

# Muslim Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Ottoman Period

Since the start of Muslim history countless Muslims have come to Jerusalem on pilgrimage. But those Muslim pilgrims are much less well known than the Christian pilgrims who came from Western Europe. Comparatively fewer Muslim pilgrims wrote accounts of their travels and only some of those accounts have been published, while even fewer have been translated into a Western language. This article seeks to present some information about a number of Muslim travelers who came to Jerusalem in the Ottoman period for religious reasons and who wrote first-person accounts of their travels in Arabic – accounts written in Turkish or other languages are not considered here. Also included is coverage of a couple of cases where an author wrote a third-person account of someone else's trip to Jerusalem. The article will summarize the activities of some of those travelers and conclude with some general observations about the nature of Muslim pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

There is a moderate amount of scholarship that can be drawn upon: 'Abdul-Karim Rafeq has summarized some Ottoman travel accounts into English<sup>1</sup>. In addition, other modern authors writing in Arabic have provided summaries and excerpts of Arabic travel accounts to Jerusalem: Bashri 'Ali Khayr Bak<sup>2</sup>, Kamil al-'Asali<sup>3</sup>, 'Abd al-Hadi al-Tazi<sup>4</sup>, and 'Abd Allah al-abashi<sup>5</sup>. Recent publications by Nabil Matar also provide information about a number of Muslim pilgrims in the Ottoman period, including an English translation of al-Miknasi's travel account<sup>6</sup>.

## 1) al-Ḥamawī, Muḥibb al-Dīn (1571)

Al-Hamawi (949-1016/1542-1608) was a Hanafi legal scholar and judge (*qadī*) in Syria, who wrote an account of a trip from Damascus to Egypt in 978/1571 that he took in the company of the Chief Judge of Syria. Al-Hamawi's account of the trip is written in a flowery style interspersed with poetry<sup>7</sup>.

A report had reached the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul that the Christians in Jerusalem had illegally renewed their church and demolished a nearby mosque. The Chief Judge of Syria, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, known as Juwizadeh, was

charged with looking into the matter, and so he arranged to stop over in Jerusalem during a previously scheduled trip to Egypt.

Along the way to Jerusalem the travel group visited the shrine (*mashhad*) of Zakariah and John the Baptist in Sebastiya and the *mashhad* of Ma'adh ibn Jabal, a Companion of the Prophet Muhammad, and »the other famous places of enlightenment«. When the group arrived in Jerusalem, they stayed the first night in al-Madrasah al-Ashrafiyah, the prominent madrasah along the west edge of the Haram. On 7 Ramadan / 11 February 1571 the chief judge, accompanied by a large crowd of Muslim religious figures, notables and common people, went to investigate the matter of the church. The church is not identified in the travel account, but clearly was the Monastery of the Cross to the west of the Old City. The chief judge noted the recent renovations and the nearby mosque whose walls the infidels had demolished. He ordered the renovations to be demolished and the mosque walls rebuilt, which was carried out on the spot, while the crowd cried out praises to God.

After thus putting the infidels in their place, the group went to the Nebi Musa shrine near Jericho for two days. The group was in Jerusalem for a total of ten days; on one Friday they performed the noon prayers in the Dome of the Rock and on the second Friday in the al-Aqsa Mosque. Then they went to Hebron, where they spent two days, before proceeding on to Gaza and Egypt.

## 2) al-Maqqarī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (1620 and 1628)

Al-Maqqari (986-1041/1577-1632) was a North African scholar who went on the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1028/1618 and afterwards remained in Cairo. He visited Jerusalem in 1029/1620 and again in 1037/1628. His voluminous historical work provides biographies of many Muslims from Spain who traveled to Jerusalem throughout the centuries, as well as details about the Muslim scholars in Jerusalem of his own day<sup>8</sup>.

1 Rafeq, Ottoman.  
2 Khayr Bak, Filasṭīn.  
3 al-'Asali, Bayt.  
4 al-Tāzi, Al-Quds.

5 al-Ḥabashī, al-Raḥḥālah.  
6 Matar, Arab; Matar, Two; Hayden/Matar, Through.  
7 al-Hamawī, Ḥādī. See Yerasimos, Voyageurs 290-291; al-'Asali, Bayt 82-83.  
8 al-Maqqarī, Nafh: see al-'Asali, Bayt 84-85. 207-208.

### 3) al-'Ayyāshī, 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad (1633)

Al-'Ayyashi (1037-1091/1628-1679) was a religious scholar from Morocco, who went on the pilgrimage to Mecca three times. The account of his travels is found in a short and a long version<sup>9</sup>. He spent a week in Jerusalem in 1074/1663. As a prominent Islamic scholar, when he presented a letter of introduction to the administrators of the Haram, they offered him accommodations as their guest. His description of Jerusalem concentrated on the Haram, where he observed the ignorance of the leading Muslim figures. He especially had encounters with an Egyptian who had recently started teaching Islamic studies on the Haram compound, but whom al-'Ayyashi was able to expose as unqualified; the Jerusalemites themselves were so poorly educated that they had not recognized that fact themselves.

One interesting incident occurred on his way from Gaza to Jerusalem with a group of other Muslim travelers. It was a hot summer day, and so they cut off fronds of a palm tree to hold over their heads and get a little shade. But as they continued on their way, they soon noticed a group ahead who were shouting curses at them. Puzzled, al-'Ayyashi asked his donkey driver what was going on, and he replied that those people were going to rob them, because they thought that al-'Ayyashi's group were Christians, since holding palm branches in their hands was something that Christians did as they entered Jerusalem. The story ends at that point<sup>10</sup>, but one assumes that by demonstrating that they were Muslims the group escaped being robbed. Those robbers apparently were from the village of Abu Ghosh, notorious for extorting money from travelers.

