



ASK Working Paper 23

Kate Raphael

**Mosques east and west of
the Jordan Valley: from the
Arab conquest to the end of
the Mamluk period**

ASK Working Paper, ISSN 2193-925X
Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg
History and Society during the
Mamluk Era (1250-1517)
Heussallee 18-24
53113 Bonn
Editor: Stephan Conermann

Author's address

Kate Raphael

Annemarie-Schimmel-Kolleg
“History and Society during the Mamluk Era, 1250-1517”
Heussallee 18-24
53113 Bonn
Phone: 0228/7362941
Fax: 0228/7362964
Website: www.mamluk.uni-bonn.de
Email: kate.raaphael@mail.huji.ac.il

Mosques east and west of the Jordan Valley: from the Arab conquest to the end of the Mamluk period

by Kate Raphael

Kate Raphael received her PhD in Medieval Archaeology of the Middle East from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2008. She is an independent archaeologist.

Fields of research: Environmental disasters, earthquakes and archaeology, the development and spatial distribution of mosques, Muslim fortifications. Her recent publications include:

- "Mongol siege warfare on the Euphrates and the question of gunpowder," *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* 25/3 (2009), pp. 355-370.
- *Muslim Fortresses in the Levant: between Crusaders and Mongols*. Routledge, London 2010.
- *Climate and Political Climate Environmental Disasters in the Medieval Levant*. Brill, Leiden and Boston 2013.
- *Azdud (Ashdod-Yam): An Early Islamic Fortress on the Mediterranean Coast*. (BAR International Series 2673) Oxford, Archeopress 2014.

Abstract	1
Introduction	2
<i>Some differences of opinion</i>	2
<i>Previous works</i>	6
<i>Methodology of research and preliminary problems</i>	7
<i>Geography, chronology and mapping</i>	8
Mosque construction under the first Caliphs, the Umayyads and ‘Abbāsids	9
<i>The spatial distribution of mosques 7th-late 9th centuries</i>	13
From Sunnī to Shī‘a rule: the distribution of mosques in the late 10th-11th centuries	17
<i>The Crusader threshold</i>	20
The distribution of mosques in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods	20
<i>The construction of mosques in relation to Jewish and Christian sacred sites</i>	24
<i>Whose responsibility was it?</i>	25
<i>Growth and/or change in the Mamluk period</i>	27
Some Preliminary Conclusion	31
Bibliography	35

Fig. 1: Mosques built from the 7 th - late 9 th centuries	13
Fig. 2: Mosques built from the late 9 th to the 11 th century	17
Fig. 3: Pace of mosque building during the Ayyubid and Mamluk period	23
Fig. 4: Mosques built before the fall of the Crusader Kingdom and after	24
Fig. 5: The relation between mosques and ancient sacred sites in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods	25
Fig. 6: Mosques built prior and during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods	26
Fig. 7: The distribution of mosques during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods	28
Fig. 8: Number of mosques built before and after the plague late 12 th –early 16 th c.	30
Fig. 9: Number of mosques built in each period	32

Abstract

As an institution that fulfilled both religious and civil functions, the mosque facilitated the establishment of Muslim rule and played an essential role in the consolidation and construction of the identity of the new emerging Muslim society. The aims of this research are twofold: the first is to record the mosques that were built throughout the region. The second aim of this project is to try and follow the pace of Islamization from the Arab conquest (638CE) up until the end of the Mamluk period (1517CE), by examining the spatial distribution of mosques in the region of what are today the modern states of Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

By recording the mosques built over the period under discussion and examining them in the wider historical frame one may well be able to provide a better picture of what might have occurred in this region. The corpus of mosques (which does not form part of this publication) is drawn from historical sources, the large body of inscriptions that commemorate the construction and/or repairs of mosques, and archaeological excavations and surveys.

The following is a preliminary analysis of this data. It is important to stress here that this work is still in progress and that the database may grow and the picture presented here may well change.

Introduction

Few would argue against or dismiss the relation between a community's house of prayer and the development and growth of a religion in a given region. As an institution that fulfilled both religious and civil functions the mosque facilitated the establishment of Muslim rule and played an essential role in the consolidation and construction of the identity of the new emerging Muslim society. The aims of this research are thus twofold, the first is to record the mosques that were built throughout the region, examine their architectural evolution, decorations and symbols that represent a long and important part of local culture and history. Following the completion of the first part of this project, the second aim is to try and follow the pace of Islamization from the Arab conquest (638 CE) up until the end of the Mamluk period (1517 CE), by examining the spatial distribution of mosques in the region of what are today the modern states of Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

Islamization and conversion are not a one sided act. Whether one person is involved or a homogeneous group, the circle influenced by this change in religion is diverse and wide. The profession of faith in Islam, the recitation of the *shahāda* (declaration of faith) represents the beginning of a process of transformation, rather than its conclusion,¹ the building of a mosque, suggests the population in its immediate surroundings and perhaps in the larger radios had formed a community which adheres to the Muslim faith. Mapping the mosques in this region, would thus give a better idea of the development of the Muslim communities. The assumption being that the construction of a mosque outside the old and traditional religious centres of the land indicates change in the religious make-up of the population. The construction of the mosque in Jerusalem and conversion of the church into a mosque at Hebron formally sealed the Muslim conquest, and asserted the new Muslim rule by taking responsibility and becoming the official patrons of the two most sacred sites in the region. There is little dispute concerning their symbolic and political role. However, the grandeur of the large mosques and monuments has to a certain degree obscured the existence of village and small neighborhood mosques, which are harder to find, but play an equally important role. It is the latter which were imperative centres of popular Islam and delineate the spread and the increase in the number of its believers. The Aqṣā mosque, the Dome of the Rock, the Great Mosque of Damascus and the congregation mosques in Ramla clearly represent fundamental steps in state building, informing the public of the new religion of its rulers; every Muslim ruler saw himself as personally responsible for these monuments. Throughout most of this period rural mosques and local communities developed independently of the state and independently of the Muslim elites and leadership.² In general they carry fewer symbols of authority and their architecture seldom incorporates the trademarks of the state built monuments. They are modest multi-functional buildings, which are not meant to overwhelm the public. Evidence of wide state investment in village and small town mosques will arrive at a considerably later period.

Some differences of opinion

Scholars are clearly aware of the meagre source material concerning conversion and Islamization, and the difficulties of quantifying both the number of Muslims who settled in

¹ Hermansen, "Conversion to Islam", 634 and 669; Kaplan, "Themes and methods," 376, 380.

² Lehmann, "Architecture," 146.

the region and the numbers among the local population who converted to Islam. While the early Muslim sources are generally regarded as challenging because they were compiled at a considerably later period than the events they describe, even the rich Ayyubid and Mamluk works reveal precious little information on the religious composition of the population in the region under discussion. Nevertheless regarding the Islamization of this region there is a firm consensus that it was a long and slow process. Although the area witnessed several important turning points, the fall of the Umayyads, the rise of the ‘Abbāsids and the arrival of the Fatimids, the dispute among scholars focuses on the composition of the population in two block periods: before and after the Crusades. In most studies the Crusader Kingdom marks a threshold. The period between the seventh and the end of the sixteenth century is divided into two: from the Arab conquest to the first Crusade (1099CE), the second phase covers the fall of the Crusader Kingdom (1291CE) up until the end of the Mamluk Sultanate. The various arguments concerning the geography and pace Islamization are displayed here in the chronological order of their publication.

In a short article published in 1972, Hitti wrote: “In Syria, using the term in its broad geographical sense to include Lebanon and Palestine, the Christian minorities must have in their totality amounted to a majority of the population. The urban population was largely Muslim.”³ Hitti, and the many scholars who followed him, seldom provided their readers with the chain of events and/or a concrete amount of evidence, which led them to their conclusions. Prawer, who largely focused on the history of the Crusader Kingdom, stated that Muslims formed the majority in the region south of Lebanon.⁴ In his book *Jews and Islam*, Bernard Lewis emphasized “The rate and scale of conversion are difficult to assess from the available evidence, and some scholars have argued that as late as the Crusades, non-Muslims still constituted a majority of the population. It is clear however, that large numbers of Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians adopted the Muslim religion and became part of the Islamic society.”⁵ Levtzion, who dedicated a large part of his research to the subject of conversion to Islam in a wide geography, arrived at slightly different conclusions. When examining the region of the Fertile Crescent in the medieval period, he emphasized the role of the nomadic tribes as agents of Islam in both the early and the later periods. It is they, who contributed most to Islamization and Arabization of the newly conquered territories. Many of the decedents of the beduins who entered Palestine between the ninth and the eleventh centuries might have been assimilated among the local peasantry. According to Levtzion, in the first centuries of Muslim rule, unlike some of the Arab tribes in the Arabian Peninsula who accepted Islam collectively,⁶ in the Fertile Crescent Islamization was largely a process of individual conversions.⁷ Conversion of the local population was not the main issue or an obligation of the new conquerors; Muslim rulers neither encouraged nor discouraged conversion.⁸ Levtzion based part of his argument on Islamic law. Since the *sharī‘a* recognizes the sever existence of a non-Muslim population within the Muslim state, a military conquest was not, necessarily,

³ Hitti, “Impact,” 212.

⁴ Prawer, *History*, 404-405.

⁵ Lewis, *Jews of Islam*, 16-17.

⁶ Shaban, “Conversion,” 26; Levtzion, “Conversions,” 298.

⁷ Levtzion, “Comparative study,” 20; Levtzion, “Conversions,” 289, 302.

⁸ Shaban, “Conversion,” 28.

followed by widespread conversion.⁹ In the 1990s Levtzion published a more cautious conclusion: “In southern Syria and Palestine the Christian population became scantier except in Lebanon and the towns close to the Christian holy places like Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and villages in their vicinity.”¹⁰

Kedar’s conclusions were similar to those reached by Prawer, “The Muslim subjects of the Franks, who constituted a major component of the Kingdom’s population and perhaps even formed its majority...”¹¹ Kedar based his work on two different contemporary sources. The first dates to the second decade of Frankish rule: “Eager to enlarge the sparse population of his capital, King Baldwin I (r. 1100-1118 CE) in about 1115 arranged a migration of Christian peasants from Transjordan to Jerusalem.”¹² The second source dates to the second half of the twelfth century: “When King Thoros of Armenia visited the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the mid 1160s, he was shocked to see that the country was full of Muslim villages, and proposed therefore that King Amalric of Jerusalem oust the Saracen peasants of his realm and supplant them with 30,000 dependable Armenian warriors, who would come with their families to settle and defend the country. The scheme fell through because the Frankish clergy insisted that the Armenian peasants pay tithes, from which the Muslim peasants were exempted.”¹³

According to Haldon “The final Islamization of Syria and Palestine does not seem to have had a great deal of success before the later ninth and tenth centuries.”¹⁴ Dajani-Shakeel, basing part of her argument on Ibn Jubayr who describes the composition of the population in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1184 CE, wrote: “The majority of the population remained Muslim, since many of the original inhabitants chose to return to their habitats on securing safe conduct from the Latin authorities. Some new Muslim commercial communities also settled in coastal trading centres, especially in Acre, while others stayed temporarily in these ports during certain seasons. As far as the rural areas, Muslims were concentrated in villages between Hebron and Bethlehem the Galilee valley and in villages between Jerusalem and Nablus. Ibn Jubayr points out that, although all the coastal cities between Antioch and Asqalon were inhabited by *ifranj* (Franks), their hinterland was populated mainly by Muslims.”¹⁵ Gil, who examined the tenth and eleventh centuries in his monumental work *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, concluded: “There is no reason to assume that the proportions in the structure of the population varied drastically in the period in question, although it is very likely that the population diminished. In other words, one should not assume that the Muslims were the majority during this period. Al-İṣṭakhrī mentions in 951 CE that in all of *Jund Filasṭīn* there were approximately twenty mosques, as against sixty Christian houses of worship at the beginning of the century.”¹⁶ According to Gil, rural Palestine was dominated

⁹ Levtzion, “Comparative study,” 9-10.

¹⁰ Levtzion, “Conversions,” 290.

¹¹ Kedar, “Some new sources,” 129-140.

¹² Kedar, “Latin and Oriental Christians,” 213.

¹³ Kedar, “Latin and Oriental Christians,” 212. The source referring to the Armenian King’s visit is: *Chronique d’Ernoult et de Bernard le Trésorier*. Ed. M. L. de Mas Latrie (Paris, 1871), 28-29. Sited in Kedar, “Latin and Oriental Christian,” 212 n. 16.

¹⁴ Haldon, “Works of Anastasius,” 129.

¹⁵ Dajani-Shakeel, “Natives and Franks,” 171.

¹⁶ Gil, *History*, 170.

by a Christian majority.¹⁷ Courbage and Fargues proposed that by the Crusader period “Muslims ... formed a small majority in Syria and Palestine.”¹⁸ Their approach and phrasing was more moderate and balanced: “Islam spread at different speeds and in different ways according to a complex of circumstances: some groups adopted it from the beginning, while others – either in whole or in part – maintained their old beliefs for several centuries.”¹⁹ Courbage and Fargues state that “Over Syria as a whole a Christian majority remained until the end of the third century of the *hijra*.”²⁰ Milka Levy-Rubin concluded that there is no substantial evidence for large waves of conversion among the Christian communities.²¹ The Samaritan community in Nablus and its surrounding area during the ninth century is the only detailed case of mass conversion that has come down to us. The evidence in the *Continuatio* recorded by the Samaritan chronicler Abū l-Faṭḥ shows that mass conversion did occur and was a direct result of popular strong local rulers who threatened and terrorized the community and the official policy of the central ruler that imposed restrictions that forced a large percentage of the Samaritan community to convert.²²

Relatively few archaeologists entered this debate. Dennis Pringle provides a short and interesting overview of churches and church building after the Muslim conquest. “In the first century of Muslim rule (629-750 CE), the surviving Christian communities, who in Palestine consisted mostly of Orthodox Melchites but also included some Syrian Jacobites, Armenians and Copts, continued to repair existing churches and to build new ones in much the same way as in the preceding two centuries. The restrictions imposed by the authorities on the construction of new churches, however the decline in the number of Christians as a result of flight or of conversions to Islam and the depressed social and economic status of many members of the subject communities (*dhimmī*) meant that new buildings tended to be few in number, small unostentatious and often crudely built and decorated. Churches built soon after the Muslim conquest includes small single-celled buildings with semi-circular apses and with or without narthexes and other adjoining rooms.”²³ Northedge who’s studies focused on Jordan in general and the region of ‘Ammān in particular wrote: “Although there was no doubt a much higher percentage of Muslim Arabs in Jordan during the Umayyad period than in some other parts of the Middle East, it seems unlikely that they constituted a majority of the population with the possible exception of ‘Ammān itself. It is the size and distribution of Umayyad mosques, in comparison with the continued use, redecoration with new mosaics, or new construction of churches, which will prove the most useful indicator on this question.”²⁴ Although Avni’s archaeological study on the period of Byzantine-Islamic transition did not focus on Islamization, he devotes parts of it to this subject. Many of the settlements description include mosques and the work is accompanied by several plans and maps that display synagogues, churches and mosques found in surveys and excavations. He sums his research as follows: “In what way do the archaeological findings contribute to our

¹⁷ Gil, *History*, 139-171, 170.

¹⁸ Courbage, Fargues, *Christians and Jews*, 44.

¹⁹ Courbage, Fargues, *Christians and Jews*, 6. For a detailed survey see Courbage and Fargues: Chapter 1. The Installation of Islam in the Arab East, 1-28.

²⁰ Courbage, Fargues, *Christians and Jews*, 12.

²¹ Levi-Rubin, “New evidence,” 262.

²² Levi-Rubin, “New evidence,” 265-267.

²³ Pringle, “Church building,” 6.

