabtī and Ḥalimah Farahāt, *al-Madīnah fī al-'uṣūr al-wuṣṭā: qaḍāyā wa-wathā'iq min ta'rīkh al-gharb al-islāmī* [The City in the Middle Ages: Problems and Documents from the History of the Islamic West] (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-'Arabī, 1994). 192 pp.

The subject of this work, as the title shows, is the North African city in the Middle Ages. In general, the study of medieval Islamic cities falls short because this kind of study requires more than one scholar in the fields of history, architecture, archaeology and others in order to examine most of the aspects related to the city and its establishment. Although one cannot determine the scholarly background of the two authors, they direct their readers and those who are interested in this subject to the exact texts in the medieval Arabic sources that deal with North African cities in the Middle Ages.

The authors have compiled a collage of texts from early works and classified them in five major chapters preceded by a brief introduction, ending their work with a bibliography and a table of contents. The five chapters are: first, the planning and problems surrounding the establishment of cities; second, the city and the government; third, some economic aspects; fourth, the social milieu; and fifth, the rise and fall of civilizing the city.

The treatment of each city mentioned in the book is uneven, depending on the amount of literature the authors found in the sources. For that reason the authors dwell greatly on cities such as Fez and Marrakesh, but do not give the same attention to other cities. A descriptive method is followed in this book. The authors never intervene to analyze the texts they found or

Anon., *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa 'l-qiṣaṣ*, facs. ed. Īraj Afshār and Maḥmūd Umidsālār (Tehran: Persian Manuscripts in Facsimile, no.1. In Memory of M. Taqī Bahār, 1379/2000). Fols. 189 + 15 pages.

For his *editio princeps* over sixty years ago of this early Persian general history, Bahār used a Paris ms. of 813/1410. The two editors now give a facsimile of what turns out to be the oldest ms., that of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussische Kulturbesitz Orientabteilung, or.2371, copied in 751/1350. It is good to have a handy facsimile text like this, even if it does not seem to add much of significance to the Paris ms. However, some information on the author can be deduced from certain statements within the book. Parvīz Azkā'ī has plausibly assigned to him the name of "Ibn Shādī," with an origin from the Hamadān region; and it appears that the author continued to work on the text after the date of composition normally assigned to it, i.e. 529/1126, possibly up to 535/1131, the date of the Great Seljuq Sultan Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad's death.

- C. Edmund Bosworth

Abū 'l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī, *al-Āthār al-bāqiya 'an al-qurūn al-khāliya*, ed. Parvīz Azkā'ī (Tehran: Mirās-e Maktūb, 2001). 902 pages.

When Sachau produced the first critical edition of this seminal work a cen-

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ture and a quarter ago, the oldest ms. at his disposal was an 11th/17th century one. Since then other, earlier mss. have turned up, including an Istanbul Umûmi one from 603/1206 and the Edinburgh one of 706/1307, famed for its fine miniatures and probably, in Azkâ'i's surmise, intended for the Rab'-i Rashîdî library at Tabriz. Various scholars have brought additions and improvements to Sachau's text, such

as those of K. Garbers and J. Fück in *Documenta islamica inedita*, Berlin 1952, 45-89. Now this new edition, based on three early mss. and incorporating subsequent improvements by scholars, has appeared from Tehran, comprising an edited text; very lengthy notes, those by Sachau plus new ones by Azkâ'i; and seven useful indices.

It is worth making the general

comment that the standard of book production in Iran -- typography, paper quality, binding, etc. -- has improved vastly during the last three or four decades; the two books reviewed above are handsome volumes and represent creditable achievements by both authors and publishers.

- C. Edmund Bosworth

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## GRAPHICS CREDITS

Page 2, Fig. 1: Photo from Delougaz and Haines, *A Byzantine Church at Khirbet al-Karak* (1960), pl. 41.9.

Pages 3, Figs. 2: Map by the author.

Page 4, Fig. 3: Photo from R. Reich, "The Beth Yerah 'Synagogue' Reconsidered," *'Atiqot* 22 (1993), 139-144.

Page 5, Fig. 4: Map by the author.

Page 6, Fig. 5: Figure by the author.

Page 8, Fig. 1: Photo from R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (New York, 1994), p.98.

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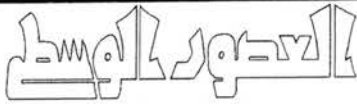
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