### 4) al-Khiyārī, Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Madanī (1670)

Al-Khiyari (1037-1083/1628-1672) was a Shafi'i religious scholar who traveled from Medina to Istanbul and back in 1080-1081/1669-1670. In the course of that trip he passed through Jerusalem for a hurried couple of days on 26-28 Rajab 1081 / 9-11 December 1670. The portion of his travel

account about Jerusalem concentrates on the sites that he visited on the Haram, where he spent most of his time<sup>11</sup>.

### 5) al-Nābulusī, 'Abd al-Ghanī (1050-1143/1640-1731)

The most important author of a Muslim travel account to Jerusalem in the Ottoman period, al-Nabulusi was a prominent Hanafi religious scholar, prolific author and sufi of the Qadiriyyah order. He was born in Damascus, where he spent most of his life. In the 1100s/1690s he made a number of journeys throughout Syria-Palestine, Egypt and the Hijaz.

His journey in 1101/1690 was to Jerusalem, where he spent 18 days in Rajab/April as a VIP guest, meeting Muslim scholars and visiting shrines, including a trip to the Nebi Musa shrine near Jericho and to Hebron. His account of that journey, *al-Ḥaḍrah al-Unsiyah*, written that same year, is extraordinarily informative<sup>12</sup>.

Another journey in 1101/1690 was to Syria-Palestine, Egypt and the Hijaz, in the course of which he spent 17 days in Jerusalem in Rabi' I 1105 / November-December 1694, including a trip to the Nebi Musa shrine near Jericho and to Hebron. His account of that journey written in 1109-1110/1697-1698, *al-Ḥaḍrah al-Unsiyah*<sup>13</sup>, is shorter and less informative than *al-Ḥaḍrah al-Unsiyah*.

In his travel accounts, which are filled with poetry, al-Nabulusi concentrated on his meetings with other Muslim religious leaders and scholars and his visits to shrines and graves of Islamic figures. He used the history of the famous 15<sup>th</sup>-century author Mujir al-Din, *al-Uns al-Jalil fi Tarikh al-Quds wa-al-Khalil* as a major source of information. His first travel account *al-Ḥaḍrah al-Unsiyah* was of critical importance in cementing the Muslim localization of the tomb of Moses at the Nebi Musa shrine near Jericho. Al-Nabulusi also made the odd accusation that the Crusaders were the ones who had built the Dome of the Rock. He argued that only infidels like the Crusaders would have wanted to cover up the Rock with a dome and so obscure from view the fact that the Rock floats miraculously in the air, last clearly seen by the traveler Ibn al-'Arabi just a few years before the Crusaders arrived.

9 al-'Ayyāshī, Riḥlat 85-89. 209-214; al-'Ayyāshī, Laḥṭ 233-247; al-Tāzī, al-Quds 22-23; Matar, Two.

10 al-'Ayyāshī, Riḥlat; al-'Ayyāshī, Laḥṭ 236.

11 al-Khiyārī, Tuḥfat 2. 175-196. See Khayr Bak, Filastīn 31-36. 75-95; al-'Asālī, Bayt 89-93. 215-221; Rafeq, Ottoman 45. 64-65.

12 al-Nābulusī, Riḥlatī; al-Nābulusī, al-Ḥaḍrah 1990; al-Nābulusī, al-Ḥaḍrah 1994. See al-'Asālī, Bayt 253-275; al-Nimr, al-Mukhtār.

13 al-Nābulusī, al-Ḥaḍrah. See al-'Asālī, Bayt 277-288.

Al-Nabulusi was such a prominent figure that quite a few scholars have written studies of him and his journeys, especially in the past few years<sup>14</sup>.

## 6) al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī, Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn (1710s)

Al-Bakri al-Siddiqi (1099-1163/1688-1749) was a prominent religious scholar and sufi of the Khalwati order. He was born in Damascus, but starting in the 1120s/1710s, he made numerous journeys throughout Syria-Palestine, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq and the Hijaz.

His first trip to Jerusalem was in 1122/1710. His account of that journey is entitled *al-Khamrah al-Ḥasīyah fī al-Riḥlah al-Qudsīyah*. His second trip to Jerusalem was in 1126/1714. His account of that journey is entitled *al-Khaṭrah al-Thānīyah al-Unsīyah lil-Rawḍah al-Dānīyah al-Qudsīyah*. His third journey to Jerusalem was in 1128/1716. His account of that journey is entitled *al-Hillah al-Dhahabīyah fī al-Riḥlah al-Ḥalabīyah*. None of the texts have been fully published yet<sup>15</sup>.

He returned to Jerusalem in 1131/1719, where he resided between his numerous other later trips.

In his travel accounts, al-Bakri al-Siddiqi concentrated on visits to shrines and graves of Islamic figures.

## 7) Rajab Pasha (1714-1716)

Rajab Pasha, an Ottoman wazir who was the governor of Jerusalem between December 1714 and March 1716, was the subject of a lengthy panegyric, written by Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Sharaf al-Dīn al-Khalīlī (late 1000s-1147/late 1600s-1734), the most prominent Muslim religious figure in Jerusalem in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>16</sup>. Al-Khalili's panegyric has the title *The History of Jerusalem and Hebron*, which is misleading since he covered only the events of Rajab Pasha's term in office. Al-Khalili emphasized the religious activities of the governor; from his account, one gets the impression that Rajab Pasha did little else besides visit Islamic shrines during his year and a half as governor.