²⁴ Northedge, “History,” 52

understanding of the change in the religious affiliation during this time, the creeping Islamization and the relations between the religious communities?the transition from a predominantly Christian society, as manifested in government and religious institutions to a multicultural society under Muslim rule was a gradual one. Throughout the period, Christians were the majority population group in both cities and villages. The penetration of Islam was slow, and mainly expressed in government elites...”²⁵

This survey has by no means exhausted the works written on conversion and Islamization in this region. The argument concerning the religious make up of the population took various turns; however, the last quote in this survey matches several of earlier conclusions. The almost complete silence of the historical accounts has turned it into an intriguing and challenging issue.

The disciplines of history and archaeology do not call for clear cut answers or final conclusions. Multiplicity of views is the essence of the development of sound research in these fields, which are constantly fuelled by new excavations and new historical sources that change, refute or strengthen ongoing discussions and arguments.

The following research exploits and combines material from several disciplines in order to broaden the base of information for this discussion. At this stage of the research I have not yet found a suitable existing theoretical model that can be applied and have not developed one of my own. By recording the mosques built over the period under discussion and examining them in the wider historical frame one may well be able to provide a better picture of what might have occurred in this region.

The only other study, I have encountered, which took into account the construction and distribution of mosques as a measure of conversion and the spread of Islam was conducted in Bengal. A short paragraph and table published by Richard M. Eaton shows the number of mosques built in Bengal between 1200 and 1800 according to inscriptions commemorating their construction.²⁶

Previous works

While there are numerous works that focus on a particular mosque and examine in detail its architecture and history, there are relatively few studies that have looked at the distribution of mosques throughout region. Milka Levy-Rubin had recorded and mapped the mosques according to the Early Arabic sources when she researched the pattern of settlement in Palestine after the conquest.²⁷ Daniella Talmon-Heller’s work on *Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn* (569/1173-643/1245) includes a map of the mosques mentioned in the text, and several other Ayyubid mosques recorded in inscriptions published by Moshe Sharon. Her work focuses on the region of Nablus.²⁸ Among the archaeologist the earliest study dedicated to village and small town mosques was conducted and published by Ghawānimah, who surveyed and wrote a detailed architectural analysis of the mosques in the region of ‘Ajlūn. Ghawānimah’s work incorporated both the historical sources and the inscriptions.²⁹ Avni focused on the open-air

²⁵ Avni, *Byzantine-Islamic Transition*, 351-352.

²⁶ Eaton, “Approaches,” 114-115.

²⁷ Levy-Rubin, “Influence,” 53-78.

²⁸ Talmon-Heller, “Cited tales,” 111-154; Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety*.

²⁹ Ghawānimah, *al-Masājīd*.

mosques in the Negev Highland which he surveyed and mapped; a number of sites were also excavated. As mentioned above, his recent book includes the early mosques (up until the eleventh century) revealed in archaeological excavations and surveys throughout the region.³⁰ In 2002 MacKenzie published his own survey of Mamluk mosques in the villages of the 'Ajlūn area.³¹ The Mamluk village mosques of northern Jordan were studied as part of the Northern Jordan Project led by Walker and Kenney. The mosque at Hubras was excavated as part of this project. Here too, the historical sources, *waqf* documents and inscriptions were fully utilized in order to get a better understanding of the rural setting.³²

Methodology of research and preliminary problems

The corpus of mosques is drawn from historical sources, the large body of inscriptions that commemorate the construction and/or repairs of mosques, and archaeological excavations and surveys. The written historical sources consist of: Muslim geographers, chroniclers, biographical dictionaries, travelers' and pilgrims' accounts. The latter include works written by Muslims, Jews and Christians who each viewed the mosques they had seen in a different manner. A large number of mosques were revealed on both sides of the Jordan Valley in archaeological excavations and surveys. The wealth and variety of this material is astonishing. It is this material that forms that backbone of the corpus and allows the reconstruction of the small town and village mosques, their development throughout this period and their importance and role in the life of the community. Their size and plan, their location within the settlement, the materials they were built from and the level and quality of the construction divulge a substantial amount of information about the people who prayed in them.

Whether they are simple graffiti or intricate works of art, information carved in stone is a most intriguing type of source for facts about mosques. The large corpus of inscriptions recorded, studied and published since the nineteenth century is a valuable and rich source. Many of the mosques commemorated in these inscriptions are no longer standing. Some inscriptions have been recycled and used as building materials, inserted in different structures or newer mosques, creating no small measure of confusion. Obviously one first searches for the date of the mosques' construction and the name of its founder; however even if these two pieces of information are missing, there is still a surprising amount of information stored in these inscriptions. The size of the inscription, the quality of the writing, the vocabulary and phrasing, the choice of Qur'ānic quotes or their absence all contribute to our knowledge on the building, the social and economic standing of the community and the person who funded it. By using all the above, one should be able to retrieve evidence for both existing mosques and their history as well as mosques that have long since vanished leaving little or no trace on the ground. Some mosques have an almost complete record which consists of a detailed architectural and historical account, the mosque's location and ground plan, the names of the patron, the people who attended the mosque, those who led the prayer as well as the learned members of the community who taught within its walls; where possible plans and photographs were added. There are, however, many entries in the database where a large amount of information is missing, and reconstructing the building's history and form is no

³⁰ Avni, "Early mosques," 83-99; Avni, "From standing stones," 124-138; Avni, "The invisible conquest," 29-42; Avni, "Continuity and change," 115-133; Avni, *Byzantine-Islamic Transition*.

³¹ MacKenzie, "Ayyubid/Mamluk archaeology," 615-620.

³² Walker, Kenney et al. "Village life" 429-470; Walker, *Jordan*.

longer a feasible task. The basic assumption that guides this research is that every mosque was built in order to fulfil the immediate needs of a specific community.³³

Geography, chronology and mapping

When the project first begun, the area of study stretched between the Jordan Valley and the Mediterranean, correlating to what is today The Palestinian Authority and Israel. The main condition was that I could walk the grounds of the region and the sites I was researching. It soon became clear that this would create a very fragmented and distorted picture, mainly due to the fact that throughout all the periods which this study is concerned with the Jordan River never marked a frontier or a border of any type and kind. The Biblical geographical term עבר הירדן (Hebrew: Ever Hayarden i.e. Transjordan) was translated and used once again by the Frankish chroniclers (French: Oultrejordain) it was never adapted by Arabic chroniclers or the modern Arabic language. Thus my project crossed the Jordan River, incorporating the ancient mosques in the region of the modern state of Jordan.

At a relatively early stage of this work, my curiosity got the better of me and when the database had 180 mosques, I decided to have three preliminary maps made. This provided a more accurate idea as to the spatial distribution of the mosques and allowed a first look at how these buildings fit in the greater scheme of the political, military, social and economic events that occurred in the region. Finding the right balance and not crowding the map with information, making sure it is legible, accurate and user friendly, deciding how to break up the time line and what periods the maps should reflect was an interesting exercise. There is a certain manipulative element that one should be aware of when moving into the process of mapping data. Producing a map is in more than one way a tool that measures a researcher's integrity.

The division of the time line was eventually settled. Although the Muslim rule from the Arab conquest (638CE) to the Crusader conquest (1099CE) was continual, this period could not be treated as one solid unit. Thus the first map shows the mosques constructed during the reign of the first four caliphs, the Umayyad and 'Abbāsid rule; from the 7th to the early 10th century. The mosques of the late 10th up until the end of the Fatimid period/Crusader conquest (1099) deserved a map of their own. The third map shows the mosques from the late 12th century to the end of the Mamluk Sultanate,³⁴ when the region once again came under a long uninterrupted period of Muslim rule. There is a fourth map that will show the mosques maintained by the Muslim population, which remained under Frankish rule. The data for this fourth map is still being collected.

The database currently has 242 mosques. Some site names mentioned in the sources could not be identified and in some cases there is still a question mark regarding the building's identification as a mosque. The coming pages are a preliminary analysis of this data; they do not include plans of mosques or an architectural overview. It is important to stress here that this work is still in progress and that the database may grow and the picture may well change.

³³ Schick, *Christian Communities*, 145; Flood, *Great Mosque*, 184.

³⁴ The three preliminary maps were produced by Prof. Geoffrey King, Institute de Physique du Globe, Paris, France. I would like to thank him for his patience, time and terrific hospitality.

Mosque construction under the first Caliphs, the Umayyads and 'Abbāsids

The last and final century of Byzantine rule has drawn considerable archaeological and historical research. Evidence gathered from excavations, contemporary Christian and the earliest Arab written accounts provides an intriguing and complex picture of this period of transition from Byzantine rule, over a varied yet dominant Christian population to Muslim rule over a population that its composition was slowly going to change until Muslim sovereigns were to govern a society which was predominantly Muslim.³⁵

On the eve of the Muslim conquest, the region was densely populated, combining large urban centres, small towns and numerous villages. The Byzantine period is considered by many researchers as “a period of unprecedented rural prosperity.... the number of sites occupied reached a pre-modern maximum.”³⁶ While Jerusalem became the religious focal point of the Province of Palaestina Prima and had already established itself as the most sacred city of the Christian world, Caesarea, located almost in the centre of the coastal plain served as the administrative capital of the province; Beth Shean, located in the northern Jordan Valley, served as the capital of Palaestina Secunda.³⁷

The semi autonomous Arab confederates, such as the Ghassanids, were incorporated into the regional Byzantine rule and administration. In several areas they replaced the Byzantine armies along the southern frontiers of Syria and contributed to the stability and economy of the region.³⁸ Although certain parts of the region's terrain and climate are inhospitable and difficult, a good network of roads connected the central and more remote regions.³⁹ The many natural harbours along the Mediterranean coast allowed the province to maintain strong political, commercial and cultural ties with the capital of the Byzantine Empire and other provinces. While Greek was the dominant written language of administrators and among the urban elites, large sections of the population even in the towns did not speak it, and the rural population hardly spoke it at all.⁴⁰

Alongside the Byzantine provincial governors, the church played an important part in the urban culture, economy and administration. During the sixth century a large part of the urban bureaucracy was done by bishops and local clergymen. Churches dominated most urban centres, many sacred Christian sites and most villages had their own church.⁴¹

Epigraphic data shows that during the second half of the sixth century most of the construction projects were of religious buildings.⁴² Administrative capitals as well as towns well off the beaten pilgrimage roads often boasted a number of churches attesting to the large urban population of the province, its wealth, its strong religious identity and the economic

³⁵ Kaegi, “Initial Byzantine reactions,” 139-140; Elad, “The coastal cities,” 156-178; Elad, “Arsuf,” 289-301; Gil, “The History of Eretz Israel,” 58-62; Schick, *Christian Communities*; Levi-Rubin, “New evidence,” 257-276; Levi-Rubin, “Influence,” 53-78; Shas, “Face to face encounter,” 33-44; Lassner, *Jews*; Avni, “Continuity and change,” 115-133; Levi-Rubin, *Non-Muslims*; Avni, *Byzantine-Islamic Transition*.

³⁶ Johns, “The long durée,” 4.

³⁷ Dan, “Byzantine Rule”; Holum, “Caesarea Palaestinae,” 11-31.

³⁸ Johns, “The long durée,” 7.

³⁹ Ward-Perkins, “Specialisation,” 167-178; Walmsley, “Pella,” 137, fig. 2.

⁴⁰ Di Segni, “Greek inscriptions,” 353-354, n. 3.

⁴¹ Bar, “Christianisation,” 401-403, 406-410, 420.

⁴² Ovadiah, *Curpus*, 188; Armstrong, “Imperial church building and church-state relations,” 3-17; Armstrong, “Imperial church building in the Holy Land,” 90-102; Di Segni, “Epigraphic evidence,” 164.

and political authority the church had gained. Urban prosperity of the late Byzantine period was partially due to the presence of a large and wealthy church hierarchy and state bureaucracy that helped maintain the urban economy.

By the seventh century the traditional layout of the Classical Roman towns in the East had long disappeared. The physical changes in the late Byzantine towns clearly reflected social and religious changes in the region's population.⁴³ The neat geometric layout of wide streets and the clear division between public and private space, industrial, commercial and domestic zones were often replaced by a less rigid architectural style and urban plan.⁴⁴ Concerning public space, the mosque may by all means be considered as providing a new well defined public area, albeit it served a particular segment of the urban population.⁴⁵ The most intriguing change can perhaps be seen in the scale of building. Pedestrians were no longer dwarfed by the urban monuments they walked by. Urban architecture "dropped" to a human level. This latter point is worth emphasizing since many of the first mosques constructed in these towns tended to merge into the urban landscape rather than dominate it.

This homogeneous picture of population growth, thriving markets and agricultural prosperity in the late Byzantine period, is pierced with pockets where archaeologists have revealed partial but significant evidence of decline and abandonment that are dated to the end of the Byzantine period. It is somewhat surprising that this evidence was retrieved from the coast.⁴⁶ Northedge's survey of the region surrounding 'Ammān suggests depopulation of the rural area in the centuries following the Arab conquest. Regarding the towns she found little evidence of their increase.⁴⁷

Before looking at the Arab Muslim conquest, it is important to bear in mind Johns' conclusion which gives a sound measure of advice to anyone who is working on any aspect of the history and material culture of this region: "...the Byzantine boom, which saw the densest occupation and the highest prosperity of the countryside in any period before the present, was altogether exceptional, whatever its causes. It would therefore be wholly misleading to take the Byzantine boom as a standard against which to measure rural demography, prosperity and settlement during the Islamic centuries."⁴⁸

While archaeological excavations do not reveal severe layers of destruction, suggesting the Arab conquerors did not torch and destroy the region, a number of contemporary Christian sources describe a violent military campaign, loss of lives and damage to churches, private and public property.⁴⁹ It is difficult to find a method that will provide an accurate and balanced picture. By 638 CE, the Arab forces had conquered most of the four Byzantine provinces: Palaestina Prima, Secunda Tertia and Arabia; the conquest of

⁴³ Walmsley, "Byzantine," 138, 148-149.

⁴⁴ The theater at Caesarea was incorporated in the Byzantine fort, while the theater at Beth Shean had residential quarters and pottery workshops built upon it. Kennedy, "From polis to medina," 4-13; Haldon, "Greater Syria," 7-8; Holum, "Caesarea Palaestinae," 28; Walmsley, "Byzantine," 130-131, 141; Carver, "Transition to Islam," 188-189, 195; Di Segni, "Epigraphic evidence," 148, 158; Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria*, 34-45; Walmsley, "Pella," 137-139, 142-144, 152.

⁴⁵ Walmsley, "Pella," 145.

⁴⁶ This point is referred to in greater detail below.

⁴⁷ Northedge, "History," 50.

⁴⁸ Johns, "The long durée," 7.

⁴⁹ Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria*, 45-47.

the coastal regions was completed during the early 640s.⁵⁰ Towns that submitted fared better than those who did not and commanders who had a firm control over their forces managed to reduce the level of violence and destruction.⁵¹ In towns that surrendered, the Christian population was allowed to leave with their possessions. It is important to emphasize that although some of the Christian population fled, none of the settlements were completely demolished by the Arab conquerors or entirely deserted by their local inhabitants.⁵²

As is often the case, the new rulers enforced new taxes on the subjects. Thus the *jizya* (poll tax) was paid by the non-Muslim population, in return the new Muslim rulers were to guarantee protection and safety to the communities and their property (Private and public, civil and religious buildings).⁵³ Throughout the early decades of Muslim rule and during most of the Umayyad period the Christian communities that remained, maintained a relatively high level of religious, social and economical freedom. The independence of Christian leaders, and especially their bishops was only curbed in the last decades of the eighth century when the caliph 'Abd al-Malik conducted a number of reforms to centralize and strengthen the Umayyad rule and restrict the influence of the local elites.⁵⁴

In general there appears to be consensus among most researchers concerning the continuity of regional economy, agricultural prosperity, markets and trade. According to Walmsley, the Umayyads' success in consolidating their rule over Syria, Palestine and Jordan, within a relatively short space of time, was due to continuity in the monetary economy, production and trade which insured Muslim domination.⁵⁵

While for the Orthodox churches (monophysites) the arrival of Muslim rule brought considerable improvement,⁵⁶ the conquest of Palestine was seen by the Emperor, the Byzantine clergy and the people as nothing short of a disaster, a punishment sent by God for their sins – the heresy of Monotheletism.⁵⁷ The conquest of Jerusalem and other sacred Christian sites was seen as a religious disgrace and a spiritual defeat.⁵⁸

Although Palestine was conquered from the Byzantines with relative ease, fear of a Byzantine re-conquest remained for the next two centuries. After the Arab conquest was completed, the status of the coast changed considerably, the latter became the main frontier between the Muslims territories and the Byzantines Empire.

The region, which correlates today with modern Jordan, Israel, The Palestinian Authority, southern Lebanon and part of southern Syria, was divided into three separate administrative units: Jund Filastīn and Jund al-Urdun and Jund al-Dimashq. Able loyal men were selected and nominated governors. A defence system was constructed along the coast

⁵⁰ Kaegi, *Byzantium*, 67, 82-85; Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquest*, 102-8, 247-250; Johns, "The long durée," 9.

⁵¹ Donner, "Centralized authority," 350-360.

⁵² The migration of the Christian population is analyzed in great detail Levy-Rubin, "Influence," 53-78.

⁵³ Griffith, *Church*, 16; Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims*, 42.

⁵⁴ Wood, "Christians," 28-29.

⁵⁵ Cahen, "Djizya," 559-562; Walmsley, "Economic developments," 329, 393, 345, 349, 352.

⁵⁶ Griffith, *Church*, 27-28. This view is examined and questioned by Wood, "Christians," 24-25.

⁵⁷ Griffith, "Answer," 279; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 53, 67-73, 77-78; Lewis, *Jews of Islam*, 18; Levtzion, "Conversions," 302-304; Humphreys tends to depict a somewhat less extreme picture of the fate of the Christian communities and their churches. Humphreys, "Christian Communities," 49, 55; Haldon, "Works of Anastasius," 115-116, 136.

⁵⁸ Haldon, *Byzantium*, 42-3; Pryor, Jeffreys, *Age*, 24; Dan, "Byzantine Rule," 258; Butler, *Arab Conquest*.

which was raided and attacked by the Byzantine fleet,⁵⁹ and the capital was moved from the shore inland and eventually established in the newly built town of Ramla. During the early years after the Muslim conquest, Mu'āwiya b. Sufyān, the governor of Syria, encouraged his soldiers and officers to settle along the coast of Syria and Palestine. This policy of resettling the region with loyal population continued all through the Umayyad period and after.⁶⁰

The impression one gets is that securing the newly conquered territories, insuring the continuity of its agricultural production, trade and general economic stability was of greater importance than displaying Muslim victory by the construction of mosques. This impression is, however, somewhat misleading. Though the population may have remained largely Christian for a considerable length of time after the Muslim conquest, mosques were introduced into this landscape not gradually, but rather immediately. This is supported not only by examining the distribution of mosques found in excavations and mentioned in the early Arabic sources, but also by the important fact that the architectural concept of the mosque development within a relatively short space of time. According to Johns, the architectural template was formed soon after the *hijra*.⁶¹ Aside from the mosques constructed in Jerusalem and Hebron, the ancient sacred centres,⁶² mosques were built throughout the region in the new military and administrative centres as well as in towns and villages that were not related or directly connected to the Muslim administration.

In addition to serving as a house of prayer, mosques played an almost essential role in the social organization, and cultural formation of Muslim communities. Thus the development of Muslim identity and the growth of the Muslim communities depended, to a large extent, on the construction of mosques. The declaration of the name of the ruler in the Friday sermon, which later became part of a familiar political ritual, and the utilization of the mosques' space for religious and political gatherings helped to consolidate both their religious and political identity. The Umayyad and Early 'Abbāsid caliphs' rule over the Muslim population and their hold in the Junds, which are the focus of this study, was partially established via the large urban congregation mosques as well as the simple rural mosques in the more arid and isolated parts of this region.

Given that the plan and layout of the urban centres had changed long before the Muslim conquest, the construction of mosques was the clearest and most significant change introduced into the urban setting and rural landscape. They did not form an alien authority and their visual expression was not altogether foreign to the architecture the region was familiar with. Beyond their official role as a place of prayer, mosques fulfilled a large number of fundamental civil functions. It seems that in many ways the constructors of the first mosques were clearly aware of these essential needs that could take place in a single building. Thus mosques were built as a result of a complex system of considerations that served both the central régime, the local community and individuals. Prior to the establishment of the *madrasahs*, court houses and khans, mosques accommodated religious learning, scholarly gatherings, offered a roof for travellers, judicial affairs, political meetings and official ceremonies.⁶³ While most of the activity within the mosque related to and influenced only

⁵⁹ Elad, "Coastal cities," 157.

⁶⁰ Fahmy, *Muslim Sea Power*, 51-53; Elad, "Coastal cities," 161, n. 26.

⁶¹ Johns, "House of the Prophet," 109.

⁶² Elad, "'Abd al-Malik," 33-58; Griffith, *Church*, 25.

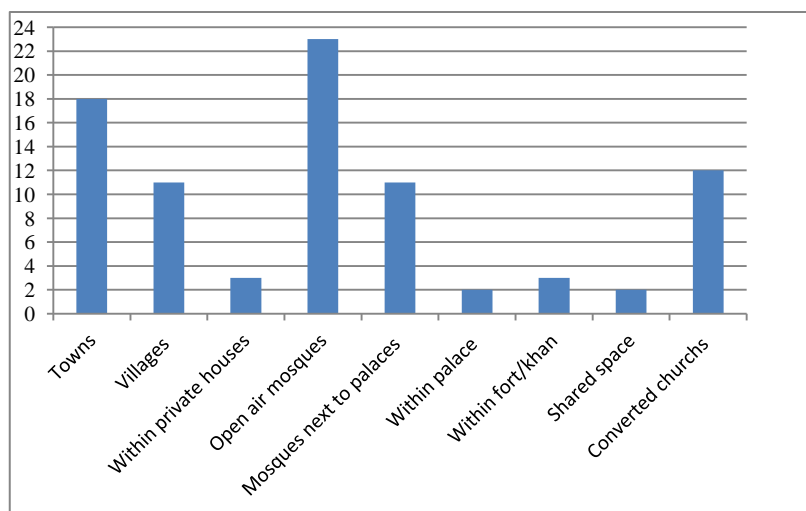
⁶³ Melchert, "Etiquette," 33-36.

Muslims, political announcements such as, the *bay‘a* and the *khuṭba*, influenced Muslims as well as non-Muslim. The first mosques served as a multipurpose building, they accommodated public functions in much the same manner as synagogues, but differed from the late Byzantine urban churches which were not familiar with many of these functions.⁶⁴ Several of these functions that were fulfilled by the first mosques were to continue well into the ‘Abbāsīd period. In rural regions many of these functions continued all through the Mamluk period.

The spatial distribution of mosques 7th-late 9th centuries

The database currently has 81 mosques that date to the reign of the first Caliphs, the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd periods.⁶⁵ The distribution of mosques throughout the region is on the whole fairly even, with two exceptions; one is the pronounced cluster of open-air mosques in the Negev, and an extreme porosity in southern Jordan (east of wadi ‘Arava). Most of the coastal towns as well as many of the inland towns had their own mosques; 10% of the town mosques were congregation mosques. The rural mosques include both villages and the mosques built next to the Umayyad palaces. Shared prayer spaces that served both Christians and Muslims (i.e. churches that had a *miḥrāb* inserted in them) and converted churches are relatively few.

Figure 1: Mosques built from the 7th – late 9th centuries.⁶⁶



Neither the Umayyad nor the ‘Abbāsīd houses had an official post which was responsible for the construction or the supervision of mosques. Besides the mosques built in small towns and villages, most mosques were built under state patronage. In several cases orders were issued by the caliphs and carried out by their governors. The mosques along the coast, built in the early decades of the seventh century were the direct result of the new military organization along this new frontier. The mosques of Acre, Caesarea, Arsūf, Yaffa,

⁶⁴ Kennedy, “From polis to medina,” 106: 15-16, 17; Bar, “Christinisation,” 418; Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria*, 105.

⁶⁵ There are four structures with questions marks surrounding their identification as a mosque.

⁶⁶ The number of Byzantine churches converted into mosques is based on data provided by David Antebi. Personal communications.

Yubnā, Maḥuz Azdūd and Asqalon were built for the garrisons and any auxiliary forces that settled along the coastal plane. The first wave of construction is attributed to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Many were renewed and/or enlarged in the second half of the seventh century due to damage caused by the Byzantine raids. Since the coastal mosques in this early period are only briefly mentioned in sentences in which the major subject is the coastal defence, it is almost impossible to reconstruct their plan, size and architectural features. It is only in the early eleventh century that we receive some information concerning their location in the town.

It is important to note that none coastal towns, served as centres of administration, or were considered sacred sites. In general holy tombs and sacred springs are absent from the descriptions of the coastal towns during the Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd periods.

As in the mosques built along the coast, the congregation mosques built in the capitals of the province and its sub-districts administrative towns were the responsibility of the ruler. The construction of mosques was as much a religious act as a political act. Since the mosque at this particular stage fulfilled many political and social functions essential to the community, but that also served the interest of the ruler it was he who ordered and funded their construction. This is supported by al-Ṭabarī (d. 923CE) who attributed the construction of the first congregation mosques to a decree issued by the Caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 633-644 CE).⁶⁷ The Caliphs in this early period “was charged with the definition of Islamic law, the very core of religion, and without allegiance to the caliph no Muslim could achieve salvation.”⁶⁸ It is thus not surprising that the first mosques were constructed by a direct order issued by the Caliph. As in the title of the ‘Caliph’, mosques were perceived by both Muslim and non Muslim populations as the symbol of both the religious and political power of the ruling house. The Friday mosques of Tiberias, Ramla, Jerusalem, Jarash, Aylah and ‘Ammān show a high degree of architectural uniformity in their plan, scale and their location within the urban setting. While they all have an early Umayyad phase, they were all enlarged and renovated during the ‘Abbāsīd period, either due to the mid eighth century earthquakes or due to the growth of the Muslim communities or both. However, according to Johns the concept of the congregation mosque was established before the accession of the Umayyads;⁶⁹ their construction in Jund Filastīn, Jund al-Urdun and Jund al-Dimashq followed a concrete idea and a plan that was formulized a century earlier. Establishing an architectural standard, be it a house of prayer, a fortress or a governors’ palace is not a rare phenomena. A set form, plan and decoration perhaps suggest the need to codify a religious practice.⁷⁰ As pointed out by both Alan Walmsley who excavated the mosque at Jarash and by and Katia Cytryn who excavated the congregation mosque at Tiberias, the plan of these two mosques derives from the Great Mosque of Damascus. The architectural uniformity clearly became the trade-mark of the ruling house. According to Flood, the Friday mosque of Damascus, the capital of the Umayyad dynasty “was the pre-eminent example of the genre.”⁷¹ If viewed from Damascus they (the above Friday mosques) may well be seen as an extension or branches of the central regime. The feeling one gets is that there was no period of trial and error, and that the

⁶⁷ Johns, “House of the Prophet,” 109-110.

⁶⁸ Crone, Hinds, *God’s Caliph*, 1, 27, 33, 57, 93, 97.

⁶⁹ Johns, “House of the Prophet,” 110-111.

⁷⁰ Flood, *Great Mosque*, 189, 210.

⁷¹ Flood, *Great Mosque*, 212.

standard plan for the congregation mosque was fixed and accepted within a very short space of time. The architectural development of the mosques in the rural regions was very different.

Although there is a clear link between congregation mosques and the towns' administrative status, what dictated the construction of a Friday mosque was the size of the Muslim community. By the late 'Abbāsid period several of the towns along the coast and inland had congregation mosques attesting population growth and prosperity, rather than their official hierarchical rank. The inscription concerning the construction of the mosque at Baysān (Beth-Shean) in 794/5 CE, is a single peculiar case which shows funding allocated by a wealthy high ranking outsider, the amir al-Ghiṭrīf b. 'Aṭā', who did not hold a position in the region. His sister Khayzurānī was a favourite wife of the Caliph Muḥammad al-Mahdī and the mother of Mūsā l-Hādī and Hārūn al-Rashīd who later both became caliphs. Khayzurānī, who was from the Yemen, arrived at the court of the caliph as a slave girl. He was quickly promoted and during the reign of his nephew, Mūsā l-Hādī, he was nominated governor of the Yemen. In 791-792CE al-Ghiṭrīf b. 'Aṭā' served as governor of Khorāsān a position he held for only one year.⁷² His funding of a congregation mosque in a town of secondary importance is difficult to explain. Perhaps it was the town's spring of 'Ayn al-Fulūs, which is said to be one of the four holy springs,⁷³ drew his attention.

Among the town mosques the one at Shivta in the Negev, has more in common with the small rural mosques built by individual communities, with little or no help from the central regime. Other than its central location next to one of the large churches, it is a small and simple plan a local creation which fulfilled the basic modest needs of the community.

The village mosques and mosques like those at Shivta attest to small-scale social religious grouping. Those rural mosques and communities developed independently of the state and independent of the Muslim elites and leadership.⁷⁴ While elements of the classical schools of architecture are evident in the large congregation mosques,⁷⁵ the smaller towns, the village mosques and the open-air mosques have their own characteristics that have little or no common ground with the formal Friday mosques built by the state. The mosques built next to or in the Umayyad palaces are a mixed collection. This is somewhat surprising since the Umayyad Palaces are a relatively homogeneous group. Only eight of the palaces have mosque. Some have both a private mosque within the palatial grounds and a public mosque built separately next to the palace (Khirbat al-Mafjar in Jericho), others had open-air mosques (Qasr Kharana, and Qasr 'Amra) that pre date the palace and attests to the existence of a Muslim community prior to the Umayyads' arrival. At Qasr al-Qastal, Qasr Hallabat and Umm al-Walid the mosques are independent free standing buildings that could accommodate circa 40-50 worshippers. At Khirbat al-Minyya although the mosque is built inside the palace it is constructed in such a way that welcomed outsiders to join, and allowed them to enter without trespassing through the private quarters of the palace. Thus although the palaces tend to represent the Umayyad elite, their mosques clearly served the small community that lived in the surrounding area.

⁷² Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum*, 2:222.

⁷³ Al-Hawārī, *al-Ishārāt*, 21. According to considerably later medieval tradition, the four holy springs in Islam are 'Ayn al-Baqr in Acre, 'Ayn al-Fulūs in Baysān, Silwan in Jerusalem and the Zamzam in Mecca. Tal, *Eretz Israel*, 116 n. 62.

⁷⁴ A similar development was identified by Lehmann, "Architecture," 146.

⁷⁵ Lehmann, "Architecture," 135.

Except for the mosques built next to the Umayyad palaces there is little evidence to show official funding or support for the construction of village mosques in Umayyad and the 'Abbāsid periods. Rural mosques clearly have their own architectural language and even within the relatively small number of sites one can find four different modules. In a number of early Islamic villages their location at the edge of the village, suggests they either served both the villagers and outsiders or that the Muslims in the village may have been a minority.

Although it is tempting to define them as “a nomadic space within a cultivated realm,”⁷⁶ the open-air mosques are often part of a hamlet, a small sedentary settlement. The number of open-air mosques, their geographical location and their architectural homogeneity represents the strongest and most tangible evidence of change in the religious composition of population. Within less than two hundred years the Negev Christian population, which was concentrated only in the towns, shrank, while the rural population that was predominantly pagan,⁷⁷ converted to Islam and continued to occupy its villages and hamlets uninterrupted up until the ninth century. Relatively few sites continued into the tenth century. This suggests, in a rather convincing manner, that this population largely converted to Islam between the late seventh and the ninth centuries. Although the dating is often vague,⁷⁸ out of the eighteen settlements recorded and carefully examined by Avner, Haiman, Avni, Magness, and others, only three had evidence of a practicing pagan community, identified by the standing stones set in a niche. The rest were identified as mosques due to the empty niche set in the south (or roughly to the south) that served as a *mihrāb*. Thus, although they may well have served a population that was going through a religious transition it seems that by the end of the Umayyad period most of the population had converted. With the exception of Ramla, rooms with a *mihrāb* incorporated in private houses, were found in rural settlements in the Negev and the 'Arava.