When Rajab Pasha arrived in Jerusalem, the first thing he did was to visit (*zīyārah*) the prophets (*anbiyā'*) and the messengers (*rusul*) and to visit the saints (*awliyā'*) and the righteous ones (*ṣāliḥīn*), done to seek the pleasure of God. Early on, Muhammad al-Khalili had a meeting with Rajab Pasha, in which he explained the religious importance of Jerusalem, how Solomon had prayed after completed his construction of the temple and how the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius had come to Jerusalem humbly.

Rajab Pasha did not know of any place where there was a prophet or a saint (*wali*) or that was famous for prayers being answered, without going there and having the Quran recited and saying prayers and proclamations of God's unity, beyond description.

He first held a large session in the Dome of the Rock, filled beyond capacity without parallel for the recitation of the Quran and the 99 divine names, prayers and praise, after the Friday noon prayers. He did the same thing in Hebron for Abraham, his wife Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. He went to Hebron at the time of the arrival of the Hajj pilgrimage caravan for no other purpose than for prayer and supplication for 15 days, doing nothing except praying day and night.

He then went to visit Esau in the village of Si'ir, where he prayed for the sultan and the chief minister, then Lot in the village of Bani Nu'aym, where he did the same thing, and Jonah in the village of Halhul, where he did the same thing. He then returned to Jerusalem passing by the birthplace of Jesus, stopping there for an hour only because his guide mentioned it.

He returned to Jerusalem and then went to Nebi Musa, where he stayed for three days with an unmentionable amount of petitionary prayers, submission, humility, and slaughtering of sacrifices and supplication to the Lord of the Worlds in the presence of the scholars and the righteous and the sufis and the possessed, with everyone praying for the victory of the Sultan of Islam and the Muslims and that the word of the ones proclaiming the unity of God would be raised and then the infidels and polytheists would be humbled and that 'Ali Pasha, the one who was the greatest of the administrating ministers, would undertake the organization of religion. He repeated his visit a number of times and each time he did what was mentioned and more. He also went to Nebi Samwil for the first time, returning to Jerusalem that same day. When he returned a second time, he prayed a great deal for the sultan and the minister.

Rajab Pasha went on a second trip to Hebron for ten days for visitation. On his way back to Jerusalem, he asked Muhammad al-Khalili whether he should visit Bethlehem. Muhammad al-Khalili said yes. But Rajab Pasha commented that it is said that the idols of the infidels are there. Al-Khalili replied that that was true, but that he as the governor could have them removed. When Rajab Pasha asked whether there was a guide to accompany him to Bethlehem, al-Khalili replied yes, the Messenger of God, on the night of the Night Journey.

Al-Khalili noted that the distribution of food to the poor in Hebron, as well as at the shrines of Lot, Jonah and Esau, had collapsed due to four factors: 1) illegitimate changes to the endowments, 2) corrupt government officials, 3) lack

14 Gildemeister, Abd al-Ghanī, *Sirriyyah, Journeys; Sirriyyah, Mystical; Khayr Bak, Filastīn* 36-54. 96-147; al-'Asalī, *Bayt* 100-108. 277-288; Rafeq, *Ottoman* 65-68; Akkach, *Poetics; Sirriyyeh, Sufi; Matar, Sufi*.

15 See al-Nu'aymāt, *Tarājim* 158-171; Khayr Bak, *Filastīn* 54-60. 148-161; al-'Asalī, *Bayt* 108-115. 289-295. 297-302; Weigert, *Eighteenth; Rafeq, Ottoman* 68-69. 16 al-Khalili, *Tārīkh*.

of administrative oversight, 4) an increase of the number of claimants to the endowment, so that there was less for the poor. He noted that the Mosque of Abraham was in ruins, as were ovens, mills, springs of water, ablution places, and *ribāṭs* in Hebron, so that few people were able to stay; the shrine of Lot, Mahall Yaḡin (a shrine south of Bani Nu‘aym), and the shrine of Jonah were also in ruins. Supplies and funds sent for repairs were dissipated without benefit. The state of the al-Aqsa Mosque was similar, so what was the state of the other Islamic buildings outside of Jerusalem and Hebron? Meanwhile the Christians were taking care for their buildings, churches and monasteries, and even expanding them, such as at Ein Kerem. Al-Khalili praised at length Rajab Pasha’s efforts to set the food distribution back on a proper footing. He washed the noble mosque, the shrines of the prophets and the cave, perfumed it and ordered the renovation of the three pots of the prophets that were used to feed the poor. He also built a market in Hebron that had been in ruins, renovated the Mosque of Abraham in Hebron, as well as the Masjid al-Aqsa, Nebi Musa, Hebron, ‘Uzayr, Nebi Samwil and Nebi Da‘ud and he reestablished the endowments for the soup kitchens.

## 8) al-Luḡaymī, Muṣṭafā As‘ad (1731)

Al-Luḡaymi (1105-1178/1693-1765) was a sufi of the Khalwati order, born in Damiatta, Egypt although his ancestors were prominent Jerusalemites. He moved to Damascus, where he died.