The continuance use of one architectural form for the construction of mosques throughout the Negev and the 'Arava shows the independence of the population and perhaps the homogeneity of this particular society. Although the central government and their regional representative appear to have been involved and partially invested in the copper industry and the building of water reservoirs and instillations, they had little direct contact with and influence on the religious aspects and the construction of mosques within this particular region.⁷⁹

The existence of open-air mosques next to a number of Umayyad palaces suggests they were acknowledged by Umayyad estate holders in the Balqā' region east of 'Ammān and at least in two cases they did not replace them with a more solid formal building.

The simplicity of the open-air mosques is such that one can walk by them and barely notice what it is he had stumbled over. They merge with the barren and arid landscape and seem to attest to the humility of the people who prayed in them and perhaps the strength of their belief. The Muslim settlement in southern Palestine was short lived; by the late ninth century or early tenth century the Negev's open-air mosques its towns and villages were

⁷⁶ A term borrowed from Wink, “Idols of Hind,” 33.

⁷⁷ Archaeological evidence of standing stone shrines has been revealed in excavations and surveys throughout the Negev.

⁷⁸ Nol, sums up the difficulties in the dating of the Arava settlements. Nol, “Settlement,” 21, 23-26.

⁷⁹ Nol, “Settlement,” 15-19.

abandoned.⁸⁰ Unlike other regions in Palestine and Jordan the Negev and the 'Arava were never resettled during the Crusader, Ayyubid and Mamluk periods.

From Sunnī to Shī'a rule: the distribution of mosques in the late 10th-11th centuries

By the late ninth-early tenth century the pattern of settlement had changed considerably in parts of the region. The abandonment of settlements in southern Palestine is clearly reflected in a drop in the number of mosques. The large cluster of open-air mosques in the Negev and many of the mosques of the Umayyad palaces in the Balqā' region east of 'Ammān fell out of use. Nevertheless the spatial distribution of mosques indicates growth among the urban communities throughout the region. As always the information concerning the villages is harder to find.

The current number of mosques for this period is 59; most of the evidence is currently drawn from the written sources. All the eight 'Abbāsīd congregation mosques continued into the Fatimid period. In addition the mosques in the coastal town are all referred to as congregation mosques, indicating the growth of the Muslim population and the continuous prosperity of the coast. Al-Iṣṭakhrī, who traveled the region towards the end of the first half of the tenth century, writes that despite the province's small size, Filastīn had twenty mosques with *minbars*,⁸¹ attesting to the number of Friday mosques (?) in the area which had more than doubled itself.⁸²

By the end of the tenth century, although descriptions of mosques are still short and meagre, mosques became a more prominent feature in the Muslim accounts. Their location in town is almost always provided, as well as certain aspects such as: a particular scholar or preacher, a fine *minbar*, magnificent paving, an unusual vessel held inside the mosque or the olive grove or the palm-dates within the mosque's grounds. Authors clearly refer to mosques as land-marks for foreigners who had just entered the town, and place public buildings such as the market and bathhouse, in relation to the main mosque.

The number of village mosques mentioned in sources suggests that mosques were not an unusual or a rare feature; and that its existence depended on the size of the population and the community's financial abilities.⁸³ In contrast to the Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd periods most of the village mosques are only known from the written sources.

The Fatimid conquest (970 CE) and the upheavals that followed,⁸⁴ had surprisingly little influence on the pattern of settlement and thus on the spatial distribution of mosques. The most important change is the rise in the number of mosques within each town. Towns such as Tiberias, Asqalon, Nablus and others had a Friday mosque as well as one or two other mosques. In addition to the natural growth of the Muslim population, this change is perhaps

⁸⁰ Avni, "Early mosques," 83-99; Haiman, "Agriculture," 29-53; Avner, "Early Islamic settlement," 39-56; Magness, *Archaeology*; Avni, "From standing stones," 70 124-138; Avner, "Eilat Region," 1704-1711; Avni, "The invisible conquest," 29-42; Avni, *Byzantine-Islamic Transition*, 283-285.

⁸¹ A raised structure, pulpit from which sermons were preached. In 749-750CE Abd al-Malik b. Marwān had *minbars* put in the sub-district capital towns when the *khuṭba* became strictly religious and the *khaṭīb* was no longer the ruler the *minbar* belonged to the spiritual preacher and was inserted in every Friday mosque. Pedersen, "Minbar," 73-75.

⁸² Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik*, 58; Le Strange, *Palestine*, 28.

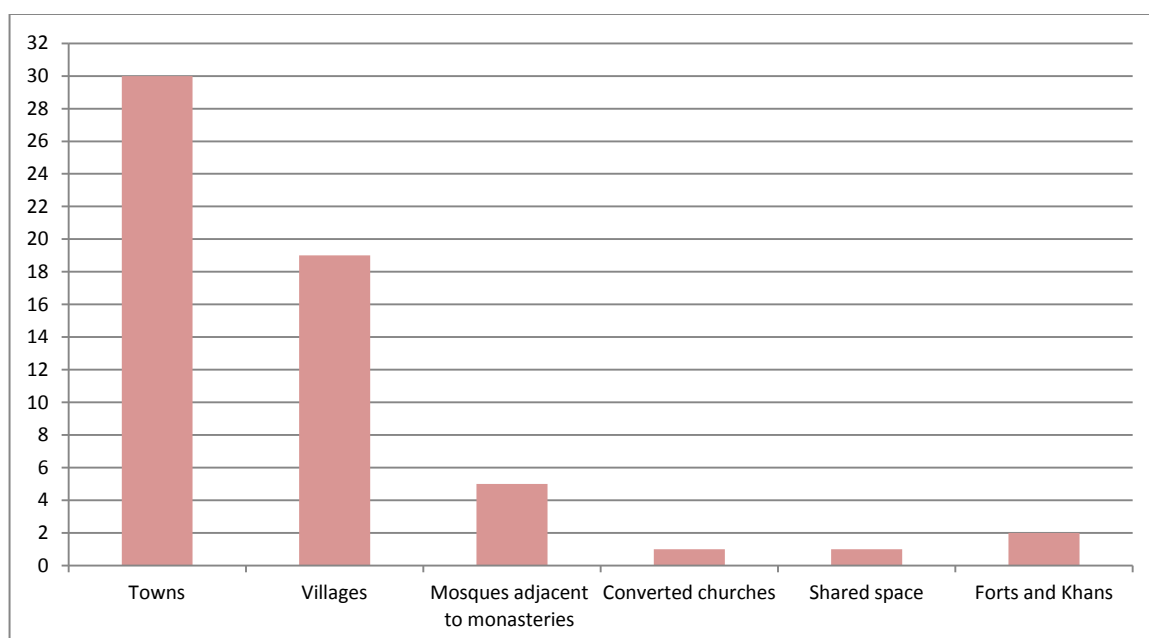
⁸³ In India some villages, which were known to be Muslim since the 17th century may never have had a mosque until the late 20th century. Instead prayer was performed in an open brick platform called an 'id-gāh. Lehmann, "Architecture," 149.

⁸⁴ On the internal wars and what is coined the war of sixty years see Gil, *History*, 335-370.

partially due to the affluent groups of scholars that developed in the late ninth and early tenth century in Tiberias, Ramla, Jerusalem, Acre, Gaza, and even the smaller places such as Caesarea and 'Aqir.⁸⁵

Their initial conquest was not followed by a wave of construction of new mosques. Nevertheless their religious concepts brought a number of changes and led to a break from the formal and strict perceptions of sacred space. While it is difficult to note a change in the architectural form of the mosques from the short description in the sources, there is sufficient evidence to show a significant change regarding where one was allowed to build a mosque and what one was permitted to bring into the mosque and/or build inside. It is important to note that a Shī'ite population resided in Tiberias, Nablus, Jerusalem and 'Ammān before the Fatimid conquest.⁸⁶ It is thus more than likely that Shī'a religious customs, rituals and ideas had begun to circle and spread in an independent manner before Fatimid rule was established.

Figure 2: Mosques built from the late 9th to the 11th century



One of the most striking changes that followed the establishment of Shī'a rule is the rise in the number of sacred tombs, springs and sacred sites that are mentioned in the sources, and which have mosques built on them or next to them. In contrast to the Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd periods religious sites gain a significant popularity; Mu'tah near Karak and al-Raqīm (Cave of the sleepers) near 'Ammān, which probably had a mosque built in the Umayyad period; the prophet Ṣāliḥ's tomb in the Friday mosque in Acre and the spring of 'Ayn al-Baqr ("the spring of the cows") also in Acre became a sacred local site. Asqalon's most famous shrine was constructed during this period above the place where the head al-Ḥusain, the grandson of the prophet, was found buried. It was funded by Badr al-Jamālī the Armenian grand *vizier* and *Amīr al-Juyūsh* (chief military commander) (1074-1094CE). In

⁸⁵ Gil, *History*, 328-334.

⁸⁶ Gil, *History*, 312.

Gaza the mosque of Shaykh Faraj, a local miracle maker, was built towards the end of the tenth century; when the Shaykh died his master Sayyid Muḥammad Khaṭṭāb buried him and built a mosque next to the tomb.⁸⁷ Muqaddasī emphasizes the tomb of Hāshim b. ‘Abd al-Manāf (the great grandfather of the Prophet) also located in Gaza.⁸⁸ In addition to the above a number of mosques were built in New and Old Testament sites. Saint Catharine’s monastery in the Sinai Peninsula had a mosque built within its walls. The Fatimids, appear to have issued decrees to the monks granting them safety and certain privileges in return for the right to build a mosque in this sacred site.⁸⁹ Others have suggested that during the years of Christian prosecution at the time of the caliph al-Ḥākim (996-1021 CE) who ordered the destruction of several churches, the monks managed to avoid having their monastery destroyed by building a mosque within the monastery grounds. According to popular tradition the mosque was built by the monks overnight so that the minaret rising above the walls of the monastery would turn away potential Muslim forces seeking to attack the site. An architectural survey shows that the sixth century guesthouse (approximately 12x10m) was transformed into a mosque during the early eleventh century. A kūfic inscription in the *minbar* reveals it was donated in 500 H/1106 CE by Abū ‘Alī Maṣṣūr Anushtakin, a minister of the Fatimid caliph al-Amīr b. al-Aḥkām Allāh.⁹⁰ Three *miḥrābs* were inserted in the southern wall and a square minaret was built as an independent free standing tower facing the church belfry. The mosque served the local population who had converted to Islam by the second half of the ninth century CE.⁹¹ In the same year (500H/1106CE) the same Abū ‘Alī Maṣṣūr Anushtakin, constructed two more mosques in the Sinai at Fārān. Both mosques are commemorated in an inscription together with a third mosque, built on Mount Sinai.⁹²

Although the Fatimid administration in Egypt was, at least to begin with, a strongly centralized system, much of the region under discussion was only partially under the direct rule of the central government.⁹³ While the administration towns and borders of the *ajnād* had occasionally changed during the Umayyad and the ‘Abbāsīd periods, by the late eleventh century the *ajnād* no longer correlated to the political and military reality; towns of eleventh century became small individual political units, better known as *mamālik* (singular *mamlaka*; a small principality).⁹⁴ The coastal cities of Palestine maintained their standing and gained a certain measure of independence, but they remained within a relatively solid political unit that adhered to a governor nominated by the Fatimid Caliph in Egypt. The town and harbour of Asqalon grew in importance, the small fort at Ashdod-Yam was maintained and the walls of Caesarea were strengthened. As noted above each of the towns along the coast had its own Friday mosque and several towns had more than one mosque. The region of Transjordan as depicted in the accounts of al-Iṣṭakhrī, Ibn Ḥawqal and Muqaddasī reveals a densely populated region with villages and small towns. During the tenth and eleventh centuries there

⁸⁷ Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum*, 4:63-65.

⁸⁸ Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 172.

⁸⁹ Stern, *Fatimid decrees*, 35-42; 65-69.

⁹⁰ Weitzmann, *Monastery*; Forsyth, Weitzmann, *Monastery*; Kamil, *Monastery*, 50-52. Galey, *Sinai*, 13; Sauvaget, Wiet, *Répertoire Chronologique*, 8:70 Inscription nos. 2912 and 2913.

⁹¹ Forsyth, “Monastery,” 4-8, fig. 4; Pringle, *Churches*, 2:49-58. The local population was partially made of the descendents of the servants associated with the monastery since the 6th century.

⁹² Honigsmann, Boswarth, “al-Ṭūr,” 663.

⁹³ Canard, “Fatimid,” 860.

⁹⁴ Haldon, “Seventh-century continuities,” 392-393, 402-403; Antrim, “Making Syria Mamluk,” 6-7.

were a number of shifts in the centres power, between ‘Ammān, Maāb, Adhruh, Mu‘ān (Ma‘ān), Şughar and Ruwāta. Karak was to supplement Maāb, Wādī Mūsā replaced Adhruh, Ruwāth replaced Gharandal. According to Walmsley these changes were partially due to shifts in tribal leaderships. The excavations at ‘Ammān and ‘Aqaba reflect some of these geopolitical changes, however both appear to have declined in the eleventh centuries.⁹⁵

The new *mamālik* and the Fatimid administrative system all came to an abrupt ending after the establishment of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem that carved the land and ruled it in their own particular manner.

The Crusader threshold

The establishment of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099CE) put an end to four hundred and sixty years of continuous Muslim rule.⁹⁶ Although the Franks reigned for two hundred years (1099-1291CE), their rule over Jerusalem, large parts of eastern Palestine and Transjordan ended after the battle of Ḥaṭṭīn (1187CE), when the above regions were conquered and annexed to Saladin’s sultanate. The Kingdom was reduced to a narrow stretch of land along the Mediterranean coast and the town of Acre replaced Jerusalem and served as its capital up until the Kingdom’s final fall (1291). Although this period of Christian sovereignty is of importance to this research it will not be addressed in this working paper.

The distribution of mosques in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods

The territorial changes following Saladin’s conquest of Egypt, his victory at Ḥaṭṭīn and the treaties signed after the Third Crusade,⁹⁷ led to a significant shuffle of frontiers, and laid the foundation to a political entity that combined Egypt and Syria and was ruled from two capitals – Damascus and Cairo. This new geo-political stadium, which seems almost obvious when researching the Mamluk period, is a rare phenomenon in the history of the eastern Mediterranean; Egypt and Syria seldom formed a solid political unit that was governed by the same ruler. The administration of this entity was a peculiar mix of old and new ideas. What is perhaps most surprising is that despite the creation of an empire based on a family confederation of autonomous and hereditary principalities, and the fluidity of the borders of each unit, the administration was gradually shifting towards a more centralized system.⁹⁸ An important part of Ayyubid power and unity, in these first decades, stemmed from re-establishing the *sunna*, the elimination of the Ismā‘īlīs heretics and the eradication of the Franks.

In addition to the changes in the political and administrative structure, according to Humphreys, this period saw a greater involvement of the indigenous, Arabic speaking element of the population in the local and regional affairs.⁹⁹ The latter was an important

⁹⁵ Walmsley, “Restoration or revolution?” 633-638.

⁹⁶ Although this period of Christian sovereignty is of importance to this research and marks a clear threshold it will not be addressed in this working paper.

⁹⁷ Humphreys, *Saladin*, 87-88.

⁹⁸ Humphreys, *Saladin*, 1-11; 46, 67-68.

⁹⁹ Humphreys, *Saladin*, 5.

development in regards to both the regional realities and the smaller daily affairs that confronted the population.