He first traveled to Syria/Palestine in 1143-1144/1731, in the course of which he visited Jerusalem from 21 Dhu al-Qa‘dah / 28 May to 1 Safar / 5 August. While there he spent much time with fellow sufis, including al-Bakri al-Siddiqi. His account of his trip, written in 1164/1751, focuses on the Haram compound and Islamic shrines, and quotes from al-Suyuti, Mujir al-Din, al-Bakri al-Siddiqi and al-Nabulusi<sup>17</sup>. He also wrote a book about the merits of Jerusalem, with excerpts from al-Suyuti and Mujir al-Din<sup>18</sup>.

## 9) al-Miknāsī, Muḡammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn ‘Uthmān (1788)

Al-Miknasi, commonly known as Ibn ‘Uthman (mid-12<sup>th</sup> century-1214/mid-18<sup>th</sup> century-1800) was a diplomat from Morocco. He went on a diplomatic mission to Istanbul in 1201/1787, during the reign of Sultan ‘Abd al-Hamid, after which he went on the Hajj pilgrimage, before returning to Morocco after a journey of almost three years<sup>19</sup>.

On the way back after the Hajj, he reached Damascus and then travelled on to Akko in 1788. While waiting for a ship

to make preparations for a trip west, he took the opportunity to visit (*ziyārah*) Jerusalem and gain blessings by seeing (*mushāhidah*) it, the Masjid al-Aqsa and the prophets who are there.

Al-Miknasi visited a number of shrines along the way. He noted the tomb of the Prophet Salih just outside of Akko and stayed the first night near the *turbah* (tomb shrine) of Shaykh Ibrahim al-Zu‘bi. Just outside of Nablus he saw the graves of the sons of Jacob and was blessed by visiting them. Just north of Jerusalem he visited Nebi Samwil. Or rather, due to time constraints, he performed his visitation by stopping along the road at the foot of the hill where the shrine is; he faced the direction of the shrine as he recited the *fatihah* and prayed (*da‘watnā allāh*).

In Jerusalem he stayed at the Abu Midyan al-Ghawth hospice for North Africans. For his time in Jerusalem, he included stories that the guides told him. He saw the sights of the Haram – the Dome of the Rock and the cave, the al-Aqsa Mosque where he prayed for blessings, the madrasahs along the western perimeter, the Mihrab of Mary and the Cradle of Jesus, the Turbah of Sulayman, and the Dome of the Chain. He also mentioned the Turbah of David outside the city walls and the tethering hole of al-Buraq. He also went to the Mount of Olives, visiting the graves of the two Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, ‘Ubadah ibn al-Samit and Shaddad ibn Aws, along the way. He visited the Tomb of Mary, noting with consternation that the keys were in the hands of Christians. He also noted the Turbah of Mujir al-Din in front of the Tomb of Mary. On the Mount of Olives he visited the grave of Shaykh Muhammad al-‘Alami and the adjacent mosque and zawiyah, and then the place of the Ascension of Jesus; it had earlier been in the hands of the Christians, but Shaykh al-‘Alami had rescued it. He then visited the Turbah of Nebi ‘Azir. He mentioned that the Nebi Musa shrine was four hours distant; he was advised that the road was dangerous, so, also facing time constraints, he did not go there. He next went to Nebi Ayyub and the Silwan spring south of the city. He noted, as other Muslim authors do, that the water of the four Rivers of Paradise flows out from below the Dome of the Rock and so there is a connection between the Silwan spring and the Zamzam spring in Mecca. He told the story of a Muslim pilgrim from India who had dropped his water jar by accident into the Zamzam spring. When he came to Jerusalem some months later, he found his water jug bobbing on the surface of the Silwan spring; al-Miknasi saw the water jug on display in the al-Aqsa Mosque. Al-Miknasi returned to the Haram compound, mentioning this time the Dome of the Mi‘raj and the Old Masjid al-Aqsa where there were two mihrabs.

He then went to Hebron, passing by Rachel’s Tomb and the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem, in the hands of the

17 The manuscript remains unedited. See al-‘Asālī, Bayt 303-310.

18 al-Luḡaymī, *Lata‘if*. See Khayr Bak, *Filastīn* 61-64. 162-177; al-‘Asālī, Bayt 115-119. 303-310; Rafeq, *Ottoman* 69-70.

19 al-Miknāsī, *Rihlat*, translated as *Matar*, Arab. See al-Tāzī, *al-Quds*; Benaboud, *Spiritual*; al-‘Asālī, Bayt 119-120.

Christians; he performed his visitation by facing the direction of Bethlehem and praying, and then continued on to Jonah in Halhul.

In Hebron he visited the tombs of Abraham and the other prophets. At first he was reluctant to go into the shrine, because by doing so he would step on the graves of the people buried there under the floor. In the Malaki school of Islamic law there is a special sensitivity about walking on the graves of Muslims, let alone Prophets, so some Maliki jurists had ruled that it is forbidden for Muslims to enter. But he went in anyway, because he noted that the building was a mosque, where Muslims had been worshipping for centuries, so how could it be forbidden for a Muslim to enter a mosque? The next day he left early so that he could be back in Jerusalem in time for the Friday noon prayers in the al-Aqsa Mosque. In his travel account, al-Miknasi then digressed with a summary of Jerusalem's history and the virtues of Jerusalem, before recording his return journey to Akko in time to catch his ship.

As a career diplomat, he was a VIP with an entourage of servants, and parts of his itinerary differed from that of the religious scholars; he met the ruler of Akko, Ahmad al-Jazzar, for example, and in Hebron he spent the night as the guest of the mayor of Hebron.

### 10) al-Zayyānī, Abū al-Qāsim (around 1791)

Al-Zayyani (1147-1249/1734-1833) was a North African who visited Jerusalem in conjunction with the Hajj, apparently around 1791. In his travel account, the first part of his description of Jerusalem is an abbreviated copy of al-Balawi's account from the Mamluk period, while the second part copies al-Miknasi's account, and so his account has no independent value, contrary to Rafeq's favorable evaluation<sup>20</sup>.

### 11) al-Qāyātī, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Jawād (1885)

Al-Qayati (1254-1320/1838-1902) was born in Egypt and was exiled to Syria for three years in 1300/1883 in the aftermath of the 'Urabi rebellion. In the course of his exile he visited Jerusalem in 1302/1885. In his account of his exile, his description of Jerusalem is especially interesting for his description of the annual festival at the Nebi Musa shrine<sup>21</sup>.

### 12) al-Qāsimī, Jamāl al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd (1903)

Al-Qasimi (1283-1332/1866-1914) was a prominent Islamic scholar from Damascus, known to the locals whom he met along the way during his pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1903. The account of his travels was first published in a Jordanian newspaper in 1981 and in full in 2010<sup>22</sup>.

At dawn on 29 Muharram 1321 / 27 April 1903 he left Damascus by train to Muzayrib, where he arrived at noon. He continued on to Der'a, arriving at sunset; he met the qadi there. The next day he took the train on a recently constructed stretch of the Hijaz railway to Amman, arriving before sunset. He stayed in Amman for ten days, visiting sites. On Thursday 10 Safar / 8 May he went to Salt where he spent another ten days. Then on Monday 20 Safar / 18 May he went via the Wadi Shu'ayb to the Jordan River, where he crossed the bridge to Jericho. He traveled with a group to a caravanserai between Jericho and Jerusalem, where the cold weather forced them to spend the night.

They arrived at Lion's Gate on Thursday 23 Safar / 21 May, deposited their luggage in a khan and then went to the Haram. They went to the Dome of the Rock, where an attendant asked them where they were staying. They said in a khan because of their luggage, but he offered them accommodations in the Zawayah al-Da'udiyah on the Haram compound.

Next day they toured the Haram. The owners of the cells on the compound and around the Dome of the Rock all offered to have them stay in their cells. He went to the zawayah that he understood from having read Mujir al-Din to be the Zawayah al-Khunthuniyah, south of the al-Aqsa Mosque building.

Over the next days he went to the Khalidiyah library and the Tomb of Mary and the Mount of Olives, where he visited most of its shrines, the Ascension of Jesus and the Zawayah al-'Alamiyah. He then went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where one of the Muslim guards showed him around. Then he went to the adjacent Khanqah al-Salahiyah. The next day he saw more sites, including the Latin Printing Press run by the Franciscans. He went to the Old al-Aqsa, and then the place of al-Buraq, before going outside the walls to the Silwan spring.

On Wednesday morning 29 Safar / 27 May he left for Hebron. Along the way he stopped in Bethlehem, where he saw the birthplace of Jesus and the palm tree and went to the

20 al-Zayyānī, al-Tarjūmānah. See al-'Asalī, Bayt 121-123; Rafeq, Ottoman 70-71.

21 al-Qāyātī, Nafḥat 87-98. 101-102. See al-'Asalī, Bayt 128-130. 321-331; Khayr Bak, Filastīn 65-69. 177-194.

22 al-'Asalī, Bayt 130-132. 333-343; al-Qāsimī, Riḥlatī.

congregational mosque in the town; he noted the souvenir industry in shells. He also saw the pool where water goes to Jerusalem (Solomon's Pools) and the Tomb of Jonah in Halhul. In Hebron he stayed at a ribat and then went to the mosque. The next evening he returned to Jerusalem and on Saturday 3 Rabi' I / 30 May he took the train to Jaffa. On Sunday he visited the garden of the Germans there. On Tuesday he took a boat to Beirut and then the train back to Damascus. His entire trip took 40 days.

### 13) al-Kitānī, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ja'far al-Ḥasanī (1904)

Al-Kitani (1274/1857-1345/1927) was a religious scholar from Morocco. In 1321/1903 he left North Africa for the Hajj, after which he came to Jerusalem. The portion about Jerusalem in the account of his travels is exceptionally interesting for his observations about the Muslims in Jerusalem<sup>23</sup>.

After the Hajj was over, in early 1322/1904 he took a steamship via the Suez Canal to Beirut and then to Damascus, where he spent a few days. On 6 Rabi' I / 20 May 1904 he left Damascus for Beirut, and on 15 Rabi' I / 29 May he took an overnight steamer from Beirut to Jaffa. In Jaffa he went to the main mosque for two hours, before taking the train (*barbūr al-barrī*) to Jerusalem. He was provided accommodations in the Bakhin Bakhin structure on the west side of the upper Dome of the Rock platform. The evening of his arrival he went to the Hammam al-'Ayn bathhouse and that night went to the Dome of the Rock, only to find that it was closed. So he prayed outside its door and then prayed at the adjacent Dome of the Chain. The next day, as a guest of the Haram administrators, he went around visiting the sites in the company of someone who knew them well: Amin al-Danaf al-Ansari and his brother Muhi al-Din, the author of a booklet about the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem, and their father, 'Umar al-Danaf, who was still alive. Al-Kitani provides details of all the places he visited with his guide on the Haram and then lists the places he visited outside the compound, mostly graves of Islamic worthies.