When examining the mosques of the Ayyubid period (1171-1260) the territorial gains and losses through war and diplomacy often led to the restoration of mosques and their abandonment shortly afterwards. This is particularly true to the coastal region. Although the Ayyubid period was relatively short and well documented by contemporary writers, the work and construction of mosques in the rural regions further inland are often shadowed by Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem and Hebron and the restoration of the Ḥaram al-Sharif and the Ḥaram al-Khalīl. While the right to restore and build the Dome of the Rock and the Aqṣā mosque was reserved for the rulers of the Muslim community,¹⁰⁰ mosques in the towns that had just been conquered from the Franks were often established by members of Saladin's family or high ranking amirs who participated in the conquest. In contrast to the Umayyad, 'Abbāsid and Fatimid periods where villages and small town mosques appear to have been built by the local communities, or wealthy individuals, during the Ayyubid period they were brought under the care of the regime. According to Tsugitaka, rural mosques were officially the responsibility of the *muqtā*'s who lived in the towns within the boundaries of their *iqṭā*'s.¹⁰¹ The *muqtā* during this period is defined as an administrative agent of a sovereign prince.¹⁰² The building of mosques was regarded as equal to the construction of convents for *ṣufīs*, khans and citadels, which all fell under the *muqtā*'s responsibility.

The number of Ayyubid mosques recorded in the database is 40; many of the urban mosques had previously served as churches.¹⁰³ Karak,¹⁰⁴ Ramla,¹⁰⁵ Sebastia¹⁰⁶ and Yubna¹⁰⁷ are but a small example of towns in which the Ayyubids made do with the church buildings and simply converted it into a mosque for the population's immediate needs. Some of these churches were originally built as mosques and were converted into churches by the Franks. Acre's Fatimid Friday mosque in the centre of town was converted into the town's main church in 1104CE, later it became the Cathedral Church of the Holy Cross. Within the Cathedral Church, the Franks preserved a small prayer area with a *miḥrāb* that still contained the tomb of the prophet Ṣāliḥ.¹⁰⁸

The only examples in the database of mosques built from scratch are *Masjid al-Naṣr* (the mosque of victory) at Bayt Ḥānūn, located north of Gaza, which commemorates the Ayyubid victory in November 1239 CE over the Crusader army led by Theobald IV of Champagne.¹⁰⁹ The inscription above the entrance to the mosque provides the rank of the Mamluk amir Rukn al-Dīn Alṭūnbā al-Hijāwī who commanded the force.¹¹⁰ Gaza had two new mosques built during this period by amirs who may have held an *iqṭā* in the region. The

¹⁰⁰ Humphreys, *Saladin*, 152.

¹⁰¹ Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society*, 73.

¹⁰² Humphreys, *Saladin*, 76-79.

¹⁰³ According to David Antebi, outside of Jerusalem, thirty two churches were converted into mosques by the Ayyubids. Antebi personal communications.

¹⁰⁴ Pringle, *Churches*, 1:286-288.

¹⁰⁵ Pringle, *Churches*, 2:187-195.

¹⁰⁶ According to Abu Shāmā, after its conquest by Saladin (1187) the church was turned into a mosque by Saladin's nephew Ḥusām al-Dīn Muḥammad.

¹⁰⁷ Pringle, *Churches*, 2:378-384.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥla*, 303; Pringle, *Churches*, 4:34-35.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, 1:292.

¹¹⁰ Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum*, 2:102-104.

first was built in 1249 CE by Sayf al-Dīn Musāfir b. Qanḡilī (?) a Mamluk of the Ayyubid sultan al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Dāwūd (d. 1258 CE); the second was the mosque of Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh al-Aybakī (a Friday mosque) a Mamluk of al-Mu‘izz Aybak (1250-1257 CE).¹¹¹ East of the Jordan River following the construction of the fort at ‘Ajlūn, a Friday mosque was built in the town below it by the Ayyubid al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, who served under the Mamluk sultan Baybars. According to an inscription its minaret was built in 662/1263-4 by the Mamluk amir Sanjar al-Shīzārī.¹¹² A number of Ayyubid village mosques were discovered in the course of a survey in northern Jordan; however their date could only roughly be ascribed to the Ayyubid period.¹¹³

It is difficult to appraise whether the database, at this stage, reflects an accurate picture of the scale and number of mosques constructed during the Ayyubid epoch. After the fall of the Crusader Kingdom (1291 CE) the entire region came under Mamluk rule. The Mongol-Ilkhānid threat that hovered over the sultanate’s eastern frontier was removed in 1323 CE, following the signing of the peace treaty. While the Mamluk sultanate witnessed some internal rebellions, and the royal court at Cairo suffered political tension and strife, other than the short success of Timor Lang (1400-1401 CE) its frontiers were relatively calm and secure for the next two hundred years. The geopolitical changes briefly described above, and the long consecutive period of Mamluk rule had a significant impact on the pattern of settlement, the growth of its population and its economy. These three components had a direct influence on the number and distribution of mosques.

The administrative division (which often plays a prominent role in the distribution, size and scale of mosques) of both Jordan and Palestine changed once again during the Mamluk period, differing from and parting with that of their Ayyubid predecessors.¹¹⁴ Damascus’ role as a second Mamluk capital meant that much of northern Transjordan and Palestine fell under its rule; the south was influenced and controlled by the Mamluk court in Cairo. Ṣafad, Gaza and Karak served as the urban administrative centres (*mamlaka*), ruled by a governor chosen by the sultan from a close circle of loyal men. In contrast to the Ayyubid period, governors were often replaced when the Mamluk sultan that appointed them was disposed. Few Mamluk governors, at any level, spent their entire career in one place. Nevertheless, the link between administrative centres and the distribution of mosques was almost as strong as it was under the Umayyads.

The Mamluk sultanate’s centralized regime with its hierarchy and division of offices was surprisingly more flexible than it is often depicted. Certain regions experienced a relatively large measure of autonomy when it came to their local internal affairs. Urban administrative centres occasionally changed; towns which had no administrative rank could and did thrive; however it would be an error to ignore the general rule that “money followed the movement of power.”¹¹⁵ The most unique example is the extraordinarily high number of mosques in Gaza, which boasted 22 mosques in a town that had few local religious sites and had not been known as a religious centre in previous centuries.

¹¹¹ Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum*, 4:34.

¹¹² Kenny, “Reconstructing,” 788; Ghawānimah, *al-Masājīd*, 72.

¹¹³ MacKenzie, “Ayyubid/Mamluk archaeology,” 615-620.

¹¹⁴ Drory, “Founding a New Mamlaka,” 163-187.

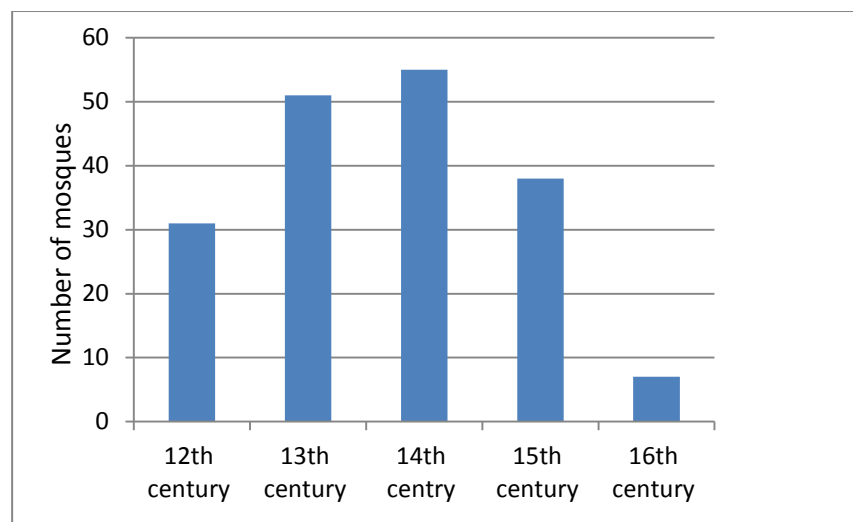
¹¹⁵ Walker, “Sowing,” 183.

The scale and pace of mosque construction and the spatial distribution is examined with a particular interest and focus on the following subjects: The rate of construction in relation to the political, social and military affairs, i.e. prior to the final evacuation of the Franks and after (figure 4) and mosques built before and after the plague (figure 8). Mosques built in ancient sacred sites vis-à-vis the creation of new local Muslim sacred sites (figure 5).

The database currently has 148 mosques spanning 330 years (1187-1517 CE). This includes mosques built during the Ayyubid and the Mamluk periods. However, the mosques in Jerusalem have not yet been added and the sources and inscriptions have not been fully exploited. Thus it is more than likely that the numbers will grow.

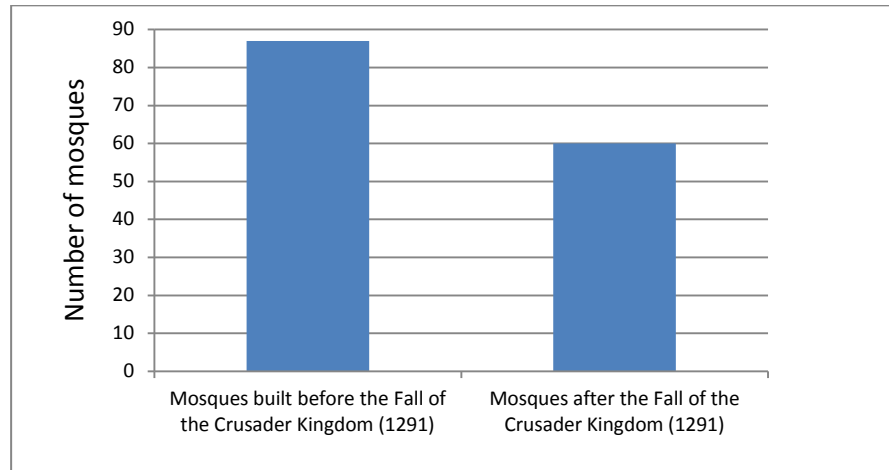
While the post Crusader period saw considerable construction of mosques and conversion of Crusader churches into mosques, it is important to examine the data carefully before making sweeping remarks. When one looks at the entire Mamluk period the pace and scale of mosques construction stretched throughout this period (Figure 3). The number of mosques built before the final fall of the Crusader Kingdom (1291 CE) was greater than after. It is difficult to describe a “wave” of mosque construction. These first mosques may well have served the Muslim communities that remained to live under Frankish rule. While the largest number of mosques was built during the first half of the fourteenth century, there is a marked drop following the arrival of the plague in 1346 CE. What it suggests is that both Ayyubid and Mamluk construction of mosques followed the gradual development and growth of the population that peaked shortly before the plague struck the region.¹¹⁶

Figure 3: Pace of mosque building during the Ayyubid and Mamluk period



¹¹⁶ Dols, *Black Death*, 149-150.

Figure 4: Mosques built before the fall of the Crusader Kingdom and after



The construction of mosques in relation to Jewish and Christian sacred sites

The village of Bethany (al-‘Azariyya) had two churches, the first built in the fourth century, the second built above the tomb of St. Lazarus by the Franks.¹¹⁷ Both were preserved and were maintained up until the fourteenth century. The Italian pilgrims Frescobaldi and Gucci who visited the site in 1384 CE are the first to mention the mosque. By the time they arrived, the entrance of Christians had been band.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless Christians visited the site up until the sixteenth century and entered via a special staircase that led directly to the tomb. The site appears to have been revered by the Moslems long before it was converted into a mosque. Felix of Fabri who visits the tomb almost a hundred years later was somewhat surprised to see the Muslims honoured the tomb as much as the Christians.¹¹⁹

Located 8 km south of Nablus, close to the main road leading to Jerusalem, the small village of ‘Awartā (Avarata, Awertah), which still exists today and the tombs within its boundaries are still revered by Jews and Moslems. According to al-Harawī (1180-1215 CE): ‘Awartā is a village on the road from Nablus to Jerusalem that contains a cave in which are the tombs of Joshua son of Nun and Mufaḍḍal, Aron’s paternal cousin. It is also said that it contains seventy prophets.¹²⁰ Al-Harawī provides a rational mix of both Jewish and Muslim traditions, but he does not mention a mosque. The village mosque is first mentioned by Rabbi Jacob who travelled to Palestine in (1238-1244 CE) to collect funds for a new Rabbinic collage in Paris. He passes the village on his way to Jerusalem. His description is brief but informative: The village of Avarata is to the left as one goes up to Jerusalem, and there is the grave of Ithamar the Priest and it is a beautiful place. There is also another grave there, said to be the grave of Phinehas, the son of Elazar the priest, and the Muslims have a place of prayer near the grave. There is also in that village a cave in which seventy elders are buried and the Ishmaelites have a house of prayer. And on the second hill to the right of the Jerusalem road is the grave of Elazar, the son of Aaron the High Priest, and it is very glorious.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Pringle, *Churches*, 1:122-125.

¹¹⁸ Frescobaldi, Gucci, et.al. *Holy Places*, 80 136.

¹¹⁹ Fabri, *Wandering*, 2: 77.

¹²⁰ Al-Hawārī, *Lonely Wayfarer’s Guide*, 24.

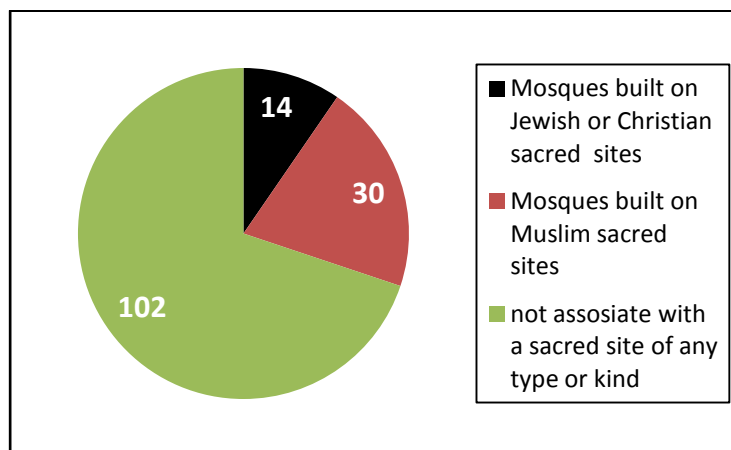
¹²¹ Adler, *Jewish Travelers*, 116-117.

The churches of the town of Lod gained importance due to the tomb of St. Gorge. The first church was constructed in the fourth century. The town's churches were partially destroyed by al-Ḥākim and Saladin. When the Byzantine church was converted into a mosque during the Mamluk period the saint was ignored. There is no indication that local Muslim community or a higher religious authority regarded the site as a sacred place.

Thus the examples vary. Where the makeup of the populations had changed, mosques had eventually been built on or nearby the sacred sites of saints and prophets of the Old and New Testament. However, while the Ayyubids and the Mamluks converted many churches into mosques in rural and urban regions, very few sites were consecrated. It seems that most of the mosques built on sacred Jewish or Christian sites had been constructed prior to the Crusader period.

Mosques constructed after the Crusader period were built on new sacred Muslim space that was created on new grounds. A good example is the case of Isdūd, (Ashdod) the mosque Salmān al-Fārisī, a close member of the Prophet's entourage who participated in the conquest of Palestine and Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm al-Mutabalī (a mystic from the Gharbiyya district in Egypt) was constructed in 1269 CE by 'Alam al-Dīn Sanjar b. 'Abd Allāh al-Turkistānī, one of Baybars' amirs.¹²² Although there are other examples, the number of mosques built on tombs of holy men, members of the prophet's entourage, men who fought in the first Muslim conquest and those who fought with Saladin, is still relatively small. Most of the mosques constructed in this period are not related to any type and kind of sacred sites.

Figure 5: The relation between mosques and ancient sacred sites in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods



Whose responsibility was it?

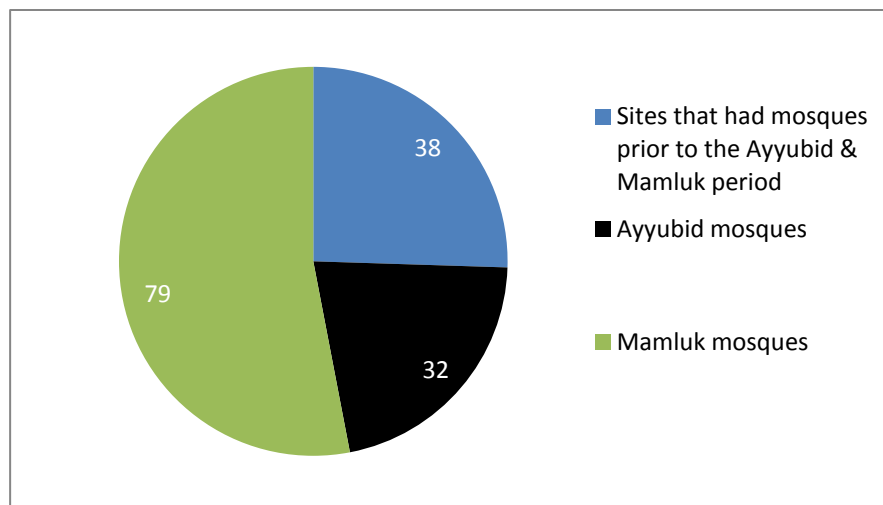
Like many of the caliphs and sultans of the previous periods, the Mamluk sultans' investments in civil and religious buildings characterized the entire length of their rule. As the leaders who often portrayed themselves as defenders of Islam in the face of the Franks and Mongols, the construction and renovation of mosques played a prominent part in almost every sultan's career. While the number of mosques built in Cairo and Damascus was higher than

¹²² Al-Ulami, *al-Uns*, 1:261; Tal, *Eretz Israel*, 427.

any other part of the sultanate, and the sky of both capitals was dotted by numerous minarets,¹²³ their investment in Palestine and Transjordan was no less impressive, and yet it was clearly conducted on a smaller and fairly modest scale.

Key religious sites, which had been conquered by Saladin, such as the al-Ḥaram al-Khalīl in Hebron and the Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem, were maintained by decrees issued by the Mamluk sultans and the governors of Damascus. Both sites were renovated and sections were rebuilt and changed. Building projects in those two particular sites were triggered by the scale of damage caused by the passage of time, neglect and earthquakes, as well as by the personal decisions of pious rulers. The political gains that were to be made were taken into account in many of the decisions regarding those two sites.¹²⁴ In general, it seems rulers were frequently more concerned with finding funds for long term maintenance of the site's staff, the needs of pilgrims and annual repairs. They thus reorganized and/or enlarged the *awqāf* and supervised its management.¹²⁵ Besides the two ancient sacred sites, one of the most surprising aspects that emerge from the database is that many of the mosques built during this period, were constructed in places that had not had a mosque before. As already noted above, it seems that prior to the plague the region may have seen a rise in the population. Albeit, while population growth plays an important role, it is important to emphasize that even rough numbers and assessments are problematic.

Figure 6: Mosques built prior and during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods



Although the Mamluk Sultanate had a complex and centralized administration with an office for each and every military and civil aspect, as in previous periods no post was created to control or oversee the building of mosques. Their construction did not seem to have required the approval of a particular civil or religious authority. There is one exception in the Mamluk period during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn. An office was created to supervise the construction of mosques in order to subdue the Nuṣayrī rebels and convert them

¹²³ Rabbat, *Mamluk History*, 91.

¹²⁴ Rabbat, "Politicising the religious," 95-104. Although this paper does not deal with the Mamluk period, the Mamluks clearly maintained the Umayyad policy.

¹²⁵ Concerning the Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem see: Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ*, 89, 416; Ibn Shaddād, *Ta'rīḥ*, 351; concerning the reorganization of the endowments at Hebron: Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ*, 27.

to Sunnism. The supervisor of the mosques was nominated by the governor of Tripoli; the decree was issued by the sultan:

“The Nuṣayris should construct a mosque in each village and assign part of the village’s land [for its management]. A manager is to be appointed as a representative of the governor of Tripoli, and had the responsibility to control the mosques- may God double his blessing.”¹²⁶

The mosques of the Nuṣayris were built at the edge of the villages, but no one prayed in them. This attempt to convert the Nuṣayris failed.¹²⁷ As mentioned above this was a rather unique case.

Besides the two sacred shrines at Jerusalem and Hebron, which became show cases of Mamluk piety,¹²⁸ and where building rights were reserved for rulers, no one had a monopoly over the construction of mosques. From the inscriptions and the sources it seems men of every social and economical rank could initiate the construction of a mosque. One, however, had to have the funds.

It is not clear whether the responsibilities of the Ayyubid *muqṭā*’s were maintained during the Mamluk period. However, in contrast to previous periods, the rural areas received the attention of the Mamluk elites. The names of sultans, *nuwwāb al-sulṭana* (viceroys), district governors and amirs of various ranks who funded the construction of mosques are often found in inscriptions in small towns and village mosques. While there is sufficient evidence of Mamluk investment in rural mosques, it is not clear whether their funding was random and given to individual whims of the sultans and their amirs or whether they followed an official policy. It is difficult to decide if the construction of a minaret in an existing mosques (a frequent Mamluk deed) was an act of appreciations or a perfunctorily deed. In a number of cases there is a rather clear and strong link between the economic prosperity of the village, the natural growth of its population and the construction or enlargement or repair of its mosque. In later centuries the collapse of the *iqṭā*’ system led in Jordan to the transfer of large amounts of land into *awqāf*. This resulted in the *waqf* having considerably larger financial freedom which allowed for a greater funding for mosques.¹²⁹ It seems southern Palestine may have followed suit, but this still requires a thorough check.

Growth and/or change in the Mamluk period

Even before the final fall of Acre in 1291 CE, each town that was taken and brought back under Muslim rule had its mosques built or rebuilt. And yet both the first mosques constructed by Saladin, his successors and by Baybars,¹³⁰ represent only a very small percentage of the mosques that were to be built during this period. The most intriguing question is for whom these mosques were established? While many scholars have regarded the construction of mosques in these first decades as acts of revenge and triumph over the Frankish Christian rule, in several cases, it seems that a Muslim community had remained and lived in the town all through the Frankish period, thus the conversion of a church that had

¹²⁶ Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society*, 171.

¹²⁷ Tsugitaka, *State and Rural Society*, 172.

¹²⁸ Kenny, *Power and Patronage*, 141-152.

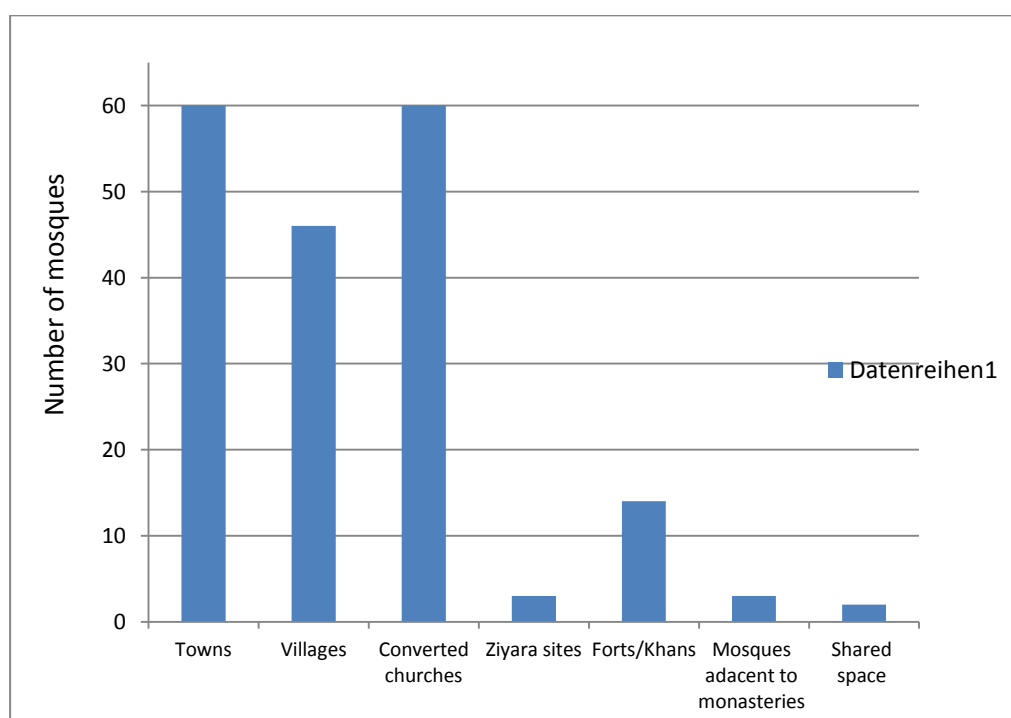
¹²⁹ Walker, “Imperial transitions,” 75-76

¹³⁰ Frenkel, “Public projection,” 43.

previously been a mosque was to serve the native Muslim population. A Muslim community remained in Acre after the fall of the city to the Franks; the Franks appear to have maintained a prayer space for them within the cathedral.

Baybars' policy of destruction along the coast is better known than his construction work in the region. While citadels, ports and coastal town defences were partially dismantled, in some cases mosques were renewed. After the conquest of Jaffa in 1268CE, he (Baybars) ordered the construction of mosques and Friday mosques in this town, and cleaned/purified the Muslim rituals, and remove the obscene (*wa-amara bi-binā' al-jawāmi' wa-l-masājid bi-hādhihi l-bilād wa-iḡhār sha'ā'ir al-islām*).¹³¹ The town of Lod was dealt with in a similar manner. During the fourteenth century, two more mosques were built in Jaffa. Although several accounts describe Acre in ruins the town had two mosques, Asqalon had a similar number. As in Cairo,¹³² Palestine and Jordan clearly had their own small scale competitiveness and rivalries displayed in its religious architecture; this can best be seen in Gaza, which boasted 22 mosques of which 5 were Friday mosques. In comparison, Şafad and Karak, which both served as *mamlakas*, each had one Friday mosque and two smaller mosques. While the investment in new mosques, repairs and additions that were made to existing mosques reflect the competitive atmosphere and is often displayed as a tool used by rulers to control and supervise the population as well as a mean to display power, it is seldom seen as an act that reflects a ruler's attentiveness to the needs or religious changes and the simple increase is the size of the local population.

Figure 7: The distribution of mosques during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods¹³³



¹³¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawq*, 293.

¹³² Humphreys, "Expressive intent," 111-112; Rabbat, *Mamluk History*, 91.

¹³³ Data concerning the number of churches converted to mosques personal communications David Antebi.

It is important to emphasize that under Mamluk rule mosques still accommodated religious as well as various civil services. Prayer, jurisprudence and Sufi *dhikr* could take place in the one mosque. It was only during the Ottoman period that Sufi practices disappeared from the mosques and Sunnī orthodox practices and Sufi practices were carried out in separate institutions.¹³⁴ Although the period saw a wave of construction of *madrasas* and other religious and civil buildings; in villages and many towns the mosque still fulfilled many of the community's needs that went beyond that of serving as a prayer house.

In general, the religious composition of the population in Jordan differed from that of the territories west of the Jordan River. It is important to emphasize that Frankish rule in Transjordan lasted less than a century and that only Karak and its surrounding were directly controlled by the Franks. According to Walker the countryside of Karak was mixed, including both Christians and Muslims.¹³⁵ Although the composition of the population may have differed, mosques east of Jordan did not seem to have developed in a substantially different manner. The rich agricultural regions, the web of roads, fortresses, khans, water cisterns and local pilgrim sites, which stretched from the north to the south parallel to the Jordan Valley connecting Cairo and Damascus, attracted substantial investment. Although the town and port of 'Aqabat Aylah and the *hajj* road that formed a separate rout in this network of roads played a central part in the development of the region,¹³⁶ it did not dictate or dominate the economic affairs or the pattern of settlement. Its contribution to the economy was via the maintenance of the rout and the sultans' pledge for the safety of the pilgrims who came under their direct responsibility. Its main contribution was thus to the region's security.¹³⁷ The numerous sugar mills, the large granaries established by Baybars at Karak fortress, the strengthening and garrisoning of existing fortresses and the nomination of military and civil governors in these fortified towns attest to the importance of Jordan, its stability and growth. Throughout most of this period Jordan's administrative centre was located in Karak. Its geographical location as well as the intimate acquaintance of both Baybars and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad with the town and its surroundings turned it into a thriving urban centre. Later the town often served as a site of refuge for both sultans and retired amirs.

While the region boosted a relatively high number of small fortress towns ('Ajlūn, Zarqā', Salt, 'Ammān, Ḥisbān and Madaba), which the sources rarely mention, the intensive surveys have revealed a large number of villages and their mosques allowing a fairly accurate reconstruction of medieval map of rural Jordan.¹³⁸ Inscriptions in mosques and minarets indicate both the sultans and amirs direct involvement in the construction of mosques in small fortress towns, main district towns and villages. This investment was driven by the agricultural productiveness that promised high revenues as well as military necessities.

By the fourteenth century, most towns across the region both those that served as administrative centres and those that lacked an official status all had on average 2-3 mosques. There are however towns such as Tiberias, Beth Shean and some of the fortress towns east of

¹³⁴ Sanders, *Creating Medieval Cairo*, 111.

¹³⁵ Walker, *Jordan*, 86-105

¹³⁶ Petersen, *Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route*, 12, 16.

¹³⁷ Although the *hajj* rout could and did attract raids and could lead to considerable violence. Petersen, *Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route*, 9-12.

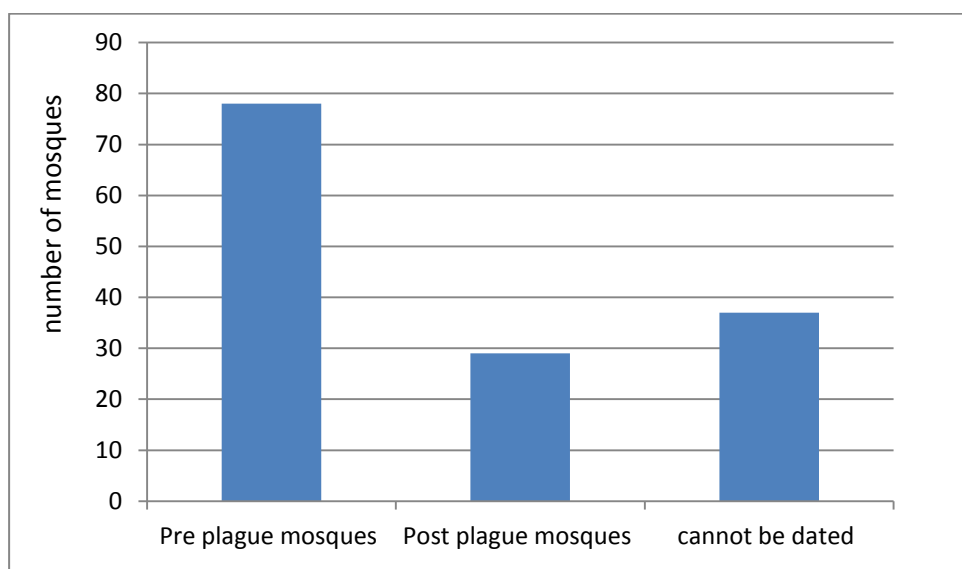
¹³⁸ McPhilips, Walmsley, "Fahl," 119-156; Walker, *Jordan*, 79-85.

the Jordan Valley where I have drawn a blank. The funding for construction and maintenance of mosques appears to have changed significantly in the late Mamluk period. Fluid administration and political instability introduced a certain measure of local autonomy. As noted above there was considerably larger financial freedom which allowed for a greater funding for mosques.¹³⁹ Although government involvement in the construction of mosques appears to have been greater than in any other period, beyond funding the mosque or its repairs and establishing endowments, each mosque run independently/autonomously by its sheikhs, the local community who prayed in it and its students.¹⁴⁰

Most of the Mamluk period mosques were newly built. Only 38 were built prior to the Mamluk period. Rather than explain this phenomena in a surge of Islamization, it seems the pattern of settlement had changed and the population throughout the region may well have grown due to political and environmental stability (fewer droughts), relatively higher security and government investment (or lack of interference).