He also went to the Madrasah al-Salahiyah (the Church of St. Anne), but it was in the hands of Christians, so he did not enter it. He noted the Birkat Bani Isra'il, which had no water in it. He went to the Citadel (Qal'at Da'ud) where he knew of a grand underground tunnel (*sirdab*) that led to the Dome of the Chain, but he could not go to it, because it was now a military fort, so he prayed at the entrance and left. He also noted Shaykh Lu'lu', but he did not go there.

Al-Kitani then listed the places he went to outside the city walls: the Tomb of David (Sayyidna Da'ud), where there were two mosques and the place where the table was brought down to Jesus and a cell of Ahmad al-Dajjani and the Zaw-

iyah al-Da'udiyah, built by Sultan 'Abd al-Majid for visitors, among other buildings. He also mentioned Shaykh al-Mansi on the right of the road from Nebi Da'ud to Jaffa Gate. He also went to the Silwan spring, where there was a mosque and Bi'r Ayyub, where there was also a mosque.

He then went to the Mount of Olives, noting on the way the Conical Cap of Pharaoh and the Kuffiyah of Pharaoh's Wife, also identified as the tombs of Zakariah and John. He knew of their location in Sebastiya, but he prayed here anyway on the off chance that here was the genuine location. He also noted the Tomb of Mary and then the Tomb of Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyah and Shaykh al-'Alami and his wife 'A'isha with the mosque above their graves. He also noted the mosque at the Ascension of Jesus, the dome of the martyrs, the dome of Salman al-Farisi and the Kharnub Tree of the Ten. He chose not to go to the Nebi Musa shrine, but he did mention the tomb of 'Ayzur.

He then identified in the cemetery at Lions Gate the graves of Shaddad ibn Aws and 'Ubadah ibn al-Samit. He also noted in the west part of the city 'Ukashah ibn Muhsin, where there was a dome and a minaret and the nearby dome of Shaykh Qaymur. Outside Damascus Gate he mentioned the Zawayah al-Adhamiyah; the tomb of Azur was in a cave at the far end. He also mentioned Shaykh Jarrah and the Mamilla Cemetery (Turbat Mamin Allah) and provides a long list of individuals buried there.

Al-Kitani made some critical observations about social customs in the city. He noted that Jews and Christians were allowed onto the Haram compound with the permission of the ruler (*hakim*) of the city, according to the Hanafi legal tradition. He noted that the decadent Muslims did not take off their shoes in the compound; they did so only when they went inside the Dome of the Rock or the al-Aqsa Mosque building. The Muslims also smoked in the compound, again only refraining from doing so in the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque building. As he commented, with such decadent Muslims, is it any wonder that the Jews and Christians were taking over the city. Their decadence was a sign of the Hour, so the End Times were near. He also noted that there were almost no Muslims in the city who had memorized the Quran, and of those few, they were all Muslims from North Africa. In the al-Aqsa Mosque he listened to a shaykh giving a lecture and was scandalized when the shaykh gave his students wrong information about a technical aspect of the regulations for the five daily prayers.

He also went on a flying one-day trip to Hebron and visited the shrines (*mazārat*) along the way. He passed by Rachel's Tomb; it was in the hands of Jews and closed, so he prayed at the entrance. In Bethlehem he noted the birthplace of Jesus, the cradle and the palm tree, along with the mosque of 'Umar. He noted that the locals produced rosaries out of shell or wood for sale to visitors.

23 al-Kitānī, al-Rihlah.

He mentioned Jonah in Halhul; his father or mother in Bayt 'Ummar, and Esau in Si'ir; nearby was Shaykh Ibrahim al-Hadam. He also mentioned Noah in Dura, Lot in Bani Nu'aym and the cave of the 40 or 60, but he did not go due to time constraints. Also near Jonah was the grave of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, a Companion of the Prophet Muhammad.

Once in Hebron he went to the Tomb of Abraham and the other tombs there. But he got into an argument with the guard who would not let him into the area where Abraham's wife Sarah was buried, because it was forbidden for men to go to that area off-limits as a harem and so violate where the womenfolk were buried. But al-Kitani pointed out that he was a *sharif*, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, and as such Sarah was an ancestor of his, and so the guard let him in.

He listed a number of other shrines and mosques in Hebron, but he did not visit them due to time constraints. He wanted to be back in Jerusalem that evening to celebrate the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, but he arrived too late, just as everyone was leaving. But the next day he was able to attend a *mawlid* celebration, which consists of the liturgical recitation of the Burda poem about the life of the Prophet Muhammad; on that occasion the poem was recited by the son of the mufti, but al-Kitani noticed that he recited the lines in the wrong order (al-Kitani did not realize that the poem had been recited according to a different version of the text than what he knew of in Morocco). Afterwards sweets were distributed, but there were not enough for everyone to have some, so people started shouting over who would get the sweets, leading al-Kitani to complain again about the abysmal standards of the Muslims in Jerusalem. The next day while taking a nap in the Bakhin Bakhin shrine, he heard the voice of Idris calling to him to tell him that his time in Jerusalem had come to an end, so the next day he took the train back to Jaffa on the start of his return travels to North Africa. Al-Kitani later traveled back to Damascus, where he took up a position teaching at the Umayyad mosque.

#### 14) al-Ḥabashī, Shaykh Ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh (1910)

Al-Ḥabashi was a shaykh from Hadramaut who travelled from Mecca to Jerusalem in early 1910 and wrote a travel account entitled *Al-Shāhid al-Maqbūl fī al-Riḥlah ilā Miṣr wa al-Shām wa-Iṣṭānbūl*<sup>24</sup>. He traveled by steam ship to Beirut and then Jaffa, arriving on 27 May, and then by train to Jerusalem, where he stayed in a hotel. He visited the Islamic sites on the Haram compound, including the underground vaulted area below the al-Aqsa Mosque, which was otherwise closed, and saw the Cradle of Jesus. He went to the Tomb of Mary, which was filled with Christians at the time, so he had to wait. He

also went to the Madrasah al-Salahiyah – Church of Saint Anne, as well as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

He went by carriage to Hebron and had a meal in a place set up for guests and visitors, before visiting the Tombs of Abraham and the other Prophets. On the way back he visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. He soon traveled back to Jaffa, apparently by automobile, where he stayed for two days with a friend, who had lovely fruit orchards, and then travelled on to Beirut and Istanbul.

#### 15) Enver Pasha (1916)

In 1916 Enver Pasha (1298-1341/1881-1922), the Ottoman leader, and Jamal Pasha, the commander of the Ottoman Fourth Army, came to Jerusalem. The historian Muhammad Kurd 'Ali wrote a sycophantic account of that trip<sup>25</sup>.

They arrived in al-Ramlah by train on 5 am on Friday 25 February 1916, where they were met by cheering crowds. They had breakfast at the railway station, bedecked with triumphal arches, where they reviewed the troops. They then traveled by car to Jaffa, arriving at 11:00. They rode along the new Jamal Pasha street, lined with large crowds. After a ceremony for the official opening of the street, they passed under more triumphal arches on their way to the city council for lunch. Then they went to the government building, where they listened to speeches and poetry recitations. Enver Pasha made a donation to the poor of Jaffa and admired Jaffa oranges when his car stopped at an orchard on the way to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, crowds lined the streets on the way to the military camp, where they arrived on Friday afternoon; they had dinner in the headquarters of the Fourth Army.

On Saturday, they met with government officials and had lunch at the headquarters of the Eighth Corps. Then they visited the Haram, first the Dome of the Rock, where they heard some Quranic verses and Enver Pasha performed two *rak'ahs*. Then they went to the Aqsa Mosque building, where they performed two more *rak'ahs* and listened to a presentation of the merits of Jerusalem. Then they went to the Kulliyah al-Salahiyah (at the Church of St. Anne), where the faculty and students put on a performance. One student recited a poem in German, which impressed the German military officers in the group.

Then they went to Nebi Da'ud and then the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, along with some German and Austrian officers. Enver Pasha donated 200 Ottoman gold coins, having donated only 50 gold coins to the Haram. The municipality held a banquet that evening, marked by more speeches in Arabic and Turkish. On Sunday morning they went to Beersheba and returned on Tuesday. On the way back they stopped at a unit of the Fourth Army and then visited the shrines of the

24 al-Ḥabashī, al-Rahḥālah 261-265.

25 al-'Asālī, Bayt 137-139. 377-381.

Prophets in Hebron, making donations to the poor, and they drank tea at the government building. They went to Bethlehem, where they visited the cave and made donations to the Christian denominations and then returned to Jerusalem, where they had lunch at the military base on the Mount of Olives, as they listened to more speeches.

On Wednesday morning they went to Jericho, where they had lunch at the expense of the municipality of Jerusalem, before continuing to Salt, where they had tea as guests of the municipality of Salt, and then to Amman, where they took the train on to Medina.

## General Observations<sup>26</sup>

A question of terminology arises, concerning what Muslim pilgrimage consists of and what distinguishes a Muslim pilgrim to Jerusalem from an ordinary Muslim traveler who visits the city.

The Arabic word *ziyārah* (visitation) is the most commonly used word in the travel accounts to identify the action of going to a shrine, typically tomb shrines of prophets or prominent religious figures. It applies to local residents visiting nearby holy places, just as much as to long-distance travelers, and is used for Jews and Christians as well as Muslims. Muslims performing a *ziyārah* visitation implies a liturgical act involving the recitation of Quranic verses and recitation of prayers. In the case of al-Miknasi, visitations could be performed by facing in the direction of the shrine from afar, without the need for a time-consuming detour off the main highway.

The Western Christians who came to Jerusalem in later medieval (i. e. post-Crusader Mamluk or Ottoman) times were almost invariably pilgrims, who came with the primary or exclusive objective of visiting the Christian holy places; only handfuls of Franciscan monks resided in Jerusalem long-term. There were scarcely any purely secular travelers to Jerusalem from Western Europe before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the case of Muslim travelers, some came to Jerusalem along their way to perform the hajj pilgrimage in Mecca. But also many Muslims who came to Jerusalem did so in the course of ordinary travels, during which they took advantage of the opportunity to visit tomb shrines and other holy places along their way. Thus even when the primary objective of their travels may not have been pilgrimage, like al-Hamawi and the chief judge of Damascus who came to Jerusalem on official government business. they spent a significant portion of their time visiting shrines like other pilgrims did. The governor Rajab Pasha was hardly an ordinary pilgrim, even if the author of the account of his year and a half as governor emphasizes his religious activities to the exclusion of anything else he did. One may be reluctant to consider Enver Pasha,

the Ottoman military leader during the First World War, to be a pilgrim, but he did include visits to religious sites on his itinerary.