The second half of the fourteenth century saw the arrival of the plague (1346 CE), which returned in a rather alarming frequency all through the fifteenth century. It hindered the population's growth and changed the size and scale of the settlements.¹⁴¹ It is, however, often difficult to find the archaeological evidence to match the bleak accounts recorded by the chroniclers. The number of mosques built in the second half of the fourteenth century, dropped considerably. It will be interesting to return and redraw this chart once the database is completed.

Figure 8: Number of mosques built before and after the plague late 12th –early 16th centuries



This long consecutive period of Mamluk rule and the relative political and economic stability influenced the pattern of settlement. The population growth was gradual and had

¹³⁹ Walker, "Imperial transitions," 75-76.

¹⁴⁰ Rabbat, *Mamluk History*, 11-13, 73.

¹⁴¹ Dols, *Black Death*; Dols, "Second Plague Pandemic," 162-189. Borsch, *Black Death*, 24-25, 40.

little to do with population transfers, which was on the whole rare.¹⁴² Within the Mamluk period villages grew and shrunk some became towns; towns gained and sometimes lost their administrative status. In Jordan, by the late Mamluk period a shift in the settlement pattern of the villages had occurred; while many villages were abandoned or were not occupied throughout the year, many new villages were founded. The new villages were smaller and agriculture less intensive. In general the picture received from combining textual and archaeological material reveals that both towns and villages in Jordan during the fifteenth century declined due to political and economic conditions; large scale production of sugar and grain required the investment and political stability of the central regime. The population of the large villages and towns migrated to smaller settlements and practiced small scale agriculture.¹⁴³

Towards the end of the Mamluk period there is evidence of abandonment of settlements, the scale of this phenomena is not clear and its relation to the plague is still a question that requires research before a convincing answer can be provided. The rural changes in western Palestine are yet to be researched and at this stage it is difficult to assert whether Palestine underwent similar changes. A preliminary study of the villages that surrounded Gaza shows continuity all through the Ottoman period and well into the twentieth century. These changes clearly influenced the size and number of mosques, and may explain a sudden peak/ a wave of construction of mosques in one particular area, town or village.

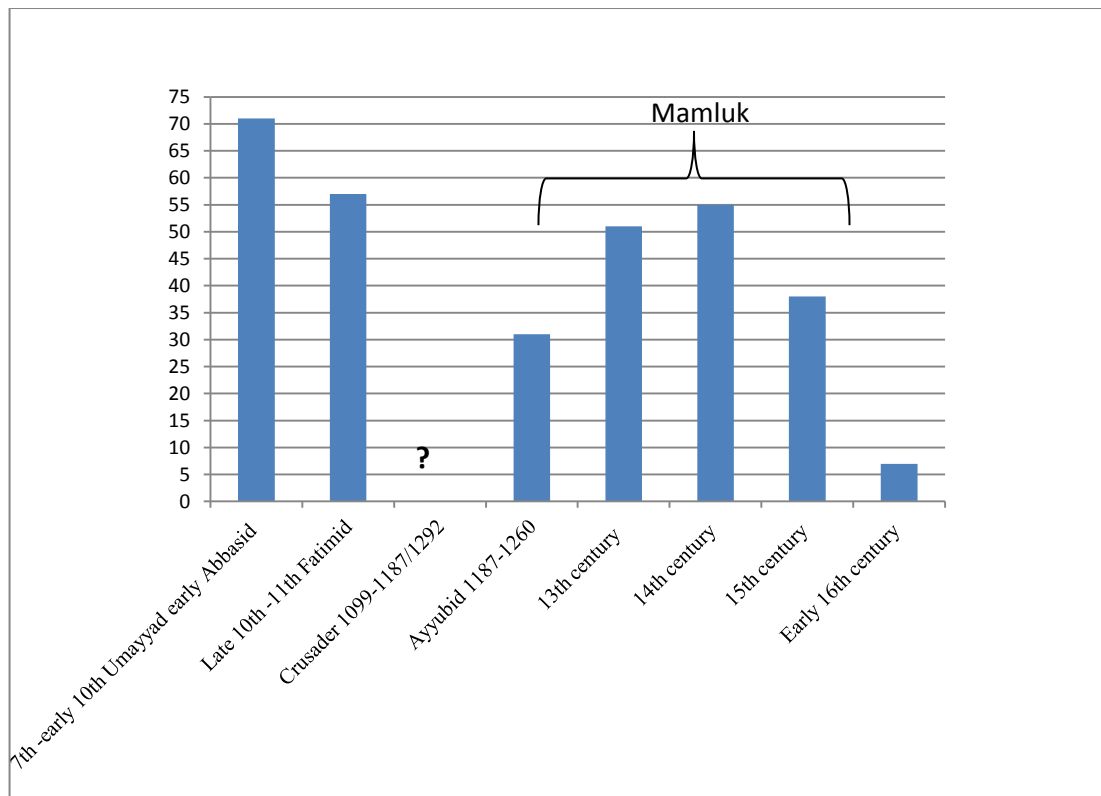
Some Preliminary Conclusion

The idea behind documenting and mapping all the mosques that were constructed in this region between the seventh and the early sixteenth centuries, is to establish a wider base of information which will add a different form of material that will enable one to examine and better understand the course and changes in the religious makeup of the region's population. The basic assumption being that a mosque was constructed for an existing community; they were not built as missionary stations in order to attract and convert the surrounding non Muslim population. While the large towns and administrative centres play an important role in this study, at a fairly early stage of this research it became clear that the rural regions play a key role in the understanding of the religious transition the region underwent.

¹⁴² This policy was carried out to rebuild towns that were partially destroyed by natural disasters, for military purposes as Baybars did when he settled some tribes along the coast, or as was done in Ḥisbān where a group of merchants was transferred to 'Ammān for economic reasons. Walker, "Planned villages," 185-186.

¹⁴³ Walker, "Settlement decline," 93-104. Walker, "Imperial transitions," 75-85.

Figure 9: Number of mosques built in each period



There are a number of important points one should bear in mind before drawing the following preliminary conclusions. The length of each period of rule; the chronological location of the ruling house i.e. are they responsible for establishing the new religion or are they acting as defenders of a well established existing Muslim population. The forever changing ratio between the power of the ruler, his governors and the measure of autonomy among the governors and the local communities is always an intriguing question; the balance between the three (ruler, governors and local Muslim communities) has a direct impact on the distribution and number of mosque, the size and scale of investment. The fluctuations in the number of mosques are clearly determined by a complex collection of factors, which seldom repeat themselves when moving from one period to the next. Although there are common denominators and there is a certain degree of continuity, each period has its own particular combination of factors, which led to a rise or a fall in the number of mosques and changes in their geographic distribution.

The large number of mosques constructed, throughout the region, in the Umayyad and early 'Abbāsid periods, clearly shows that the first caliphs and the caliphs of the Umayyad house all incorporated the building of mosques into their administrative, political and military plans that formed part of the organization of the newly conquered territories. It is important to emphasize that although some new Muslim settlements were established (Ramla) most of the Muslim population settled in existing towns,¹⁴⁴ thus the mosques' multifunctional role was especially important in this early period, when it served as the new Muslim communities'

¹⁴⁴ Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims*, 58.

religious, social, educational and political centre; functions that were essential for the growth and development of the Muslim community and religious identity. While the mosques in the region's main administrative centres and most sacred sites were to begin with the sole responsibility of the Umayyad caliphs, the rulers' grip gradually loosened, and in the early 'Abbāsid period one finds high ranking officials initiating and overseeing renovations and construction work. The mosques in the rural regions were constructed by the local communities as well as by members of the Umayyad family. In contrast to the architectural uniformity of the official Friday mosque they seem to display a larger degree of architectural diversity. The location of these mosques within the village provides some indication as to the size and standing of the Muslim community.

While the building of the first mosques often appears as the most difficult phase in the introduction and establishment of a new religion, the Umayyads handled/manoeuvred by applying a certain measure of diplomacy and force that few of their successors seem to have followed. Their choice of where to build a mosque and the distribution of mosques conveys their strong need to create their own space within the existing urban settlements. A similar picture appears also in the rural setting, although the number of examples is fairly small. In general other than The Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the sanctuary at Hebron they seldom chose Christian or Jewish sacred sites and the number of churches and synagogues that were converted is relatively low. The mosques constructed by the Umayyads (and maintained by the 'Abbāsids) only partially served their successors. The shuffling of frontiers, the geopolitical interests of new rulers, the changes in the pattern of settlement and administration led to the building of new mosques and the abandonment of others. The degree of continuity in both the rural and the urban settlements is a subject that requires further research.

Although there are significant changes between first period (i.e. 7th-early 10th) and the second period (late 10th -11th) in both the number and the distribution of mosques; within two centuries, almost every town throughout the region had its own mosque. By the end of the tenth century many towns had a Friday mosque as well as two or three smaller mosques. The rise in the number of mosques per town indicates the natural and gradual growth of the local Muslim population. While it is true that numerous churches survived and continued to be active throughout the period of transition (7th-8th centuries), and new churches were built, it seems that the ratio between the number of churches and the number of mosques was gradually changing. This change was due to the growth and strengthening of the Muslim communities and the social, economical and religious restrictions that hindered the development and growth of the Christian population. The geographical distribution, the number, size and style of churches built in the two centuries prior to the Crusader conquest is perhaps the key to a more accurate and better understanding of this change. Moving into the next period and following the same line of thought, the number of new mosques built and the number of mosques that remained active during the Crusader period is an important component of this study.¹⁴⁵

While the Mamluks were conceived by the local population as well as their enemies and allies as defenders of Islam, this image scarcely conveys or explains the complex picture behind the numerous mosques that were constructed during this period or their geographical distribution. The long uninterrupted life of the Mamluk Sultanate, the nature of their

¹⁴⁵ The mosques of the Crusader period are yet to be researched, and form a separate chapter within this research.

government and the resources that stood at their disposal led to developments and changes, in which religious, political, economical as well as personal intrigues and interests were constantly at work. While this is perhaps not unique to Mamluk rulers, the geographical distribution of mosques throughout this era clearly differs from that of previous periods. The high density of mosques in southern Palestine (in relation to the rest of the region covered by this study); the village mosques which receive financial support and were often incorporated in governmental investment, are currently the most striking features of this period. A number of mosques are also reconstructed and built along the coast attesting to the maintenance and at least some governmental support of small communities in this region, which has often been depicted as forsaken and neglected by the Mamluks sultans. While the number of mosques is higher than any other period, the pace of construction was gradual; suggesting the building of mosques followed the natural increase in the region's population, rather than a steep or sudden change in the religious composition of the population.

This brief survey of mosques which spans seven centuries is part of a long term research. The current data base has produced some new question, and only provided partial answers to my initial research questions. The conclusions presented here may well change as the data base grows. While I am convinced that the idea behind this project and the method of research applied are sound, I am quite aware of the fact that there are some historical enigmas that may never fully be resolved.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ I would like to thank friends and colleagues in the Annemarie-Schimmel-Kolleg for many stimulating conversations, their comments and remarks. Special thanks are due to the staff of the Kolleg that ordered books and articles and went out of their way to help with both technical and academic requests. Last but not least, I would like to thank the directors of the institute for the generous grant that allowed me to start this research, which I hope to publish in full within the coming years. Any mistakes and faults in this study are entirely my own.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

ADAJ: Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan

ASOR: The American Schools of Oriental Research

NEAEHL: New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land

EP: New Encyclopedia of Islam

Al-Iṣṭakhrī, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad, *k. al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, ed. M. J. De Goeje's, Leiden 1870.

Adler, E. N. (ed.), *Jewish Travelers in the Middle Ages*, New York 1987.

Antrim, Z, "Making Syria Mamluk: Ibn Shadād's al-Al'āq al-Khaṭirah," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11/1 (2007), pp. 1-18.

Armstrong, G. T., "Imperial church building and church-state relations, AD 313-363," *Church History* 36 (1967), pp. 3-17.

Armstrong, G. T., "Imperial church building in the Holy Land in the fourth century," *Biblical Archaeologist* 30 (1969), pp. 90-102.

Avner, U. Magness J., "Early Islamic settlement in the southern Negev," *ASOR* 310 (1998), pp. 39-56.

Avner, U., "Eilat Region," *NEAEHL*. Ed. E. Stern (Jerusalem), vol. 5, pp. 1704-1711.

Avni, G., "Early mosques in the Negev Highlands: New archaeological evidence on Islamic penetration of Southern Palestine," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 294 (1994), pp. 83-99.

Avni, G., "From standing stones to open mosques in the Negev desert: The archaeology of religious transformation on the fringe," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 70 (2007), pp. 124-138.

Avni, G., "The invisible conquest: The Negev in transition between Byzantium and Islam in the light of archaeological research," in: *Man Near Roman Arch, Studies Presented to Prof. Yoram Tsafrir*, L. Di Segni, Y. Hirschfeld, J. Patrich and R. Talgam (eds.), Jerusalem 2009, pp. 29-42. [Hebrew]

Avni, G. "Continuity and change in urban centres in Palestine during the Early Islamic period: the cases of Jerusalem and Ramla," in: *Shaping the Middle East: Christians, Jews and Muslims in an Age of Transition*, Eds. K. Holum and H. Lapin (eds.), Bethesda 2011, pp. 15-133.

Avni, G. *The Byzantine-Islamic Transition in Palestine*, Oxford 2014.

Bar, D., "The Christinisation of rural Palestine during Late Antiquity," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 54/3 (2003), pp. 401-421.

Borsch, S. J., *The Black Death in Egypt and England A Comparative Study*, Austin Texas 2005.

- Butler, A. J., *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, Oxford 1902.
- Cahen, Cl., "Djizya," *EF*², vol. 2, pp. 559-562.
- Canard, M., "Fatimid," *EF*², vol. 2, pp. 850-862.
- Carver, M. O. H., "Transition to Islam: Urban roles in the east to south Mediterranean, fifth to tenth centuries AD," in: *Towns in Transition, Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, N. Christie and S. T. Loseby (eds.), Aldershot, U.K. 1996, pp. 186-212.
- Courbage, Y. and Fargues, P., *Christians and Jews under Islam*, London and New York 1997.
- Crone, P. and Hinds, M., *God's Caliph, Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge 1986.
- Dajani-Shakeel, H., "Natives and Franks in Palestine: perceptions and Interaction," in: *Conversion and Continuity*, M. Gervers, and R. J. Bikhazi (eds.), Toronto 1990, pp. 161-184.
- Dan, Y. "The Byzantine Rule (395-640)," in: *The History of Eretz Israel The Roman Byzantine Period*, M. D. Herr (ed.), Jerusalem 1990.
- Di Segni, L., "Epigraphic evidence for building in Palaestina and Arabia (4th -7th c.)," in: *The Roman and Byzantine Near East vol. 2: Some Recent Archaeological Research*, J. H. Humphrey (ed.), Portsmouth Rhode Island 1999, pp. 148-178.
- Di Segni, L., "Greek inscriptions in transition from the Byzantine to the early Islamic period," in: *From Hellenism to Islam*, H. M. Cotton, R. G. Hoyland, J. J. Price and D. J. Wasserstein (eds.), Cambridge 2009, pp. 352-373.
- Dols, M. W. *The Black Death in the Middle East*, Princeton 1977.
- Dols, M. W., "The Second Plague Pandemic and its Recurrences in the Middle East 1347-1894," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 22/2 (1979), pp. 162-189.
- Donner, F. M., *The Early Islamic Conquest*, Princeton 1981.
- Donner, F. M., "Centralized authority and military autonomy in the Early Islamic Conquest," in: *The Byzantine- and Early Islamic Near East III, States, Resources and Armies*, A. Cameron (ed.), Princeton 1995, pp. 337-360.
- Dols, M. W., *The Black Death in the Middle East*, Princeton 1977.
- Drory, J., "Founding a New Mamlaka: Some Remarks Concerning Safed and the Organization of the Region in the Mamluk Period," in: *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, M. Winter and A. Levanoni (eds.), Leiden and Boston 2004, pp. 163-187.
- Eaton, R. M., "Approaches to the study of conversion to Islam in India," in: *Islam and the History of Religions*, R. C. Martin (ed.), Tucson, US 1984, pp. 106-124.
- Elad, A., "The coastal cities of Eretz-Israel in the Arab period (640-1099) on the basis of Arab sources," *Cathedra* 8 (1978), pp. 156-178. [Hebrew]

- Elad, A., "Arsuf in the Early Arabic period," in: *Apollonia and Southern Sharon*, I. Roll and E. Ayalon (eds.), Tel-Aviv 1989, pp. 289-301. [Hebrew]
- Elad, A., "Why did 'Abd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock? A re-examination of the Muslim sources," in: *Bayt al-Maqdis: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, J. Raby and J. Johns (eds.), Oxford 1992, pp. 33-58.
- Fahmy, A. M., *Muslim Sea Power in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Seventh to the Tenth Century A.D. Studies in the Naval Organization*, London 1950.
- Fabri, Felix, *The Wandering of Felix of Fabri*. Palestine Pilgrim's Text Society, New York 1893, vol. 2.
- Flood, F. B., *The Great Mosque of Damascus*, Leiden, Boston and Köln 2001.
- Forsyth, G. H., "The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai: The church and fortress of Justinian," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 22 (1968), pp. 1-19.
- Forsyth, G. H. and Weitzmann, K., *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian*, Ann Arbor 1970.
- Frenkel, Y., "Public projection of power in Bilād al-Shām," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11/1 (2007), pp. 39-54.
- Galey, J., *Sinai and the Monastery of St. Catherine*, Givataym 1980.
- Gil, M., "The History of Eretz Israel under Muslim Rule (634-1099)," in: *The History of Eretz Israel under Muslim and Crusader Rule*, J. Prawer (ed.), Jerusalem 1992.
- Gil, M., *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, Cambridge 1992.
- Ghawānimah, Y. D., *Al-Masājid al-Islāmiyyah al-Qadīmah fī Minṭaqat 'Ajlūn*, Irbid, Jordan 1986.
- Griffith, S. H., "Answer for the Shaykh: A 'Melkite' Arabic text from the Sinai and the doctrines of the trinity and incarnation in the 'Arab orthodox' apologetics," in: *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, E. Grypeou, M. N. Swanson and D. Thomas (eds.), Leiden and Boston 2006, pp. 277-309.
- Griffith, S. H. *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, Princeton and Oxford 2008.
- Haiman, M., "Agriculture and Nomad-State Relations in the Negev Desert in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 297 (1995), pp. 29-53.
- Haldon, J., "Seventh-century continuities: the ajnād 'thematic myth,'" in: *Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam The Byzantine and the Early Islamic Near East III States, Resources and Armies*, A. Cameron (ed.) Princeton 1989.
- Haldon, J., *Byzantium in the Seventh Century Transformation of Culture*, Cambridge 1990.
- Haldon, J., "The Works of Anastasius of Sinai: A Key Source for the History of Seventh-Century East Mediterranean Society and Belief," in: *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, Volume I: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, A. Cameron and L. Conrad, Princeton 1992, pp. 107-147.

- Haldon, J., "Greater Syria in the seventh century: context and background," in: *Money, Power and Politics in Early Islamic Syria*, J. Haldon (ed.), Surry, U.K 2010, pp. 1-20.
- Al-Hawārī, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Abī Bakr, k. *al-Isharāt. ma'rifat az-ziyārāt*, trans. by Sourdel-Thomine, Damascus 1953.
- Al-Hawārī, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Abī Bakr, *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage*, 'Alī ibn Abi Bakr al-Harawī's *Kitāb al-Isharat ila Marifat al- Ziyārāt*, trans. J.W. Meri, Studies in Late Antiquities and Early Islam, Princeton 2004.
- Hermansen, M., "Conversion to Islam in theological and historical perspective (Chapter 27)," in: *The Oxford Handbook of Conversion*, Rambo L. R. and C. E. Farhadian (eds.), Oxford 2014.
- Hitti, P. K., "The impact of the Crusades on eastern Christianity," in: *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in Honor of Aziz Suryal Atiya*, S. A. Hanna (ed.), Leiden 1972, pp. 211-217.
- Holum, K. G., "Caesarea Palaestinae A Paradigmatic Transition?" in: *Shaping the Middle East: Jews, Christians and Muslims in an Age of Transition 400-800 CE*, K. G. Holum and H. Lapin (eds.), Bethesda, Maryland 2011, pp. 11-31.
- Honigmann, E. and C. E. Boswarth, "al-Ṭūr," *EI²*, vol.10, pp. 663-665.
- Hoyland, R. G., *Seeing Islam as Others Saw it*, Princeton 1997.
- Humphreys, R. S., "The intent of the Mamluk architecture in Cairo: A preliminary essay," *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972), pp. 69-120.
- Humphreys, R. S., *From Saladin to the Mongols*, New York 1997.
- Humphreys, R. S., "Christian Communities in Early Islamic Syria and Northern Jazira: The dynamics of adaptation," in: *Money, Power and Politics in Early Islamic Syria*, J. Haldon (ed.), Surry, U.K. 2010, pp. 45-56.
- Ibn 'Abd az-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ az-zāhir fī sīrat al-malik az-zāhir*, 'A. 'A. al-Khuwayṭir (ed.), Riyad 1976.
- Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla*, W. Wright (ed.), Leyden and London 1907.
- Ibn SHaddād, *Ta'rikh al-malik az-zāhir*, A. Khuṭayṭ (ed.), Wiesbaden 1983.
- Johns, J., "The long durée: State and settlement strategies in southern Transjordan across the Islamic centuries," in: *Village, Steppe and State, the Social Origins of Modern Jordan*, E. J. Rogan and T. Tell (eds.), London and New York 1994, pp. 1-31.
- Johns, J., "The 'House of the Prophet' and the concept of the mosque," in: *Bayt al-Maqdis, Jerusalem and Early Islam* (Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, vol. 9, part 2) Oxford 1999, pp. 59-112.
- Kamil, J., *The Monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai, History and Guide*, Cairo 1992.
- Kaplan, S., "Themes and methods in the study of conversion in Ethiopia: A review essay," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 34/3 (2004), pp. 373-392.

- Kedar, B. Z., "Some new sources on Palestinian Muslims before and during the Crusades," in: *Die Kreuzfahrerstaaten als multikulturelle Gesellschaft*, H. M. Mayer (ed.), München 1997, pp. 129-140.
- Kedar, B. Z., "Latin and Oriental Christians in the Frankish Levant, 1099-1291," in: *Sharing the Sacred, Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land, First-Fifteenth Centuries CE.*, A. Kofsky and G. G. Strumisa (eds.), Jerusalem 1998, pp. 129-140.
- Kaegi, W. E., "Initial Byzantine reactions to the Arab conquest," *Church History* 38/2 (1968), pp. 139-149.
- Kennedy, H., "From polis to medina: urban changes in late antique and Early Islamic Syria," *Past and Present* 106 (1985), pp. 3-27.
- Kenny, E., "'Reconstructing' Mamluk 'Ajlūn: The 728/1328 flood report as a source on architectural patronage," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan X, Department of Antiquities*, Amman 2009, pp. 787-793.
- Kenny, E., *Power and Patronage in medieval Syria, The Architecture and Urban Works of Tankiz al-Nāṣirī*, Chicago 2009.
- Lassner, J. *Jews, Christians, and the Abode of Islam*, Chicago and London 2012.
- Lehmann, F., "Architecture of the Early Sultanate period and the nature of the Muslim state in India," in: *Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque*, F. B. Flood (ed.), Oxford 2008, pp. 130-149.
- Leonardo Frescobaldi, Giorgio Gucci and Simone Sigoli, *Visit to the Holy Places of Egypt, Sinai Palestine and Syria in 1384 by Frescobaldi, Gucci and Sigoli*, trans. from the Italian T. Bellorini and E. Hoade SBF VI, Jerusalem 1948.
- Levi-Rubin, M., "New evidence relating to the process of Islamization in Palestine in the Early Muslim Period: The case of Samaria," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 43/3 (2000), pp. 257-276.
- Levy-Rubin, M., "The influence of the Muslim conquest on the settlement pattern of Palestine during the Early Muslim period," *Cathedra* 121 (2006), pp. 53-78. [Hebrew]
- Levy-Rubin, M., *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: From Surrender to Coexistence*, Cambridge 2011.
- Levtzion, N., "Toward a comparative study of Islamization," in: *Conversion to Islam*, N. Levtzion (ed.), New York and London 1979, pp. 1-22.
- Levtzion, N., "Conversions to Islam in Syria and Palestine and the survival of the Christian communities," in: *Conversion and Continuity*, M. Gervers and R. J. Bikhazi (eds.), Toronto 1990, pp. 289-311.
- Lewis, B., *The Jews of Islam*, London 1985.
- MacKenzie, N. D., "Ayyubid/Mamluk archaeology of 'Ajlūn area: A preliminary typology," *ADAJ* 46 (2002), pp. 615-620.

- McPhilips, S. and Walmsley, A., "Faḥl during the Early Mamluk period: Archaeological perspective," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11/1 (2007), pp. 119-156.
- Magness, J., *The Archaeology of the Early Islamic Settlement in Palestine*, Winona Lake, Indiana 2003.
- al-Ulamī, Mujīr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad, *al-Uns al-jalīl bi-tarīkh al-quds wa-l-Khalīl*, Amman 1973, vol. 1.
- al-Maqrīzī, Taqī l-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma‘rifat duwal al-mulūk*, M. M. Ziyāda and S. ‘A. F. Ashūr, Cairo 1934-73, vol. 1.
- al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan at-taqāsīm fī ma‘rifat al-aqālīm*, Beirut 2003.
- Nol, H., "Settlement and rule in the eighth - ninth centuries CE: The Arava as a case study," *Cathedra* 153 (2014), pp. 8-34.
- Northedge, A., "The History of ‘Ammān in the Early Islamic period," in: *Studies on Roman and Islamic ‘Ammān. The Excavations of Mrs. C-M Bennett and other Investigators*, Oxford 1992.
- Ovadiah, A., *Curpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land*, tran. from Hebrew R. Kirson, Bonn 1970.
- Pedersen, J., "Minbar," *ET*², vol. 7, pp. 73-75.
- Petersen, A., *The Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route in Jordan an Archaeological and Historical Study*, Exeter, U.K. 2012.
- Prawer, J., *A History of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem vol.1: The Crusades and the First Kingdom*, Jerusalem 1963. [Hebrew]
- Pringle, D., "Church building in Palestine before the Crusades," in: *Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century*, J. Folda (ed.), Oxford 1982, pp. 5-46.
- Pringle, D. *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, Cambridge 1993, vol. I.
- Pringle, D., *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, Cambridge 1998, vol. II.
- Pringle, D., *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom*, Cambridge 2009, vol. IV.
- Pryor J. H. and E. M. Jeffreys, *The Age of ΔΡΟΜΩΝ, the Byzantine Navy ca 500-1204*, Leiden and Boston 2006.
- Rabbat, N., *Mamluk History Through Architecture*, London and New York 2010.
- Rabbat, N., "Politicising the religious: or How the Umayyads co-opted classical iconography," in: *Between Continuity and Change: Religious Identities in the Levant from Alexander to Mohammed*, M. Blömer, A. Lichtenberger and R. Raja (eds.), Turnhout Belgium 2015, pp. 95-104.
- Sanders, P., *Creating Medieval Cairo*, Cairo and New York 2008.
- Sauvaget, C. J. and Wiet, G. (eds.), *Répertoire Chronologique D'épigraphie Arabe*, Cairo 1933, vol. 8.

- Schick, R., *The Christian Communities of Palestine from the Byzantine to the Islamic Rule*, Princeton 1995.
- Shaban, M., "Conversion to Early Islam," in: *Conversion to Islam*, N. Levtzion (ed.), New York and London 1979, pp. 24-29.
- Sharon, M., *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae*, Leiden and Boston 1999, vol. 2.
- Sharon, M., *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae*, Leiden and Boston 2009, vol. 4.
- Shas, D. J., "The face to face encounter between patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem and the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb: friends of foes?" in: *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, E. Grypeou, M. N. Swanson and D. Thomas (eds.), Leiden and Boston 2006, pp. 33-44.
- Stern S. M., *Fatimid decrees: Original Documents from the Fatimid Chancery*, London 1964.
- Talmon-Heller, D., "The cited tales of the wondrous doings of the Shaykhs of the Holy Land by Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahid al-Maqdisī (569/1173-643/1245): Text translation and Commentary," *Crusades* 1 (2001), pp. 111-154.
- Tal, U., *Eretz Israel in Medieval Arabic Sources (634-1517), Selected Translations*, Jerusalem 2014. [Hebrew]
- Talmon-Heller, D., *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria, Mosques, Cemeteries and Sermons under the Zangids and Ayyubids (1146-1260)*, Leiden and Boston 2007.
- Tsugitaka, S., *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam, Sultans, Muqta's and Fallahun*, Leiden, New York and Köln 1997.
- Walker, B. J., Kenney, E., Holtzweg, L., Carroll, L. Boulogne, S. and Lucke, B., "Village life in Mamluk and Ottoman Ḥubrāṣ and Saḥam: Northern Jordan Project, report on the 2006 season," *ADAJ* 51 (2007), pp. 429-470.
- Walker, B. J., "Sowing the seeds of rural decline? Agriculture as an economic barometer for Late Mamluk Jordan," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11/1 (2007), pp. 173-193.
- Walker, B., "Imperial transitions and peasant society in the Middle and Late Islamic Jordan," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* (Department of Antiquities, Amman) 10 (2009), pp. 75-85.
- Walker, B. J., *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages*, Chicago 2011.
- Walker, B. J., "Settlement decline or internal migration? 'Reading' anew the history of Late Mamluk Jordan," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* (Department of Antiquities, Amman) 11 (2013), pp. 93-104.
- Walker, J. B., "Planned villages and rural resilience on the Mamluk frontier: A preliminary report on the 2013 excavation season at Tall Hisban," in: *History and Society during the Mamluk Period (1250-1517)*, Stephan Conermann (ed.), Göttingen 2014, pp. 158-192.
- Walmsley, A., "Byzantine, Palestine and Arabia: urban prosperity in Late Antiquity," in: *Towns in Transition, Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, N. Christie and S. T. Loseby (eds.), Aldershot, U.K. 1996, pp. 126-158.

- Walmsley, A., Restoration or revolution? Jordan between the Islamic conquest and the Crusaders: Impressions of twenty-five years of archaeological research,” *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* (Department of Antiquities, Amman) 7 (2001), pp. 633-638.
- Walmsley, A., *Early Islamic Syria*, London 2007.
- Walmsley, A. “Economic developments and the nature of settlement in the towns and countryside of Syria-Palestine, ca. 565-800,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 61 (2007), pp. 319-352.
- Walmsley, A. “Pella, Jarash, and ‘Ammān old and new in the crossing to Arabia, ca. 550-750 C.E.,” in: *Shaping the Middle East: Jews, Christians and Muslims in an Age of Transition 400-800 CE.*, K. G. Holum and H. Lapin (eds.), Bethesda, Maryland 2011, pp. 135-152.
- Ward-Perkins, B., “Specialisation, Trade and Prosperity: An overview of the economy,” in: *Economy and Exchange in the East Mediterranean during Late Antiquity*, S. Kinsley and M. Decker (eds.), Oxford 2001, pp. 167-178.
- Weitzmann, K., *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai – The Icons. Vol. 1: From the Sixth to the Tenth Century*, Princeton 1976.
- Wink, A., “The Idols of Hind,” in: *Piety and Politics in the Early Indian Mosque*, F. B. Flood (ed.), Oxford and New Delhi 2008, pp. 29-63.
- Wood, P., “Christians in the Middle East, 600-1000: Conquest, competition and conversion,” in: *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, A. C. S. Peacock, B. De Nicola and S. N. Yildiz (eds.), Dorchester, U.K. 2015, pp. 23-50.