The total number of Muslim travelers who came each year to Jerusalem from some distance is hard to judge, but over the centuries it seems to have been substantially more than the number of Western Christian pilgrims. The Muslim who came on the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca from a long distance sometimes combined their hajj pilgrimage with a trip to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is out of the way for people traveling to the Hijaz or along the most direct travel routes between Egypt and Syria, so that the Muslim travelers would need to actively choose to come to Jerusalem. Al-Miknasi, for example, had not originally intended to go to Jerusalem and decided to go only because there was no ship immediately available in Akko to take him back to North Africa. The Muslim pilgrims might spend a week or so in Jerusalem. If they were prominent Islamic scholars they would stay as guests on the Haram compound, otherwise there were other hospices where pilgrims could stay. The pilgrims centered their attention on the Haram compound along with other Islamic sites in the city. Some of the authors listed in detail all of the sites on the Haram that they visited, some were more thorough than others who might skip some of the lesser shrines, like the Market of Knowledge at the far southeast corner of the Haram. That name was thought up by the guides stationed there to attract the attention (and donations) of pilgrims who might not otherwise bother to go there, as al-Miknasi noted.

The Muslim pilgrims were especially interested in visitations to tomb shrines and graves of prominent Muslims. They usually refused, however, to visit sites under the control of Christians, such as the Tomb of the Virgin Mary. Only in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, when secular tourism had developed, would elite Muslims freely visit Christian churches. The pilgrims who came to Jerusalem invariably also included a pilgrimage trip to Hebron; they also commonly made a trip to the Nebi Musa shrine near Jericho, but sometimes they chose not to go due to time constraints or fear for their safety on the insecure road there. They also took advantage of the opportunity for visitations at whatever tomb shrines they passed by during their travels.

The Muslim travelers discussed here who came to Jerusalem were members of the same culture as Jerusalem's majority population, and so they fit in easily. Some of the Muslim travelers stayed only a few days, but others chose to stay in Jerusalem for years. That is in contrast to Western Christian pilgrims who were thrust into an alien culture and needed to be escorted by their Franciscan guides at all times and rarely stayed after their week-long package tours with fixed itineraries had come to an end, at least until the development of tourism in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century allowed for independent travel.

<sup>26</sup> See also Schick, Who.



Those Muslim travelers who wrote travel accounts were typically members of a narrow social group of elite religious scholars, who wanted to meet their peers while in the city. Thus their accounts often contain much biographical information about the religious scholars they met. That is a feature of pre-modern Muslim historical writing in general, where biographies of religious scholars take a prominent place. That marks a difference between the Muslim travel accounts and the accounts of Western pilgrims of more diverse social backgrounds, who came to visit the Christian holy places, but not to meet Christian clergymen.

Some of the accounts were written as the personal memoirs of the authors without any thought about a wider readership, while in other cases, notably al-Nabulusi's two travel accounts and the third-person accounts about Rajab Pasha and Enver Pasha, wide distribution was an objective from the beginning.

While more limited in number than the accounts of Western Christian pilgrims, and far less widely known, the accounts of the Muslim pilgrims are of interest for the different perspectives they offer on the religious importance that Jerusalem holds.

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## Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

### Muslimische Jerusalem-Pilger in osmanischer Zeit

Die Erfahrungen muslimischer Pilger, die nach Jerusalem kamen, sind westlichen Gelehrten kaum bekannt, da nur eine Handvoll ihrer Reiseberichte veröffentlicht ist und noch weniger in eine europäische Sprache übersetzt wurden. In diesem Artikel werden 15 muslimische Reisende vorgestellt, die aus religiösen Gründen in osmanischer Zeit nach Jerusalem kamen und über ihre Reisen auf Arabisch berichteten. Diese muslimischen Pilger, von denen die meisten prominente Religionsgelehrte waren, werden identifiziert, und einige der Höhepunkte ihrer Berichte aus der Zeit vom 16. bis zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert werden zusammengefasst. Es folgen einige allgemeine Beobachtungen über die Art der muslimischen Pilgerfahrt und die vielfältigen Aktivitäten dieser muslimischen Pilger.

### Muslim Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Ottoman Period

The experiences of Muslim pilgrims who came to Jerusalem are not well known among Western scholars, because only a handful of their travel accounts have been published and even fewer have been translated into a European language. This article presents fifteen Muslim travelers who came to Jerusalem in the Ottoman period for religious reasons and

who wrote accounts of their travels in Arabic. Those Muslim pilgrims, most of whom were prominent religious scholars, are identified, and some of the highlights of their accounts spanning the period from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century are summarized. Some general observations follow about the nature of Muslim pilgrimage and the varied activities of those Muslim pilgrims.

### Les pèlerins musulmans pour Jérusalem à l'époque ottomane

Les érudits occidentaux n'ont guère connaissance des expériences vécues par les pèlerins musulmans qui ont visité Jérusalem, car seule une poignée de manuscrits fut publiée et encore moins dans une des langues européennes. Cet article présente 15 voyageurs musulmans qui sont venus à Jérusalem à l'époque ottomane pour des raisons religieuses et ont raconté leur voyage en langue arabe. On identifie ces pèlerins, dont la plupart étaient de célèbres érudits religieux, et résume les points forts de leurs récits qui datent du 16<sup>e</sup> au début du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle. Suivent encore quelques observations sur le caractère du pèlerinage musulman et les diverses activités des pèlerins musulmans.

Traduction: Y. Gautier